

WRITINGS OF ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER

by Archibald Alexander

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Archibald Alexander, compiled for study and devotional reading.

134 Chapters

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A Day at a Time

A DAY AT A TIME

AND OTHER TALKS

ON LIFE AND RELIGION

BY THE REV.

ARCH. ALEXANDER, M.A., B.D.

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THIS BOOK

WRITTEN IN WAR-TIME

TO MINISTER COMFORT

AND IF IT MAY BE TO REINFORCE HOPE

AND FAITH

IS DEDICATED

BY PERMISSION

TO

SIR JOHN R. JELLICOE

G.C.B., K.C.V.O.

ADMIRAL OF THE GRAND FLEET

"There are nettles everywhere,

But smooth green grasses are more common still;

The blue of heaven is larger than the cloud."

E. B. BROWNING

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A DAY AT A TIME

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

(Deuteronomy 33:25.)

I

A DAY AT A TIME

If any one of us knows a word of hope or has picked up a message of comfort anywhere, it is his plain duty to share it, these days. We owe it to each other to cherish as exceeding precious, and to pass on to others, every brave and helpful word or thought we come across.

Well, here is a splendid one for us all, and especially for those who have most at stake in this great conflict, and are looking anxiously ahead and fearing what the weeks may have in store,--"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." It is a great and glorious promise. And just a couple of verses further on, it is caught up and included in one greater still,--"The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." Fathers and mothers, with a boy, or more than one, perhaps, away on active service for King and country, this promise is for you, to take to your heart and hide there, like some precious secret between you and God,--As thy days, so shall thy strength be.

Notice carefully, however, how the promise runs. Not, mark you, as your life is, not as your years are, not even as your weeks are, but as your days, so shall your strength be. For each day as it comes, God's promise is that strength will be given you, but just for a day at a time. The way to live under any circumstances, but especially in these hard weeks, is just a day at a time. Leave to-morrow with God, my brother, until it comes. That is what the Word of God lays upon you as a duty. Live this day at your best and bravest, trusting that God's help will not fail you. And for the duties and trials of to-morrow, however hard and heavy, believe that strength for that day also will be given you, when it comes.

You cannot have failed to observe what an important place this way of living had in the teaching of Jesus Christ. He was always trying to get men to trust the coming days to God, and to live fully worthily and nobly to-day. He was dead against the practice of adding to the burdens of to-day fears and forebodings for to-morrow. It is in love to us, in His desire to save us unnecessary pain, that He bids us remember that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

In one of R. D. Blackmore's fine open-air stories, there is a character who talks at length about horses. After comparing good ones and bad ones in their behaviour the first time they breast a hill with a load behind them, he sums the matter up thus: "Howsoever good a horse be, he longeth to see over the top of the hill before he be half-way up it." The man who is listening to him confesses that he has often felt that way himself! And I do not know that there are many of us who can claim to be guiltless in this respect. Yet it is perfectly plain that the men and women who are living the bravest and most successful lives around us, and are proving towers of strength to others, are

those who have learned the art of living just a day at a time, and of depending upon God for strength for that day in the simplest and most trustful fashion.

Why, my brothers, if God our Father had meant us to carry on our backs the fears and anxieties of the coming days, He would surely have told us more about them! If we were meant to bear to-day what next week holds, surely we should have been permitted to see into next week. But we cannot. We cannot see a single second ahead. God gives us Now, and To-Morrow He keeps to Himself. Is there anything wiser or better we can do with our to-morrows than just to leave them quietly and trustfully with Him?

The habit of living ahead, as so many of us do, prevents us from getting the full taste and flavour of the happiness and blessing that are ours to-day. I defy any man to be adequately grateful for this day's sunshine if he is worrying all the time about the chance of a bad day to-morrow. Mark Rutherford, merciless self-critic as he was, takes himself severely to task for this habit in his "Autobiography." "I learned, alas! when it was almost too late," he says, "to live in each moment as it passed over my head, believing that the sun as it is now rising, is as good as it ever will be." Yes, in great things as well as in little things, that is true. If we are to live our lives at the full, and anywhere on the Christian level, the only way is to live one day at a time.

Our forefathers in the pulpit were fond of reminding their hearers to live each day as if it were their last. And in solemn truth, without being in the least morbid, that is the way to live. If a man knew that after to-day, he would not smell the sea again, how fully and gratefully would he fill his lungs with its ozone to-day! If he knew he were not to enter God's House again, how earnestly and sincerely and reverently he would join in its worship to-day! Yes, but the point is, why should his hope, that he has other days to come, prevent him taking out of this day all that he possibly can? Why should this day be any less prized, because others in all probability will follow it?

But the great value of this word is the comfort of it to those who are anxious and fear the coming days. And which of us is not in that category? I do not suppose there is one of my readers upon whom, somehow or other, the war has not levied its tax. Nearly every one has somebody belonging to him or her who is in this gigantic struggle, and whose welfare is a matter of real concern. And, closer still, there are fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, whose very dearest are "in it" or are getting ready to do their share. They have joined, and we are proud that they have joined, for this is a cause that ennobles every mother's son who fights for it. But who shall say what the mother's thoughts are, these days? How proud, and justly proud, the father is that his boy has played the man, and offered himself to his King and for his country! But only God, who made the father--and the mother--heart, knows what the surrender costs. And only God knows how eagerly and anxiously they look ahead to try to see what the future may hold.

And, knowing that, He sends His comfort to you, fathers and mothers. The comfort of His promise,--As thy days, so shall thy strength be. Just a day at a time, my friend! Do not take fears for next month on your shoulders now. You will get strength given you for to-day, certain and sure, and when next month comes, the strength and comfort for that day will come too, as certain and as sure. Be not over-anxious about the morrow. Leave your to-morrow, and your soldier-son, in God's hands. You can do nothing more at the best, and this is the best. But it is such a mistake to do anything less. Leave all your to-morrows with God--it is what He wants you to do--and humbly and gratefully take from His hands His gift of To-day, and the strength that comes with it. If that be

not enough--and it is not enough for God has said more--when that is not enough, still your heart a moment, and listen! And you will hear, beneath that promise for to-day, like the grand deep tones of an organ, the magnificent diapason of the Father's constant love and mindfulness,--"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." And surely that is enough!

"So for To-morrow and its needs

I do not pray,

But keep me, guide me, help me, Lord,

Just for To-Day."

PRAYER

O Lord our God, who dost appoint the way for each of us, give us the grace to trust that as Thou hast helped us hitherto, so, in Thy great mercy, Thou wilt bless us still. We do not ask to see the distant scene. Keep us, and our beloved, this day; and in quietness and confidence teach us to leave to-morrow with Thee, our Father. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GOD IN THE WHEELS

"The Spirit of life was in the wheels."

(Ezekiel 1:21.)

II

GOD IN THE WHEELS

The prophet Ezekiel once had an extraordinary vision of God. He tries to tell us about it, but his description seems to be a meaningless jumble of cherubim, and wheels,--wheels within wheels, complex, wonderful, unresting. Behind all, he saw the Glory of God. And again and again he tells us that "the Spirit of Life was in the wheels."

Now that at least is intelligible, and it is a good thing for us to think about. The Spirit of God is in the wheels.

I want to suggest to you that He is in the wheels of industry. We have no hesitation in saying that God gives the farmer his harvest, and we actually thank Him for it in His temple. A shepherd with a lamb in his arms is for a pastoral people like the Jews the very image of the Saviour God. But men who dwell in towns, and work in mills and factories and yards and railways, or who control or manage such places, have little to do with either corn or sheep. Is it not worth while to remind them that God is also in the wheels? Do you remember how Kipling's old chief engineer Macandrew believed that his twin monsters, driving the liner onward on her way, sang their hourly hymn of praise to God? And why not? From all the wheels of industry and man's inventiveness, goes there not up to Him a praise as real as the song of His little birds?

Where two or three gather together on Lord's days, God is truly and graciously present. But I want you to remember that out in the noisy moving world of industry and business, God is present also, guiding, controlling and bringing His long, long plans to pass. It is by His decree that all the countless wheels of traffic and production turn and spin, for He needs them all, and has brought them into being by the hands of men, and they are His, as the Church is His. I would not have you, as Christian men, look upon your week-day world with its mechanism and its traffic, that world of yours that goes so literally upon wheels, as a province of life very far remote from the presence of God. I would remind you rather that God's spirit is in those wheels, that they move at His bidding, and that they are working out His purposes upon the earth.

I would suggest, further, that God is in those wheels whose turning brings us Change. If you will allow the figure, I would say that God is in the wheels of Change and time.

As we grow older, we resent more and more the constant alteration of the surroundings of life. It saddens us that there should be such a continual moving on. But perhaps it is in the realm of doctrine and practice that changes hurt and perplex us most. Godly old customs die out. The face of truth seems to alter. Old notes in religion disappear and new ones take their place, and we are

sorely tempted to ask if it be possible that the children can know God better or serve His Christ more truly than their fathers. Ah yes, from forty years and upwards, men are very apt to have a quarrel with change. They resent it, and would spike Time's wheels if they could.

Forgetting that the Spirit of God is in those very wheels. Change is God's method and His blessing. The Bible does not envy the man who has no changes. It is afraid for him, afraid that for want of them, he may settle on his lees, and forget the fear of God.

Of course, no one will defend every new fashion, or assert that everything recent is an improvement on what went before. But I, for one, do believe that generation after generation men are moving up, being shepherded up, the long slope of history nearer to God. I believe that God's promise is that He will do better for us than at the beginnings, and I believe He is keeping His promise. I must believe that the history of this world which man rough hews, is--spite of all the wars--being shaped by God Himself, or else there is no God at all. And so I would say to those who distrust the continual changes of life, and would fain stop the wheels that turn on and on and never halt, "Fear not! Be of good courage! For aback of all change is God our Father, and it is His Spirit that is working in the wheels."

Again, I would suggest to you that God is in the wheels that shape your own lot and mine. The wheels of Chance, they are sometimes called, the mere whirligig of destiny, as if the world were some blind irresponsible machine grinding on in the dark, and heeding not which or how many lives were broken in its teeth.

And I grant you that there be times when that idea seems feasible. For life is full of mysterious happenings, and chance sometimes seems the most probable explanation. The tragedy of Job is always being played somewhere. There are men who up to a certain point in life have known nothing but good fortune, and after that, nothing but disappointment and disaster. Out of a blue sky the bolt may fall on any one; while from clouds lowering and heavy, it is waited for, expected and dreaded--and never comes! The merest knife-edge of circumstance sometimes affects results out of all proportion to its importance. "A grain of sand in a man's flesh" as Pascal remarks, "has changed the course of Empires." Yes, I grant you, there be times when the blind chance theory does suggest itself.

But by an overwhelming majority the instinct of man is against it. And best of all, Jesus Christ, our supreme authority, has pledged Himself in His life and death, that the Ruler and Disposer of all events is Eternal Love. We have learned from Jesus to say and to trust "Our Father who art in Heaven." We know and believe that whatever is to come falls not by chance, but is sent and permitted by the Love of God, who makes no mistakes. Taught and inspired by Jesus, many thousands of men and women have committed themselves and all their interests--home, health, happiness, reputation, loved ones--to the keeping of God the Father, and known by the peace that came to them, that it was a real transaction.

Soulless wheels of destiny! say some. The blind mechanism of law! Ah, no, Jesus is the refutation of that. Law there is, and mechanism there must be. But neither blind nor soulless. For, above all, is the Father Love of God, and it is His spirit that is guiding and governing the wheels.

Wheels of Industry, Wheels of Change, Wheels of Destiny. And God's Spirit in them all!

PRAYER

O Lord our God, to whom not only the Church but our whole work-a-day world belongs, give us the purged sight that can see Thy tokens there. Deliver us from all foolish fear of changes since the goad moving all things onward is in our Father's hand. And help us to be sure that whatsoever befalleth us and ours has been permitted and appointed by a Love that passeth knowledge. Amen.

A TRIPLE BEST

"The just shall live by faith."

(Romans 1:17.)

III

A TRIPLE BEST

Some time ago I came across the life-motto of George Stephenson, the "father of the locomotive," as he has been called, the man whose brains and sagacity made possible the network of railways which spreads now over the earth. The crystallised experience of such a life is worth studying. Here, then, was Stephenson's working formula:--"Make the best of everything; think the best of everybody; hope the best for yourself."

First, MAKE THE BEST OF EVERYTHING. In every set of circumstances possible or conceivable, there are always, at any rate, two ways of acting. You can look for the helpful, bright, and hopeful things, and "freeze on" to these meantime. Or, you can select all the doleful, sombre aspects, and sit down in the dust with them. Now, if it did not matter which a man did, there would be no good saying any more. But it has long since become abundantly clear that the man who makes the best of his circumstances, however hard they be, comes most happily out of them in the end. In other words, it pays to make the best of things. It is the cheery people who recover quickest when they are sick. There are men who, if their house should fall in ruins about them, will contrive some sort of shelter meantime with the broken beams! That is the type that wins out in the end somehow; these are the men to whom the miracles happen--who never know when they are beaten, who will face the most tremendous odds with "the half of a broken hope" for a shield, who are never done until they are dead. What makes for success or failure in a man is nothing external to him at all. It is something within him. It is the temper of his spirit. It is the way he captains his own soul.

The other day I saw a photograph of a backyard. It was a little bit of a place, of the most forlorn appearance, littered with tin cans, overgrown with weeds, and hemmed round with blank walls of brick. But it came into the hands of a man who believed in making the best of things. Another photograph showed that same backyard after a year had passed. It was still as small as ever, still overlooked by high walls and surrounded by chimneys. But it was now a perfect little oasis of beauty amid a wilderness of bricks and slates. Will anybody deny that that spirit pays?

Right up the scale, from little things to the highest things, the man who looks for the shining possibilities and follows them, is the man on whom, in our short-sighted way, we say that Fortune smiles. Rather, he smiles in such a determined way to Fortune, that she has at length to smile back!

Nobody pretends that it is easy, when we have failed, to gather our powers together and try again. But nearly all the big men have had to do that very thing. It certainly is not easy, when you have a heavy burden of your own, to spare a cheery word or a hand of sympathy for somebody who is

really much better off, but there are plenty of people doing it at this moment. Nero's palace is the last place in this world where you would expect to find a company of loyal Christian folk. Yet there were such people there, "the saints of Cæsar's household." And the grace of God that made that possible can achieve all these lesser wonders too.

Second, THINK THE BEST OF EVERYBODY. There is a winsome legend that Jesus once revealed Himself in this way:--A knot of idlers had gathered in the street round a dead dog. One remarked how mangy and unkempt its hide was. Another said, "What ugly ears!" But a stranger, who had come forward, said, "Pearls are not whiter than its teeth!" And men said to one another, "This must be Jesus of Nazareth, for nobody but He would find something good even in a dead dog." Certainly it is the mark of the most Christlike men and women that they delight rather in emphasising the merest speck of goodness than in denouncing the too visible evil. We can, all too easily, see the fault in another. What we cannot see is the heart of the defaulter, the weight of temptation he struggled under, and his bitter inner penitence. "Granted," as Carlyle says, "the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy. He has not been all-wise and all-powerful. But, to know how blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

The way to get the best out of people is to think the best about them. Let a man see that you have good hopes of him, and recognise what is best in him, and, in ways of which science can give no explanation, you add to his chances of reaching better things. In any case, who would not wish to stand on Christ's side rather than on Judas's. "This ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor." That is Judas. "Let her alone. Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work in me. She hath done what she could." That is Jesus Christ.

Third,--Don't leave yourself out of the picture. HOPE THE BEST FOR YOURSELF. George Eliot, in her "Scenes of Clerical Life," gives, in one chapter, an account of how the Rev. Amos Barton is criticised and discussed in his parish. In the next chapter we see the Rev. Amos himself going on his way blissfully unconscious of the poor opinion in which he is held, believing quite honestly in himself, and not a little proud of his abilities. "We are poor plants," says this keen student of character, "buoyed up by the air vessels of our own conceit." And a blessed thing, too, when you think of it! If we only knew all the disparaging remarks people make about us, we should never face up to our duties at all. What helps us along is our innocent belief in our powers, in the esteem in which we are held--our little conceits, if you like. Since they send us to our tasks with more spirit, and keep us at them with more determination, aren't they good things in their way? They are indeed just a lower form of that hope that we are speaking of--Hope's poor relations.

If these are of such value, how much more pure quiet steady Hope itself, purged of all pride and undue self-esteem? Hope the best for yourself, and you are already a good way on the road to it. Suggestion is a tremendously powerful instrument, even when you make it yourself. By self suggestion, the psychologists tell us, you can influence your actions, your character, and your general outlook in a wonderful fashion, either to your advantage or your hurt. Therefore, they say, be careful never to suggest evil to yourself. Never say to yourself, "I'm going to make a mess of this," or "I am not fit for that." Suggest success, happiness, health, and you beckon them to you. Hope the best for yourself, and you pave the way for its coming.

On higher planes, the same holds true. Hope on, and, though you fall you will rise again. Believe that you will be enabled to face your trouble or temptation, and you will be brought through it somehow. Even when the end of life is near, hope still, for beyond this best there is a better, and God's road winds uphill all the way.

But, you say, this is just faith. I know it is. Run your hopes for yourself up as high as you can reach, and they will touch God and become faith. That is why you are to hope the best for yourself. Because--God. Because God the Father loves you, and desires the best for you too. I believe in the optimism which Stephenson's motto embodies, because I believe in the Fatherhood of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why I counsel you to go on hoping that the best is yet to be. Not that we can earn it at all, or that we deserve it at all. But--because God, our Father. And, for the daring and faith of that saying, this sufficient ground.--Because--Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Help us all, Heavenly Father, to meet the discipline of life with stouter hearts. May we all try harder to cultivate the Christ-like mark of charity. And spite of our many sins and shortcomings, and our poor love of Thee, grant us the courage to believe that all things, in Thy great Love for us, are working together for our good. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

FINICAL FARMING

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

(Ecclesiastes 2:4.)

IV

FINICAL FARMING

When a man like the writer of Ecclesiastes gives his views on life, it is worth everybody's while to listen. A tabloid of experience is worth a ton of theory. And it is from his own knowledge of men and experience of life that he has discovered that "he that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

Was ever a temper of mind, that we all know something about, more neatly hit off than that? You can see the very picture which this wise preacher had before his eyes. Agricola was a farmer in his parish who would not sow his fields unless the wind was blowing soft and gentle from a certain direction, and the clouds were just as he wished to see them. He held there was no hope of a harvest unless wind and clouds were right. And I observed, says the wise man, that Agricola, my farmer friend, waiting for the exactly suitable conditions, never got his seed in at all.

He was speaking chiefly about benevolence and charity when he used this figure. And that is one reason why we need to give heed to it. For ours is an age of charity. We give more to the poor and needy to-day than ever any nation gave before. It is said, indeed, that a good deal of our giving is not very wise. Our charities overlap. The truly necessitous are forgotten, and the improvident, the lazy, and the wasteful reap the largest share. Certainly that is one of the perils of charity-giving. But I question very much if, in our efforts to avoid it, we are not running the risk of falling into a graver mistake still, namely, of observing the wind overmuch before we sow. If I refuse to give my mite for Christ's sake till I have made perfectly certain that it will not be misused, if we withhold our subscription from a charity till we are assured that it is managed in the very most economical fashion, it will end in us giving nothing at all. There is, of course, a reasonable amount of inquiry that is not only legitimate but necessary. Just as there is a regarding of the clouds before reaping which is simply wise. But, to wait till every scruple is satisfied, till every risk has been eliminated and there is not a cloud in the sky, is to wait for a state of matters that may be long enough in coming. Meantime the needy person may die; or the corn blacken in the fields.

Charity, however, is but a small part of Christian benevolence. The law of Christ says "neighbour" whether he be poor or not. He is in trouble, and I feel inclined to visit him. Must I wait till I am sure he will not misunderstand my motive? I have it in my heart to forgive him. Shall I defer the reconciliation till I am convinced he will not offend again? Or I have hurt and offended him, and wish to apologise. Had I not better wait till I know that he will not reject my advances? The wise man's answer to all these questions is an emphatic No. If you wait for all that, he says, you will wait too long, and the chance will go past. Wait till the wind and the clouds are just as you would

wish them, and you will neither sow nor reap at all.

What to do, then? The wise man answers: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Just because you can never fully calculate what the result of your labours may be, give up trying. Don't trouble about it, but do what comes to your hand at the time. If it is sowing time, don't wait for the perfect day. If the weather will do at all, sow thy seed in the morning, and in the evening do not stop. In other words, Take life more royally. Do not be deterred by its ordinary risks. Seize your chance like a brave man. You do not know, of course, whether that seed you sow will prosper or not. But sow it, all the same. Don't let the fact that you don't know cause you to hold your hand. It is just because you do not know but that the kindness which you offer your neighbour may be ill-requited, that there is a royal free-handed self-forgetfulness in offering it. That a man should live his life and do his good deeds with a certain dash and carelessness of consequence--that, the Preacher thought the ideal of noble living. And when we measure it by the standard of Him who said, Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, it does not seem to come so very far short.

For, of course, there are the continual surprises that life holds for faith. If only the corn reaped when the clouds were just right was safely gathered in, then indeed we might feel that we could not be too careful. But what do we find again and again? Why, we find that men who have had the faith to sow when the day was by no means perfect have been blessed beyond their expectations. We find our barns full and running over, though we reaped on a cloudy day. We have seen men cast their bread upon the waters, where you would say it was certain to be lost, and find it again, after many days. It's perfectly true that you don't know whether shall prosper this or that. Yet how often have you been surprised to find that where you thought you knew, you were proved mistaken, and where you dealt in faith, it stood justified beyond your dreams.

And so, the end of the matter for the Preacher is, once more, Live your life royally, with a certain loving wastefulness, and an easy disregard of calculations. Do all the good you can, and do it with a free hand, not asking to see your harvest before you sow, but taking your risk of it, and leaving the outcome with God. "Cast your bread on the waters, and you will find it after many days."

But what of the bread one has cast on the waters, only to see it carried away, apparently of no use to anybody? What of the faith that has not been justified? What of the good done to the ill-deserving, of the kindly-meant act repaid with indignity and scorn? It is a hard question, not easy to answer, not fully to be answered at all. "After many days," said the Preacher. And there is no sign yet, we say. Patience, brothers, patience! God's day is not yet done. When the days have run out to the end, it will be time enough to say if we miss the bread returning. We shall be better able to count the gains and the losses, if there are any then,--when the "days" are done.

PRAYER

Teach us, O Lord and Master, the high and difficult lesson that only those who lose their lives shall truly find them. Show us that the manna hoarded in miserly fashion is always touched by Thy curse. In small things as in great, may this be a token that we are Thy disciples, that virtue also goeth out of us. Amen.

THE DOCTOR

"But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

(Matthew 9:12.)

V

THE DOCTOR

Jesus is Himself the best witness as to what He was, and what He wished to do for men. It is a fact, moreover, for which we cannot be too thankful that, in explaining Himself, Jesus used not the language of doctrine, but living figures and symbols which the humblest and youngest could not fail to understand.

When, for example, He compared Himself to a shepherd leaving the ninety and nine in the fold and braving the darkness and the steep places that he might bring back the one that had wandered, He opens a window into His own love for men which is worth pages of description. For those who are familiar with the daily life and work of a shepherd, it means a great deal that Jesus waits to be the Shepherd of men.

But, in these very different days of ours, there are multitudes in streets and tenements who have never seen a shepherd, and know not what manner of life is his. So that one is glad that Jesus gave Himself other names as well. When Matthew Arnold met the pale-faced preacher in the slums of Bethnal Green, and asked him how he did--

"Bravely," he said, "for I of late have been

Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the Living Bread."

If that name for Christ brought him comfort, another preacher may be allowed to confess that he has often been cheered and helped by the thought of Jesus as the Good Physician. I am glad that in effect, at least, if not in actual words, He called Himself by that name.

This is His apology for consorting with publicans and sinners, for being so accessible to those who had lost caste and character. He says it is the sick who need a Physician, not those who are well. And His defence implies that Jesus regarded Himself as being in a true sense a Physician, not for outward ills merely, but for the whole man, body, mind, and spirit.

The days were, as you know, when priest and physician were one calling; and it is doubtless to the advantage of both vocations that their spheres are now distinct. But it may be, and I think it is, unfortunate that Jesus should be regarded by many as so entirely identified with the priestly side of life and the priestly calling. It is beyond question that a faithful priest is, in his degree, a mirror of Christ, and helps men to see Him more clearly. But it is also true--and a truth worth underlining in these days--that the Doctor, too, is a symbol of what Christ means to be to men--nay, more, that

there are respects in which the figure of a beloved physician of to-day comes nearer to the reality of the living human Christ than any other calling in the world.

It is a sure and unique place which the Doctor holds in the esteem and confidence of the community. He is the most accessible of all professional men, the most implicitly trusted, and, I think, the best beloved. At all hours of the day and night he is ready to give his services to those who need him. His mere presence in the sick room inspires confidence. In the poor districts of town and city especially, he is more really the friend and confidant and helper of everybody than any other person whatever. As no other man does, the Doctor goes about continually doing good. His life is a constant self-sacrifice for his fellow-men. He wears himself out in the interests of the needy. He runs risks daily from which other men flee. He asks not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and often and literally he gives his life a ransom for many.

And I do not know what we have been thinking of that we have not oftener made use of this as Christ's claim for Himself, that we have not told the ignorant and the very poor especially, who know far more about the Doctor than they do about the Church, who are, in fact, shy of all that is priestly, but who do understand and appreciate the Doctor, I say, I do not know why we have not oftener told them to forget that Jesus is the King and Head of the Church and remember only that He is the best of all Physicians. That Christ is compassionate, sympathetic, and approachable, like the Doctor, would be veritable good news to many a poor ignorant soul who is mightily afraid of His priests.

The word which comes to our lips when we seek to characterise the life and work of the true Doctor is Christlike. And big as the title is, it is deserved. In sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, in his care most for those who most need him, in the way he identifies himself with his patient, bearing with, because understanding, his weakness and petulance and fears, and seeking all the while only to heal and help and save him, there is no more Christlike character or calling in the modern world than the Doctor.

I am the happy possessor of an engraving--a gift from one whose calling is to teach doctors--of Luke Fildes' famous picture. Most of you doubtless are familiar with it. It represents the interior of a humble home where a little child lies critically ill. The father and mother, distracted with grief, have yielded their place beside the couch to the Doctor, who sits watching and waiting, all-absorbed in the little one's trouble. It is a noble face, strong, compassionate, resourceful, gentle; and if the Eternal Christ of God is to be represented to us in His strength and gentleness by any human analogy or likeness whatever, as He wished to be, and indeed must be, no finer figure could be found, I think, than that, none more certain to draw out the reverence and gratitude and trust of men.

Men of all grades and classes appeal to and trust the Doctor. But how many of them realise that Jesus desires that men should come to Him and trust His willingness to help and save them, just as they would do to some good physician? How many men who have found comfort by taking their fears and forebodings to the Doctor and hearing his authoritative "Go in peace!" know or realise that just so would Jesus have us bring Him our unworthiness and shame and sin? Jesus never preached at those whom His compassion drew to Him. He never lectured them, He just helped them, and that at once. He lifted them to their feet and gave them a new hope. He, straightway, in God's name, assured them of forgiveness.

Ah, if men only understood that Jesus is to be found to-day down among the world's burdened and weary souls, not as a Priest begirt with ceremony and aloof from daily life, but as a Physician, approachable, helpful, human, who sees and pities their weakness, and longs to save them and help them to their best. If men only understood that!

PRAYER

We come to Thee, Thou Good Physician, with all our ills and fears. We would whisper in Thine ear the troubles that frighten and shame us. Surely Thou wilt hear. Draw near us in Thy strength and Pity, and in Thy Mercy heal us all. Amen.

WELL AND NOW

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

(Ecclesiastes 9:10.)

VI

WELL AND NOW

In popular and condensed form, the golden rule according to Ecclesiastes is, "Do it well and do it now." His own words are, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." We want to let that precept soak into our minds for a little.

DO IT WELL. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Among the lesser joys of life there are few that thrill one with a more pleasurable sense of satisfaction than that which goes with the bit of work finished, rounded-off and done as well as one can do it. No matter what the job may be, if it is worth doing at all, or if it is one's business to do it, it is not difficult to recognise in the curious inward glow over its honourable completion, a token of God's good pleasure, some far-off echo of His "Well done!"

It is a truism which never loses its point that it is enthusiasm that commands success. In her weird book called "Dreams," Olive Schreiner tells the parable of an artist who painted a beautiful picture. On it there was a wonderful glow which drew the admiration of all his compeers, but which none could imitate. The other painters said, Where did he get his colours? But though they sought rich and rare pigments in far-off Eastern lands they could not catch the secret of it. One day the artist was found dead beside his picture, and when they stripped him for his shroud they found a wound beneath his heart. Then it dawned upon them where he had got his colour. He had painted his picture with his own heart's blood! It is the only way to paint it, if the picture is to be worth while at all. If we would have the work that we do live and count, our heart's blood must go into it. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.

What magnificent heart-stirring examples are coming to us every day just now, from sea and battle-field, of the good old British virtue of sticking in gamely to the end and "seeing the thing through!" If the stories of the old English Admirals are calculated, as Stevenson says, to "send bank clerks back with more heart and spirit to their book-keeping by double entry," shall not the story that unfolds day by day of what our own kith and kin are doing, nerve and inspire us all to "do OUR bit," to face up to OUR duty, humdrum and ordinary though it be, with the same grit and energy, with the same determination to see it through, and make as good a job of it as we can?

The Preacher has his reason for this advice. Because, he says, some day you will have to stop and lay down your tools, and that will be the end. No more touching botched work after that. No going back to lift dropped stitches then. Such as it is, your record will have to stand as you leave it,

when Death raps at your door. Even for us in this Christian age, this ancient Preacher's reason still stands valid and solemn. Do what you are at now as well as ever you can, for you shall pass that way no more again for ever.

The Apostle Paul, who expresses practically the same sentiment, gives a different reason. "Whatever ye do," he writes to the Colossians, "do it heartily as to the Lord." And that is the point for you and me. Not merely because we have a limited time to work, but because our work is Christ's service, we must do it heartily, with all our might. It is to the Lord. To us all in our different labours, in the things we work at day by day, and the worthy interests we endeavour to support, there comes this call that transforms the very commonest duty into an honourable obligation to a personal living Master--Whatever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord.

Yes, and DO IT NOW. For the amount of misery and suffering and remorse that is directly due to putting off the God-given impulse or generous purpose to some other season, is simply incalculable. If all the kind letters had been written when the thought of writing was fresh and insistent--ah me, how many burdened souls would have been the braver and the stronger. If only the friendly visit had been paid when we thought about it--and why wasn't it? "Never suppose," says Bagshot, "that you can make up to a neglected friend by going to visit him in a hospital. Repent on your own death-bed, if you like, but not on another's."

An old writer on agriculture says that there are seasons when if the husbandman misses a day he falls a whole year behind. But in life the result is often more serious still. When you miss the day, you miss it for ever. Wherefore, let us hear the words of the Preacher. If we have a kind purpose in our heart towards any living soul, let us do it now. If we think of beginning a better way of living, let us begin now. If we propose to end our days sworn and surrendered servants and soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, let us volunteer now, for this is the day of salvation.

It is said that a great English moralist had engraved on his watch the words, "The night cometh," so that whenever he looked at the time he might be reminded of the preciousness of the passing moment. The night cometh. How far away it may be, or how near to any one of us, no one of us knows. But near or far it cometh with unhalting step. Wherefore, whatsoever the thing be that is in your heart to do, great or little, for yourself or for others, for man or for God--DO IT NOW!

PRAYER

O Lord our God, by whose command it is that man goeth forth to his work and his labour until the evening, grant us all a more earnest regard for the sacredness of each passing moment, and help us to do with our whole heart whatsoever our hand findeth to do. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE "WASHEN FACE" IN WAR TIME

"And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread."

(Genesis 43:31.)

VII

THE "WASHEN FACE" IN WAR TIME

That is what Joseph did when his feelings nearly overmastered him at the sight of his brother Benjamin standing before him, all unconscious of who he was. He "sought where to weep," says the record with quaint matter-of-factness, for of course he did not want his brothers to see him weeping just yet. So "he entered into his chamber and wept there." But Joseph's secret affections being thus recognised and allowed their expression, he had a duty to perform. He put a curb upon his feelings. He took a firm grip of himself. He "washed his face and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread." One cannot help admiring that. It was a fine thing to do.

And there are two classes of people in our own time in whom one sees this same attitude, and never without a strange stirring of heart.

The first and most honourable are those who have already tasted of the sorrows of war and lost some dear one in the service of King and country. We speak of the courage and sacrifice of our men, and we cannot speak too highly or too gratefully about that. But there is something else that runs it very close, if it does not exceed it, and that is the quiet heroism and endurance of many of those who have been bereaved. Time and again one sees them facing up to all life's calls upon them with a marvellous spirit of self-restraint. God only knows how sad and sore their loss is. And upon what takes place when they enter into their chamber and shut the door and face their sorrow alone with God, it does not beseem us to intrude. Such sorrow is a sacred thing, but at least we know, and are glad to know, that God Himself is there as He is nowhere else. It is never wrong and never weak to let the tears come before Him. As a father understands, so does He know all about it. As a mother comforteth, so does the touch of His Hand quieten and console.

But what fills one with reverent admiration is that so many of those whose hearts we know have been so cruelly wounded have set up a new and noble precedent in the matter of courage and self-control. They are not shirking any of the duties of life. They are claiming no exemptions on the ground of their sorrow, and they excuse themselves from no duty merely because it would hurt. They wear their hurt gently like a flower in the breast. They carry their sorrow like a coronet. Out from their secret chambers they come, with washen face and brave lips to do their duty and refrain themselves. How beautiful it is! What a fine thing to see! The sorrowing mother of a noble young fellow I am proud to have known, said to a friend recently who was marvelling at her fortitude, "My boy was very brave and I must try to be brave, too, for his sake." Dear, gentle mother! One cannot speak worthily about a spirit so sweet and gracious as that. One can only bow the head and breathe the inward prayer, "God send thee peace, brave heart!" But, surely, to accept sorrow in

that fashion is to entertain unawares an angel of God! The feeling which underlies this new etiquette of sorrow with the washen face is not very easily put into words. But it rests, I think, upon the dim sense that the death which ends those young lives on this noble field of battle is something different from the ordinary bleak fact of mortality. If death is ever glorious, it is when it comes to the soldier fighting for a pure and worthy cause. There is something more than sorrow, there is even a quiet and reverent pride in the remembrance that the beloved life was given as "a ransom for many." When one thinks what we are fighting for, one can hardly deny to the fallen the supreme honour of the words "for Christ's sake." And it is not death to fall so. Rather is it the finding of life larger and more glorious still. It is that that marks the war-mourners of to-day as a caste royal and apart. It is that that moves so many of them by an inward instinct to wear their sorrow royally. Hidden in the heart of their grief is a tender and wistful pride. Lowell has put this feeling into very fine words:

"I, with uncovered head,
Salute the sacred dead,
Who went and who return not--
Say not so.
'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,
But the high faith that fails not by the way.
Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave;
No bar of endless night exiles the brave,
And, to the saner mind,
We rather seem the dead that stayed behind."

The other class who are teaching us a new and better way to bear burdens are the friends at home of those who are on active service. Men, with sons in the trenches, are going about our streets these days almost as if nothing were happening, making it a point of honour not to let the lurking fear in their hearts have any outward expression. Wives and mothers and sisters are filling their hands and their hearts full of duties, and putting such a brave face on life that you would never suspect they have a chamber that could tell a different tale. It is absolutely splendid. There is no other word for it. I walked a street-length with a young wife recently whose man has been ill and out of the fight for a while. She hoped that he might have been sent home, and who can blame her? but he has gone back to the trenches instead. And how bravely and quietly she spoke of it! Pride, a true and noble pride in her beloved soldier, a resolute endeavour to do her difficult bit as uncomplainingly and willingly as he--it seemed to me that I saw all that in her brave smile. And I said to myself, "Here is the cult of the washen face! And a noble cult too! Britain surely deserves to win when her women carry their crosses so!"

It is easy, of course, to read the thought in their minds. Our men, they say, are splendid, why should we be doleful and despondent? They have made a new virtue of cheerfulness; let us try to learn it too. They have offered everything in a cause which it is an honour to help in any degree; let

us lay beside theirs the worthy sacrifice of the washen face and a brave restraint. Such, I imagine, is the unconscious kind of reasoning which results in the resolute and cheerful bearing you may see on all sides of you every day.

And wherever it is seen, it carries its blessing with it. Others with their own private burdens and anxieties are encouraged to hold on to that hope and cheerfulness which are just the homely side of our faith in God and in the righteousness of our cause.

The cult of the washen face is contagious. It spreads like a beneficent stain. And since it is entirely praiseworthy, we can but wish it to spread more and more. Those who come out from the chambers where they have kept company with sorrow or anxiety, to face life and duty with shining face and mastered feelings, are not only proving their faith in the Divine Strength, they are making a precious contribution to the moral steadfastness of the nation.

"And he washed his face and went out and refrained himself." Good man!

PRAYER

We bless Thee, O God, for the assurance that Thine ear is ever open to our cry, that it is never wrong to take our sorrows and our cares to Thee. But help us also, endowed with Thy strength in our secret chambers, to bear our burdens bravely in the sight of men. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

THE REAL MARTHA

"But few things are needful, or one." R. V. (margin).

(Luke 10:42.)

VIII

THE REAL MARTHA

When Jesus said, upon one occasion, that He had not where to lay His head, He was speaking the bitter and literal truth. He had really no home of His own, but was everywhere a wanderer, dependent on others for shelter and food; and though the New Testament draws a veil over all the hardships which that entailed even in the hospitable East, imagination can picture something at least of what the homelessness of Jesus must have meant.

But He had close and warm friends who made it up to Him as far as friends could, and of these were the two sisters, Martha and Mary, who with their brother, Lazarus, had a house in Bethany. This place was His haven and shelter, for "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." The sisters were unlike in disposition. Mary, we can imagine, was dreamy, meditative, perhaps a little delicate and fragile, and gifted with a quick and loving sympathy. Martha was robust, practical, energetic. Her way of showing the Master that she considered it an honour to have Him for a guest was to give Him the very best that her housewifely skill could suggest. No trouble was too much for her. And it is very possible that one of the charms which this home had for Jesus--one of the qualities which made it a real place of rest--was its well-ordered arrangements, the quiet, efficient, capable way in which things were done. And whose was the credit for that? Martha's.

What would that household have been like without Martha? And what would any home that is fortunate enough to have a Martha in it, be like without her? The truth is our debt to the Marthas is one which we have never fully acknowledged. You would imagine, hearing the way in which her name is sometimes used, that it has an apologetic character, as if the making of a home comfortable and homelike were a gift to be lightly esteemed in comparison, for example, with the ability to write verse! It is foolish to play Mary off against her sister in this way. Martha did what she could do best, and showed her love for Christ in that fashion, and you may be quite sure that He understood. Mary served Him in her way, by giving Him what He needed more at times than food--a heart to listen to His message, and a sympathy which made the telling of it meat and drink to Him. Each sister was the complement of the other.

But we wrong Martha, of course, in thinking of her as always in the kitchen. Certainly when there was a meal to be prepared you would find her there, and well that was for the household and the servants. But nobody is always eating or thinking about eating; and often of an evening, doubtless, when the labours of the day were over, Martha would join her sister at the feet of the Master whom she loved as much as Mary did.

The incident which has given rise to the popular misconception of Martha's character occurred during a visit which Jesus paid in the days before Lazarus fell sick. Something went wrong in Martha's department that day. Perhaps it was a mistake of a servant that irritated the usually self-controlled Martha, or maybe some oversight of her own. At anyrate, it set up a condition of worry which straightway began to add to itself, as its habit is, seven other devils. And as Martha went out and in the dining chamber getting things ready, the sight of Mary sitting there at the Master's feet doing nothing, struck her, perhaps for the first time, as rather out of place. Things began to go further wrong. Just when Martha wanted to do special honour to Jesus, the ordinarily smooth-running wheels of that home began to creak and grind. Each time she entered the room where Christ and Mary were, Martha's steps grew brisker and more emphatic; and then the last straw was laid on, and the outburst came! Martha asked Jesus if He really did not care that Mary was leaving her to do everything. Bid her come and help me, she said.

Of course, Jesus knew that it was for His sake that Martha was giving herself all this trouble. He saw, as even we can see, that this kind-hearted, worried woman was speaking crossly, as the very best will do at times, because she was tired and a bit overdriven. And with a perfect and gentle chivalry and tact He made His reply. As the Authorised Version puts it, it jars on one, somehow. But King James' translators have misread their text. What Jesus said was: "Martha, Martha, you are unduly anxious and troubled. Only a few things are necessary, or even one. Mary has chosen a good part, and I cannot allow you to take it from her."

Martha, remember, was making a feast worthy of the Master, and Jesus, looking upon the various dishes being got ready, said, in effect, I do not really need so many as that. One would do quite well. And I must not let you think that Mary is doing nothing. She, too, is ministering to me by her sympathy and her willing ear, and you must not take away the good part she has chosen.

Jesus was not speaking about the personal salvation of either Mary or her sister. He was only dealing gently with a good and true friend of His who had not served Him as she had wished to do. When He spoke of what was needful, He meant needful for Himself, the Guest whom both the sisters were seeking to honour.

He made no comparison between Martha's service and Mary's. He did not say, as we have read it so often, that Mary had chosen the better part. He said, in her defence, that Mary's was also a good part. He is not blaming Martha, but only expostulating with her in the gentlest fashion, and defending Mary from the charge which Martha in her heat had made against her, the charge of being useless, and doing nothing to help to entertain the Master. Jesus said, She is helping to entertain Me in her own way, and, He added, it is a good way.

When Jesus having said that only a few things were necessary, dropped His voice, as we may imagine, and added "or indeed one," He may have meant more than He seemed to say. For there was one thing that was more than meat to our Lord, and that was to find a soul with heart and sympathy open to His message. And it may be that He felt, as He said the words, that Mary's ministry met a need of His deeper than that for which Martha was catering. At anyrate, the oldest and best versions of this Gospel give Christ's words as we have rendered them, and they stand here, not to be used as a peg on which to hang doctrines, but rather as a proof of the gentle courtesy of our Lord, of His insight into character and motive, and of His gracious recognition of the worth of any and every kind of service that has love at its heart.

Martha went back to her kitchen, and Mary remained where she was. Mary was not asked to go and help. Martha would have protested if she had come. Martha was not called upon to go and sit beside Mary. Each continued the service for which she was best fitted. But each, I think, had learned something that day. And you and I must not leave this page of our New Testament till we have learned it too--that we serve best when we do gladly that for which we are best qualified; that it belongs to our Christian service to recognise in all loyalty that, though others find different ways of expressing it, theirs is a good part; and that we must never either belittle it or seek to take it from them.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, Who by many diverse ways dost bring us near to Thee, and in differing modes and stations dost appoint our service, help us gladly and gratefully to do the things we can do, neither envying those whose opportunities are greater, nor forbidding those who follow not us. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

OUR UNEARNED INCREMENT

IX

OUR UNEARNED INCREMENT

"It is vain for you," says the writer of the 127th Psalm, (Psalms 127:2)"to rise early and sit up late and eat the bread of sorrow, for so He giveth to His beloved (in their) sleep." That is the true reading, and I want you to think about it. "God giveth to His beloved while they sleep." Over and above what you have yourself achieved, you GET something you have never worked for. And you get that, as it were, in your sleep. This is a beautiful thought, and there are three people to whom I want to offer it as God's comfort.

The first is the worried man. It is indeed directly against worry that this psalmist sets forth his reminder. It is not that he minimises the need for hard work and watchful care. But he tells the man who is feverishly burning his candle at both ends, and consuming himself in a frenzy of tense anxiety, to leave something for God to do. It is as if he said, "Why so hot, little man, why so fiercely clutching all the ropes? Remember that God is working too as well as you, working in your interest and in love for you. When you have done your best therefore, go to your bed and sleep with a quiet mind, for God giveth to His beloved even so."

One can imagine how a word like that would relax the tension and lead some persuadable Hebrew who heard it to say, "Ah, well, I worry far too much. After all, I am not Providence. I am always getting a great many things I have not wrought for. I shall worry less about securing the good things I desire for me and mine, and trust more to God to give them as He sees fit." If all of us who needed this reminder just had the sense to come to the same conclusion!

I have seen a man compass his family with so many careful regulations and observances that the criticism of a candid friend seemed entirely just. "You would think," he said, "to see so-and-so shepherding his family, that there was no other providence than his own." You can't be with your best beloved all the while. And you ought to know that God too is watching even while you sleep.

If there be some plan on which you have set your heart, and you are over-anxious about it, quote this text to yourself. Do your best, of course, but, having done so, leave the outcome with God. About a great many of the things over which we worry ourselves needlessly, I believe God's word to us is:--Leave these things to Me. You can't work for them. And anxiety won't bring them. But you will get them, as you need them, just as if they came to you in your sleep.

Said one hermit to another in the Egyptian desert, as he looked at a flourishing olive tree near his cave, "How came that goodly tree there, brother? For I too planted an olive, and when I thought it wanted water, I asked God to give it rain and the rain came, and when I thought it wanted sun I asked God and the sun shone, and when I deemed it needed strengthening, I prayed and the frost came--God gave me all I demanded for my tree, as I saw fit, and yet it died." "And I, brother," replied the other hermit, "I left my tree in God's hands, for He knew what it wanted better than I,

and behold what a goodly tree it has become."

The second man to whom I would offer the comfort of this word of God is the man who is disappointed. Things have gone wrong with him. The plan on which he spent so much of his time and energy has miscarried, and a very different result has emerged from what he counted on. His way, as he saw it, is blocked, and he has had to turn aside.

Now, there are not many things one can say usefully to a disappointed man. And it is cruel kindness to try to heal his hurt lightly. Nevertheless, to him also the psalmist's message applies, and what he needs to remember, that he may pick up heart and go on again, is that God giveth to His beloved while they sleep.

We have all had disappointments, sore enough at the time, which after-experience proved to have been blessings in disguise. Many a man can point to a signal failure as the beginning of a true success or usefulness or happiness. We did not feel as if we were being enriched when our plan fell through, and we were bitter and rebellious enough at the time, it may be, but it is quite clear to us now that God was at that very time giving to us with both His hands.

No one, of course, can see that about any more than a few of his disappointments. It would be false to experience to speak as if we could. But what is manifestly true about one or two may conceivably hold with regard to them all, if we knew more, or could see better. And the Christian Gospel calls us to believe and trust that that is so. There is another Hand than ours shaping our life, a wiser Hand. Better things are being done for us than we can see in the meantime. And the man whose hopes and plans have turned out amiss, but whose trust is still in God, is invited by our psalmist to reason with himself thus:--"I am like a man asleep, and I do not rightly understand at present, but I will trust that it is not for nothing that misfortune has come, and when I wake I shall hope to see that God has been giving to me in love and mercy when I was not aware of it at all."

The third man whom this text will help and comfort is the worker, the man or woman who is trying to do something for Christ's sake. The Christian worker needs to be told that what he is trying to do is not nearly all that he is doing. What he is, is speaking as loudly as what he does or says. There is an aroma and fragrance about the life of the consecrated Christ-like man or woman which sweetens and sanctifies other lives beyond what he or she can ever know. Some of the best sermons in the world have been preached by people who least suspected what they were doing. The invalid in the home does not know how real religion becomes to all who watch her patience and unselfishness. And among the busy and vigorous we often catch hints and reflections, that they never suspect, of what Christ-likeness means. The man who has surrendered his life to God, indeed, is a channel of blessing to others beyond all he ever dreams of. He must not be disheartened when he realises how little he is doing, for the truth is he is doing far, far more than he knows. Wherefore, my brother, be of good cheer, and render your service to Christ with a quiet heart. Lay your course, and work your ship, and hoist your sail and trust. And the gifts of God will enrich you, and the winds of heaven will bring you on your way, even while you sleep.

PRAYER

We give Thee thanks, O God, for all Thy bounties, undeserved and unearned; for the increase Thou dost send us while the stars are shining; for Thy gracious thirty-fold and sixty-fold beyond what we have sown. Every morning Thou leavest gifts upon our doorstep and dost depart

unthanked. But this day we remember, and we bow our heads to render unto Thee our humble and our hearty thanks for all that Thou hast given us while we slept. Amen.

SMOKING WICKS

"The smoking flax he shall not quench."

(Isaiah 43:3.)

X

SMOKING WICKS

We read the 42nd chapter of Isaiah now as if it were a part of the Christian Evangel. And that is right. For whoever the Servant may have been, of whom Isaiah was thinking, it is Christ and only Christ who completely fulfils this prophecy. This is a true description of His spirit and His method. "The dimly-burning wick he shall not quench."

The figure is easily understood. Here is a piece of flax floating in oil, and burning so faintly that it seems a mere charred end from which the smoke coils thinly upwards. Some one comes and snuffs it out, because it smells. That is the way of the world's reformers, as Isaiah saw it, and we can see it still. By and by they will trim the wick and light it with fire of their own, but first they will quench the spark. But there is One to come, said Isaiah, shooting his arrow of prophecy in the air, who will go otherwise about it. He will not despise the spark because it is so feeble. He will tend it and foster it, and make the evil-smelling bundle of flax into a clear, shining light. And the saying has found its mark in Jesus Christ.

When a woman that was a sinner made her way into the house where He sat at meat, and wept at His feet, He amazed all those present by the extraordinary gentleness of His dealing with her. He did not refer to the evil in her life. He did not, as other good men would have done, first cast her down, that He might afterwards lift her up. He simply took the beautiful impulse after good which she brought Him out of a life besmirched and tawdry, held it in His hands--a mere spark of virtue--and breathing on it, blessed it, and behold it was a flame, burning up the evil in her life, a lamp lighting her path along a new and hopeful way. That was Christ. He does not, He will not quench the dimly-burning wick.

Now--and this is our point--if those who profess and call themselves Christians are to have the spirit in them that was also in Christ Jesus, must not this be their mark too? Does not this prescribe their attitude to life, that many-coloured, strangely-mixed compound of good and evil? Good in any form, however feeble, however mixed, as in this world it inevitably is, with what is evil, should find in those who call themselves by Christ's name, its truest supporters, sympathisers, friends.

To the eye and heart in sympathy with it, beauty often peeps out in strange places.

"The poem hangs on the berry bush,

When comes the poet's eye,

And the whole street is a masquerade

When Shakespeare passes by."

So the mark of the Christ-like heart is just that it discerns, and, discerning, loves the feeblest tokens of some inward grace that redeems a life from evil. Do not be afraid that by welcoming the scant good, you may be held to approve of the greater evil. That is a risk that God Himself rejoices to take. Did not Christ risk that, when He accepted that poor woman's worship? Did He not risk it when He held out His hands to a man like Zaccheus? Does He not risk it always when He declares, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out?" And shall we refuse because the risk is too great?

Life presents us with many anomalies that refuse to square with our theories. You find men exhibiting qualities of character, which any Christian might be proud to emulate, outside of the Church altogether. And you cannot simply label these--"glittering vices," and pass on. God is not two but One, and goodness is His token wherever it be found. "The World," says John Owen, "cannot yet afford to do without the good acts even of its bad men." And the truth for us to learn is that the grace of God is not bound by our standards or limits. Make the circle as wide as you like, you will still discover fruits of the Spirit outside, where by all our canons they were never to be expected.

"And every virtue we possess,

And every victory won,

And every thought of holiness

Are His alone."

It is for something more than tolerance I am pleading. For that may be a weak and a wrong thing, if it spring not from belief in the good. What our calling demands is something more, the rejoicing, hopeful recognition of the good deed or purpose anywhere, and the offer of a sympathy and a faith in which it can grow. That gift of yours may actually be the decisive factor in a life balancing perilously betwixt good and evil. Three times, the other evening, I tried to light my study fire, and each time it went out. The paper burned, but the sticks apparently would not light. At last in despair I flung in a burning match and went away--and when I returned I found a cheerful blaze: the brief glimmer of that last match had been the determining factor. You will smile perhaps at the illustration, but you will remember, all the better, that where the flax is even smouldering, there the angels are still fighting for a soul. And you will, maybe, remember also that even your warm sympathy may turn the scale, and fan the flicker to a flame.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that the mind that was in Him may more and more be found in us. Help us to offer to what is good anywhere a sympathy in which it may grow and increase. Grant us a helpful faith in the struggling good in every man, even as Thou, our Father, dost call us sons while as yet we are but prodigals, afar off. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

CULPABLE GOODNESS

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of."

(Romans 14:16.)

XI

CULPABLE GOODNESS

In his letter to the Christians at Rome, the Apostle Paul counsels them not to let their "good be evil spoken of." And at first we ask ourselves if this is a possible thing. Can you have good that is evil spoken of? Since this is a matter that ought to concern us all, I want to suggest one or two ways in which this very result may be brought about, that those of us who are trying to follow an ideal of goodness may be on our guard.

First, we can very readily have what is good in us evil spoken of because of our CENSORIOUSNESS. When men come upon some fruit that grows upon a goodly-looking tree, or one at least that has a trustworthy label attached to it, and find it sour or bitter to the taste, they are apt to be particularly resentful. And it is with precisely such indignation that they observe men and women who profess themselves followers of Christ exhibiting a censorious and critical spirit. Where ought you to find the broadest charity, the kindest judgment, the most Christ-like forbearance and restraint? Among Christians, of course. And yet--alas! alas!

Just keep your ears open with this end in view for a week, and you will be surprised at the appallingly hard judgments that come tripping daintily from the lips of some of those you know best. And if that line of investigation be not very handy, just watch yourself for the same time, and you will learn what a rare thing Christian charity is.

We talk a lot about it, but in real life we "forbid" men very readily "because they follow not us," we belittle things which we do not understand, we speak rashly about people whom we do not know, and we are ready, without the least consideration, with our label for the movement or the man, who happens to be brought to our notice.

Ah, if we could only see how far astray we often are, what a libel our label is, and how unChrist-like many of our speeches appear! We don't know enough of the inner life of any man to entitle us to pass judgment upon him. A critical spirit never commends its possessor to the affection or the good-will of men. Besides, it blinds him to much that is really beautiful, and cuts him off from many sources of happiness. You will see evil in almost anything if you look for it, but that is not a gift that makes either for helpfulness or popular esteem. "I do not call that by the name of religion," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "which fills a man with bile," and, on the whole, the ordinary man is of the same mind with him.

"Judge not; the workings of his brain

And of his heart thou canst not see.

What looks, to thy dim eyes, a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield."

Sometimes one must, in the interests of true religion, pass judgment, but these times are not so frequent as we suppose. And if there are occasions more than others when the disciple needs an overflowing measure of Christ's spirit, it is when it is his clear duty to diagnose, disapprove, and condemn.

Secondly, we may have our good evil spoken of by our EXTREMENESS. I should be very chary of saying that there is such a thing as being righteous overmuch, but for two reasons. The first is that there is an injunction in Scripture against it. And the second is that I have met people, of whom, in all charity, it was true! The modern name for being righteous overmuch is being a "crank." Now, nobody loves a crank. The extremist always does his own cause harm. Carefulness about one's food is a good thing, but to take an analytical chemist's outfit to table with us is simply to ask for the contempt of all sensible people.

Paul's advice to the Philippians was, "Let your moderation be known to all men." And Paul was himself a splendid example of the true moderation as distinguished from that which is merely indolent and uninterested. Earnest, enthusiastic, loyal, there was yet about him a big and healthy sanity, a sweet reasonableness, and--what the extremist always lacks--an engaging tact. In other words, Paul was a Christian gentleman, and if you want to know what that means, read his letter to Philemon about Onesimus the runaway slave. There are blunt words with which a man can be felled as effectually as with the "grievous crab-tree cudgel" of which Bunyan speaks. Paul did not consider it any special virtue to employ such words. His Christian zeal did not lead him to make a statement in a way that would irritate and rasp a man's soul. There is a certain extreme candour affected by some Christian people, who pride themselves on always calling a spade a spade. But if it hurts my friend to hear me say "spade" I know of no law of God that compels me to name the implement at all!

And then, lastly, we can have our goodness "evil spoken of" because it is so COLD. It sometimes seems as if, in our day, warmth of manner had gone out of fashion. Ian Maclaren once said of our generation that it will "smile feebly when wished a happy New Year as if apologising for a lapse into barbarism." But I don't think any sensible person, not blinded by an absurd convention, cares for that type of rarified demeanour. No one likes to get a hand to shake which feels like a dead fish!

In one of his books, Dr Dale of Birmingham criticised that line in Keble's hymn which speaks about the trivial round and the common task giving us "room to deny ourselves." "No doubt," he says, "but I should be very sorry for the people I live with to discharge their home duties in the spirit of martyrs. God preserve us all from wives, husbands, children, brothers, and sisters who go about the house with an air of celestial resignation." Ah, no, that's not the goodness, either at home or on the street, which wins men. It is not beautiful because it is too cold. The religion of Jesus is something much more than duty-doing. Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD WITH ALL THY HEART.

Whosoever compels thee to go a mile, GO WITH HIM TWAIN. Whatsoever ye do, do it HEARTILY AS UNTO THE LORD.

PRAYER

From all unkind thoughts and uncharitable judgments; from all intemperate speech and behaviour; from coldness of heart and a frigid service, Good Lord, deliver us. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

A KHAKI VIRTUE

"God loveth a cheerful giver."

(2 Corinthians 9:7.)

XII

A KHAKI VIRTUE

We are proud to believe that, in the article of courage, our men are second to none in the world. They have glorious traditions to live up to, and they are adding to these pages--nay, a whole volume, as splendid as any in our annals. Yet it is not of our soldiers' courage I wish to speak.

For we are told on all hands that there is another quality shining brighter still these days in the trenches in France and Belgium, in ambulance waggons and field hospitals, and in the camps at home, namely, cheerfulness. Again and again the same tale is repeated from one quarter or another--"our men are simply wonderful," "they treat discomfort as a joke." They label the very instruments that deal death among them with names that raise a smile. Nurses, doctors, and correspondents tell us that the light-hearted way in which our soldiers face pain and suffering and force twisted lips to smile has created a new record for the British Army. When the story of this war is written, and the world gets a nearer glimpse into those awful trenches, I venture to prophesy that the quality in our countrymen which will most capture the imagination and fill us with the greatest pride will be the gay, undaunted cheerfulness with which they faced it all.

Surely we who stay at home may learn something of that virtue too. For it is worth learning. Ordinary people who only know what they like, without knowing why they like it, have a very warm side towards the person who, when things are grey and gloomy, can keep cheerful. They would much rather see him come in on a dull day than a wiser man whose wisdom was a burden to him, or even than a pious person whose piety ran to solemnity and gloom. It is high time, indeed, that the tradition was broken for good and all which associates moral excellence with a funereal heaviness of manner and denies the favour of the Lord to one who, as Goldsmith has it, "carols as he goes."

For the blessing of God is written visibly upon the results of cheerfulness wherever you find it. God rewards the gallant souls who keep their colours flying through every battle, even though they have to nail them up over a sorely damaged ship. If you want a proof that the hopeful and cheery way of facing the rebuffs of life and tholing its aches and disappointments is more in the line of what God expects from His children than the doleful whining temper, you have it shown unmistakably in the fact that the gallant unconquerable soul solves problems, overcomes difficulties, endures pains, and wins successes where the solemn and easily depressed would simply have given in and lain down. You can safely prophesy that the man whom you hear singing as he goes through the valley, like the pilgrim that Bunyan's Christian heard, is going to get out of it safely and honourably in the end. The Lord Himself will deliver him, as He delights to deliver all

those who face life smiling and unafraid, and meet His Fatherly discipline with a stout heart.

Cheerfulness, in other words, pays for oneself. But it is also a great blessing to others. One very safe and sure way to help our fellows up their hills is to breast our own as bravely and gaily as we can. And the cheerfulness which heals and blesses like the breath of morning is that which shows up against a background of cloud and trouble. Let us all in this year of war and clean courage, register a vow that we shall take a leaf out of our soldiers' book, and think less about our own troubles, teach our lips to smile when things are wrong, and keep our eyes wider open for trouble's danger signals among our friends. It's a simple way of doing good, but a very effective one. For cheerfulness, like mercy, is twice blessed. It blesseth him that has, and him that sees!

"It was only a glad Good Morning

As she passed along the way,

But it spread the morning's glory

Over the livelong day."

But cheerfulness needs its explanation. It implies something. A man is not cheerful without some underlying philosophy of life to sustain him, some pillar of faith or hope at his back. When a man faces life dauntless and smiling, he does so because some inward and, it may even be, unconscious faith or hope thus finds its expression. What that faith is, different men will describe in different ways.

But however much the descriptions vary, it all comes back to this in the end, that the man who is living bravely and cheerfully is expressing by his conduct at any rate his faith in the Fatherhood and good Providence of God. He knows that "God's in His Heaven"; at any rate he believes so. He believes that things do not just fall out by chance, but that a Father Hand controls all, and a Father Heart cares even for the sparrow's unheeded fall. The God who rules all makes no mistakes.

And is not that a cardinal part of the faith which Jesus brings near to all who are learning of Him? There are various adjectives used to qualify the title Christian. One hears, for example, of "earnest Christians," and earnestness is a very necessary quality, even though one does occasionally happen upon "earnest Christians" who are rather unlovable and irritating people. But there's another adjective, not nearly so common--and yet it denotes a quality just as essential in those who have taken Christ's gospel of God's Love and Fatherhood to their hearts--namely, cheerful. A "cheerful Christian." Let us all try to be that kind of Christian at least.

PRAYER

"The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces, let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep. Amen."

R.L. STEVENSON.

THE OVERCOMING OF PANIC

"(Jeremiah dwelt among the people that were left in the land.)"

(Jeremiah 40:6.)

XIII

THE OVERCOMING OF PANIC

Once upon a time Jeremiah the prophet had asked for only one thing, that he might get away from that strange cityful of perverse men to whom it was his hard lot to be the mouthpiece of a God they were forgetting. He was tired of them. "O that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men that I might leave my people and go from them."

Well, time passed on. The people got no wiser, and Jeremiah's burden certainly got no lighter. But the very chance he prayed for came. He had a clear and honourable opportunity to go to the lodge in the wilderness, or anywhere else he liked, away from the men who had disowned his teaching. His work was done apparently, and he had failed. Yet with the door standing invitingly open, see what Jeremiah did! He "went and dwelt among the people that were left in the land." He had his chance and he did not take it!

We all know something of this desire to get rid of a present hard duty, or a difficult environment, or a perplexing problem. And yet I wonder, if the way were similarly opened up for us, how many would seize the opportunity? I believe that the feature of such a situation would just be the large number of us who, when it came to the pinch, would choose as Jeremiah did, to remain where we are! Something would hold us back.

Yet the desire itself is natural enough, and a man need neither be a coward nor a weakling who confesses to it. The hours when the daily round seems altogether flat and unprofitable, and when one would gladly change places with almost anybody, are real hours in life, and it is no shame to have known them. But between that knowledge and the actual escape, the actual fleeing from one's post, there is a great gulf fixed that, for very many with any high ideal of duty, is impassable. For, though a man has known the state of mind that looks for some back door out of a depressing situation, he has had the other experience also, the joy of self-mastery, the keen sense of pleasure that comes to him when he discovers that his surroundings do not count for so much as he himself does. That experience, though it be only in memory, will stand between a man and retreat. He has conquered before, and the thrill of victory over material discouragements may be his again. And so, though the way of escape be open, he will choose to remain and fight it out.

Sometimes the mere weight of his responsibility may tempt a man to wish that he might escape. There is a fairly well-known symptom of nervous disease whose name signifies the fear of being shut in, when the patient dreads the experience of being in any closed place. Sometimes a moral panic of that kind comes to a man when he realises that he is shut in with some duty which must be gone through with. With something of the instinct of the trapped animal he may look round for a

way of escape.

Yet does that mean that he would take the chance deliberately, with eyes full open to the consequences, if it were offered? I think not.

You can apply the test to yourself. Have you ever accepted some responsibility, and then, when the occasion came nearer, backed out of it for no other reason than that you were afraid? If you have, you will perhaps remember whether you felt proud of yourself, whether, beneath the undoubted relief, there was not a good deal of quiet shame and self-scorn. If the same thing were to happen again, you might feel the impulse to desert, but if you remembered your former experience, you would hardly yield to it, I imagine.

The plain truth is that no proper man really likes a soft job. "In the long run," says J. A. Symonds, "we really love the sternest things in life best." And he speaks truth. There is a certain exhilaration in the endurance of hardness. Responsibility braces most men like a shock of cold water. What is arduous calls them as with a trumpet. And in the general sense of quiet contempt for the person who in a panic flings up his responsibility, we may recognise one of God's elementary checks upon cowardice.

There are those who are reading these words who are enduring hardness and making sacrifices from which they might easily escape. They do at times desire relief. But the point is that they don't take it, when it is possible. And I say there must be some reason for this. What is it that holds men back from the easy way when it stands open before them?

For one thing, I think, the sense of the place that hardness and effort and endurance play in every true life. For centuries men have climbed up to strength of character, if at all, by ways uniformly arduous and steep; and distrust of the primrose path, however alluring, has passed as an instinct into our blood. In the small unheroic affairs of life we have learned that a difficulty faced and overcome, or a duty doggedly fulfilled, add a precious something to experience that there is no other way of securing. The schoolboy on a hot summer day may look up from his task, away out wistfully to the cool shade of the trees across the playground, and wish that he were there, rather than where he is. Yet even he knows, what we all come to learn, that that is not the road to anything in life worth the gaining.

Another deterring impulse is the sense of a divine vocation. Our calling and circumstances are ordained for us by God, and we must not quit the field till the day is done. It is He who has chosen our lot in life and summoned us to the sphere we fill.

We may succeed or fail as seems to Him best. Sometimes he places men, for reasons of His own, in corners where success, as commonly measured, is not possible. But one thing--success or failure--we must not do. We must not shirk. We must not run away. God means us to stand fast and do our best. For failure even, if it be honourable, He may have His good word at the last. But to the man who has shirked life's hard duties, not even God can say, "Well done!"

PRAYER

Lord of our life, and God of our salvation, make us strong to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Thou sendest no man a warfare upon his own charges. In dependence on Thy help, grant us grace to do each duty, as the hour and Thy will may bring it. And, with Thy fear in our

hearts, grant us deliverance from all other fears whatever. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

THE DAY'S DARG

"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

(1 Corinthians 10:31.)

XIV

THE DAY'S DARG

It is never hard to connect the presence of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ with our Sabbaths and our hours of worship. If ever Christ comes near us in spirit at all, we say, it is when in the quiet of the sanctuary we reach out hands of prayer and desire to Him. The link between our worship and our Lord is strong and obvious. But, when the din of business shuts out all else, when the hard, toilsome duty of the ordinary day is to be done, when we are at work amid surroundings that have no suggestion of sacredness or of God about them--what of the link with Christ then? It is much harder then, is it not? to imagine any thinkable and workable connection that our Lord has with that sphere of life, broad and extensive as it is. There are many indeed who forget that there is any, and live as if there were none. And yet the solemn truth is that if that link is not strong and real, we don't know what religion means. We have hardly the right to call ourselves Christian men and women unless we can relate our week-day labours to the fact of Christ.

So let us try to strengthen that link. Let us look at our daily work in the light of religion.

First, let me remind you that our work is by divine commandment. It is not something that God allows us to do when we are not worshipping. It is His ordinance that we should all work at something. The business of life is labour of some sort. I do not know if we all realise how the Fourth Commandment begins--"Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." And the man who is inexcusably idle, or who belittles his work, even in the interest, as he thinks, of religion, is breaking this commandment as truly as he who neglects the other half of it and dishonours the Sabbath day.

No one will accuse the Apostle Paul of any indifference or lukewarmness where true religion was concerned. Yet it was this Apostle who ordered the Thessalonians to go on with their daily occupations even though they believed, as so many did at that time, that the Return of the Lord to earth was just at hand. By our daily work we serve the Lord as truly as when we gather to His worship. Let us get out of our heads, then, the false and foolish idea that all the working part of our week is the part at which God looks askance. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and one of the ways of doing that is by being loyal to the duties of each hour whatever they may be.

Secondly, I would ask you to think of those quiet, unrecorded years of our Lord's life on earth before His public ministry. The Gospels give no details, but the fact is perfectly certain that up till His thirtieth year Jesus of Nazareth worked at His trade as a carpenter. If only we would let that fact soak into us, it would alter our whole idea of the relation of our daily work to religion. Jesus worked Himself.

And we have, as has been pointed out, interesting indirect proof as to what manner of life He lived on those workaday levels that we all know so much about. For, to this Carpenter of Nazareth there came a day when, in Nazareth itself, He stood forth as representative of a morality and religion higher than ever was proclaimed before. He spoke to men about the true way to live like one having authority. And there were many who so resented what they deemed His presumption that anything that reflected on His claims or belittled His authority would gladly have been seized upon and made the most of. Had there been in Nazareth a bit of botched work of His doing, "a door of unseasoned wood or a badly made chest," don't you think it would have been produced to discredit His mission? If any one could have been found with whom the Carpenter had not dealt honourably and justly, if, as He walked the streets of His native town and lived His humble daily life in the sight of all men, there had been anything that weakened His claim to guide and teach His brethren, don't you think they would have found it out and taxed Him with it?

There was nothing of that. Jesus faced His fellows with His daily duty behind Him, and it reinforced every word He said. His message to men was backed up by His daily life. He spoke of religion as no other son of man ever did, but He lived it long before He ever opened His mouth. He brought religion down to the workshop and the street, and showed men what it meant there. And unless He had done that, it is difficult to conceive that His public ministry of itself would have satisfied men that He was indeed One sent from God.

Do you see, then, from this point of view, what a great and vital part of religion our day's work is, and the way we do it, our life at home, our ordinary contact with our fellow-men? It is that that gives weight to any profession we may make. If in our daily life we are not exhibiting our religion, nothing that we can profess or say on Sunday will make up for that defect. It is what we are on Monday and Tuesday that underlines and emphasises the claims we make at church on the Sunday. Behind all our prayer and profession lies the everyday life.

Third, our daily work is sanctified by the fact that our Lord and Master is with us, to help and strengthen us there, as truly as when we pray. Jesus Christ is not far away, as we so pitifully misconceive it, amid the dust of business, when we must keep our temper and follow conscience along the hard way and deal honourably with all men. He is near us there also, ready and willing to help us to be true to God and man on that road which once He trod Himself.

There is a famous unwritten saying of Christ which puts memorably what the Gospels likewise testify. "Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me. Cleave the wood and there am I." Christ is as near us in our daily work as that! When Peter and his friends went a-fishing, you remember, with heavy hearts because the Master had gone away from them, He met them by the lake as they plied their ordinary calling. So does He wait, my brother, to meet you and me wherever the duty of the hour may take us. For our working life is not outside of His interest nor out with His care and guidance. With reverent imagination Van Dyke has seemed to hear the Christ speak thus--and the words may perhaps further weld the link for some of us between our everyday duty and the Christ whom we worship and seek to serve:

"They who tread the path of labour follow where My feet have trod;

They who work without complaining do the holy will of God.

Where the many toil together, there am I among my own;

Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with Him alone.
I, the peace that passeth knowledge, dwell amid the daily strife,
I, the bread of heaven, am broken in the sacrament of life.
Every task, however simple, sets the soul that does it free,
Every deed of love and mercy done to man is done to Me.
Nevermore thou needest seek Me; I am with thee everywhere--
Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me, cleave the wood and I am there."

PRAYER

Our Lord and Master, whose command it is that we do with our whole heart whatsoever our hand findeth to do, grant that we may so yield and surrender ourselves, body, mind and spirit, unto Thee, that even in the common business of each ordinary day we may serve Thee and glorify Thy great Name. Amen.

GASHMU THE GOSSIP

"Gashmu saith it."

(Nehemiah 6:6.)

XV

GASHMU THE GOSSIP

Gashmu is a mere name in Scripture. He is mentioned only three times--twice as acting with Sanballat against Nehemiah, and once as the authority for a false piece of news. It is reported, wrote Sanballat in a cruel letter to Nehemiah, that you are plotting against the king, and "Gashmu saith it." That is what Gashmu stands for in Scripture, a tale-bearer, a slanderer, a gossip. What an unenviable immortality to be remembered only as the pedlar of a tale he knew to be untrue!

As long as we live together in society, there will be a kind of gossip that is inevitable, the kindly or merely casual relation of small and insignificant matters of fact, as that the painters are in next door, or that Mrs So-and-So has got a new bonnet. It is not of that I want to speak.

For there is another sort as deadly as the plague, and in civilised countries the cruellest and most devilish instrument that one man or woman can use against another. And that is the inventing of an untrue report about a man's doings or character, or the unthinking repetition of the same. That is the pestilence that walketh in darkness; that is the destruction that wasteth at noonday. And I wish I had the pen to write of it as it deserves.

It is very, very common. We are all too ready to repeat what we have heard, with a "Gashmu saith it," as if that certified the tale correct. And the harm done is simply incalculable. If my house is burned or I lose my money, I can still get along by the kindness of my friends for a little, till I find my feet again. But whoever by some lying story takes away my character, deals me a blow from which there is no recovering, which my loyalest friends can do nothing to avert. I have no redress, no compensation, and no help. Any one may be a victim, and you and I, by thoughtlessly passing on the deadly thing, may all unconsciously be driving another nail into a man's coffin.

Did you ever lie awake at night and think that even now the cancer may have begun on YOUR good name, that whispers may be going about among your friends concerning you? Those who know you will hear it, and will say, It's a lie! But that won't stop it. And you will never know till some day you waken up and find that your reputation is in danger. And not one word or vestige of truth may be in it. It may be a lie pure and simple, or a colourable counterfeit of some quite innocent truth. That won't make any difference. It is enough merely to start it, and, like a stone thrown down an Alpine slope, it gathers others in its train, till an avalanche swoops down on some unsuspecting head.

When King Arthur enrolled his Knights of the Round Table, he made them take the oath to "speak no slander." And there is a knightly chivalry of speech which ought to be the mark of all those who

have promised fealty to Jesus Christ. Our discipleship of Jesus demands of us the high endeavour to love our neighbour as ourselves, and that presupposes, as one of its consequences, that we guard his name against false witness as carefully as we protect our own. If we hear a good story about some one, a report that is to his credit and honour, let us blazon that abroad. We are all far too slow at that, and somehow the tale that is a little damaging has a far easier and more rapid circulation. Might we not make more of our brother's successes? Might we not oftener repeat about him what he is too modest ever to say about himself? It were a true and kindly Christian act. But never, as we call ourselves servants of Christ, never do our brother such a grievous irreparable wrong as to start about him a tale which may not be true. God can and will forgive you your sins of speech. But even He cannot make clean the character which a foolish word has sullied.

King Arthur went further, however, than demanding that his knights should speak no slander. Their vow included the words, "no, nor listen to it." And that is a high and difficult course to keep. It is not easy, when you are being told of something that is striking or sensational of a merely gossipy character, to stop the conversation and lead it into other channels. It requires great courage and as great tact. But how many of us ever try it?

If, however, the refusal to listen be regarded as a counsel of perfection, there remains yet the further injunction--never REPEAT the gossip you have heard. That at least is homely and possible.

We used to read in our book of Fables of the lamb that noticed this significant thing about the track that led to the lion's den--that all the footprints pointed inwards, but there were none returning. "Vestigia nulla retrorsum." No footprints backwards. It would be a good motto for us all. Let the stories, the ill-humoured, unkind, uncharitable sayings that float and wander about everywhere, let them come to us as they will, but let the traces end there. Be such a person that men may trace a story from its source down the chain TO you, but never PAST you.

We can do that much at least for our friends. All about us is the constant, unquiet drift of gossip and distorted half-truth, as restless as the sand in the desert, dancing and whirling with every puff of wind. We can do something to arrest that drift. We can be for our friends in some measure what Isaiah said that God's Servant, when He came, should be, the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land, stopping the drift of the sand, and sheltering our friends by our loyalty and our silence.

Don't even repeat the gossip that comes to you, not only for the strong reason already given, but also for this little one, that you won't likely repeat it correctly. With all the will in the world, it is one of the hardest things to retail a story just exactly as you heard it. Sir Walter Scott, speaking about anecdotes that he had heard, said he always liked to cock up their bonnets a bit and put a staff in their hands that they might walk on a little brisker and sprightlier than when they came to him! But we all do that, without meaning to do it at all. We add a little bit. We exaggerate just the tiniest fraction, and our hearer when he repeats the story does the same, and so the matter grows till it is big enough to do much mischief.

"A Whisper broke the air,

A soft light tone and low,

Yet barbed with shame and woe.

Now, might it only perish there,
Nor further go!
Ah me! A quick and eager ear
Caught up the little meaning sound;
Another voice has breathed it clear,
And so it wandered round,
From ear to lip, from lip to ear,
Until it reached a gentle heart,
And that--it broke."

There is a legend that once a king avoided death in a poisoned cup that had been handed to him by making over it the sign of the Cross--when it broke in pieces at his feet. Let us, when we are tempted to retail the vivid, poisonous piece of scandal, stop and invoke the Spirit of Christ. Is this that I am going to say about my brother the kind of thing I should say if Christ were standing by? Am I justified in turning over that bit of gossip which may be true, but which ought not to be true? Our duty, who profess and call ourselves Christians, is clear. We are to speak no slander no, nor listen to it. We are to retail evil about no man. We are to love one another.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, whose command it is that we love our neighbour as ourselves, help us to cherish and protect his good name as carefully as we guard our own. Make us more willing to repeat the good about him, but slower to retail or exaggerate the evil. Grant us all a deeper sense of the deadly wrong a foolish tongue can work, and keep Thou the door of our lips. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

GOD IN FRONT

"Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness."

(Psalms 21:3.)

XVI

GOD IN FRONT

You know how, in a happy home, the near approach of a birthday is signalled, how parcels are mysteriously smuggled in and hidden in secret places, and, though everything seems to be going on as usual, yet the plans are being laid in train that will surprise and delight the fortunate owner of the birthday when the festal day dawns. That is our feeble, human way of trying to surprise one another with the blessings of goodness. That is how we "prevent" our beloved with tokens of our remembrance. So, says the Psalmist, does God deal with us. Not only have we--what we so much need--His forgiveness of our past, and His help and presence for the day which now is; He is working for us in the future too, sowing the days to come with blessings for us to pick up when the passage of time brings us to the places where He has hidden them.

The idea that God has been beforehand in our history, getting ready, as it were, for our coming, though not a very usual one, is very helpful, and it finds abundant illustration and proof in all directions. When a child arrives on this earth, he enters into the enjoyment of bounties and blessings prepared, not merely weeks, but literally ages before his coming. Warmth he needs, and aeons ago the coal beds were formed in the bowels of the earth. Food he needs, and God "laboured for ages," as Sir Oliver Lodge puts it, to bring corn into existence. For corn needs soil, and, to make that, the Creator had to set the glaciers grinding over the granite, and to loosen the forces of rain and frost and running water over great stretches of time.

Every child born into the world becomes the heir of all the ages past. What blessings have been prepared for most of us, in advance, in the homes into which we were born, and the gracious influences under which we have grown up! "I have to thank the gods," says Marcus Aurelius the pagan Emperor, "that my grandfathers, parents, sisters, preceptors, relations, friends and domestics were almost all of them persons of probity." "I have to thank the gods." Who else is there to thank but God who prevents us in this way with the blessings of goodness? God is working beforehand in our interest in all these things. So, when we awaken to a sense of Him, there is His Church, established of old, awaiting to take us by the hand and help us on our way. When we learn our need of a Saviour, behold Christ stands at the door and knocks. When, in penitence of heart, we ask God's mercy, we learn that, long since, it was laid up in store for us. Before we thought of loving God, He first loved us, and gave Himself for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Is it not gloriously true all the way along that God has been beforehand with His goodness?

And that, of course, is the explanation of all the glad surprises of life. The Lord has prepared them for us beforehand. He has sown the future with good things and watched our surprise as we

picked them up. When Mary Mardon and her father, in Mark Rutherford's "Autobiography," went to the seaside to look for lodgings they saw a dismal row of very plain-looking houses. Mary objected instinctively to the dull street, but her father said he could not afford to pay for a sea view, so they went in to inquire. To their delight they found that what they thought were the fronts of the houses were really the backs, for the real fronts faced the bay, had pretty gardens before the doors, and a glorious sunny prospect over the ocean. Isn't that what we often find to be the case? Our most treasured friends are not always those whom we fall in love with at first sight. The thing we greatly fear dissolves like mist. An envied, but despaired-of, blessing is flung into our lap. A door of splendid hope opens in a dead wall. Life is full of the unexpected as if wonder were one of the things God wanted very much to keep alive in us. When, as you think, everything has been exhausted, God surprises you with a fresh gladness. And, aback of all, there is the unending surprise of God's patience with us, and of that daily mercy of His, which we so ill requite, and so often forget.

Of course, no one dreams of suggesting that all our surprises are of a happy sort. It is not so. But the point is that if it is God who has hidden the blessings for us to come upon, it is He also who has hidden the other things. God's hand does not slip so that we get the wrong parcel by accident. He prevents us also with the blessings that we do not call by that name at all. In his Lay Sermons, Huxley, describing the tadpole in its slimy cradle, says: "After watching the process hour after hour, one is almost possessed by the notion that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic object-glass would show the hidden artist with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work." If, in that wonderful fashion, God is working beforehand according to a plan of His own, in the life of a tadpole, is it not much more likely that He is so working in your life and mine, not in its joys only, but also in its dark hours and its sorrows? That, indeed, is the very message and comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ, that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground--calamity indeed for the sparrow--without our Father.

If it be true that God our Father is working in advance of us all the time, then surely it is wrong to speak of the monotony of life? For we are on a road which God Himself has sown with surprises for us, and the hour of our deadliest weariness may be the immediate precursor of our richest and most joyous find. Who could have supposed, at the end of the eighteenth century, when poetry in England seemed dead, that a great galaxy of stars--Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats--was on the very eve of rising? The unexpected can always happen. You may come upon another of God's hidden blessings to-morrow. Let us not talk of monotony, therefore, in an age which has seen so many wonderful things happen. Rather let us hold to the faith that all the while God is going before us with the blessings of goodness.

This faith puts another complexion on all our fears and forebodings. Before we live it, the web of our life passes through God's hands. And the shaded parts, as well as the bright parts, are in His wise and loving design. Nobody can promise us freedom from sorrow, but the Bible promises that God is beforehand to make the sorrow bearable. He has adjusted our temptations to our strength, and never a one has He hidden, where we come upon it, that it is impossible for us by His help to withstand. Before the mother puts her little child into his hot bath at night, she tests the water first with her fingers. And the Psalmist means us to believe that life comes to us from God, who has measured and adapted it for us, beforehand, in a like fashion.

Viewed in the light of this faith, Death itself takes on a different aspect. Oliver Wendell Holmes has suggested that the story of this life and the next can be fully written in two strokes of the pen, an interrogation-point, and, above it, a mark of exclamation--fear and question here below, and, above, adoration, wonder, surprise. "I go to prepare a place for you," said Christ to His disciples. If the preparation for us here is so wonderful, is it likely to fail yonder? If Love made ready for us here, shall it not be beforehand there too? Yea, verily. Our experience of how God prevents us here with His loving kindness ought to strengthen in us all the "faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the saint's trust in every age, that when we pass hence it will be to meet the grandest, the most blessed, and the most surprising provision of all."

PRAYER

Our Father in Heaven, we shall not be afraid of what life may hold for us when we have learned that our little web has first passed through Thy merciful and loving hands. We have often prayed that Thou wouldest go with us; but Thou hast answered us beyond our asking, for Thou goest before us all. In the faith of that leading, make us to journey bravely and to sleep secure. Amen.

"UNBELIEF KEPT QUIET"

"Fight the good fight of faith."

(1 Timothy 6:12.)

XVII

"UNBELIEF KEPT QUIET"

We are often told that this is not an age of faith, that the day of the beautiful, old, simple acquiescence is past, whether it ever comes again or not. Some one has wittily suggested that the coat of arms of the present age is "an interrogation-point rampant, above three bishops dormant, and the motto 'Query.'" But, like a great many more witty things, that saying leaves one questioning whether, after all, it be really true. I venture, for my part, to assert that a great many more people are really interested in this matter of faith than most of us imagine. There is something that haunts men as with a sense of hidden treasure about this wonderful thing in life called Faith, that always seems to be going to disappear, and yet somehow does not. With a strange, wistful persistence men linger about this pool, though there are many to tell them that the "desired angel bathes no more."

I wish to speak a word of encouragement to-day to all who are finding faith hard. "Fight the good fight of faith," says Paul to his young friend, Timothy. Fight. I want to remind you that faith often implies effort, that there is nothing in the idea of faith which is incompatible with struggle, that the very form of Paul's advice implies an antagonism.

It is true that many think of the "faith of the saints" as a quiet, contented habit of gentle acquiescence, a sweet and beautiful state of mind very far removed from the restless, questioning, analytic temper of the man of to-day. Now, I do not say that faith is never seen now in that placid form, but I do say that that was not the type Paul had in mind when he wrote Timothy, it is not the figure which best described his own faith, and it is certainly not the aspect he would require to deal with, were he writing to the men of to-day.

For they are only too conscious of much inward suspense of judgment and uncertainty concerning many things in Heaven and earth. And that inward conflict seems to many of them a sign that faith is waning, if not dead. They have forgotten that it is that very sense of inward conflict which proves that faith is not dead. Dead things do not offer any resistance. We ought by this time to have learned that a thing "may be for us an intellectual puzzle, and yet a sheer spiritual necessity," and that the Christian faith is, for every soul who has once caught it. There are a great many earnest and honest men to whom it is the best of news that Christian faith is not incompatible with very grave perplexities. The real opposite of faith is not doubt, as so many suppose, but deliberate and satisfied denial. Faith can live in the same life along with very many doubts--as a matter of fact, in the case of not a few of the most Christ-like men of our time, it is living beside them constantly. Paul assures us that outside of him he found fightings and within him he found fears. Yet he kept

the faith for all that. They start up on all sides, these spectres of the mind and reason, and they ask questions which a man cannot answer. Yet Faith may be dwelling in his life in very deed and truth, because faith is something more than the sum of all his beliefs. It is the whole conscious and deliberate set and desire of his being.

It is a well-known fact that a man may be truly courageous, acting, speaking, thinking bravely at the very moment when panic fears are gripping his heart. I like that fine old story of the soldier advancing into the fire zone with steady step, and taunted by a comrade for his pale face. "You're afraid," said the other. "I know I am afraid," said he, "and if you felt half as much afraid as I do, you would turn and flee." It is the very finest courage that dominates and controls a sensitive organisation, and holds the shrinking other-half to its purpose with firm grip. Just so is it with faith. A man keeps his course, lifts up his eyes to the hills, lives for God and His Christ, prays on, struggles on, and hopes for the home beyond the edge of life, while often enough his mind is full of questioning and the puzzle of God's deep mysteries. For faith is not what the intellect says merely. It is what the whole man is struggling and trying to say.

"With me, faith means perpetual unbelief

Kept quiet, like the snake 'neath Michael's foot,

Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe."

Don't do yourself the wrong of thinking that faith has vanished because the snake is felt to be writhing. "Perpetual unbelief kept quiet." Yes, but what keeps the clamouring doubts and fears under foot? Just yourself, just your highest self, the bit of you made for God, and unable to do without Him! Faith is the vote of the whole man, of the best of the man, in the face of a protesting minority. In other words, fight is a splendid word to use in speaking about faith.

Let a man ask himself--Does he really wish that the best he has dreamed or heard about God and His love for men, His passion to deliver them from evil, and His pity and nearness to us all in Jesus Christ His Son--does he wish all that to be true? No man is without faith who does wish that, and is living in the direction of his desire. In that man's life who, despite all the clamour and philosophy of Babylon, is keeping his window open towards where he believes Jerusalem to be, there is that vital element of faith that is linking his life to God even now, and will bring him where he would be at last.

I do not think that the prodigal was at all sure of the welcome that awaited him. Probably his mind, as he limped along in his rags, was full of misgivings and fears. But the father hailed him as his son whenever he saw afar off that the lad's face was set for home. I do not imagine our Father will concern Himself very much about the gaps in our creed if only our faces are turned homewards and towards Him. Let the man I have tried to speak to be of good courage, and fight on with a stout heart. Faith is not sight. It may not even be assurance, may be only hope and longing, and a reaching towards the Highest. But I firmly believe that no man, even though he may fall on the way home, and before he knows of his welcome, I believe that no man shall be cast out at the last, whose arms, as he fell, were outstretched in desire to God.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, Author and Finisher of our faith, help us with all our strength to fight the good fight. When our defence is being broken, do Thou garrison our souls, O God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EQUIPMENT OF JOY

"The joy of the Lord is your strength."

(Nehemiah 8:10.)

XVIII

THE EQUIPMENT OF JOY

Let us talk about joy, and especially that kind of it of which Nehemiah was thinking when he said, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It is strange that while practically everybody would agree as to the wholesomeness and the duty of joy in the ordinary sense of the term, to add the words "of the Lord" to it, seems, to some, completely to alter its character and in fact to spoil it, to turn it into an unreal sort of joy which is not true joy at all.

I wish emphatically to protest against such a conception of religious joy as an injustice to the Father Love of God. The joy of the Lord, as I understand it, is not different in quality from wholesome human gladness, it is, in fact, just that gladness deepened and sanctified by the sense of God, and the knowledge of Him brought to us by Jesus Christ our Lord. There is not a single innocent and pure source of gladness open to men and women on this earth but is made to taste sweeter when they have opened their hearts to the love of God. It is the very crown of happy living that is reached when a man can say, "My Lord and my God." Once I have dared to accept the wonderful truth that even for me the Eternal Father has His place and His plan and His care, every simplest happiness, every common joy of living, every delight in the beauty of the world and the pleasures of home and work and friendship--every one of these takes on a keener edge. It is a pestilent heresy to declare that a Christian ought to walk through life like a man with a hidden sickness. On the contrary, there is no one who has a better right to be joyous and happy-hearted. Do you think it is for nothing that the "joy of our salvation" is a Bible phrase? And shall we believe that that salvation is ours and not be mighty glad about it all the time? What is the good of translating "Gospel" as "good news" and at the same time living as if religion were a bondage and a burden grievous to be borne? Of all the strange twists of human convention, it is surely the strangest to allow ordinary human joy to be happy and cheerful, and to insist that those whose joy is in the Lord should pull a long face, and forswear laughter, and crawl along dolefully as if to the sound of some dirge! The "morning face and the morning heart" belong of right to the truly religious, and no one ought to be gladder, come what may, than the man who has made the highest and best disposal of his little life that any one can make, namely, surrendered it in faith and obedience to his Lord.

A gloomy, ponderous, stiff religion which looks askance at innocent merriment and is afraid to pull a long breath of enjoyment has the mark of "damaged goods" on it somehow, and no one will take it off your hands. It is not catching, and certainly your children will never catch it. It is said to be a good test of a religion that it can be preached at a street corner. But I know a better test than that. Preach it to a child. Set him in the midst of those who profess it. If their religion frightens him,

freezes the smiles on his lips, and destroys his happiness, depend upon it, whatever sort of religion it be, it lacks the essential winsomeness of the religion of Jesus Christ.

I need not say, of course, that I am not pleading for a more hilarious religious life. And, equally of course, empty frivolity, and the cult of the continual grin are insufferable things to endure either in the name of religion or anything else. Not by a single word would I lessen the condemnation which such aberrations deserve. But I do say, and with all my heart I believe that a deep, abiding well-spring of happiness--which our author calls the "joy of the Lord"--is of the very essence of true religion, and is indeed, what he asserts it, actually our strength. Actually our strength. Let us be quite clear about that.

The man in whose heart there dwells this best of all joys is a strength to other people. We don't need any one to prove that to us, I imagine. We have all been helped and revived many a time merely by contact with some hearty cheerful soul. Who, for example, that had his choice, would elect for his family physician a man with a doleful air? Have we not all found that a doctor's cheery manner was as potent a medicine as any drug that he called by a Latin name? Ay, and even when we are in trouble, and our hearts are sad and sore, I think we would all rather see the friend whose faith in God showed in a brave and buoyant outlook than one whose religion was of the dowie and despondent sort.

I have heard it said of an employee who had the gift of the joyous heart that the twinkle of his eyes was worth £100 a year to his firm. I could easily believe it, though the money value might well have been set at any figure, seeing that the thing itself is really priceless. Did not the most famous modern apostle of the duty of happiness--himself a signal proof that joy is something more than the mere easy overflow of health and animal spirits--did not Stevenson declare that "by being happy we sow anonymous benefits," and that "the entrance of such a person into a room is as if another candle had been lighted?" I take it the proof is ample that a joyous heart is a strength to others.

But more, it is a strength to oneself. That may not be so obvious, and yet the result here is even more certain. Ordinary experience tells us that joy is good for us, that depression and gloom work us bodily harm. But from one province of scientific study especially there has come a wonderful array of evidence that makes it as certain as any fact can be that the happy states of mind do literally add to our strength in quite measurable directions. There is, in strict fact, no tonic in all the world like gladness.

That being so, joy, and especially the best kind of it of which Nehemiah speaks, is not a luxury, not a condition you may legitimately cherish if you are fortunate enough to possess it. It is a sheer necessity. You can't do without it. Even to meet your sorrows, even to gird you for service, even to run your race without fainting, you need the joy of the Lord, which is strength. And since the Father has stored up such an abundant supply of it in this world of His, since it is knocking at our doors every day, and only our distrust and suspicion keep it outside, we know what to do to secure this good gift of God. We have only to open our doors to let it in, and give it room.

"So take Joy home

And make a place in thy great heart for her,

And give her time to grow, and cherish her,
Then will she come and oft will sing to thee
When thou art working in the furrows--ay,
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad--
Joy is the grace we say to God."

PRAYER

Help us, O God, beyond our poor and forgetful thanksgiving, to show forth the praise of Thy loving kindness by our joy and gladness. For Thy great grace and mercy toward us, and for all the gifts of Thy sleepless Providence, we offer Thee the joy of our hearts. Accept our offering, we beseech Thee; forgive its scant measure, and teach us to be glad in Thee. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

THE GOD OF THE UNLOVABLE MAN

"The God of Jacob is our refuge."

(Psalms 46:11.)

XIX

THE GOD OF THE UNLOVABLE MAN

There is a phrase which echoes through the Old Testament like the refrain of some solemn music--the "God of Jacob." "The God of Jacob," says the 46th Psalmist, "is our refuge." Yet when you think of it, it is a strange title. The "God of Abraham" you can understand, for Abraham was a great and faithful soul. And the "God of Isaac," also, for Isaac was a saint. But the "God of Jacob" is a combination of ideas of a very different sort. For though, by God's grace, Jacob became a saint in the end, it took much discipline and trouble to mould him into a true godliness. And, for the greater part of his life, and many of his appearances on the stage of Scripture, his actions and ideals are not such as to make us admire him very passionately. We like Esau for all his faults, but we do not like Jacob for all his virtues. There is something cold and calculating about Jacob that repels affection. For all his religion, the Jacob of the earlier chapters is a mean soul, successful but unscrupulous, pious but not straight, spiritually-minded but not lovable. And yet the Almighty condescends to be known as the God of Jacob, and the Bible loves that name for God!

What does that say to you? To me it says this--and I think we all need to learn it--that God is the God even of unlovable people! That even unlovable people have a God! That the Lord is very gracious to sinners, we all rejoice to believe, for that is the Evangel of Jesus, and He Himself was found practising it even among the waifs and outcasts of society. But that unlovable people have a God, too, is actually harder for us to realise, for the plain fact is that unlovable, disagreeable people irritate and annoy us more even than the sinners. If you question that, just analyse your attitude to the Prodigal in our Lord's wonderful story, compared with that toward his respectable, cold-hearted and priggish elder brother. The brother irritates us. We call him, with some heat, as Henry Drummond did, a baby, and we want to shake him. But we never want to shake the prodigal.

Now, we all have, on our list of acquaintances, people whom we have labelled disagreeable, who continually rub us the wrong way, as we put it. There is the man who is always talking about himself, and is filled with conceit like a bladder with air. "There is the man," says Hazlitt in one of his Essays, "who asks you fifty questions as to the commonest things you advance, and, you would sooner pardon a fellow who held a pistol at your breast and demanded your money." There is the ill-tempered, sulky person, and the grumbling, whining, dolorous soul never without an ache or a grievance. So we can all draw up our own private "Index Expurgatorius" of the people we bar or dislike. We say these people are unlovable.

And, since the corruption of the best is the worst, we are agreed that the most unlovable of all types is the religious undesirable, the smug, unctuous, oily person, for example, whose sincerity is continually in question, the narrow, intolerant, little soul who cannot see any sort of truth or righteousness except his own, or the prim and pious man who is cocksure of his interest in the life to come, but is not straight in the affairs of the life which now is. There are others, but enumeration is not a very profitable or a pleasant task. Take them all together, gather them in a crowd in your memory, and then set yourself this exercise for your sanctification and growth in grace. Realise that the Lord your God is the God also of these unlovable people. Get that idea thoroughly into your heart, and say it to yourself, if need be, many times a day. These people look up to Him in worship just as you do. They have their sacred hours in His presence just as you have. There is nothing you look for to God, that they do not seek, too, from Him. They are not of a different order from you, but the same order. And though you do not love them, God does. Though they are outside of your circle, they are not outside of His. The God of Jacob is their God. And therein lies for them, as it did for Jacob, the hope and promise of better things to come.

If we remembered that, should we not be more patient and forbearing with them than we are, keener to look for the best in them, and to make the best of them than we are? Just to think of what is meant by the "God of Jacob" is to set our sharp and bitter judgments of others over against the infinitely tender compassion and patience and longsuffering of God. All the wonder of the divine grace is hidden in the phrase. And this is the wonder--that God never grows tired even of disagreeable people. He does not give up caring even for the unlovable. But oh! what poor sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty we are, with our quick, rash final judgments and our hard, unbrotherly hearts!

Did you ever ask yourself what some of these unlovable people are doing, the while you and I are telling each other how impossible and unlovable they are? George Eliot suggests it somewhere thus:--"While we are coldly discussing a man's career, sneering at his mistakes, and labelling his opinions 'Evangelical and narrow' or 'Latitudinarian and pantheistic,' or 'Anglican and supercilious,' that man in his solitude is perhaps shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is a hard one, because strength and patience are failing him to speak the difficult word and do the difficult deed." Ah, yes, it's a mercy that there is a God even for unlovable people!

But there is a question that has been waiting all this time, and we must ask it before we close. What about ourselves, you and me? Are we such lovable people that we can afford to judge others? Do we never rub our friends the wrong way, and, without meaning it, annoy and disappoint and repel them? Are our religious profession and our daily practice so very much in keeping that we may talk about prigs and self-righteous people as if they belonged to an entirely different world? May I speak for you all and say humbly "No"? No, God knows they are not! The fact is that if we know ourselves at all well, we must be aware that we have it in us to be quite as disagreeable and selfish and self-righteous as anybody. It is only our best beloved who do not get tired of us, and sometimes even they must be hard put to it.

But there is a blessed Gospel for those who have made that discovery about themselves. There is a God of Jacob. Abraham is too high for us, and Isaac is too saintly, but Jacob, faulty, disappointing, unlovable, yet by God's grace redeemed and perfected at last, Jacob is the man for us! The hope and comfort of all who have learned what they really are is that "the God of Jacob is

our refuge."

PRAYER

Bring us, we pray Thee, O God, into a truer knowledge of ourselves. Make us to learn how frail we are, how poor and blind and naked; to the end we may regard with due charity the shortcomings of others, and may worthily praise Thy great Mercy, who yet hast not turned away Thy face from us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE GOD OF THE UNLOVABLE MAN

"Elijah went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat under a juniper tree, and requested for himself that he might die."

(1 Kings 19:4.)

XX

UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE

A well-known writer relates that, when passing through Edinburgh once, he saw a procession of Friendly Societies, and observed on one of the banners the name emblazoned, The Order of the Juniper Tree. His comment is:--"Many of us belong to that order." So we do. And, because of that, we can diagnose Elijah's trouble quite accurately. He is suffering, as we have all suffered at some time or other, from the pains and penalties of reaction. Just because he had climbed to a height almost superhuman, the reaction when it came was very black and terrible. The Bible is too wise and too true to human nature to conceal the fact that for his hour of splendid daring, Elijah had his price to pay.

It's a commonplace, of course, but just one of those commonplaces which in the bulk spell wisdom, that there was a physical reason for this condition. To put it plainly, Elijah was tired out. He had been using up his physical and nervous energy at such a ruinous rate during the past few hours, that he had overdrawn his account. It strikes one as a very significant fact that when God's angel took the prophet in hand, the first thing he did was to provide him with a meal. Elijah was actually on his way back to his normal condition when he had had something to eat.

That is not a mere incident in the story. It is exceedingly important, because, sometimes the religious depression with which we are acquainted arises in a similar way. It is a very useful fact to remember that a man's whole religious outlook is coloured by the condition of his health. We may be slow to admit such a low and material cause for effects so apparently spiritual. But it is a fact all the same. And it is only wise to recognise it.

But Elijah's reaction was not entirely or even mainly physical in its origin. He had been in a very exalted spiritual condition during the contest on Carmel. Think what the man had done! He had stood alone in the path of a whole nation rioting down to idolatry and shamelessness, and with voice and presence and fire from Heaven had stopped and turned them, driven the huddled, frightened sheep back again to the ways and the worship of God. Was it to be wondered at that his very soul within him was faint under the strain?

Though the vision and the privileges of the hill-top are what the best men covet most, it is but little of it at a time that any one can stand. Do you remember that Jesus would not let Peter and James and John remain long on the Mount of the Transfiguration, even though they wanted to build tabernacles and dwell there? There have been few greater spiritual experts than John Bunyan, and when he has described how his pilgrim fared in the Palace Beautiful, how he slept in a

chamber called Peace, how he saw afar off the Delectable Land, whither he was journeying, where does he take him next? Straight down into the Valley of Humiliation, where he has to fight for his life against the darts of the Evil One flying as thick as hail!

There is no cure for reaction, of course, but there are one or two rules which experience has proved to be helpful.

For example, it is never a wise thing, when you are depressed, to attempt to form any judgment about yourself, your service, or your standing in the sight of God. By some Satanic impulse, that is the very time, of course, when you will be tempted to do it. It may appear a very wholesome spiritual exercise when you have gone a day's journey into the wilderness and are faint, to reckon up what manner of man and disciple of Christ you are. But don't do it then. Nobody sees truly either himself or God, under a juniper tree.

And then, if possible, do not speak about your despondency. Don't express your mood outwardly at all, if you can help it. Bottle it up if you can, and you will starve it all the sooner. His biographer relates of the late Ian Maclaren that, like many people who have Celtic blood in their veins, he was subject to curious fits of depression and gloom which did not seem to be in any way connected with bodily health. "But," he goes on to say, "he never inflicted his melancholy moods on his family, was only very quiet and absorbed, and kept more closely to his study. In a day or two he would emerge again, like a man coming out into the sunshine."

And lastly. Once a man has sworn himself a disciple and soldier of Jesus Christ, neither doubt nor depression, neither darkness nor reaction absolves him from the obligation to follow and to serve when he is called. It must be confessed that it is an undue sense of the importance of our own feelings that makes the juniper-tree-mood the peril and hindrance that it is. We need to remember that the call of Christ overrides personal feelings. In His army too, there is discipline to be thought of, and "it is not soldierly to skulk." When the bugle calls to action, nobody but a coward would make the fact that he is not feeling quite up to the mark, an excuse for sitting still. Reaction is a natural thing, but cowardice is always shameful.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, we bless Thee for the comfort of Thy perfect knowledge of us. We are glad to think that Thou knowest our frame and rememberest that we are dust. Make us more wise to bring the burden of our moods of darkness and reaction to the footstool of Thy perfect understanding; but save us, we beseech Thee, from all yielding in the long fight against them. Seeing that Thy grace is sufficient for us and Thy strength made perfect in our weakness, grant us a godly fear of all unmanly surrender. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

INSTRUCTING THE CABIN BOY

"If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine."

(John 7:17.)

XXI

INSTRUCTING THE CABIN BOY

When John Wesley was on his way home from Georgia, he wrote this record of the voyage in his Journal:--"Being sorrowful and very heavy (though I could give no particular reason for it) and utterly unwilling to speak close to any of my little flock (about twenty persons), I was in doubt whether my own neglect of them was not one cause of my heaviness. In the evening, therefore, I began instructing the cabin boy, after which I was much easier."

This is a significant passage for various reasons. For one thing, it lets us see that even a spiritual genius like Wesley sometimes fell into the mood of doubt. And, for another, it shows how, almost by accident, as it seems, he found a cure for his trouble. It is plain that religion just then had lost its savour for the great evangelist. The joy had gone out of his service and the power from his prayers, and he was not sure of anything at all. This is practical doubt, the only serious kind there is. "Being sorrowful and very heavy and very unwilling."

There are not a few men and women whose trouble this is. They are in straits to know what is really God's truth. They greatly desire to lay hold of it surely for themselves. The tremendous earnestness of those who have found the old dogmas unsatisfying, and are adrift again in a twentieth century search for God, is one of the most significant features of the situation. Can a man really come in touch with God? they ask. Is there a living Christ whose presence redeems men from evil and can lift them up to what they long to be? Is there a life with God which even Death cannot end? And those who are in such deep earnest to know God vitally for themselves, are sorrowful and heavy indeed to find that all their thinking and reading and inquiry do so little for them. They pray for light, and examine all the evidence with a wistful eagerness, but the clouds still lie around them, and they are still wandering, now in this direction, now in that, like men lost in a mist.

Is there no way out of this tangle? Yes, there is. To all who are sorrowful and heavy because they know so little they can call their own about God and spiritual living, I want to say, There is a way forward, a safe, sure way. It is the way that Wesley stumbled upon. "I began instructing the cabin boy." That is the way for you and me to a fuller experience of God.

That is the simple solution which so many thousands of us have overlooked, and it was the discovery of Jesus Christ. When asked how He knew about God, He answered that it was because He was doing God's will, and He added, If any man, no matter who, no matter what his doubts be, if any man be willing to do God's will, where, and as, it is clear to him, he too shall know. God will not leave him in ignorance of what is really essential.

Nowhere, except in the Bible, do you find such a method of learning recommended. From nobody but Christ could such a precept come, for it is clean contrary to all that we know about learning in other spheres. Study and you will know, think, investigate, ask questions--that, we can understand. That is how knowledge comes to us in the realms with which we are acquainted. But when men asked Christ how they could learn God's truth for themselves, He said, First of all you must obey it. Do, and you will know.

You remember the lepers whom Christ touched, of whom it is written that "as they went, they were healed?" That is how the only sort of doubt that really matters is healed. As you go, not as you sit still and puzzle, but as you shoulder the nearest duty and obey what light and knowledge you have.

"I don't know," Wesley would say to himself, "whether I am in my right place here or not, whether I am really Christ's servant or not. I am in the dark, and don't seem to be sure of anything. But there is that cabin boy. I can at least do him some good. That is right anyhow, whatever be uncertain." "After which," he says, "I was much easier." It is marvellous to read, but it is a law as certain and safe as gravitation. Do God's will as you know it, and you will get more light. "Doubt of any sort," said Thomas Carlyle, "cannot be removed except by action."

It is hardly necessary to say, of course, that the knowledge which Christ promises to those who will obey God's will is not of dogma in its restricted theological sense. It was life Christ talked about, it was life He was concerned with, and, for Him, life meant not head-knowledge, but heart-experience and heart-hold of God. It is that He promises in His great saying. So do not make the mistake of thinking that when you seek to do the Will of God, all your mental difficulties, about miracles or inspiration or what not else, will come to an end. These are problems, not of life, but of mind, and you have them because God has given you a mind, and you will probably have them as long as your mind is growing. What Christ does promise is of vastly more importance, namely, the light of God's truth in your heart, the assurance of God in your inmost soul, that you shall know for yourself that God is, and that He is near to you, and that your true life is in Him; and when a man has got that length, there are many doctrinal and other mental puzzles for the solution of which he is content to wait with an easy trust and patience.

I like that saying of Viscount Kenmure's, away back in the sixteenth century, "I will lie at Christ's door like a beggar, and, if I may not knock, I will scrape." I like it, for this reason, that I am quite sure there is no essential door of God in earth or heaven which is shut against the man who casts himself so utterly on Him as that. And I take Kenmure's word to illustrate what Jesus meant by If any man will do God's will. It is when a man says, I cannot see, I do not know, my mind is filled with spectres and doubts and questions, but, so help me God, I will do the thing that is right for me, I will walk by what little light I have--it is then, it is to that man that there come infallibly the knowledge which no criticism can shake, and the peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, we thank Thee for this one straight road out of our doubts, and the difficulties we so often make for ourselves. We bless Thee for the steadfast certainty that no man, who will rise and follow what light he has, shall finally be left in darkness. By doing shall we come to know. As

we go upon our clear duty, other truths become more clear. It is our Lord's own doctrine, and in His Name we pray that Thou would'st help us to learn it. Amen.

GOD'S DOOR OF HOPE

"The valley of Achor for a door of hope."

(Hosea 2:15.)

XXII

GOD'S DOOR OF HOPE

The world has a scheme of redemption of its own, and men can themselves do something for the brother who has fallen. But the plan involves, invariably, a change of surroundings. Worldly wisdom says, of the youth who is making a mess of his life, "Ship him off to the colonies, try him with a new start on another soil." But the grace of God promises a far more wonderful salvation. It makes possible a new start on the very spot of the old failure. It leads a man back to the scene of his old disloyalty, and promises him a new memory that shall blot out and redeem the old. God does not take the depressed and discouraged out of their surroundings. He adds an inward something that enables them to conquer where they stand. It is not some new untried sphere that God gilds with promise. It is the old place where one has already failed and fallen. It is the valley of Achor, the scene of Israel's defeat, and Achan's shame and sin, that God gives to His people as a door of hope.

In Italian history, during the Middle Ages, the republics of Pisa and Genoa were often at war, and at one time the Genoese were badly beaten in a sea-fight near the little island of Meloria. Some years after, a Genoese admiral took his fleet to that same spot and said, "Here is the rock which a Genoese defeat has made famous. A victory would make it immortal." And sure enough, the fight that followed ended in a great victory for Genoa. It is that sort of hope that God holds out to all defeated souls who put their trust in Him. He points us back to our valley of Achor, the place with a memory we do not like to think of, and He says, There is your door of Hope, Go back and try again. And those who go back in His strength are enabled to write a new memory upon the old shame.

Our Lord and Master is very gracious to forgive us when we come to Him in penitence to tell Him of the position we have lost by our faithlessness or our cowardice, but He does not consent to the ultimate defeat of the very feeblest of His soldiers. "Go back and try again," is His order. There are many, as Dr Matheson says, who offer us a golden to-morrow, but it is only Christ who enables us to retrieve our yesterday. For His grace is more than forgiveness. It is the promise to reverse the memory of Achor, to turn defeat into victory even yet.

Achor, further, literally means Trouble, and it is a great thing for us when we have learned that even there God has for us a door of hope.

The valley of Trouble is perhaps the last place in the world where the uninstructed would look for any fruit of harvest, and yet again and again men have brought the fairest flowers of character and holiness out of it. How many a devout and useful servant of Christ owes the beginning of his

allegiance to a serious illness, to some crippling disappointment, to an overwhelming sorrow? In all humility there are many who can say, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, and there are many, many more about whom their friends often quote that text.

"I walked a mile with Pleasure;

She chattered all the way,

But left me none the wiser

For all she had to say.

"I walked a mile with Sorrow,

And ne'er a word said she,

But oh, the things I learned from her,

When Sorrow walked with me!"

There is a door of Hope even in the valley of Trouble, and those who tread it in God's company shall not fail to find it.

There is one other class who need to know that even in Achor there is a door of hope, the depressed and discouraged. Phillips Brooks once declared, "I came near doing a dreadful thing the other day. I was in East Boston and I suddenly felt as if I must get away from everything for a while. I went to the Cunard dock and asked if the steamer had sailed. She had been gone about an hour. I believe if she had still been there, I should have absconded." I wonder if there is any one who has not known that feeling? When duty is dull, and circumstances discouraging, when we seem to be merely ploughing the sands, "Oh," we say, "for the wings of a dove!" Comfort and happiness and salvation seem to lie solely in escape. And it may be that they do. But more often the trouble is in ourselves, and would travel with us to the new post.

If there be any depressed or discouraged reading these lines, I should like to remind them of God's promise to give the valley of Achor--that is the depressing scene of your labours, my brother--for a door of hope. You are looking for your hope somewhere else, anywhere else provided it be out of your present rut and drudgery. In reality your door of hope lies in the rut, in the valley itself. It is not escape you need. It is just a braver faith that God is in your valley with you, and that He needs you there.

Take a firmer grip of that, and go back to where you serve, and you will find, please God, that even in your valley He has opened for you a door of Hope and Gladness.

May all those who are living and working these days in the valley of Achor find in it somewhere God's Door of Hope.

PRAYER

Grant us, O God, the faith that in Thy strength we can yet succeed even in the place where we have failed. Teach us that it is Thy whisper we hear, when we have fallen into Despond, bidding us rise and try again. And grant us the courage to be sure, since Thou hast a tryst to meet and help

us there, that even our Achor shall open to us its door of hope. Amen.

NOW-A-DAYS

"There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master."

(1 Samuel 25:10.)

XXIII

NOW-A-DAYS

Nabal, says the Bible, was a churl. When David sent his men to request some provender, in return for services rendered, this ill-mannered sheep-farmer broke out, "Who is David? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master." It was a singularly rude and ungracious reply, all things considered. But it is not about Nabal's truculence I wish to speak. I want you to think about that phrase he used, and the tone in which it was said. "Now-a-days." The implication, of course, is that servants did not break away from their masters in his young days. Things were different in the times he could remember.

You will recognise this peculiar intonation of "Now-a-days" as something fairly familiar. You hear it yet, quite often. Now-a-days the Church has lost caste. Now-a-days the Bible is a neglected book. Now-a-days faith is on the wane, and most people don't believe anything at all. There are many such sentences, beginning with the word Now-a-days and sounding like a chant on a minor key.

This pessimistic philosophy is difficult to fight, for it is unsubstantial, and dissolves like mist whenever you come to close quarters. But there are three queries I have noted in my Bible opposite that "Now-a-days" of Nabal.

And the first is--What about the man himself? Judge his philosophy by his actions. Nabal apparently believed that servants were getting entirely out of hand, and he speaks as if he remembered something very different in his own early days. Very good. What was he doing to maintain the old standards? Nothing, less than nothing. His personal manners and behaviour were such that servants would be very ready to break away on that farm, I should think. Now, what business has Nabal to go whining, in general terms, mark you, about servants now-a-days, when he behaves like a boor to his own? For any declension which he may see about him, he is himself largely responsible.

I think that it is a perfectly fair line of argument, and it disposes of quite a number of pious "inexactitudes." When I hear a man talking about the lost influence of the Church now-a-days, I am always tempted to inquire what his own relation to it is, whether he is loyally supporting it and working in its interests, for experience has taught me that a very great deal of exaltation of the Church's past records, at the expense of its position to-day, comes from men who are themselves doing absolutely nothing to help it on its way. There are exceptions, of course, but, as a rule, it is not the active workers in any worthy cause who are lamenting its failure. The men who think the country is going to the dogs are themselves to be found, for the most part, lolling in the clubs. It is not the pledged and active member of Christ's kingdom who thinks it is disappearing from the

earth. And to those who are fond of the Now-a-days type of complaint, I would suggest the inquiry--What about yourself? Are you helping to keep up the old standards as you say you remember them? Or is your influence also tending to set this ball of the earth rolling in the very direction you deplore, namely, down the hill?

The second query on Nabal's "Now-a-days" is--Can his memory be relied upon? It is an instinct with us all to idealise the past, and gild it in memory with all sorts of romance. We quietly drop all the shadows from the picture as time goes on. Were ever summer days since so long and fine and sunny as they were when we were boys? Never! We are all agreed about that. Yet when we were boys, men who were then grey were using exactly the same words about summer days years before! We are all apt to praise the past just because it is the past, and because it has a way of turning rosy as it recedes. The wise man recognises that, and allows for it. The foolish man begins many sentences with "Now-a-days," and ends with a shake of the head and a sigh.

But there is something that does not forget nor gild the past with false romance, and that is history. Turn back its pages a hundred years or more; read such a book as H. G. Graham's "Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century"; and you will soon discover what a fine word Now-a-days really is.

As far as humanity and civilisation, brotherly charity, and true religion are concerned, the man who in pessimistic mood contrasts now-a-days with the good old times a hundred years ago, simply does not know what he is talking about. Changes there have been, many and radical, but change is not necessarily a sign either of declension or decay.

I can partly understand a man without faith in God giving his vote for a general falling off in human progress, but I cannot understand a man who believes in God, and in the presence in the world of a living spirit of Christ, being a pessimist. No one affirms, of course, that we are progressing everywhere, and all the time. Set-backs here and there, there are in human history just as in a successful campaign. But that, on the whole, the world grows better, the Kingdom comes, and earth draws nearer to Heaven, seems to me to be simply a corollary from the fact that God reigns, and has blessed us with knowledge of Himself.

I grant you that the war is a disappointing revelation of how far mankind still has to travel. But, as far as we are concerned, I am not disposed to counsel undue humiliation and self-condemnation on account of it. A people that for the sake of unseen eternal realities like honour and righteousness will make the sacrifices which we are making, can hardly be said to be degenerating, especially when we remember some of the causes for which we have drawn the sword in years and generations gone by. But even though the clock of progress be set back awhile--and that does not seem so likely now as when the war began--it is simply not possible that, in this world of God's, evil should ultimately vanquish good, that the Spirit of Christ should finally be crushed by the forces that oppose it. That can never be. As soon might the germs of disease which the sun destroys turn round upon it and quench its blessed light.

The third query opposite Nabal's "Now-a-days" is--Does he truly discern the present time? Does he know "now-a-days" even as well as he knows the past? As a matter of fact, David was not just a servant who had broken away from his master, and if Nabal had only lived a little longer he would have seen how completely he had misread the signs of the times.

That is worth remembering when you are tempted to say, Now-a-days things are out of joint. Maybe you don't clearly see these very days you are disparaging. When Jesus preached in Nazareth, the village where He had been brought up, the people said, Is not this the Carpenter? and in their anger at His presumption, as they thought it, they wanted to make away with Him. If they had only known!

It is not enough to recognise that we cannot see the future. We cannot even see the present. Think what it would be like if we could see the great men, the prophets, poets, reformers, leaders, who are at this present moment in our nurseries and schools, or if we were able to recognise in the--at present--small shoot of a cause, the great tree into which in God's providence it is destined to grow!

Now-a-days; now-a-days! What a delusion it is for anybody to think he knows "now-a-days" well enough to call it names! It is not with observation that the Kingdom comes. God rings no bell when He has a new and gracious purpose afoot in the world. And the thing for you and me to do is to rest confidently in the faith that, in His own good way and time, God is redeeming the world to Himself, and to do all that we can to help Him, and to make our little corner of it a brighter and a better place. But do not let us imagine that we can see all that is going on about us. There is far, far more of God and of goodness in the world than we suspect. The woods and hedges look very bleak and bare to-day.[1] It is a dead and barren aspect that Nature wears now-a-days. Yet even now the sap is mounting quickly in every living stem, and Spring is getting ready while we sleep.

[1] Written in February.

So, let us have the courage to believe--so is it with every worthy cause of God and man.

PRAYER

Almighty God, Ruler and Disposer of all events, we would remember that this world of ours is, first of all, Thine. We believe that, though Thy Kingdom comes not with observation yet it does come more and more. We believe that, with Thee, the best is yet to be. And we pray that, with that faith in our hearts, we may leave the large campaign with quietness and confidence to Thee, and seek rather to discharge the duties of that post Thou hast assigned to us, with loyalty and good hope. Amen.

ROUNDAABOUT ROADS

"And a certain man drew a bow at a venture."

(2 Chronicles 18:33)

XXIV

ROUNDAABOUT ROADS

It sounds improbable that though a whole army was trying to kill Ahab, it should be an arrow which a man shot at a venture, or as the Hebrew has it, quaintly, "in his simplicity"--when twanging his bow carelessly, or trying a new string perhaps--that should find the king's heart.

And yet it is the thing that does happen occasionally in real life. We sometimes do get the target when we are aiming for something else. The name which we have been worrying to recall strolls casually into our memory when we have given up trying and are not thinking of it at all. There are certain stars, astronomers tell us, which they see best when they look askance. And I have come to think that there are certain precious goods of His which God allows us to possess on the same conditions. You see them by looking past them. You get them by aiming at something else. "Look at your goal and go for it straight," says worldly wisdom, wisely and truly enough in many instances. All the same there are good things in life to which that is emphatically NOT the road. The real way to secure these is to aim for something else.

This is true, for example, of Happiness. Everyone of us wants to be happy. And there is such a bountiful provision of the means of happiness all about us that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that God means us all to be happy. Yet when those for whom happiness is meant and prepared seek it directly and for itself, it is as certain as anything can be that they won't find it. You ask, perhaps you pray for this boon, and God shows you only some bare duty that is clearly yours. Out to it you go, like a brave man, not thinking there can be any blessings on that road, when, lo! as you journey, happiness comes to you, quietly, filling your heart with peace.

One does not find that the New Testament, as a matter of fact, has much to say about being happy at all. There is so little reference to it that it looks as if God had forgotten our need. I find that the Book which I had thought might tell me how to find happiness tells me instead of "bearing one another's burdens," doing it "unto one of the least of these"; tells me about my brother's need of me when he is sick or naked or hungry; tells me even about such a thing as a cup of cold water to a thirsty disciple. Ah! but when, in however poor a fashion, I forget my own quest and gird myself in Christ's name and try to DO some of these things, I find that God has not forgotten after all, that, all the time He has been showing me THE way to happiness, and I did not recognise it because it is not a straight road. It's not a question of seeking, but of forgetting to seek. Happiness comes to you oftenest when you are intent on bringing it to your brother.

The same principle holds true also with regard to Influence. It is natural that a man should desire that his shadow when it falls on others should heal and not hurt. But the healing, helpful shadow is

not got by wishing for it. As soon as you begin to think about it and aim for it, you will go astray. Here is a little poem which tells how the strange magnetic quality of influence for good comes to a man:--

"He kept his lamp still lighted,
Though round about him came
Men who, by commerce blighted,
Laughed at his little flame.
He kept his sacred altar
Lit with the torch divine,
Nor let his purpose falter,
Like yours, O World, and mine.
And they whose cold derision
Had mocked him, came one day
To beg of him the vision
To help them on their way.
And, barefoot or in sandal,
When forth they fared to die,
They took from his poor candle
One spark to guide them by."

That is the secret--a roundabout way, as you see. If Influence is to be ours, that is how it will come, not by our trying to be influential, but by our striving to be upright, loyal, and true.

In the third place, this is true of Life in Christ's sense of the term. Life was one of His favourite words. It was Life, in the highest sense, that He claimed to bring to men. And the greatest calamity in His eyes that could fall on any man is that that inward soul-life should die.

Yet when those in whom He has awakened it, aim directly for its growth and culture, they make mistakes. To the question--Shall I regard the development and deepening of that soul-life of mine as the one end and object of my living? the answer of Jesus, as I understand it, is No. Life, said He, at its highest and fullest and most perfect, is reached by giving it away. He that loseth his life shall save it.

What a long way from this ideal are those good people who are for ever laying their fingers on their spiritual pulse and plucking their soul-life up by the roots to see how it is growing! There is a nobler use of life than to save it in that fearful fashion. There is a truer way to grow in grace than by hoarding up virtue so, namely, by letting it go generously out from us. When St Nicholas got to Heaven with his white robes of sainthood stained with mud through stopping on his way to help a

carter pull his waggon out of a rut--a task which his fellow St Cassianus, for the sake of his robes, avoided and declined--it was the muddy saint whom the Master welcomed with the sweetest smile and the most gracious words. Whoso loseth his life, the same shall save it.

Happiness, Influence, Life, these three, and the road to each of them is indirect. May God bless it to us that we have stood for a little to mark the flight of an arrow shot "in simplicity!"

PRAYER

O Lord our God, may we have grace to discover the blessings that lie on Thy roundabout roads. May we never make the mistake of thinking that the path to true happiness is the one that runs straight towards it. Keep us true to Christ, and we shall not then be false to any man. And give us to know that we are likest Him, not when we hoard and cherish life and virtue, but when we spend them without stint or measure in any worthy cause of God or man, for His sake. Amen.

"Why was not this ointment
sold for three hundred pence,
and given to the poor?"
(JOHN xii. 5.)

THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF LOVE

XXV

THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF LOVE

"Wherever this Gospel is preached, this that she had done shall be told as a memorial of her." (Matthew 26:13) What a gracious memorial, and how worthy of it was Mary's beautiful outburst of generosity! But what a pity that the speech of Judas should be recorded also, as a memorial of him! And yet, on mature consideration, we would not have the Judas criticism forgotten. Because it called forth what we might not otherwise have had, the vindication of Jesus Himself. And because, as a matter of fact, we are constantly hearing the protest of Judas repeated in our own day, and are often ill-held to know how to meet it.

"This he said," records our evangelist bluntly, "not because he loved the poor, but because he was a thief and kept the bag." Yet he might have been an honest man and said the same thing. For very many honest and earnest men and women are repeating this criticism still. It is repeated whenever it is taken for granted that practical utility is the only standard by which to judge actions and offerings, that God and man can be served in no other way than by "iron bars and perspiration."

How often do we meet the type of mind that admits the service of a ploughman and denies that of poet or artist, for whom a waterfall, as somebody has said, exists merely as so much power for driving turbines, and whose sole test of usefulness is that of making two blades grow--and corn blades at that!--where but one grew before. We are commonly browbeaten by this type of person, and yet we feel that somehow, if we could only say it, he is wrong--that the poet's is as divine a vocation as the farmer's, that God meant a silver band of falling water in a green glade to suggest other things besides dynamos, and that he who even paints some blades of grass, and paints them pleasingly, has his place somewhere in the great guild of servants of God and man.

One has heard the same attitude taken up in other directions too. Why spend so much money on a Church, you will be asked, when there are so many poor people in the land? What need for stone pillars and a fine organ, when a plain building and a harmonium would do as well? Why try to secure what is called a beautiful Church service, dignified, stately, musical, when the very baldest worship is acceptable in God's sight, if only it be sincere? We have heard all that, and other remarks like that, often, and we have seldom been able to give reasons against them. A mere instinctive sentiment seems a feeble thing to oppose to such cold and hard facts. Yet somehow we feel that it is all wrong if only we knew how to convict it.

Did it ever occur to you that Jesus Himself has answered that objection and others like it when He vindicated Mary's action that night? There is no doubt that her ointment cost a deal of money, money that could have fed many hungry people. It was an extravagant offering, without any practical outcome, save that Jesus was refreshed. There is no doubt also about our Lord's sympathy with the poor and needy. And yet He upheld Mary's action, and would not have it called

wasteful! All that could be said in its favour was that it was beautiful, that it touched Jesus keenly, and influenced all who saw it done. And that, as I read the story, was one reason at least why Jesus defended it. He allows the Beautiful. He would have the Beautiful honoured for its own sake even in a world so full of sorrow and trouble as this.

For my part, I am very grateful that this word of Christ's has been recorded. For it affords sufficient warrant for declaring the poet, the artist, the architect, and all those who are trying to make the world more beautiful, God's servants too, offering Him a gift He does not disdain to recognise, as truly as the physician, the philanthropist, and the preacher whose object is to make it better.

Beauty of form and structure has been lavished profusely by the Creator on creatures too small to be seen. There are more things grow out of God's earth than corn for food or timber for building houses. There's the heather and the wild flowers, the daisies and the violets. Hard-headed common-sense asks--What's the use of them? What good do they do? The answer is that they are beautiful, and that seems in God's sight to be justification enough for having made them.

So when we see Love breaking her alabaster box, and pouring forth her offering without stint, as she is doing every day--a mother lavishing care upon an ungrateful son, a husband surrounding a peevish wife with a tireless devotion, or a sister keeping her own love-dream at arm's length that she may guard and guide some graceless brother--let us lay our hands upon our lips when we are tempted to criticise. These actions may be foolish, extravagant, quixotic, and may outrage every canon of common-sense. But there is a fragrance about them without which the world would be much poorer. They are morally beautiful, and for that reason, our Lord Himself would teach us, they are not to be rudely handled nor judged by any hard standard.

Yes, but He said more than that. He found a more complete extenuation of Mary's extravagance. It was because she loved much. Her gift was an offering of love to Himself. "She hath done it for my burial." And that is the end of the whole matter, my brothers. Love is always extravagant when measured by the tape-line of bare duty. It always overflows. It breaks its box and gives everything it has. Yet, like the widow's cruse of old, its casket is never empty, for even when it has given its all, the next needy case will find succour at that door. Take your charity subscription sheet to the man who loudly asserts that too much money is being given to the Kirk this dull season, and what will you get? Take it also to the man who has signed a bigger cheque than he can well afford that the House of his God may be made beautiful, and it will be strange if you are sent empty away. Ah no, it is not Mary, whose devotion has found outlet in some sudden generosity, it is not she who neglects the poor.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, whose we are and Whom we seek to serve, enlighten us, we pray Thee, in the knowledge and practice of that supreme service which is love. May we learn that the greatest thing in our little lives is the love they hold for God and man. Teach us to appraise love's extra everywhere as those who have also felt and understand. And when our own gift and offering must needs be poor and small, may we be encouraged by the remembrance that even a widow's mite that love has offered is precious in Thy sight. Amen.

"I know both how to be

abased, and I know how to
abound."

(PHILIPPIANS iv. 12.)

THE ART OF "DOING WITHOUT"

XXVI

THE ART OF "DOING WITHOUT"

In one of his letters, Paul declares that he knows both how to be abased and how to abound. (Php_4:12) Most people, who did not stop to think, would be inclined to assert that the second of these lessons did not require much learning. It's an easy enough thing to be content, they would say, when you have plenty. Far harder is it to learn how to do without. I am not at all sure that that is right. I rather think that, of the two, abundance is a more searching test of a man's true quality than scarcity ever is. Carlyle has declared that for one man who will stand prosperity there are a hundred that will stand adversity.

But whether that be so or not, there is no question that it is a great thing to have the secret of doing without. And the merest glance abroad convinces us that it is of the utmost importance. In literature, for example, the quality which confers most distinction upon style is the art of omission. Did not Stevenson, himself a master, say that one who knew what to omit could make an Iliad of the daily newspaper? And the commonest blunders in the great business of living spring from ignorance of this secret. Why do some people make themselves disagreeable in a community by their touchiness and sulkiness? Simply because they have not learned how to be abased, how to live without getting their own way always, or without getting the praise or recognition to which they feel themselves entitled. It's an art, you see, which is well worth studying.

It has to be added that opportunities for practising it are never long wanting from anybody. We don't need to choose what things we shall do without, as a rule. The things are simply taken from us, or we never get them. It may be our own fault, or it may not. The result is the same. We have to do without. And we give away our inmost self by the fashion in which we do it.

There is, for example, the question of material goods. It's easy to talk unreal nonsense here, and we all must confess to wishing to have more of this sort of property than we do possess. But I honestly believe that the Apostle Paul did not greatly concern himself whether he was, materially speaking, well-off or ill-off. There are other men that one knows who have attained to the same point of view. There's no question either that for those whose religion is a vital thing it is the right point of view. The real man is independent of either riches or poverty, because the real man is the man inside. Riches is not you. Poverty is not you. You are what you are in your inner spirit. The riches there are invisible, but they are eternal--love, faith, hope, peace. And the man who has these, as Paul had them, can honestly say that it is of relatively small moment whether he is in a material sense, rich or poor.

Or take the question of friendship. Who can tell in adequate words what it means to have one true, loyal friend? But it has happened sometimes that the very closest friendships are broken and a man has to stand alone, not by his own choice, but in the grim ordering of things. There is a higher obligation than that you keep faith with your friends. First and foremost you must keep faith with

yourself, with your own conscience, with the voice within. And it may be that obedience to that involves seeming disloyalty to your friends, either for a while or permanently.

Such a time came to Paul. He had for conscience' sake to stand alone; and he did it. He was able to do it because his life did not rest for its ultimate pillar on his friendships any more than on his riches. Paul's real life was within. That inner life of his was enriched and made radiant and constant by one supreme fact--he believed that Jesus Christ his Lord deigned to share it with him in spirit. It is not irreverent to say that in his inner soul Paul lived with Christ.

Maybe his words are too big for us to use, but each of us who, at some hard bit of our journey, has appealed beyond friends to the Christ within, saying, "I have done, O Lord, what seemed to me right. And my friends are hurt and angry. But Thou knowest"--that man has learned, even in a slight degree, that there is a nearer and truer blessing possible for sinful men than even human friendship.

Then there is another thing that has sometimes to be done without. There are privileges that belong to every Christian man and woman, and are in a sense their birthright--the sense of God, confidence, quietness of heart, hope. There is no doubt that every real Christian should be walking and working in the light and gladness of God's presence.

But it is just as clear that not all are so blessed. It may be their own fault. Doubtless in many cases it is. Or it may be temperament or outward circumstances that determine it. Anyhow, many have to walk, not in the light but in uncertainty, perplexity, and misgiving, and sometimes even in darkness.

But "a bird is a bird even though it cannot sing." And a Christian is a Christian still even though his soul is dark within him, and he goes on in fear, never daring to look up and hope at all.

That is spiritual abasement. It ought not to be. It is never to be lightly acquiesced in. But it happens sometimes to earnest men and women, and it seems to be the settled condition of a few. Is it possible to do without these things? Can a man manage to exist and even move forward who has for a while lost his hold on his faith and on God? There are good and godly men who have done it. Brother Lawrence did it. Robertson of Brighton did it. Horace Bushnell did it. And many, many more. When all that they held most precious in faith had been eclipsed for the time, they steered still by the little light they knew. Though there should be no heaven, they resolved that they were called to be pure, truthful, patient, kind, since these things could never be wrong. Though there were no Christ, they would still follow where He had once seemed to invite them. And so doing and so following they came again to know. The darkness passed, and faith and gladness returned. They had lost hold of God for a little, but He had never lost hold of them. And, brethren, whatever the doubt or darkness be, that's always true. That is what makes it possible at all. That is what may make it even blessed. For

"It's better to walk in the dark with God

Than to walk alone in the light;

Better to walk with God by faith

Than to walk alone by sight."

PRAYER

Our Gracious God and Father in Heaven, whether Thou dost appoint for us poverty or riches, save us from thinking that a man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Beyond all our friendships, be Thou our Friend and Helper, and grant us to seek first the blessing of our God. Make us very sure, for their comforting and our own, that when men in their darkness sorely seek Thy face, the very ache of their quest is token that Thou hast already found them. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WONDER

"And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight."

(Exodus 3:3.)

XXVII

WONDER

Moses, adds one commentator significantly, was then eighty years of age. By the ordinary standards, he was an old man, yet he had not lost his youthful sense of wonder. It is a good sign, the best of signs, when a man has lived so long and yet finds wonder in his heart. It is a bad sign when a man at any age, or when a generation of men, find nothing in all God's world to wonder at.

Yet in many quarters it is regarded as the correct attitude to refrain from expressing surprise at anything, no matter how striking. The utmost concession to be made to what is really wonderful is a languid and patronising "Really?" That is always a pitiful thing. For where there is no wonder there can be no religion worthy of the name.

The instinct of worship and the instinct of wonder are very intimately related. And where the one has died, the other cannot be in a very healthy state. "I had rather," said Ruskin once, "live in a cottage and wonder at everything, than live in Warwick Castle and wonder at nothing." And his preference is to be commended. For he who has never wondered has never thought about God in any way to be called thinking.

It was our Lord Himself who said that the ideal of religion was the child-like heart. Everyone knows that these little people are always being brought to a halt to wonder at something. And Heaven is in very truth nearer to them then, and they are more truly filled with its spirit, than either you or I are when the glory and bloom of this world unfold before our eyes, or the thought of the Infinite and Eternal God comes to us and we have not felt impelled to bow our heads in silence and worship, spell-bound, and in a godly fear.

It is not hard to lay one's finger on some of the causes that have brought about this state of things. A silly fashion, for one cause, has decreed that wonder is vulgar. Why that should be so, no one can tell. But if there be higher intelligences than ours in God's Universe, and they see the sons of men, as they have plenty of chances to do, casting an indifferent glance at the full pomp and majesty of the setting sun, or reading such a Psalm as the 103rd with an untouched heart, how they must marvel indeed!

And then, of course, familiarity tends to blunt the sense of wonder in a certain and common type of mind. The best men have always resisted that tendency and recognised that it works harm to life and character. They have remembered to look for God in the common and familiar, and that is a search that goes far to make a man a saint, just because it is a continual prayer, a continual holding open of the heart to God. His answer is to fill the wondering heart, bit by bit, with Himself.

Ignorance, too, is often a cause, the kind of ignorance that calls itself knowledge. It is an innocent delusion on the part of the youthful tyro in Science that after he has made a little experiment with a prism and a beam of sunlight, there is nothing wonderful in the rainbow. Pure, profound Science on the other hand, speaks very humbly--and wonders all the while.

Nature is dumb and silent concerning the Infinite behind it to him who goes but to catalogue and dissect. Take a heart that can wonder with you on your country-walk, open your eyes and look, open your heart like a child and listen, and you will find, as Moses found, that even in a bush there may be the Voice of God. Hold the door of your heart ajar in simple wonder, and some thing of God will enter to cleanse and freshen it, as the hot and dusty street is washed by the rain from Heaven.

Just as he who goes to Nature with a heart that cannot wonder, will find no message there for him, so he who looks out upon the sanctities of home, of human life and love, in that dull mood of mere acceptance, must often find himself hard pressed for material when he makes his thanksgiving to God. George Eliot has spoken somewhere of the agony of the thought that we can never atone to the dead for the stunted affection we gave them, for the "little reverence we showed to that sacred human soul that lived so close to us, and was the divinest thing God has given us to know." The divinest thing God has given us to know!

Have we realised that that gift of God to us lives now in the same home with us? Do you know what it is? It is a wife's devotion, a mother's care, a brother's comradeship, a sister's love. It is the trust and affection of little children, and the patience of those who love us. And yet there have been men--judge ye if this be not true--who have lived close to gifts of God like these, and taken them all unquestioned and never wondered at the undeserved bounty of them or their continuance from day to day.

How easy it is to discover the gifts and charm of a stranger, how easy to wonder at that! But to wonder at the sacrifice and the patience of the love that dwells under the same roof with us, and stoops, in Mrs Browning's happy phrase, "to the level of each day's most quiet need," how few of us do that! And yet, without daily wonder, how can we be sure that we do not slight it, or requite it ill, how can we truly give our thanks to God whose gift it is?

Most important of all, he who brings no wonder in his heart can never be touched with the sense of God. The lack of the great deep and awful wonder of our fathers in all their thought and speech about God, has brought it about that our religious speech to-day is too often either superficial, flippant and easy, or syllogistic, mechanical, and hard. It is the absence of wonder that tempts men to imagine that God can be enclosed in any formula whatever, or brought to the hearts of men in so many rigid propositions. If men would but give their wonder expression when they frame their creeds, there would be less chafing where the edges are too sharp.

I am bound to confess that my sympathies are altogether with a working man who once listened to a fervid evangelist at a street corner unfolding a scheme of salvation as clean-cut and mechanical as a problem of Euclid, and buttonholed him afterwards to inquire if he had ever read any astronomy. No, he said, he had not. "That's a pity," said the artisan, "for, eh, man, but ye have an awfu' wee God." In all reverence, my brothers, that is what the absence of wonder brings us to, a small God, a small salvation, and a merely mechanical Christ.

Men have sometimes asked what that childhood of the Kingdom is on which Jesus laid so much stress, and some have taken it to mean renunciation of intellect and reason in favour of a Church's dogma. But it means, says John Kelman, something far more human and more beautiful--"it means wonder and humility and responsiveness, the straight gaze of childhood past conventionalities, the simplicity of a mind open to any truth, and a heart with love alive in it." That is surely right. That is what becoming a little child in Christ's sense does mean. First of all, wonder.

PRAYER

Almighty and eternal God, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, dwelling in light that is inaccessible and full of glory, whom no man hath seen or can see, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God! Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it. O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Amen.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

"If ye then, being evil, know ... how much more ... your heavenly Father."

(Luke 11:13.)

XXVIII

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

If it were a conceivable thing that we had to part with all the words of Scripture save one, and if we were allowed to choose that one, there are some of us who would elect to retain that great declaration of Jesus--"If ye being evil know ... how much more ... your heavenly Father." For, having that, we should still be rich in knowledge of the Love and Fatherhood of God. We should still know Christ's dominating conception of God, and have His last and highest word regarding Him. We should still be able to rise, as Jesus not only warrants but invites us to do, from the little broken arc of true fatherhood on earth to the perfect round in Heaven.

At the warm reassuring touch of that "How much more your heavenly Father" whole systems of brainy divinity vanish away! The truth of the Fatherhood of God, vouched for and lived on by Jesus, kills men's hard and unworthy and hurtful thoughts about God as sunshine kills the creatures that breed and prevail in darkness and ignorance. They can no more live alongside of a realisation that Christ's name for God is His true name, and really describes His attitude to all the sons of men, than the dark, creepy things that live under the stone can remain there when you turn it over and let in the air and the light.

But, say some, you must not carry the truth of God's Fatherhood too far. What is too far? I ask. I want to carry it, and I believe Christ means us to carry it, as far as ever it will stretch, and that is "as far as the East is from the West." Think of a father's GOOD-WILL. It is conceivable that other men may do you a deliberate wrong. But you are entitled to believe that your father won't. You may not understand what he proposes, but you can be quite sure that he means only your good. Henry Drummond tells how his early days were made miserable by the conception he had of God as of some great staring Eye in the heavens watching all he did. But that is a policeman's eye, not a father's.

There are many tokens that, even yet, we have not realised what these blessed words of Jesus mean and imply. A mother vainly trying to answer the old, old question why her little one was taken from her, will say, "Perhaps I was too fond of him." Or, should sudden sorrow come, the explanation suggested by the troubled one himself is, "I was too happy." There are plenty of people who are afraid to declare that they feel very well or are very happy, in case the upper Powers should hear and send trouble, apparently out of sheer malice! "Bethankit, what a bonny creed!" Oh! what a dreadful caricature of God! How it must pain the Father to hear His children talking so!

There is another mark of fatherhood, as we know it on earth--COMPASSION, pity, the willingness to forgive. There is no forgiveness on earth like a father's or a mother's, none so willing, none that will wait so long and yet give itself without stint at last. Pity, as the world of business and of ordinary relationship knows it, is at best a transient emotion. It murmurs a few easy words and then forgets. But parent love suffereth long and is kind, hopes against hope, and waits and is still hopeful when every one else has written the offender down irreclaimable. It is such compassion and pity for us sinners, how great soever our sins be, that Jesus would have us come for to God in Heaven.

But will not men abuse such patience and long-suffering? it is asked. Is it not a risky thing to tell them that God is our Father? It is. But it is the risk that Love takes cheerfully, and that only Love can take. And when men talk lightly and complacently about the great mercy of God, there is something, I think, which they have forgotten, namely, that at the heart of the divine Fatherly forgiveness there lies the shadow of the Cross. I do not say that in any conventional sense. I say it because I have seen for myself that at the heart of all true earthly forgiveness of a fatherly sort there lies this same mysterious shadow. Shall not the father forgive his returning prodigal? Yea, verily, and with all his heart. But, ah, before that, think how the father has suffered with his son, and for his son. The prodigal's shame is the father's shame too, and lies heavy on his heart. And it is out of a chamber where he and that pain have long been companions that the earthly father issues to welcome and receive at last the lad who has sought his face penitent and in his right mind. The welcome is real. The forgiveness is full and free. And yet behind it there is sacrifice. The price of it is suffering. Aback of it lies--the Cross! That is what silences cheap thinking and glib speech about the forgiveness of God. If God's long-suffering be like a father's here, it is, first, long suffering.

The danger, however, is not that we abuse God's grace knowingly and in callous complacency. Far more is it, I think, that we never actually accept and realise and build our lives upon the gracious compassion of the Heavenly Father and His willingness to forgive.

Every parent ought to know Coventry Patmore's beautiful lyric, "The Toys." In it a father tells how, when his little son had been disobedient again and again, he struck him, and sent him with hard words and unkissed to bed--"his mother, who was patient, being dead." And when, later, he went upstairs to see him, he found him asleep, his lashes still wet with tears, and--what touched him most--on a table beside his bed all his little treasures heaped together to comfort his sad heart--a box of counters, and a red-veined stone, a piece of glass abraded by the beach, and six or seven shells, a bottle with blue bells, and two French copper coins--all his little store of precious things.

So when that night I prayed

To God, I wept and said--

"Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,

Not vexing Thee in death,

And Thou rememberest of what toys

We made our joys,

How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I, whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath and say:
'I will be sorry for their childishness.'

One word more about our Father's SILENCE. Our fathers here on earth had their silences when we were children. We asked him for something that we wanted very much. And he gave no reply. We went on asking. We expected to get what we had set our hearts on. He heard us hoping and believing that this good thing would come to us, and he held his peace. But we knew that silence, and we trusted it. We were quite sure that he would have told us if we were deceiving ourselves, that his gift, when it came, would, at least, not be a mere mockery of our hopes.

And I often think of these words of Christ's, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" when I stand by a graveside, and speak the words of radiant hope with which we lay our beloved to rest. Our Father hears us speak that hope. He has heard hearts in an agony through all the generations wish that it might be true--that this bleak fact of Death is not the end, but only the beginning of a better thing. But He keeps silence. We have no sure proof, only the blessed hope of the Christian evangel.

He keeps silence. But, my brethren, can we not trust that silence since it is our Father's? We have asked this bread in our pain and through our tears. We have asked it because it seems to us we need it so. And whatever gift His silence hides, this at least is certain, it is not, it cannot be, only a stone.

PRAYER

Almighty God, who through Jesus Christ has taught us to call Thee our Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast chosen a name so dear to us to reveal Thy care and Love. When our way is dark and our burden is heavy and our hearts are perplexed, grant us the grace to know that Thou who art directing every step of our journey art a God of Love, and Thy true and perfect Name is Our Father in Heaven. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE UNRETURNING BRAVE

"Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

(Matthew 16:25.)

XXIX

THE UNRETURNING BRAVE

(EASTER DAY, 1915)

NOTE.--I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll's "When the Wounded Go Home," a tender and courageous message.

Christmas in war time was like an evil dream. Easter is like a breath from Heaven itself, a wind from the pure and blessed heights of God blowing the clouds of battle-smoke apart for a brief space so that we all may see again that beyond the smoke and beyond grim death itself there is the Life Enduring, a Divine Love compared to which ours at the best is untender and hard, a Fatherly welcome beside which welcomes here are faint and cold. This is the strangest Easter Day the world has ever known, yet never have the thousands and thousands of stricken homes and sore hearts needed more the living hope that is begotten anew in the Christian Church this day by our Lord's rising again from the dead. It is assuredly of God's mercy that Easter should fall in these days, when so many fathers and mothers, wives and sisters and lovers need its hope and comfort so.

We cannot but think to-day of the many, many homes in our own and other lands from which strong and brave men marched away weeks or months ago, because they had heard the call, and were willing to make the supreme sacrifice for righteousness' sake, who will never come back again, who have died a soldier's death and sleep in a soldier's grave--fathers, husbands, sons, lovers, gallant men, dear lads, cheerful, willing, dauntless. You find their names by the hundred and the thousand in the casualty lists, but the loss you cannot measure unless you could see all the shadowed homes. How many such homes there are in our own land alone, How many such in our own little circle!

Try to realise that, and then ask if a more gracious message could fall upon all these hearts to-day than the Easter message of the Christian Church,--that there is no death and that its seeming victory is not a victory. The old, old question, If a man die shall he live again? is answered to-day by the triumphant Yes! of Christendom. Yes, he never ceases to live. From the inferno of the battlefield the mortally stricken do but pass across the bridge and stream of death to God's Other Side. When they fall in battle, they fall into His everlasting Arms. They do not die. They are not dead. It is only their poor mortal bodies that the shrieking shells can maim or destroy. They themselves, the real self and spirit of them, no material force can hurt, for that belongs to a higher kingdom than the visible, and its true goal and home are not here at all.

To all who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death in these days, to all who have watched their beloved go out where every true man would wish to go, and know only too surely that they shall never return,--to these to-day Jesus Christ has His Word to speak,--and would that all might hear it and give it room in their hearts to do its blessed work! It is to Him we owe it, and He is our authority for believing that beyond the darkness and separation of death there is the morning of a new and fairer day. The valley of the Shadow, yea, the valley of battle itself opens out again at its far end to the sun's rising and the untrammelled life in the light and liberty of God. The happy warrior is borne by gentle hands to God's own land of peace, where the fret and fury of battle slip from him like a discarded garment, and beside the still waters of that better country he finds healing for his hurt. It is that quiet and blessed hope that is being reborn in our hearts this day as the Church keeps her festival of a Risen and a Living Christ. It is that lively hope the Church offers for comfort to all stricken homes and to every sorrowing heart.

They offered themselves, these gallant lads, not for anything they hoped to gain, but for the sake of honour and liberty, of justice and righteousness. And when a man casts himself on God in that fashion, offering not the words of his lips, nor the homage of his worship, but himself, all that he has, his life and all that life holds for him, think you that upon that poor soul, with his priceless offering borne humbly in his hands, the God and Father of us all is going to turn His back? "He that loseth his life," said Jesus, "for my sake shall find it."

There are times when the most gracious doctrine is not gracious enough to represent and embody the Spirit of Christ to us. We want something more, and we often seek it and sometimes find it in poetry, in art, or, best of all, in the silence of our own hearts when God-given instinct whispers what no words or doctrine can ever express. Such a time is now. Such a need is ours to-day.

I make no defence of it theologically, and I ask no man to accept it who does not feel it clamouring at his heart for entrance, but I confess that for me a couple of lines of John Hay's in his "Pike County Ballads" strike a note which all that I know in my heart of the Spirit of Christ leaps up to welcome and approve. It is when he has told the story of Jim Bludso's sacrifice. Jim was engineer on the "Prairie Belle," a river-steamboat, and he was rather a rough, careless man. But when the steamer took fire, it was Jim who held her against the bank till everybody got safely off except himself. With eyes wide open to what he did, he sacrificed his life to save the other souls on board. Hay sums up in these lines:--

"And Christ ain't going to be too hard

On a man that died for men."

I leave it there. I trust I am a loyal son of the Church, but I must have a place in my creed somewhere for the hope which these lines express that Christ ain't going to be too hard on a man that died for men.

But there is something more to be said. Every chaplain at the front tells us that the most careless and irreligious youths and men take up a wonderfully different attitude out there. Men pray in the trenches who have never prayed before. I heard some stories recently that brought tears to my eyes, of brave and simple confessions made at little gatherings for prayer in strange places, by some of those very lads whom we reckoned indifferent and heedless before they left home. And some of them, turning their faces simply and earnestly, and by an old, old instinct of the heart,

towards God and His Christ before the battle broke upon them, some of them have fallen on the field!

Many, many more there must be who turned them Godwards even at the eleventh hour in one brief upward glance to ask forgiveness and strength to play the man, about whom no chaplain can report, for no one knows or saw or heard save Christ Himself. But there's a glorious page in the Gospel to assure us beyond all doubt or question that no one who makes that appeal, though it be the dying thief himself, ever makes it in vain.

And there we leave the issue--with God, who is kinder than our kindest, and whose mercy is from everlasting. It is He who has brought us this blessed hope, through His Son, this Easter Day, and we honour His gift best by taking it in all its breadth and comfort to our hearts. To the broken-hearted wife or mother, to whom the bald War Office report has come, let us take this comfort,--"Your beloved is not dead. God has him in His gracious care and keeping till the day break and the shadows flee away." For that is the Easter message, God be thanked. And this is Easter Day.

PRAYER

To Thy merciful care and keeping we commend all the sons and daughters of affliction, and especially those who in this great contest have lost some loved one. Grant that even through their tears they may discern the glory that belongs to those who have given their lives a ransom for many. Be Thou their help and their strength, and may the sympathy of all who know them be for them an earnest and token of Thy great Love and Compassion. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF SUNSET

"The heavens declare the glory of God."

(Psalms 19:1.)

XXX

THE SACRAMENT OF SUNSET

"The sky," says Ruskin, "is the part of Nature in which God has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more from the sole and evident purpose of touching him, than in any other of His works." It looks like the truth. For there is no scene of earth so fair or majestic that man cannot spoil it. Where the "cataract exults among the hills, and wears its crown of rainbows all alone," he will build him a power-house to supply current to some distant town. But he cannot touch the heavens. In the heart of some fairy glen he will placard the virtues of somebody's pills, and plaster the gate-posts in a sweet country lane with the specious claims of some quack doctor, but above it all, it is God, and God alone, who spreadeth out the heavens like a curtain and in them has set a tabernacle for the sun. Even in places where the face of earth wears no suggestion of natural beauty the face of the sky redeems it from evil. For, above the squalor of the city's meanest slum, burn the great fires of the setting sun, and overhead the fleecy white clouds sail silently all night long.

But, of it all, the glory of the sunset is chief. The dawn has its cold splendours too, but not many of us are there to see it when it is at its best. It is at eventide, when the work of the day is done, and the spell of its restfulness lays the senses open, it is then chiefly that God unfolds these splendid harmonies of colour in the western heavens. And, by consent, on this Ayrshire coast, on which I look out as I write, these glories can be seen to great advantage. It is into no flat expanse of water that the dying sun sinks here. The peaks and crags of Arran invest its passage with an indescribable pomp and majesty, standing out against it like the massive pillars of some giant gateway of the West. It is never twice the same. Sometimes lurid and blazing, with masses of thunder-cloud piled high, all their outer edges rimmed with fire; and, next night, peaceful and level, a study in straight lines, as if the great Artist, with even brush, had washed the sky with bands of grey and blue and gold. Each evening God has His own picture for us, His own handiwork, unspoiled by man. How many of us ever pause to recognise its beauty? What does it mean that such a prodigality of harmonious colours should be the most ordinary feature of our evening hour? Is it that God Himself takes delight in the beauty of it all, for its own sake, rejoicing, like all good workmen, in the work of His hands? Or has He some purpose with regard to His children of mankind? Is it, as Ruskin says, for the sake of pleasing man? How unthankful and unmindful we are, if that be so!

The sunset teaches us to put together these two ideas--beauty, beyond the wit of man to portray, and God. There is plenty of ugliness and sin in the world, and the life of men. Man himself recognises how much of the beauty that might have been has been marred and disfigured by him.

Yet in his heart he worships it, and feels after it afar off. And in the evening sky it is written that Beauty belongeth supremely unto God.

Whatever that far-off divine event be, to which the whole creation moves, one of its features shall be, must be, a beauty which shall fully satisfy. For beauty and God cannot be divorced. And when, of an evening, God for His own good pleasure, working with those material elements which have no power to disobey His behests, unfolds His will in such dazzling visions of splendour, is He not declaring that the end and goal of life itself, when His purpose therewith is completed, and Man, too, has fallen into harmony with His will, shall be fair, and satisfying, and beautiful?

Let us not be afraid to say and believe that God speaks to us in the sunset. If I pick up the receiver of a telephone and hear my friend announce some good news that fills my heart with gladness, it does not disturb me to remember that the wire itself has no power to speak. For I feel that somewhere at the end of the wire is a mind and a heart like my own who is using the dead, soulless wire as a medium of speech with me. When the glories of the sun's setting fall upon your heart like a benediction, stirring you to devout and grateful thought, breathing peace upon you, cleansing your desires of all that is mean and sordid, do not be afraid to believe that, behind and beyond all that is material and visible, there is the Mind and Heart in whose image yours was made, whose gift peace is, whose whisper, though it come along dead ether-waves to reach you, is His whisper nevertheless.

It is perhaps natural that the prevailing quality of the thoughts that arise within us when we watch the setting sun should be pensive, tender, and, not seldom, a little sad. For it speaks of the end of the day and the coming night. Its charm and spell are like that of autumn, the remembrance of what has gone, the tender grace of a day that is dead. For all the beauty and wonder of this world, there is a tear at the heart of things. Beneath all our laughter and happiness there lies that deeper note. The night cometh. There is an end to it all--friendship, love, happiness, work, life itself.

"For be the long day never so long,

At last it ringeth to evensong."

And yet, and yet, my brothers, the end is beautiful, more beautiful even than the beginning. God has made the day's death to be exceeding fair. The sun passes gloriously to its rest. Hopefully too, for, passing thus, it promises a new and fairer morning. So do God's children die.

PRAYER

O Lord our God, who hast written Thy Word of hope and promise in the evening sky, be near us when our day is done, and the wind has fallen silent, and the night is waiting. Put us to sleep in a chamber of peace whose windows open toward the sun rising, and, when we awake, may we be still with Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

S. Christ's Gracious Invitation

Christ's Gracious Invitation.

[Raleigh? N.C.: s. n., between [FOR THE SOLDIERS.] No. 25.

CHRIST'S GRACIOUS INVITATION.

"Ye sinners, come: 'tis Jesus' voice;

The gracious call obey:

Mercy invites to heavenly joys,

And can you yet delay?"

More precious than a stream of water to a traveler perishing with thirst--better than a skillful physician to one dying of a dangerous disease--more welcome than a reprieve to a condemned rebel, is the voice of mercy saying to the convinced sinner, "COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY-LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST." Matthew 11:28.

These are words that can never lose their sweetness nor power by age or repetition. They are as true and as full of grace and mercy now as when first uttered; and are as free to those who hear the gospel in the present day, as they were to those who first heard them in the land of Galilee. Who is he that speaks? It is the voice of "Immanuel, God with us." What man or angel could invite a guilty world to come to him. Neither Moses nor Elijah, nor Paul, nor John, presumed to call men to look to them for rest. Only He in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," could give rest to every troubled soul.

It is the voice of a loving Saviour, the good Shepherd of the sheep, the compassionate Redeemer of men, whose heart is an ocean of love, and whose love led him to take the form of a servant, and to humble himself to the death of the cross. To whom does he speak these words? To all who hear the sound of the gospel. They are addressed to the man of pleasure or of sorrow, the man of wealth or of deepest penury, the man esteemed for his morality or notorious for his vice, to Jew and Gentile, to "every creature under heaven." And yet they seem specially suited to those burdened with a sense of their guilt. To those who feel they have a blind mind and a hard heart, and a load of sin that presses them to the ground, these words come at words of peace and hope.

How must you come? Not by a bodily approach; this is now impossible. The heavens have received him out of our sight. A local coming, if it were practicable, might be useless. Many came to Christ when he was on earth; they heard his words and saw his miracles of mercy, and went unblest, for they had not faith. Coming to Christ is the act of the soul; it is a spiritual approach, and is called trusting, receiving, believing on him. It is a full persuasion that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of the lost. It is the heavy-laden sinner giving full credit to the truth and sincerity of gospel invitations and promises. It is the hearty belief that Jesus is able and willing to save from sin and all its consequences. It is a sincere humble dependence upon the merits of his sacrifice for

pardon and eternal life. Will YOU come to Christ? Then come just as you are, helpless, unworthy, full of guilt and misery. You can come in no other way, for a sense of sin and ruin lies at the foundation of the religion of the gospel. Do not for a moment suppose that you must make yourself better, or prepare your heart for a worthy reception of Christ, but come at once--come as you are. He saves none because their sins are comparatively few and unnoticed by their fellow-men; he rejects none because their sins are many and great.

Christ knew the worst of all who would come to him. He knew the depths of sin to which men would go. He understood the deep spiritual necessities of every immortal soul for time and eternity. He knew that men burdened and bound by sin would need such an invitation and assurance as he has given. And because he knew that his grace would be sufficient for the worst of the human race, he therefore said, Come unto me, and I will not cast you out.

If he made such a promise, what can prevent his fulfilling it? Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than any sinner who seeks to him be excluded from his mercy. He will not cast you out because of the number of your sins, nor because of their greatness and enormity, nor because of the peculiar aggravations attending them, nor because they have been of long continuance--from early youth to hoary age. You may be a profligate and an outcast, abandoned by men as beyond the hope of recovery, lost to yourself and your friends, yet say not that you are excluded from the invitation. Even you are addressed as though by name. The invitation says, "Whosoever," Revelation 22:7; that includes you. "If any man," John 7:37; that embraces you. To "all;" that takes you in. It says, "I will in no wise"--not by any means, or on any account whatever--"cast him out." Surely this is enough. No man who hears the gospel has any pretense to say that he is not invited. Stand where we may on this wide earth, among nominal christians at home, or among the heathen abroad, or in the midst of Jews or Mohammedans--to those of every clime and every age and every condition of life--to the lovers of pleasure, or wealth, or any of the things of this world, and to the most guilty and the most hardened of the human race, with confidence and joy these words may be addressed, "Come unto Christ." The promise is that he will give you REST. And this includes pardon and acceptance with God. It includes a deliverance from the condemnation and the tyranny of sin, from fear and remorse, from all spiritual enemies and all vain self-righteous hopes. It is a cordial for an accusing conscience, it is consolation for the oppressed, it is peace for the troubled spirit, it is a balm for every evil that can afflict us in our passage through life, and it is the earnest and pledge of the glorious, pure, eternal rest of heaven.

What is the warrant of all this? The character of him who spoke these words. Christ is love incarnate--divine love in human nature. The great end for which he came into the world was to seek and to save sinners. He came to honor and obey the law what man had broken, and to bring an everlasting righteousness, which is "unto all and upon all them that believe." Romans 3:22. He came to die, "the just for the unjust," 1 Peter 3:18, and to pay the penalty that man's sins had required, by offering himself as an atonement for guilt. The promise that he makes rests on the value of the infinite price he paid to secure our salvation. He does not offer a gift that cost him nothing, and yet it may be had "without money and without price."

Consider too that he is "meek and lowly of heart," and will not proudly repel or scorn you for your unworthiness. When did he ever turn away from the cry of distress, or from the wail of the most abject? When did he ever reject those who sought his aid, however lowly their condition or great

their sorrow? All who have come to him have been welcomed; and if you draw nigh in faith he will not cast you out. That you may come aright, he promises the aid of his Holy Spirit to make you sensible of your sinfulness, and of his grace and ability to save you.

What reception will you give to this "golden saying," this gracious invitation? The case is urgent; come speedily. There is danger if you delay. Do not speculate, nor argue, nor make excuse, nor hesitate, nor stand looking at a distance, but COME, and in faith cast yourself at the feet of Christ with the earnest penitential cry, "Lord, save, or I perish. Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

INVITATION.

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,

Weak and wounded, sick and sore,

Jesus ready stands to save you,

Full of pity, love, and power:

He is able,

He is willing: doubt no more.

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,

Lost and ruined by the fall;

If you tarry till you're better,

You will never come at all:

Not the righteous--

Sinners Jesus came to call.

Let not conscience make you linger,

Nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness he requireth,

Is to feel your need of him:

This he gives you--

'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Agonizing in the garden,

Lo, your Saviour prostrate lies!

On the bloody tree behold him!

Hear him cry before he dies,

"It is finished!"

Sinners, will not this suffice?
Lo, th' incarnate God, ascended.
Pleads the merit of his blood;
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.
Saints and angels, joined in concert,
Sing the praises of the Lamb;
While the blissful seats of heaven
Sweetly echo with his name.
Hallelujah!

Sinners here may sing the same.

ACCEPTANCE.

Just as I am--without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me.
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.
Just as I am; and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot--
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.
Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
With fears within, and foes without--
Lamb of God, I come.
Just as I am--poor, wretched, blind:
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find.

O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,

Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relive,

Because thy promise I believe

O Lamb of God, I come.

S. Practical Directions How to Grow in Grace and Make Progress in Piety

"Practical Directions How to Grow in Grace and Make Progress in Piety"

Archibald Alexander (1772-1851)

When there is no growth, there is no life. We have taken it for granted that among the regenerate, at the moment of their conversion, there is a difference in the vigour of the principle of spiritual life, analogous to what we observe in the natural world; and no doubt the analogy holds as it relates to growth. As some children who were weak and sickly in the first days of their existence become healthy and strong, and greatly outgrow others who commenced life with far greater advantages, so it is with the 'new man'. Some who enter on the spiritual life with a weak and wavering faith, by the blessing of God on a diligent use of means, far outstrip others who in the beginning were greatly before them.

It is often observed that there are professors who never appear to grow, but rather decline perpetually, until they become in spirit and conduct entirely conformed to the world, from whence they professed to come out. The result in regard to them is one of two things; they either retain their standing in the Church and become dead formalists, 'having a name to live while they are dead'—'a form of godliness, while they deny the power thereof'—or they renounce their profession and abandon their connection with the Church, and openly take their stand with the enemies of Christ, and not infrequently go beyond them all in daring impiety. Of all such we may confidently say, 'They were not of us, or undoubtedly they would have continued with us.' But of such I mean not now to speak further, as the case of back-sliders will be considered hereafter.

That growth in grace is gradual and progressive is very evident from Scripture; as in all those passages where believers are exhorted to mortify sin and crucify the flesh, and to increase and abound in all the exercises of piety and good works. One text on this subject will be sufficient: 'Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' And this passage furnishes us with information as to the origin and nature of this growth. It is knowledge, even the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Just so far as any soul increases in spiritual knowledge, in the same degree it grows in grace. Persons may advance rapidly in other kinds of knowledge, and yet make no advances in piety, but the contrary. They may even have their minds

filled with correct theoretical knowledge of divine truth, and yet its effect may not be to humble, but to 'puff up'. Many an accurate and profound theologian has lived and died without a ray of saving light. The natural man, however gifted with talent or enriched with speculative knowledge, has no spiritual discernment. After all his acquisitions, he is destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But it should not be forgotten that divine illumination is not independent of the Word, but accompanies it. Those Christians, therefore, who are most diligent in attending upon the Word in public and private, will be most likely to make progress in piety.

Young converts are prone to depend too much on joyful frames, and love high excitement in their devotional exercises; but their heavenly Father cures them of this folly, by leaving them for a season to walk in darkness and struggle with their own corruptions. When most sorely pressed and discouraged, however, He strengthens them with might in the inner man. He enables them to stand firmly against temptation; or, if they slide, he quickly restores them, and by such exercises they become much more sensible of their entire dependence than they were at first. They learn to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, and to distrust entirely their own wisdom and strength, and to rely for all needed aid on the grace of Jesus Christ. Such a soul will not readily believe that it is growing in grace. But to be emptied of self-dependence, and to know that we need aid for every duty, and even for every good thought, is an important step in our progress in piety. The flowers may have disappeared from the plant of grace, and even the leaves may have fallen off, and wintry blasts may have shaken it, but now it is striking its roots deeper, and becoming every day stronger to endure the rugged storm.

One circumstance attends the growth in grace of a real Christian which renders it exceedingly difficult for him to know the fact, upon a superficial view of his case, and that is, the clearer and deeper insight which he obtains into the evils of his own heart. Now this is one of the best evidences of growth; but the first conclusion is apt to be, 'I am growing worse every day; I see innumerable evils springing up within me which I never saw before.' This person may be compared to one shut up in a dark room where he is surrounded by many loathsome objects. If a single ray of light be let into the room, he sees the more prominent objects; but if the light gradually increases, he sees more and more of the filth by which he has been surrounded. It was there before, but he did not perceive it. His increased knowledge of the fact is a sure evidence of increasing light.

Hypocrites often learn to talk by rote of the wickedness of their hearts; but go to them and seriously accuse them of indulging secret pride or envy or covetousness or any other heart sins, and they will be offended. Their confessions of sin are only intended to raise them in the opinion of others, as truly humble persons; and not that any should believe that corruption abounds within them.

Growth in grace is evinced by a more habitual vigilance against besetting sins and temptations, and by greater self-denial in regard to personal indulgence. A growing conscientiousness in regard to what may be called minor duties is also a good sign. The counterfeit of this is a scrupulous conscience, which sometimes haggles at the most innocent gratifications, and has led some to hesitate about taking their daily food.

Increasing spiritual mindedness is a sure evidence of progress in piety; and this will always be accompanied by deadness to the world. Continued aspirations to God, in the house and by the way, in lying down and rising up, in company and in solitude, indicate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency all progress in sanctification is made.

A victory over besetting sins by which the person was frequently led away, shows an increased vigour in the renewed principle.

Increasing solicitude for the salvation of men, sorrow on account of their sinful and miserable condition, and a disposition tenderly to warn sinners of their danger, evince a growing state of

piety.

It is also a strong evidence of growth in grace when you can bear injuries and provocations with meekness and when you can from the heart desire the temporal and eternal welfare of your bitterest enemies.

An entire and confident reliance on the promises and providence of God, however dark may be your horizon, or however many difficulties environ you, is a sign that you have learned to live by faith; and humble contentment with your condition, though it be one of poverty and obscurity, shows that you have profited by sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Diligence in the duties of our calling, with a view to the glory of God, is an evidence not to be despised.

Indeed there is no surer standard of spiritual growth than a habit of aiming at the glory of God in everything. That mind which is steady to the main end gives as good evidence of being touched by divine grace as the tendency of the needle to the pole proves that it has been touched by the magnet. Increasing love to the brethren is a sure sign of growth; for as brotherly love is a proof of the existence of grace, so is the exercise of such love a proof of vigour in the divine life. This love, when pure, is not confined within those limits which party spirit circumscribes, but overleaping all the barriers of sects and denominations, it embraces the disciples of Christ wherever it finds them.

A healthy state of piety is always a growing state; that child which grows not at all must be sickly. If we would enjoy spiritual comfort, we must be in a thriving condition. None enjoy the pleasures of bodily health, but they who are in health. If we would be useful to the Church and the world we must be growing Christians. If we would live in daily preparation for our change, we must endeavour to grow in grace daily.

The aged saint, laden with the fruits of righteousness, is like a shock of corn fully ripe, which is ready for the garner; or like a mature fruit which gradually loosens its hold of the tree until at last it gently falls off. Thus the aged, mature Christian departs in peace.

As growth in grace is gradual, and the progress from day to day imperceptible, we should aim to do something in this work every day. We should die daily unto sin and live unto righteousness. Sometimes the children of God grow faster when in the fiery furnace than elsewhere. As metals are purified by being cast into the fire, so saints have their dross consumed and their evidences brightened, by being cast into the furnace of affliction. 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you', but rejoice, because 'the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory'.

We shall here present some PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS HOW TO GROW IN GRACE AND MAKE PROGRESS IN PIETY.

1. Set it down as a certainty that this object will never be attained without vigorous continued effort; and it must not only be desired and sought, but must be considered more important than all other pursuits, and be pursued in preference to everything else which claims your attention.

2. While you determine to be assiduous in the use of the appointed means of sanctification, you must have it deeply fixed in your mind that nothing can be effected in this work without the aid of the Divine Spirit. 'Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase.' The direction of the old divines is good: 'use the means as vigorously as if you were to be saved by your own efforts, and yet trust as entirely to the grace of God as if you made use of no means whatsoever'.

3. Be much in the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and strive to obtain clear and consistent views of the plan of redemption. Learn to contemplate the truth in its true nature, simply, devoutly, and long at a time, that you may receive on your soul the impression which it is calculated to make. Avoid curious and abstruse speculations respecting things unrevealed, and do not indulge a spirit of controversy. Many lose the benefit of the good impression which the truth is calculated to make, because they do not view it simply in its own nature, but as related to some dispute, or as bearing on some other point. As when a man would receive the genuine impression which a beautiful landscape is adapted to make, he must not be turned aside by minute inquiries respecting the botanical character of the plants, the value of the timber, or the fertility of the soil; but he must place his mind in the attitude of receiving the impression which the combined view of the objects before him will naturally produce on the taste. In such cases the effect is not produced by any exertion of the intellect; all such active striving is unfavorable, except in bringing the mind to its proper state. When the impression is most perfect, we feel as if we were mere passive recipients of the effect. To this there is a striking analogy in the way in which the mind is impressed with divine truth. It is not the critic, the speculative or polemic theologian, who is most likely to receive the right impression, but the humble, simple-hearted, contemplative Christian. It is necessary to study the Scriptures critically, and to defend the truth against opposers; but the most learned critic and the most profound theologian must learn to sit at the feet of Jesus in the spirit of a child, or they are not likely to be edified by their studies.

4. Pray constantly and fervently for the influences of the Holy Spirit. No blessing is so particularly and emphatically promised in answer to prayer as this; and if you would receive this divine gift, to be in you as a well of water springing up to everlasting life, you must not only pray, but you must watch against everything in your heart or life which has a tendency to grieve the Spirit of God. Of what use is it to pray, if you indulge evil thoughts and imaginations almost without control? or if you give way to the evil passions of anger, pride and avarice, or bridle not your tongue from evil speaking? Learn to be conscientious; that is, obey the dictates of your conscience uniformly. Many are conscientious in some things and not in others; they listen to the monitor within when it directs to important duties; but in smaller matters they often disregard the voice of conscience, and follow present inclination. Such cannot grow in grace.

5. Take more time for praying to 'the Father who is in secret', and for looking into the state of your soul. Redeem an hour daily from sleep if you cannot obtain it otherwise; and as the soul's concerns are apt to get out of order, and more time is needed for thorough self-examination than an hour a day, set apart, not periodically but as your necessities require, days of fasting and humiliation before God. On these occasions, deal faithfully with yourself. Be in earnest to search out all your secret sins and to repent of them. Renew your covenant with God, and form holy resolutions of amendment in the strength of divine grace. If you find, upon examination, that you have been living in any sinful indulgence, probe the festering wound to the core; confess your fault

before God, and do not rest until you have had an application of the blood of sprinkling. You need not ask why you do not grow, while there is such an ulcer within you. Here, it is to be feared, is the root of the evil. Sins indulged are not thoroughly repented of and forsaken; or the conscience has not been purged effectually, and the wound still festers. Come to 'the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and uncleanness'. Bring your case to the great Physician.

6. Cultivate and exercise brotherly love more than you have been accustomed to do. Christ is displeased with many of His professed followers, because they are so cold and indifferent to His members on earth, and because they do so little to comfort and encourage them; and with some, because they are a stumbling block to the weak of the flock, their conversation and conduct not being edifying, but the contrary. Perhaps these disciples are poor and in the lower walks of life, and therefore you overlook them as beneath you. And thus would you have treated Christ Himself, had you lived in His time; for He took His station among the poor and afflicted; and He will resent a neglect of His poor saints with more displeasure than He would of the rich. Perhaps they do not belong to your party or sect, and you are only concerned to build up your own denomination. Remember how Christ condescended to treat the sinful woman of Samaria, and the poor woman of Canaan, and remember what account He has given of the last judgment, when He will assume to Himself all that has been done, or neglected to be done, to His humble followers. There should be more Christian conversation and friendly intercourse between the followers of Christ. In former days, 'They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name.'

7. If you are in good earnest to make greater progress in piety, you must do more than you have done for the promotion of God's glory and of Christ's kingdom on earth. You must enter with livelier, deeper feeling into all the plans which the Church has adopted to advance these objects. You must give more than you have done. It is a shame to think how small a portion of their gains some professors devote to the Lord. Instead of being a tithe, it is hardly equal to the single sheaf of first-fruits. If you have nothing to give, labour to get something. Sit up at night and try to make something, for Christ has need of it. Sell a corner of your land and throw the money into the treasury of the Lord. In primitive times many sold houses and lands and laid the whole at the apostles' feet. Do not be afraid of making yourself poor by giving to the Lord or to His poor. His word is better than any bond, and He says, 'I will repay it.' Cast your bread on the waters, and after many days you will find it again. Send the Bible—send missionaries—send tracts to the perishing heathen.

8. Practice self-denial every day. Lay a wholesome restraint upon your appetites. Be not conformed to this world. Let your dress, your house, your furniture, be plain and simple, as becomes a Christian. Avoid vain parade and show in everything. Govern your family with discretion. Forgive and pray for your enemies. Have little to do with party politics. Carry on your business on sober, judicious principles. Keep clear of speculation and surety-ships. Live peaceably with all men as much as in you lies. Be much in ejaculatory prayer. Keep your heart with all diligence. Try to turn to spiritual profit every event which occurs, and be fervently thankful for all mercies.

9. For your more rapid growth in grace, some of you will be cast into the furnace of affliction. Sickness, bereavement, bad conduct of children and relatives, loss of property or of reputation,

may come upon you unexpectedly and press heavily on you. In these trying circumstances, exercise patience and fortitude. Be more solicitous to have the affliction sanctified than removed.

Glorify God while in the fire of adversity. That faith which is most tried is commonly most pure and precious. Learn from Christ how you ought to suffer. Let perfect submission to the will of God be aimed at. Never indulge a murmuring or discontented spirit. Repose with confidence on the promises. Commit all your cares to God. Make known your requests to Him by prayer and supplication. Let go your too eager grasp of the world. Become familiar with death and the grave. Wait patiently until your change comes; but desire not to live a day longer than may be for the glory of God. If we are on the watch we may often find good things when they were least expected. It is seldom that I consult an almanac for any purpose, but wishing the other day to see when the moon would change, I opened the calendar at the current month, and the first thing which struck my eye was the heading of a paragraph in the very words which I had selected as the subject of this essay—'Hindrances to Growth in Grace'. Of course I perused the short paragraph, and I was so well pleased with what I read that I resolved to take it for my text—and here it is, word for word:

The influence of worldly relatives and companions;
embarking too deeply in business;
approximations to fraud for the sake of gain devoting too much time to
amusements;
immoderate attachment to a worldly object;
attendance on an unbelieving or unfaithful ministry;
languid and formal observance of religious duties;
shunning the society and religious converse of Christian friends;
relapse into known sin;
non-improvement of graces already attained.

Now all this is very good and very true. The only objection is that several of the particulars mentioned should rather be considered as the effects of a real declension in religion than merely as hindrances to growth; although it is true that nothing so effectually hinders our progress as an actual state of backsliding.

It seems desirable to ascertain, as precisely as we can, the reasons why Christians commonly are of so diminutive a stature and of such feeble strength in their religion. When people are truly converted they always are sincerely desirous to make rapid progress in piety; and there are not lacking exceeding great and gracious promises of aid to encourage them to go forward with alacrity. Why then is so little advancement made? Are there not some practical mistakes very commonly entertained, which are the cause of this slowness of growth? I think there are, and will endeavour to specify some of them.

First, there is a defect in our belief in the freeness of divine grace. To exercise unshaken confidence in the doctrine of gratuitous pardon is one of the most difficult things in the world; and

to preach this doctrine fully without verging towards antinomianism is no easy task, and is therefore seldom done. But Christians cannot but be lean and feeble when deprived of their proper nutriment. It is by faith that the spiritual life is made to grow; and the doctrine of free grace, without any mixture of human merit, is the only true object of faith. Christians are too much inclined to depend on themselves, and not to derive their life entirely from Christ. There is a spurious legal religion, which may flourish without the practical belief in the absolute freeness of divine grace, but it possesses none of the characteristics of the Christian's life. It is found to exist in the rankest growth, in systems of religion which are utterly false. But even when the true doctrine is acknowledged in theory, often it is not practically felt and acted on.

The new convert lives upon his frames rather than on Christ, while the older Christian is still found struggling in his own strength and, failing in his expectations of success, he becomes discouraged first, and then he sinks into a gloomy despondency, or becomes in a measure careless. At that point the spirit of the world comes in with resistless force. Here, I am persuaded, is the root of the evil; and until religious teachers inculcate clearly, fully, and practically, the grace of God as manifested in the Gospel, we shall have no vigorous growth of piety among professing Christians. We must be, as it were, identified with Christ—crucified with Him, and living by Him, and in Him by faith, or rather, have Christ living in us. The covenant of grace must be more clearly and repeatedly expounded in all its rich plenitude of mercy, and in all its absolute freeness.

Another thing which prevents growth in grace is that Christians do not make their obedience to Christ comprehend every other object of pursuit. Their religion is too much a separate thing, and they pursue their worldly business in another spirit. They try to unite the service of God and Mammon. Their minds are divided, and often distracted with earthly cares and desires which interfere with the service of God; whereas they should have but one object of pursuit, and all that they do and seek should be in subordination to this. Everything should be done for God and to God. Whether they eat or drink they should do all to His glory. As the ploughing and sowing of the wicked is sin, because done without regard to God and His glory, so the secular employments and pursuits of the pious should all be consecrated, and become a part of their religion. Thus they would serve God in the field and in the shop, in buying and selling and getting gain—all would be for God. Thus their earthly labours would prove no hindrance to their progress in piety; and possessing an undivided mind, having a single object of pursuit, they could not but grow in grace daily. He whose eye is single shall have his whole body full of light.

Another powerful cause of hindrance in the growth of the life of God in the soul is that we make general resolutions of improvement, but neglect to extend our efforts to particulars. We promise ourselves that in the indefinite future we will do much in the way of reformation, but are found doing nothing each day in cultivating piety. We begin and end a day without aiming or expecting to make any particular advance on that day. Thus our best resolutions evaporate without effect. We merely run the round of prescribed duty, satisfied if we do nothing amiss and neglect no external service which we feel to be obligatory. We resemble the man who purposes to go to a certain place, and often resolves with earnestness that he will some day perform the journey, but never takes a step towards the place. Is it at all strange that that person who on no day makes it his distinct object to advance in the divine life, at the end of months and years is found stationary? The natural body will grow without our thinking about it, even when we are asleep, but not the life of piety, which only increases by and through the exercises of the mind, aiming at higher

measures of grace.

And as every day we should do something in this good work, so we should direct our attention to the growth of particular graces, especially of those in which we know ourselves to be defective. Are we weak in faith? let us give attention to the proper means of strengthening our faith and, above all, apply to the Lord to increase our faith. Is our love to God cold and hardly perceptible, and greatly interrupted by long intervals in which God and Christ are not in all our thoughts? let us have this for a daily lamentation at the throne of grace—let us resolve to meditate more on the excellency of the divine attributes, and especially on the love of God to us—let us be much in reading the account of Christ's sufferings and death, and be importunate in prayer, until we receive more copious effusions of the Holy Spirit; for the fruit of the Spirit is love, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us. And so we should directly aim at cultivating and increasing every grace; for the divine life, or 'new man', consists of these graces, and the whole cannot be in health and vigour while the constituent parts are feeble and in a state of decay.

The same remarks are applicable to the mortification of sin. We are prone to view our depravity too much in the general, and under this view to repent of it, and humble ourselves on account of it; whereas, in order to make any considerable progress in this part of sanctification, we must deal with our sins in detail. We must have it as a special object to eradicate pride and vain glory, covetousness, indolence, envy, discontent, anger, etc. There should be appropriate means used, suited to the extirpation of each particular vice of the mind.

It is true, indeed, that if we water the root we may expect the branches to flourish; if we invigorate the principle of piety, the several Christian virtues will flourish. But a skilful gardener will pay due attention both to the root and the branches; and, in fact, these graces of the heart are parts of the root, and it is by strengthening these that we invigorate the root. The same is true as it relates to the remaining principle of sin. We must strike our blows chiefly at the root of the evil tree; but those inherent vices which were mentioned, and others, should be considered as belonging to the root, and when we aim at their destruction particularly and in detail, our strokes will be most effectual. I shall mention at present but one other cause of the slow growth of believers in piety, and that is the neglect of improving in the knowledge of divine things. As spiritual knowledge is the foundation of all genuine exercises of religion, so growth in religion is intimately connected with divine knowledge. Men may possess unsanctified knowledge and be nothing the better for it; but they cannot grow in grace without increasing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Being,' says Paul, 'fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' 'Grow in grace,' says Peter, 'and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Jonathan Edwards remarks that the more faithful he was in studying the Bible, the more he prospered in spiritual things. The reason is plain, and other Christians will find the same to be true.

The Evidences of the Christian Religion

The Evidences of the Christian Religion

By Alexander, Archibald (1772-1851) —Ti de kai aph' heautou n ou krinete to dikaion; Luke 12:57.

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Right use of Reason

CHAPTER I. THE RIGHT USE OF REASON IN RELIGION. THAT it is the right and the duty of all men to exercise their reason in inquiries concerning religion, is a truth so manifest, that it may be presumed there are none who will be disposed to call it in question.

Without reason there can be no religion; for in every step which we take, in examining the evidences of revelation, in interpreting its meaning, or in assenting to its doctrines, the exercise of this faculty is indispensable. When the evidences of Christianity are exhibited, an appeal is made to the reason of men for its truth; but all evidence and all argument would be perfectly futile, if reason were not permitted to judge of their force. This noble faculty was certainly given to man to be a guide in religion, as well as in other things. He possesses no other means by which he can form a judgment on any subject, or assent to any truth; and it would be no more absurd to talk of seeing without eyes, than of knowing any thing without reason.

It is therefore a great mistake to suppose, that religion forbids or discourages the right use of reason. So far from this, she enjoins it as a duty of high moral obligation, and reproves those who neglect to judge for themselves what is right. But it has frequently been said by the friends of revelation, that although reason is legitimately exercised in examining the evidences of revelation, and in determining the sense of the words by which it is conveyed; yet it is not within her province to sit in judgment on the doctrines contained in such a divine communication. This statement, though intended to guard against the abuse of reason, is not, in my opinion, altogether accurate. For it is manifest, that we can form no conception of a truth of any kind, without reason; and when we receive any thing as true, whatever may be the evidence on which it is founded, we must view the reception of it to be, reasonable. Truth and reason are so intimately connected that they can never, with propriety, be separated. Truth is the object, and reason the faculty by which it is apprehended; whatever be the nature of the truth or of the evidence by which it is established. No doctrine can be a proper object of our faith which it is not more reasonable to receive, than to reject. If a book, claiming to be a divine revelation, is found to contain doctrines which can in no way be reconciled to right reason, it is a sure evidence that those claims have no solid foundation, and ought to be rejected. But that a revelation should contain doctrines of a mysterious and incomprehensible nature, and entirely different from all our previous conceptions, and, considered in themselves, improbable, is not repugnant to reason; on the contrary, judging from analogy, sound reason would lead us to expect such things in a revelation from God. Every thing which relates to this Infinite Being, must be to us, in some respects, incomprehensible. Every new truth must be different from all that is already known; and all the plans and works of God are very far above and beyond the conception of such minds as ours. Natural religion has as great mysteries as any in revelation: and the created universe, as it exists, is as different from any plan which men would have conceived, as any of the truths contained in a revelation can be. But it is reasonable to believe, what by our senses we perceive to exist; and it is reasonable to believe, whatever God declares to be true. In receiving, therefore, the most mysterious doctrines of revelation, the ultimate appeal is to reason. Not to determine whether she could have discovered these truths; not

to declare, whether considered in themselves, they appear probable; but to decide, whether it is not more reasonable to believe what God speaks, than to confide in our own crude and feeble conceptions. Just as if an unlearned man should hear an able astronomer declare, that the diurnal motion of the heavens is not real but only apparent, or that the sun is nearer to the earth in winter than in summer; although the facts asserted, appeared to contradict his senses, yet it would be reasonable to acquiesce in the declarations made to him by one who understood the subject, and in whose veracity he had confidence. If, then, we receive the witness of men, in matters above our comprehension, much more should we receive the witness of God, who knows all things, and cannot deceive his creatures, by false declarations.

There is no just cause for apprehending, that we shall be misled by the proper exercise of reason, on any subject, which may be proposed for our consideration. The only danger is, of making an improper use of this faculty, which is one of the most common faults to which our nature is liable. Most men profess, that they are guided by reason in forming their opinions; but if this were really the case, the world would not be overrun with error; there would not be so many absurd and dangerous opinions propagated, and pertinaciously defended. They may be said, indeed, in one sense, to follow reason, for they are guided by a blinded, prejudiced, and perverted reason.

One large class of men are accustomed, from a slight and superficial view of the important subject of religion, to draw a hasty conclusion, which must prove, in the highest degree, detrimental to their happiness. They have observed, that in the modern, as well as ancient world, there is much superstition, much imposture, much diversity of opinion and variety of sects, many false pretences to Divine Inspiration, and many false reports of miracles, and prophetic oracles: and without giving themselves the trouble of searching diligently for the truth, amidst the various contending claims, they draw a general conclusion, that all religions are alike: that the whole affair is a cheat, the invention of cunning men who imposed on the credulity of the unthinking multitude: and that the claims to Divine Revelation, do not even deserve a serious examination. Does right reason dictate such a conclusion as this? If it did, and we were to apply it to all other concerns, it would make a sad overturning in the business of the world. Truth, honesty; and honor might, on these principles, be discarded, as unmeaning names; for of all these there have been innumerable counterfeits, and concerning all of them, an endless diversity of opinion. A second class, who profess to be men of reason, pay more attention to the subject of religion; but their reason is a prejudiced judge. They listen with eagerness to, all that can be said against revelation. They read with avidity the books written against Christianity, and but too faithfully treasure up every objection to religion; but her advocates. never obtain from them a fair hearing. They never inquire, whether the arguments. and objections which appear to them so strong, have not been refuted. With the means of conviction within their reach, they remain firmly fixed in their infidelity; and as long as they pursue this partial method of investigation, they must ever remain in the same darkness. A third class, who wish to be considered as taking reason for their guide, are under the dominion of vicious passions; of ambition, avarice, lust, or revenge. Men of this character, however strong their intellect, or extensive their erudition, can never reason impartially on any subject which interferes with the gratification of their predominant desires; and as religion forbids, under severe penalties, all irregular passions and vicious indulgences, they pursue it with malignant hatred. As one well observes, "they are against religion, because religion is against them" Such men never reason calmly on the subject, and they are incapable of receiving any benefit from the arguments of

others. They never think of religion but with a feeling of enmity, and they never speak of it but in the language of sneer, or abuse. There is no object which this race of infidels. have more at heart, than to root up every principle of religion from the minds of men, and to drive it from the earth, so that not one vestige of it might remain to give them torment. Voltaire may be considered as the leader. of this band; and his humble imitators, have been too numerous, in every Christian country. But there is still another class of men, more distinguished, as masters of reason, than those who have been mentioned. They are the cold, speculative, subtle set of skeptics, who involve themselves. in a thick mist of metaphysics; attack first principles, and confound, their readers with paradoxes. The number of those who belong to this class, is, perhaps, not large, but they are formidable: for while the other enemies of the truth, scarcely make a show of reason, these philosophers are experienced in all the intricacies of a refined logic; so that in their hands, error is made to appear in the guise of truth. Should we yield ourselves to the sophistry of these men, they will persuade us to doubt, not only of the truth of revelation, but of our senses, and of our very existence. If it be inquired, how they contrive to spread such a colouring of skepticism over every subject; the answer is, by artfully assuming false principles as the premises of their reasoning; by reasoning sophistically on correct principles; by the dexterous use of ambiguous terms; by pushing their inquiries beyond the limits of human knowledge; and by calling in question the first principles of all knowledge. But it is not easy to conjecture what their motive is; most probably, however, it is vanity. They are ambitious of appearing more profound and acute than other men; and distinction is not so readily obtained in the common course, as by flying off in an eccentric orbit. It cannot be any sincere regard for truth, which influences them; for, upon their principles, truth and reason are equally worthless. They pull down every thing, but build up nothing in its place. Truth has no greater enemies in the world than this Pyrrhonic sect.; and it is to be lamented, that, sometimes, ingenious young men are caught in the wiles of their sophistry, and are led so far into the labyrinth of their errors, that they are never able to extricate themselves; and all their fair prospects of virtue and usefulness are obscured forever.

Before I leave the consideration of the various classes of persons, who, while they profess to be guided by reason, make an improper use of this faculty, I ought to mention a set of men, distinguished for their learning and ingenuity, who profess to receive the Christian revelation, and glory in the appellation of Rational Christians. They proceed on the plausible and (if rightly understood) correct principle, of receiving nothing as true, but what their reason approves; but these very men, with all their fair appearances of rationality, are chargeable with as gross a dereliction of reason, as can well be conceived; and, in regard to consistency, are more vulnerable, than any of those already mentioned. For, while they admit, that God has made a revelation, they insist upon the right of bringing the truths revealed, to the test of human judgment and opinion, and reject diem as unreasonable, if they do not accord with this standard. But. the declaration of God is the highest reason which we can have for believing any thing. To set up our opinion against the plain expression of his will, is surely presumption of the highest kind. Perhaps, however, I do not represent the case with perfect accuracy. Perhaps, no man is chargeable with such an inconsistency, as to admit a thing to be contained in an undoubted revelation, and yet reject it. The exact state of the matter is this. The Scriptures, it is admitted, contain a revelation from God; but there are many things in the Bible, which, if taken in the most obvious sense, are inconsistent with reason; now, as nothing inconsistent with reason can be from God, it is concluded, that this cannot be the true sense of Scripture. Accordingly, their wits are set to work,

and their learning laid under contribution, to invent and defend some other sense. Upon these principles, a man may believe just as much, or as little as he pleases, of what the Bible contains; for it has been found that no text is so stubborn as not to yield to some of the modes of treatment which have been adopted;. But I maintain, that this whole procedure is contrary to, right reason. The plain course which reason directs us to pursue, is, after examining the evidences of revelation; and being satisfied, to come to the interpretation. of the Scriptures with an unbiassed mind; and in the exercise of a sound judgment, and with the aid of those helps and rules which reason and experience suggest, to obtain: the sense of the several parts of the document and although this sense may contradict our preconceived, opinions, or clash with our inclinations,. we ought implicitly to receive it; and not by a refined ingenuity, and labored critical process, extort a meaning, that will: suit our own notions. This is not to form our opinions by the Word of God, but to cut down the sublime and mysterious doctrines of revelation, to the measure of our. narrow conceptions. And thus, in the creed of many, called rational Christians, the divine system of heavenly truth is shorn of its glory, and comes forth little more than an improved theory of Natural Religion. There is no reason in this. But what if the plain sense of Scripture be absolutely repugnant to the first principles of reason? Let that be demonstrated, and the effect will be, rather to overthrow the Scriptures, than to favor such a method of forming a theory from them. But no such thing can. be demonstrated. The reasonings by which it has been attempted to prove, that the doctrines, commonly called orthodox, are contrary to reason, are fallacious; and a similar mode of reasoning, on the truths of Natural Religion, will land us in atheism.

Deistical writers have been fond of representing faith, and reason as irreconcilable. They have insinuated, and even asserted, that revelation cannot be received without a renunciation of reason; and have affected to regret, that it should be subjected to the trial of a rational investigation, which they allege, it can by no means bear. This was a favorite topic with Morgan, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Hume. The last mentioned author, in the close of his far famed Essay on Miracles, uses the following language; “Our most holy religion is founded on Faith, not on reason, and ‘tis a sure method of exposing it, to put it to a test, which it is, by no means fitted to endure.”—And again: “Mere reason, is insufficient to convince us of its [the Christian Religion’s] veracity, and whoever is moved by faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continual miracle, in his owns person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding.” On the insidious nature of this attack, I shall not stop to remark, except to observe, that it may be taken as a specimen, not only of Hume’s method of treating Christianity, but of that of the whole tribe of deistical writers, until very recently, when they have come out boldly. Under the mask of friendship, and with the words of respectfulness on their lips, they have aimed the most deadly thrusts at the vitals of Christianity. But in regard to the sentiment; expressed in this extract, the friends of revelation utterly disclaim it, and hold it to be false and unfounded. The state of the controversy between Christians and deists, did not authorize any such assertion. The defenders of the truth have ever been ready to meet their antagonists on the ground of impartial reason. They have met them at every point, where they have chosen to make the assault; and I may safely say, that no deistical argument remains unrefuted, no infidel objection undetected and unexposed.. As. Mr. Hume wrote this immediately after finishing his argument against miracles, perhaps he felt a confidence, that he had achieved what none before were able to effect. But his confidence was premature: the argument which he claims the honor of having discovered, (though this might be disputed on good ground,) has been refuted, with a clearness of evidence, sufficient to bring conviction to any mind,

but that of a sophist and a skeptic. But we shall have further occasion, in the sequel, to consider the force of Mr. Hume's reasonings against miracles.

It may, perhaps, require some apology, that a subject which has been so fully and ably discussed, in numerous volumes, should be attempted to be treated in a short essay. My only apology is, that the poison of infidelity is imbibed by many, who never have access to the antidote. It is much to be regretted that some of the books which are almost sure to fall into the hands of literary youth, are deeply tinctured with skepticism. How many read Hume and Gibbon, who never have seen the answers of Campbell and Watson. Now, if we can present, even a brief outline of the evidences of Christianity, to those who may not be disposed to read larger works, we may be contributing, in some small degree, to prevent the progress of one of the greatest evils to which men are liable.

Impossible to Banish all Religion

CHAPTER II.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BANISH ALL RELIGION FROM THE WORLD; AND IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, IT WOULD BE THE GREATEST CALAMITY WHICH COULD BEFAL THE HUMAN RACE.

IT is not my object here, to consider religion as it is a matter of duty, or a means of obtaining happiness in a future world; for both these would be equally disregarded by those men who aim at the subversion of all religion. What I shall attempt, at present, is to state and establish the fact, that man is so constituted, that he must have some sort of religion. And the truth of this will be manifest, from an inspection of the principles of human nature, and from the history of the world. Man has naturally a sense of moral obligation, a perception of the difference between right. and wrong, feelings of remorse or approbation on the review of his conduct, fears of future retribution when he has committed a crime, and a propensity to pay religious homage to some object, visible or invisible. These are what have been called his religious feelings; and from them he has received the appellation of a religious animal. And certainly there is nothing by which man is so clearly distinguished from the creatures below him, as this capacity for religion; for whatever indications they give of sagacity in other matters, it is impossible to communicate to them any ideas of morality, or any impressions of a religious nature. Now, that these feelings are natural, and not adventitious, is manifest, because they are found to exist in men of all ages, of all countries, and in every different state of society. And hence, no nation, ancient or modern, has ever been found without some kind of religion. It would be as difficult to find a whole nation without religion, as to find one destitute of speech. Some travellers, it is true, from superficial observation, have reported that some savage tribes had no ideas of religion, and no species of worship; but on more accurate examination, it has been ascertained, that this was a mistake. And from our present knowledge of the nations of the earth, we are authorised to assert, that there is not one totally destitute of some sense of religion, and some form of worship. The same thing was well known to all the wisest men of antiquity. It is a fact from which both Plato and Cicero have derived many important conclusions. And these principles of our nature are so deeply radicated, that they never can be removed. Men may be induced to abandon their old religion, and to adopt a new one; but they never can remain long free from all religion. Take away one object of worship and they will soon attach themselves to another. If unhappily they lose the knowledge of the true God, they will set up gods of their own invention: or receive them from others. The history of all nations bears such ample testimony to this fact, that it cannot be denied. Now, this universality of religion evinces, in the clearest manner, that the principle is natural, that it is an essential thing in the constitution of man: just as the fact, that men are always found living in society, proves that the social principle exists, and is natural to man.

Atheistical men, have, indeed, attempted to trace all religious feelings, and all rites of worship, to the craft of priests, and policy of rulers; but this opinion is not only unsupported by historical

testimony, but is most unreasonable in itself. For if there had not existed a predisposition to religion in the minds of men, such a design would never have been conceived; and if it had, all attempts to introduce into the minds of men, ideas so foreign to their nature, must have been abortive. At any rate, such an imposition could not have tow tinned for so long a time, and could not have been extended to every tribe and nation in the world. If no sense of religion had existed in the minds of men, priests and politicians, however cunning, would have had no handle to take hold of, no foundation on which to build. Besides, it seems to be forgotten by the advocates of this hypothesis, that the existence of priests, supposes the previous existence of religion.

They have, moreover, alleged, that fear produced the gods. Be it so; it still confirms my position, that there is something in the nature of man which leads him to religion; and it is reasonable to conclude, that a cause which has operated uniformly, heretofore, will continue to produce the same effects as long as the world stands. It is impossible, therefore, to banish all religion from the world. To what degree, atheists have succeeded, in divesting themselves of all religious impression, I do not pretend to know. That some men have gone to a great length in counteracting the constitutional tendencies, and extinguishing the feelings, of nature, is undoubtedly true; but there have been sufficient indications to lead to the opinion, that there is more of affectation than reality in the bravery of their profession. It is known that some of them have, above other men, been the slaves of superstitious fears; and that others, in times of extreme peril, as in a storm at sea, have, for the moment, renounced their atheism, and cried as earnestly for mercy, as those around them. Now, if these philosophers, with all their reasoning, are not able to erase all religious impressions from their own minds, it is vain to attempt to banish all religion from the world. But suppose the great work achieved; and that every vestige of religion was obliterated; what would be the result? Would men remain without any objects of religious homage? Would they never again be afraid of invisible powers? Would the feelings of remorse at no time urge them to perform some sort of penance, or attempt some kind of expiation? Would no impostors and false prophets arise to deceive the world again with their dreams, fancies, and pretended revelations? They must have made but superficial observations on human nature, who think that none of these things would ever occur.

If those persons, therefore, who oppose Christianity, hope, by its subversion, to get rid of all religion, they do greatly deceive themselves. This work being accomplished, they would soon have more to perform in endless progression. Instead of the pure, mild, benignant, religion of Christ, they would soon find themselves surrounded by superstitions as foul and as false, as monstrous and as absurd, as any which the hot bed of paganism ever produced. Look into the heathen world, and see the abominations and miseries which inveterate superstition perpetuates in some of the fairest and most populous regions of the globe. Look at the savage tribes of Africa and America, and contemplate the cruel bondage of superstition, to which the people are subjected. Evils as great would soon grow up among us, were it not for the salutary influence of Christianity. Our forefathers, before they became Christians, were in the same degraded and wretched situation. And shall we curse our posterity by bringing back those evils from which our fathers escaped? It is a truth which should be proclaimed every where On the house tops, that it is the Bible, which has delivered us from the horrid dominion of superstition; and it is the Bible, which must prevent its return. Philosophy has had no hand in working out this deliverance from the horrors of idolatry. With all her celebrated schools and sages, she never turned one individual from the worship of

idols; and she would be equally powerless in preventing the return of superstition, if other barriers were removed.

But, I proceed now to the second part of my proposition, which is, that if religion could be banished from the world, it would be the greatest calamity which could befall the human race.

It has formerly been a matter of discussion with the learned, whether the influence of superstition or atheism was most baneful on society. Plutarch, Bacon, Boyle, Warburton, and others, have handled this subject, in a learned and ingenious manner, and arrived at very different conclusions. However doubtful this question may have been considered in former times, I believe all reflecting men are now pretty well satisfied, that the question is put to rest forever. We have recently beheld the spectacle of a great nation casting off contemptuously the religion of their fathers, and plunging at once into the abyss of atheism. We have seen the experiment tried, to ascertain whether a populous nation could exist without the restraints of religion. Every circumstance was as favourable to the success of the experiment, as it could be. Learning was in its highest state of advancement; philosophy boasted of an approximation to perfection; and refinement and politeness had never been more complete among any people. But what was the result? It is written in characters of blood. It was as if a volcano had burst upon the world, and disgorged its fiery flood over all Europe. Such a scene of cruelty, cold-blooded malignity, beastly impurity, heaven-daring impiety, and insatiable rapaciousness, the world never witnessed before, and, I trust in God, will never witness again. The only ray of hope which brightened the dismal prospect was, that this horrible system contained in itself the principles of its own speedy downfall. Atheism has no bond of union for its professors; no basis of mutual confidence. It breeds suspicion, and consequently hatred, in every breast; and it is actuated by a selfishness which utterly disregards all the bonds of nature, of gratitude, and of friendship. To an atheist, fear becomes the ruling passion. Conscious of his own want. Of virtue, of honor, and humanity, he naturally views his fellows in the same light, and is ready to put them out of the way as soon as they appear, in any degree, to become obstacles to the accomplishment of his plans. Hence the bloody actors in this tragedy, after glutting their revenge, by shedding the blood of innocent Christians and unoffending priests, turned their murderous weapons against each other. Not satisfied with inflicting death on the objects of their suspicion or envy, they actually feasted their eyes, daily, with the streams of blood which incessantly flowed from the guillotine. Never was the justice of heaven against impious and cruel men more signally displayed, than in making these miscreants the instruments of vengeance upon each other. The general state of morals, in France, during the period in which Christianity was proscribed, and atheism reigned, was such as almost exceeds belief. An eye-witness of the whole scene, and an actor in some parts of it, has drawn the following sketch:—"Multiplied cases of suicide; prisons crowded with innocent persons; permanent guillotines; perjuries of all classes; parental authority set at naught; debauchery encouraged by an allowance to those called unmarried mothers; nearly six thousand divorces within the single city of Paris, within a little more than two years after the law authorized them;—in a word, whatever is most obscene in vice, and most dreadful in ferocity!" [1] If these be the genuine fruits of atheism, then let us rather have superstition in its most appalling form. Between atheism and superstition, there is this great difference; the latter may authorize some crimes, the former opens the flood-gates to all. The one restrains partially, the other removes all restraint from vice. Every kind of religion presents some terrors to evil doers; atheism promises complete immunity, and stamps

virtue itself with the character of folly. But we must not suppose that the whole mass of the French people became atheists, during this period. Far from it. A large majority viewed the whole scene with horror and detestation; but the atheistical philosophers had got the power in their hands; and though a small minority of the nation, were able to effect so much mischief. But from this example we may conjecture, what would be the state of things, if the whole mass of people in a nation should become atheists, or be freed from all the restraints of conscience and religion. Such an event will never occur, but if it should, all must acknowledge, that no greater calamity could be imagined. It would be a lively picture of hell upon earth; for what is there in the idea of hell more horrible, than the absence of all restraint and all hope, and the uncontrolled dominion of the most malignant passions! But there would be one remarkable point of difference, for while atheists deny the God that made them, the inhabitants of hell believe and tremble.

[1] Gregoire.

Christianity rejected, no other religion

CHAPTER III.

IF CHRISTIANITY BE REJECTED, THERE IS NO OTHER RELIGION WHICH CAN BE SUBSTITUTED IN ITS PLACE; AT LEAST NO OTHER WHICH WILL AT ALL ANSWER THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH RELIGION IS DESIRABLE.

IT has been proved in the former section, that it is necessary to have some religion. We are already in possession of Christianity, which, by the confession of deists themselves, answers many valuable purposes.—It behoves us, therefore, to consider well, what we are likely to obtain by the exchange, if we should relinquish it. If any man can show us a better religion, and founded on better evidences, we ought, in that event, to give it up willingly; but if this cannot be done, then surely it is not reasonable to part with a certain good, without receiving an equivalent, in its place. This would be, as if some persons sailing on the ocean, in a vessel which carried them prosperously, should determine to abandon it, without knowing that there was any other to receive them, merely because some of the passengers, pretending to skill, suggested that it was leaky, and would sooner or later founder.

Let the enemies of Christianity tell us plainly what their aim is, and what they design to substitute in the place of the Bible. This, however, they are unable to perform and yet they would have us to consent to give up our dearest hopes without knowing what we are to receive, or whether we are to receive any thing, to compensate for the loss. This is a point of vital importance, and demands our most serious attention. If it is really intended to substitute some other religion in the place of Christianity, we ought certainly, before we make the exchange, to have the opportunity of examining its claims, that we may know whether it will be likely to answer the purposes for which religion is wanted. To bring this subject fairly into view, let us take a survey of the world, and inquire, what it has to propose for our selection, if we should renounce Christianity.

There are only three things, in that event, between which we must choose. The first, to adopt some of the existing, or some of the exploded systems of Paganism; the second, to accept the Koran instead of the Bible; and the third, to embrace Natural Religion, or pure deism.

Few men have had the effrontery to propose a return to Paganism: yet even this has not been too extravagant for some whose names stand high as men of literature. The learned Gibbon has not, that I recollect, expressed his opinion, on this subject, explicitly; but it may be fairly inferred, from many things in his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, that he deeply regretted the subversion of the old Pagan system, and that the progress of Christianity was far from affording him any pleasure. But although he makes it sufficiently manifest, that, could his wishes have governed past events, the old system would never have been disturbed, and Christianity never have had a footing; yet we cannot say, whether he would have given his vote to have the temples rebuilt, and the Pagan rites restored. It is difficult to tell what he wished to accomplish, by his opposition to Christianity; or whether he had any definite view, other than to manifest his hatred

to the Gospel and its Author.

Taylor, the learned translator of Plato, openly avowed his predilection for the religion of the Athenian philosopher, and his wish that it might be revived; and, speaks in contemptuous terms of Christianity, in comparison with Platonism; but he never could have supposed that to be a suitable religion for the bulk of men, which had not the least influence upon them, while the philosopher lived. This, then, would be no substitute for Christianity; for under its benign influence, even THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED. UNTO THEM. But I have no doubt, that, if the truth could be ascertained, we should find, that this sublime genius derived some of his best ideas, directly or indirectly from the Scriptures; and that if he had lived under: the light of the Gospel, he never would have spoken, of it as his translator has done. In the time of the revolution in France, after some trial had been made of having no religion, D'Aubermenil proposed a new religion, in imitation of the ancient Persians. His plan was to have the Deity represented by a perpetual fire, and offerings made to him, of fruits, oil, and salt; and libations poured out to the four elements. It was prescribed, that worship should be, celebrated daily in the temple, that every ninth day should be a sabbath, and that on certain festivals, all ages should unite in dances. A few fanatics in Paris, and elsewhere, actually adopted the new religion, but they were unable to attract any notice, and in a hula. time sunk into merited oblivion.

It has been common enough to set up the Mohammedan religion, in a sort of rival comparison with Christianity, but I do not know that any have gone so far as to prefer the Koran to the Bible, except those few miserable apostates, who, after being long "tossed about with every wind of doctrine," at length threw themselves into the arms of the Arabian impostor. How far this religion will bear a comparison with Christianity, will be seen in the sequel.

Deism, or Natural Religion, is then, the only hope of the world, if the Christian religion be rejected. To this our attention shall now be turned. The first English deists extolled Natural Religion to the skies, as a system which contained all that man had need to know: and as being simple and intelligible to the meanest capacity. But strange to tell, scarcely any two of them are agreed, as to what Natural Religion is; and the same discordance has existed among their successors. They are not agreed in even those points, which are most essential in religion, and most necessary to be settled, before any religious worship can be instituted. They differ on such points as these; whether there is any intrinsic difference between right and wrong; whether God pays any regard to the affairs of man; whether the soul is immortal; whether prayer is proper and useful; and whether any external rites of worship are necessary. But Natural Religion is essentially defective, as a religion for sinners, which all men feel themselves to be. It informs us of no atonement, and makes no provision for the pardon of sin. Indeed, if we impartially consider the law of nature, all hope of pardon must be relinquished, because it is a first principle of Natural Religion, that every one will be rewarded or punished exactly according to his works: and therefore, if any man sin, he must suffer according to the demerit of his crime. As this religion teaches no plan of atonement and forgiveness, so it inculcates no effectual method of reformation, or purification from the pollution of sin, and affords no aid to those who wish to live well, but leaves all to be performed by the mere strength of men, which, alas! is insufficient to bear up against the power of temptation. In those very points in which we want a clear response, Natural Religion is silent. It can do no more when its light is clearest, than to direct us in the way of duty, and to intimate the consequences of disobedience. Deists, then, must lead such lives of perfection, as to need no pardon, no

regeneration, no aid, no reformation. The system is good for them, who can go through life without sin: it sets no hope before the mourning penitent.

Again, if deism be the true religion, why has piety never flourished among its professors? why have they not been the most zealous and consistent worshippers of God? Does not truth promote piety? and will it not ever be the case, that they who hold the truth will love God most ardently, and serve him most faithfully?—But what is the fact, in regard to this class of men? Have they ever been distinguished for their spirit of devotion? Have they produced numerous instances of exemplary piety? It is so much the reverse, that even asking such reasonable questions, has the appearance of ridicule. And when people hear the words “pious deist,” they have the same sort of feeling, as when mention is made of an honest thief, or a sober drunkard.

There is no slander in making this statement for deists do not affect to be pious. They have no love for devotion. If the truth were known, this is the very thing they wish to get rid of; and if they believed, that professing themselves to be deists, laid them under greater obligations to be devout, they would not be so zealous for the system. Believe me, the contest is not between one religion and another, it is between religion and irreligion. It is impossible that a man a truly pious temper, should reject the Bible, even if he were unacquainted with its historical evidences. He would find it to be so congenial to his taste, and so salutary in its effects on his own spirit, that he would conclude that it must have derived its origin from heaven. But we find no such spirit in the writings of deists. There is not in them a tincture of piety; but they have more than a sprinkling of profane ridicule. When you turn to them from the Bible, you are sensible of as great a transition, as if you passed suddenly from a warm and genial climate into the frigid zone,. If deists expect ever to conciliate regard for their religion, they must appear to be truly pious men, sincerely engaged in the service of God; and this will have more effect than all their arguments. But whenever this event shall occur, they will be found no longer opposing the Bible, but will esteem it as the best of books, and will come to it for fuel, to feed the flame of pure devotion. An African prince, who was brought to England and resided there some time, being asked what he thought of the Bible, answered, that he believed it to be from God, for he found all the good people in favor of it, and all the bad people against it! The want of a spirit of piety and devotion, must be reckoned the principal reason why the deists have never been able to establish, and keep up, any religious worship among themselves. The thing has been attempted at several different times and in different countries; but never with any success.

It is said, that the first enterprise of this kind was that of David Williams, an Englishman, who had been a dissenting minister in Liverpool, but passing over first to Socinianism, and then to deism, went to London, where, being patronised by sonic persons of influence, he opened a house for deistical worship, and formed a liturgy, consisting principally of praise to the Creator. Here he preached for a short time, and collected some followers; but he complained that most of his congregation went on to atheism. After four years trial, the scheme came to nothing. There were neither funds nor congregation remaining, and the Priest of nature, (as Williams styled himself,) through discouragement and ill health, abandoned the project.

Some feeble attempts of the same kind have been made in the United States; but they are unworthy of being particularly noticed. [2]

Frederick II., the deistical king of Prussia, had once formed the plan of a Pantheon, in Berlin, for the worshippers of all sects and all religions; the chief object of which was the subversion of Christianity; but the scheme was never carried into execution. The most interesting experiment of this kind, was that made by the Theophilanthropists in France, during the period of the revolution. After some trial had been made of atheism and irreligion, and when the want of public worship was felt by many reflecting persons, a society was formed for the worship of God, by the name just mentioned, upon the pure principles of Natural Religion. Among the patrons of this society, were men beloved for their philanthropy, and distinguished for their learning; and some high in power.

La Revelliere Lepaux, one of the directory of France, was a zealous patron of the new religion. By his influence, permission was obtained to make use of the churches for their worship. In the city of Paris alone, eighteen or twenty were assigned to them, among which was the famous church of Notre Dame. Their creed was simple, consisting of two great articles, the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul. Their moral system also embraced two great principles, the love of God, and the love of man;—which were indicated by the name assumed by the society. Their worship consisted of prayers, and hymns of praise, which were comprehended in a manual, prepared for a directory in worship. Lectures were delivered by the members, which, however, underwent the inspection of the society, before they were, pronounced in public. To these were added some simple ceremonies, such as placing a basket of fruits and flowers on the altar. Music, vocal and instrumental, was used: for the latter, they availed themselves of the organs, in the churches. Great efforts were made to have this worship generally introduced, in all the principal towns in France; and the views of the society were even extended to foreign countries. Their manual was sent into all parts of the republic, by the minister of the interior, free of expense.

Never did a society enjoy greater advantages at its commencement. Christianity had been rejected with scorn: atheism had for a short time been tried, but was found to be intolerable: the government was favorable to the project; men of learning and influence patronised it, and churches ready built, were at the service of the new denomination. The system of Natural Religion, also, which was adopted, was the best that could have been selected, and considerable wisdom was discovered in the construction of their liturgy. But with all these circumstances in their favor, the society could not subsist. At first, indeed, while the scene was novel, large audiences attended, most of whom, however, were merely spectators; but in a short time, they dwindled away to such a degree, that instead of occupying twenty churches, they needed only four, in Paris; and in some of the provincial towns, where they commenced under the most favorable auspices, they soon came to nothing. Thus they went on declining, until, under the consular government, they were prohibited the use of the churches any longer; upon which they immediately expired without a struggle; and it is believed that not a vestige of the society now remains.

It will be instructive and interesting to inquire into the reasons of this want of success, in a society enjoying so many advantages. Undoubtedly, the chief reason was, the want of a truly devotional spirit. This was observed from the beginning of their meetings. There was nothing to interest the feelings of the heart. Their orators might be men of learning, and might produce good moral discourses, but they were not men of piety; and not always men of pure morals. [3] Their hymns were said to be well composed, and the music good; but the musicians were hired from the stage. There was also a strange defect of liberality in contributing to the funds of the society. They found it impossible to raise, in some of their societies, a sum which every Christian congregation, even

the poorest, of any sect, would have collected in one day. It is a fact, that one of the societies petitioned government to grant them relief from a debt, which they had contracted, in providing the apparatus of their worship, not amounting to more than fifty dollars, stating that their annual income did not exceed twenty dollars. In the other towns, their musicians deserted them, because they were not paid, and frequently, no person could be found to deliver lectures.

Another difficulty arose—which might have been foreseen. Some of the societies declared themselves independent; and would not agree to be governed by the manual which had been received, any further than they chose. They also remonstrated against the authority exercised by the lecturers in the affairs of the society, and declared, that there was danger of their forming another hierarchy. There were also complaints against them, addressed to the ministers, by the agents of government in the provinces, on account of the influence which they might acquire, in civil affairs. The Theophilanthropists were, moreover, censured by those who had made greater advances in the modern philosophy, for their illiberality. It was complained, that there were many who could not receive their creed, and all such must necessarily be excluded from their society. This censure seems to have troubled them much; and in order to wipe off the stigma, they appointed a fete, which they called the Anniversary of the re-establishment of Natural Religion. To prove that their liberality had no bounds, they prepared five banners to be carried in procession. On the first was inscribed the word, Religion; on the second, Morality: and on the others, respectively, Jews; Catholics; Protestants. When the procession was over, the bearers of the several banners gave each other the kiss of peace; and that none might mistake the extent of their liberality, the banner inscribed, Morality, was borne by a professed atheist, universally known as such in Paris. They had also other festivals, peculiar to themselves; and four in honor of the following persons, Socrates, St. Vincent de Paule, J. J. Rousseau, and Washington;—a strange conjunction of names, truly! [4]

I have been thus particular in giving an account of this society, because the facts furnish the strongest confirmation of my argument, and are in themselves curious and instructive. After the failure of this enterprise, deists will scarcely attempt again to institute any form of public worship. But among those philosophers who believe in the perfectibility of human nature, under the fostering influence of increasing knowledge and good government, there is a vague theory, of a kind of mental, philosophical religion, which needs the aid of no external forms. The primary articles of their creed is, that religion is a thing entirely between God and every man's conscience; that all our Creator requires, is, the homage of the heart; that, if we feel reverence, gratitude, and submission, towards him, and act our part well in society, we have fulfilled our duty;—that we cannot know how we may be disposed of hereafter, and ought not to be anxious about the matter. Whether this is expected to be the religion of philosophers only, or also of the unlearned, and the great mass of laboring people, I am unable to say. But I know, that such a system as this, will, to a large majority of every community, be equivalent to no religion at all. The great body of the people must have something tangible; something visible, in their religion. They need the aid of the senses, and of the social principle, to fix their attention, to create an interest, and to excite the feelings of devotion. But the truth is, that if the heart be affected with lively emotions of piety, it will be pleasant, it will be useful, and it will be natural, to give them expression. This will hold in regard to philosophers and men of learning, as well as others. Wherever a number of persons participate in the same feelings, there is a strong inclination to hold communion together; and if sentiments of

genuine piety exist in the bosoms of many, they will delight, to celebrate, in unison, the praises of that Being, whom they love and adore. There is no reason why pious emotions, more than others, should be smothered, and the tendency to express them, counteracted. Such indeed will never be the fact. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. Piety, it is true, consists essentially in the exercise of the heart; but that religion which is merely mental, is suspicious; at best, very feeble; is not likely to produce any permanent effect on the character or comfort of the person entertaining it; and cannot be useful to others in the way of example. In the year 1802, when Christianity, which had been proscribed in France, was restored by an act of government, a speech was delivered by one of the councillors of state, which contains excellent sentiments, on the subjects here treated. One or two extracts will not be unacceptable to the reader. "Science can never be partaken of, but by a small number, but by religion one may be instructed without being learned. The Natural Religion, to which one may rise by the effects of a cultivated reason, is merely abstract and intellectual, and unfit for any people. It is revealed religion which points out all the truths that are useful to men who have neither time nor means for laborious disquisitions. Who then would wish to dry up that sacred spring of knowledge, which diffuses good maxims, brings them before the eyes of every individual, and communicates to them that authoritative and popular dress, without which they would be unknown to the multitude, and almost to all men. For want of a religious education for the last ten years, our children are without any ideas of a divinity, without any notion of what is just and unjust; hence arise barbarous manners, hence a people become ferocious.—One cannot but sigh over the lot which threatens the present and future generations. Alas! what have we gained by deviating from the path pointed out to us by our ancestors? What have we gained by substituting vain and abstract doctrines for the creed which actuated the minds of Turenne, Fenelon, and Pascal?"

I think enough has now been said to establish, beyond all reasonable doubt, our second proposition, that if Christianity be rejected, there is no other religion which can be substituted in its place; or, at least, no other which can at all answer the purpose /or which religion is desirable.

It may also be observed, in conclusion, that the facts which have been adduced, not only serve to confirm this proposition, but furnish new and cogent arguments in proof of the proposition maintained in the preceding chapter. _____

[2] The infidel meetings which at present (A. D. 1831) are held in some of our principal cities, and where male and female lectures are delivered, on Sunday, and at other times, are not intended to be, in any sense, worshipping assemblies; but their character is understood to be atheistical, and their object is to bring into ridicule and contempt, every species of religion, whether natural or revealed.

[3] Thomas Paine was one of them.

[4] *Histoire de Theophilanthropie*, par M. Gregoire.—See Quarterly Review for January, 1823.

Revelation necessary to teach worship of God

CHAPTER IV.

REVELATION NECESSARY TO TEACH US HOW TO WORSHIP GOD ACCEPTABLY—THE NATURE AND CERTAINTY OF A FUTURE STATE—AND ESPECIALLY, THE METHOD BY WHICH SINNERS MAY OBTAIN SALVATION.

IT would be superfluous here to repeat what was said in the preceding chapter, respecting the need in which man stood of a revelation when he first proceeded from the hands of his Creator. The object which we have, at present, in view, is, to inquire, whether man, in the condition in which we now find him, and in which history informs us he has existed for ages, does not stand in urgent need of more light than he possesses; and, whether, there are not some points of vital importance, concerning which he must remain in the dark, unless the knowledge of the truth is communicated to him by a revelation from God. Let it be understood, however, in what sense it is asserted, that a revelation is necessary. Of course, it is not meant, that there is any natural necessity for such an event; nor is it intended, that God is obliged by any necessity, to grant a revelation. The necessity contended for, relates altogether to the wants of man. It is found, that in all times, and in all circumstances, he needs information, which he cannot obtain from the unassisted exercise of his own reason; or, at least, cannot obtain so satisfactorily from this source, as from divine revelation. For even if it were possible, for a few philosophers of the highest order of intellect, by long and profound investigation, to discover all the truths absolutely necessary to be known; yet, for the bulk of mankind, it might be all important, to have these same things made known by divine revelation; because the great majority of our race have neither leisure nor ability for such tedious and difficult researches. But the truth, as made known by history, is, that on those very points, on which it is most needful that man should be instructed, the wise men of this world are as much at a loss as the vulgar. They reasoned much, and speculated as far as human intellect could go; but instead of clearly ascertained truth, they rested at last, in mere conjecture; or deviated into gross error.

Again, if the light of nature were sufficient to shed some light on the great truths needful to be known by man; yet a clear, well attested communication from heaven, might be of the greatest utility, by speaking decisively and authoritatively, in regard to matters, concerning which the conclusions of reason are feeble, and uncertain. To affect the conscience and influence the heart, it is highly important that religious truth should be attended with certainty, and should be felt to possess the sanction of divine authority. What men discover by the slow deductions of reason, is found to operate feebly on the conscience, compared with the persuasion, that God speaks to us, immediately, by divine revelation. In reasoning about the most important truths, men differ exceedingly from one another; and this very circumstance spreads doubt and uncertainty over all their speculations. When we peruse the discourses of the wisest of the heathen sages, and observe what darkness surrounded them, we cannot but feel commiseration for the imbecility of the human intellect; and, indeed, the best of them were deeply convinced of the insufficiency of their own reason, to guide them; and, sometimes, seemed to entertain a glimmering hope, that at

some future period, and in some unknown way, divine instruction might be communicated to the erring children of men.

It is also more than probable, that the clearest and most important ideas which the heathen philosophers entertained, were not the discoveries of their own reason, or a light struck out from an observation of the works of nature, but rays of truth derived more remotely, or more directly, from divine revelation, as has been remarked in another part of this essay.

But, after all, it is an undeniable fact, that reason, aided as it was by tradition, left men to grope in the dark, and to fall into the most degrading idolatry. Indeed, although reason may teach that there is a God, and that he ought to be worshipped; yet, of what kind his worship should be in order to be acceptable, she never has made known, nor is it within the reach of her ability. All the rites of worship invented by man are altogether unworthy of God; and, truly, it is in the nature of things impossible, that men should devise a form of acceptable worship, for no service of this kind can be pleasing in the sight of God, which he has not himself appointed. Now, if men have lost the knowledge of the original institutions of religion; or, if these have become altogether corrupt, there must be a new revelation, before man will be able to render an acceptable service to his Creator. There is good reason to believe, that many of the heathen rites of worship, are nothing else but corruptions of divine institutions, which were given to man by an early revelation. This seems especially to be the fact, in relation to sacrifices, which constituted an essential part of the worship of almost all ancient nations; and some vestiges of which have come down by tradition, among the most barbarous tribes. Reason, certainly, never taught men that shedding the blood and taking away the life of an animal, could be an acceptable sacrifice to the deity; or, that presenting it on an altar, and consuming it wholly or partially by fire, could be a propitiation for sin; and yet these mysterious ceremonies were almost as universal as the gift of speech. And between the sacrifices of nations, remote from each other, there has been remarked, a wonderful similarity in the circumstances of their sacred offerings; in the erection of altars; in the pouring out the blood: in dividing the animal into pieces; in combining the offering of salt, wine, bread, and incense, with the sacrifice of animals; in considering the blood and death of the victim, as expiatory for sin; in having an order of priesthood to officiate in these sacred rites, who were solemnly consecrated to the service, and considered more holy than other men; and when, only a small part of the animal sacrificed was consumed in the fire, in feasting on the remainder, within the precincts of the temple, or sacred enclosure. And this analogy may be traced even in the names, by which similar sacrifices were denominated among different nations. These, and many other striking resemblances, in the rites of ancient nations, go to prove, incontestably, that they must have had a common origin; and no account of this is half so probable, as that which ascribes sacrificial rites to an original revelation, which brings us to see the credibility of the Mosaic history, in regard to the origin of religious worship. But supposing that any heathen nation should now be convinced of the absurdity of idolatry, and should become sensible of their obligation to render some kind of external homage to the great Creator, by what means could they learn what sort of service would be acceptable? Reason could not teach them what rites should be observed. Without a revelation from God, they must forever remain without. a form of worship; or, if they attempted to invent certain rites, all experience teaches, that these human inventions will ever be marked with human weakness; and reason herself intimates, that no worship, not appointed by God, can be acceptable to him. It appears then, that even if man were not a sinner, still he would need a divine

revelation, to teach him how to render an acceptable worship to his Creator.

Some infidel writers have pretended, that it is a matter of indifference by what rites God is worshipped, and that he is equally pleased with the services of all nations, however different from each other in their mode of worship. This doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the dictates of sound reason. Upon this principle, even human sacrifices, which have been so common in the world, would be justified. And the most impure and abominable rites would be sanctioned by the Deity. The whole worship of Pagan nations, both in ancient and modern times, is detestable; and no one who has any just conceptions of the attributes of God, can persuade himself, that he ever could be pleased, with services so characterized by cruelty, impurity, and folly. Indeed, their worship is not directed to the true God, but to the false deities of their own invention. They sacrifice not to God, but to devils. They substituted for the august Creator, creatures of almost every kind and species. No man, under the government of reason, can look into any heathen temple, without being shocked and mortified with the degrading and abominable rites of idolatry. The more this subject is contemplated, the more clearly will the necessity of divine revelation be felt, and the greater will appear to be its value to the human race. Who can read an account of the mythology and idolatry of the ancient Egyptians, or of the modern Hindoos, and not be deeply impressed with the necessity of something, which might have the effect of dispelling this horrible darkness, and breaking asunder these cruel bonds of superstition?

Another argument for the necessity of a divine revelation, is, that without it man must remain ignorant of his origin, and his end; and utterly unable to account for the circumstances by which he is surrounded. He finds himself here upon the earth, and feels that he is borne along the stream of time with the rest of his generation, towards a dark gulph before him, which he perceives he can by no means escape. But when he inquires, respecting the origin of the human race;—when he seeks a solution of the enigma of his sinful, suffering, and mortal existence, he finds no one among the living or the dead, from whom he can obtain the least satisfactory information, on these points. All the traditions and histories of men are full of fables; and if they contain some rays of truth, they are so mingled with error, that no man can distinguish the one from the other. Leaving out of view the history contained in the Bible, and all that we can learn from others casts not a solitary ray of light on the points under consideration. We have no means of tracing up our race to its origin, and the deist can give no rational account of the wickedness of men, and of their sufferings and death. The darkness and uncertainty resting on these subjects, have led many, who rejected the authority of the Bible, to adopt most absurd and atheistical hypotheses, respecting the origin of man. Some have professed to believe, that the earth and its inhabitants have existed from all eternity—which is too absurd to require refutation. Others have amused themselves and their readers, with the idea, that originally, the human race was merely a species of monkey or baboon, and that by degrees they laid aside their brutal appearance and manners, and certain inhuman appendages, and having, in process of time, invented language, and the arts most necessary to provide for the clothing and shelter of the body, they gradually rose higher and higher in the scale of improvement, until they arrived at that pitch of refinement and civilization, which has been attained by the most polished nations. These, it is true, are rather atheistical than deistical hypotheses; but they serve to show how little light reason can shed on this subject; and, how much we need a divine revelation. For the deist can form no theory which can satisfy our reasonable desires. He can give no good reason for the moral condition and mortality of our race. He may say,

that it is the law of our nature; but this is merely to declare the fact, and not to account for it. But we might, perhaps, be contented to remain ignorant of our origin, if we could know what is to be our destiny, hereafter; and how far it is connected with our present character and conduct. Reason has exerted and exhausted all her resources, to demonstrate a future existence, and to place the immortality of the soul on an immovable basis. But what has been the result of all these reasonings? Why, a possibility, or, to say the most, a strong probability, that the soul survives the body. But this, of all others, is the point, on which we want certainty—absolute certainty. How painful to be involved in a cloud of doubt and suspense, when we look forward to futurity; and, especially, when descending into the grave, to have nothing to lay hold of, but the conclusions or conjectures of our own feeble reason? That I do not depreciate the force of the arguments for the soul's immortality, will appear, from the fact, that many of the heathen philosophers held, that the soul died with the body;—that of those who believed in a future existence, some were of opinion, that after the lapse of a thousand years, or some longer period, it would come to an end; others—and these very numerous—believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls from the body of one animal to that of another, in perpetual succession; and more still, had no other idea of immortality, than that the soul—which they thought was a particle of deity—would, at death, be refunded into the divine essence; which was virtually to deny its future existence, as to its distinct personality;—or, as possessing individuality, and consciousness. Even such men as Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, had no clear, consistent, and satisfactory views of this interesting subject: not because they neglected to exercise their cultivated and powerful intellect, upon it; for it was a subject, which more than all others engaged their thoughts;—but, because it was surrounded by a darkness which unassisted reason could not penetrate. O how glad would these sages have been to possess one ray of that revelation which our infidels foolishly despise! The earlier deists, generally admitted the doctrine of a future state of retribution, and affected to believe, that reason, was sufficient to establish the doctrine; but their successors, in modern times, or at least, a large majority of them, have either denied, or called into question, this fundamental doctrine. And if we should weigh impartially, all the arguments which have ever been adduced, in ancient or modern times, to establish this point, we would be obliged to confess that we needed further light. And from the very nature of the case, no one can give us an absolute assurance of our future and immortal existence, but God alone. It is an event which depends on his will, and nothing else. Arguments may be adduced, to prove that the soul is naturally immortal; but they prove no more than this, that the same causes which effect the dissolution of the body, can have no tendency to destroy the existence and activity of the soul. And what are called the moral arguments, only go to prove, that if God exercises a moral government over his creatures here, there must be a place for a just retribution hereafter. But we want, on this point, more certainty.—We want one to come from the other world, to tell us that there is a future state.—We want to hear the voice of God testifying, that there is not only a future state, but a day of righteous judgment. Here, every man can judge for himself, whether he needs a revelation. This argument for the necessity of a divine revelation, will be corroborated by observing the state of religion and morals among all heathen nations. It has often been remarked, that the most certain method of ascertaining what reason is capable of accomplishing, is to see what she has actually done in time past; especially, when enjoying all the advantages of high culture and extensive information. In physical science, we may expect new discoveries by the exercise of reason: and the science of morals may in time come to be better understood; but if all nations, even the most

civilized and learned, as well as the rude and barbarous, have utterly failed in forming correct opinions, on the most essential points of theology and ethics; and have, all of them, fallen into the most absurd and degrading errors; and have acquiesced in the most abominable and impure rites of idolatry; then, what can be more evident, than that they needed a divine revelation? Probably, one reason why the nations were left so long to walk in their own ways, was, to convince us of our own imbecility, and to prepare us to receive gratefully, when offered, this most comprehensive gift of God. To do justice to this argument, would require volumes; but as the subject has been amply treated by Leland and others, I will pass it over, by remarking, that the abominable rites of Pagan worship, and the shocking cruelties and impurities which have ever been perpetrated under the sanction of every heathen religion, make but a faint impression on our minds, because we only hear the distant report of these things, and are often tempted to think, that the narrative of these horrible doings, must be too highly colored: but, the truth is, the half, and far more than the half, remains untold, and cannot be publicly told, without outrageously offending against decency. It is an awful thought, that for so long a time, so many millions of our fellow creatures have been under the cruel bondage of superstition;—a slavery which affects the mind, and is productive of more human misery than all other causes. And as, Paganism still exists, and as its evils are unmitigated by the lapse of time, it is an easy matter to compare the Christian with the heathen world.—Cast your eye over the map of the earth, and say, where is found the densest darkness? Where does the light of truth shine? Is not the line of demarkation between light and darkness visible? And is it not as evident, as any thing can be, that the Bible is a rich blessing to all who possess and read it? We might here, also, institute a comparison between those Christian nations which freely circulate the Scriptures, and those who lock them up in a dead language—but this we omit; and go on to remark, that he who is informed of the events which have occurred on missionary ground, in our own times, must have his eyes covered with thick scales of prejudice, if he does not acknowledge, that the Gospel is the richest benefit which can be conferred on Pagan nations. Either then, a vile imposture—a cunningly devised fable—has the power of reforming and civilizing the most degraded of the heathen tribes; or, Christianity is a Divine Revelation; and is still accompanied by the power of God, making it effectual to the illumination, conversion, and salvation of the gentiles. Let the deist take his choice between these two things. But here, permit me to ask, whether, if a company of deists had gone out to Africa, or to the Society or Sandwich islands, any such reformation would have been wrought? The reader will smile, at the idea of a deist turning missionary to the heathen; but this very feeling demonstrates, that deism is not to be the means of regenerating the world. If the deist was right, certainly he would be the only proper person to send on a mission, to convert the idolatrous world. But all are ready to pronounce the very idea to be ludicrous. What! a missionary society of deists!—Why, they have no confidence in their own principles, in this respect; and no zeal for propagating them in such a field, and with such sacrifices, as the Christian willingly makes. But why should I go to distant and heathen lands, to prove that a revelation is necessary, when we have proof enough before our eyes. In any of our populous cities, we may draw a visible line between that part of the population, who are under the light of evangelical truth, and those who place themselves out of the reach of all the direct rays of the Gospel. Between these two extremes, there is a large class, not properly reckoned with either; but let us, without caring for exact accuracy in our computation, suppose, that one-third of the adult population are regular church-going people, who hear the leading truths of the Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath; and that another third seldom or never attend any place of public worship.

Between these two classes of citizens, we can institute a comparison. Exceptions you may have to make on both sides, but taking them in mass, is there any room to doubt whether religion is useful and necessary? From which of these classes, permit me to ask, are our prisons crowded with inmates? Suppose, first, that all those who never read the Bible, and frequent no place of worship, were removed from among us, would the state of society be meliorated, or deteriorated? Or, again, suppose that all the church-going people should be translated to another country, what would then be the condition of society? If I am not egregiously erroneous in my calculations, on the former supposition, we should be able to dispense with most of our means of coercion and restraint, and would save the enormous expense of keeping up such an array of courts, police-officers, and prisons. And, on the latter supposition, all the wealth of the country would be insufficient to provide places of confinement, and means of support, for the guilty; or, to come nearer to the truth, our large towns would soon become as Sodom; or as a den of thieves: and, soon, the doom of Sodom would sink them, never to rise again. But does any one think that this is not a fair statement of the matter, as it seems to take for granted, that there is no religion, nor can be any, without revelation?. I would request the person who makes this objection to tell me what kind of religion might be expected, if the Bible were banished from among us? Suppose then, instead of the hundreds of Gospel preachers, whose voices are lifted up on the first day of every week, to warn men of the danger of a sinful course, and to point out to them the way of life, all their pulpits should be filled with infidel lecturers, male and female; what, in your consciences, do you think would be the effect on morals and social happiness? We all know that many sinners have been converted by the faithful preaching of the Gospel; permit me to inquire, do you know, or have you heard of any transgressors being turned from the error of their ways, by attending on deistical lectures; or even on the theatre, that boasted school of morality? No doubt, some of my readers have heard of conversions at these places of fashionable resort, but not to righteousness—not to God, but the contrary. And, as I have happened to mention the theatre, I will further add, that I am far more afraid of the moral influence of this institution, than of that of deistical or atheistical lectures; not because it pleads for vice—this would not be tolerated—but because it draws thousands within the enchanted circle of temptation, and plunges thoughtless youth into the vortex of sensual pleasure, from which it is difficult to extricate them. But I will admit, that there may be much religion, without revelation; the whole heathen world is a proof of it. Some men of the world, indeed, confound all religions, and all the ministers of religion together, as if they were all alike; whereas, true and false religion, are as dissimilar, as light and darkness; and I will repeat what I have already said in substance, and that is, that, the only effectual barrier to false religion, is to cultivate that which is true. Infidelity may serve to sweep away one form of superstition, but after awhile the tide will turn, and enthusiasm, or superstition, will come in like a flood; for, as we have shown, the people must have some sort of religion; and if you banish that which is true, rational, sober, and benevolent, you will soon be visited with the most absurd and degrading systems of wild fanaticism; and these will, when the fires of enthusiasm are extinguished, settle down, or rather grow up, into hideous forms of superstition. The Pagan religions had some mixture of truth derived from early tradition; for they were all, as we have seen, a corruption of the primitive worship of fallen man: but banish the Bible, and you will have in its place, either the dark horrors of atheism, accompanied with crime, in her polluted and blood-stained robe, or you will have the reign of superstition, chilling every generous emotion—degrading every noble affection—and blighting all domestic bliss.

Sometimes, a splendid temple rests upon a few solid pillars, and falls to ruin if they be removed. Thus, the peace and order, and comfort, of civil society, depend much on two institutions; for both of which we are indebted to revelation. The first of these, is, the SACRED INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE: the second is, the RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION OF AN OATH, or solemn affirmation, which is virtually the same thing. Remove these, and the fair fabric of human happiness totters at once to its very base. But the argument on which I chiefly mean to dwell, to evince the necessity of a revelation, is, that without it, we can never learn how sin can be forgiven, or the sinner saved. Admitting then, that reason can direct us with sufficient clearness, in regard to all our moral duties; and admitting, that if a man performs his duty, no more is required of him, and he may confide in the justice and goodness of God; and that, in pursuing this course, no evil will ensue, and the suitable reward will not be wanting.—I say, admitting all this, for argument's sake—yea more, that all men possess this knowledge: yet, I maintain, that in relation to the state in which man actually is, it amounts to nothing. It is one thing to have a system of religion which suits the case of an innocent being, and quite another to find out a plan by which A SINNER can obtain forgiveness. A citizen may know full well, that if he obeys the laws of his country, he will be protected by all upright magistrates; but if he has already violated the laws, and incurred a formidable penalty, the knowledge mentioned does not reach his case. What he needs now, is to know how he can obtain a pardon, and evade the vengeance of the violated law. In every such case, there is an absolute need of a declaration, or revelation, from the supreme power of the state, of a willingness to pardon, on some certain condition. In no government can a pardon be a matter of course, or provided for by the law itself: for, such a provision would be subversive of all government. It would be a complete nullification of the obligation and authority of the law. Here, then, the momentous question occurs, is man a sinner? Have all men transgressed the law of God? I am willing to waive the proof of this point, for the present, and to leave it to the decision of every man's conscience is there then a man, upon earth, who is not conscious of having violated the law of his nature, both by omissions of duty, and the actual commission of sin?

Assuming it then as a fact, that men are sinners, I ask, what does the light of nature teach, respecting the forgiveness of sin? I shall endeavor to demonstrate, that reason sheds not a ray of light on this fundamental point; and, therefore, that Natural Religion, if known ever so perfectly and universally, could not bring us the relief which we need. The main argument for the position which I have laid down, is short and simple. It is the dictate of right reason, that God is just, and will render to every one according to his character and conduct; and that his law, being wise and good, must not be violated with impunity. Can the deist conceive of an objection to this principle?—Certainly not. It must be considered a self-evident truth, with every theist who believes in the moral government of God. The case is plain, therefore, and as far as the dictates of reason extend, the sinner has no prospect before him but to suffer the just punishment of his offences, whatever that may be. To suppose that reason can inform us that God will pardon our sins, is to suppose that its dictates are contradictory; for, to pardon, is the same as not to punish; but we have just seen, that the voice of reason is, that God is just, and will render to every man what he deserves. These two things are not compatible. Before I proceed further, I must put the reader on his guard, against loose and illogical reasoning, on a point so vital. I scarcely know a subject, on which most men appear to satisfy themselves with more vague and fallacious arguments. Some of the more common of these, it, will be my object now to consider. In the first place, it is alleged, and with much confidence asserted, by many, that God is a Being of too much benevolence and kindness,

to inflict severe punishments on his erring creatures. This suggestion—for it has not the shape of an argument—seems to give honor to God, while it is very soothing to the mind of the sinner. But when it is examined, it will be found to be rather an insult than an honor; for it supposes that the Ruler of the universe, out of kindness to a rebellious creature, will cease to be just:—that, rather than punish offences as they deserve, he will dishonor his own law. What sort of compliment would it be to an upright judge, among men, to say of him, that we were sure his benevolence and compassion would prevent him from inflicting the penalties annexed to the laws? But, if the Judge of all the earth, does not act upon the principle of punishing all sin as it deserves, on what other principle does he act? Would any one say, by punishing it half as much as it deserves;—but this might be a severe suffering; therefore, the conclusion to which this reasoning must lead, is, that God's goodness will, altogether, and forever, prevent him from inflicting any punishment on sin, however atrocious it may be. Many, in our days, who are not called deists or atheists, but who are more dangerous, because they mingle some Gospel truth with their errors, greedily embrace, and zealously inculcate this very opinion. But look at its consequences. The infinitely perfect God will treat alike the most malignant rebel, and the most affectionate and obedient servant. He will, in his treatment of his creatures, manifest no more displeasure at sin, than he does towards the most perfect virtue. If such benevolence as this existed, it would be no moral perfection, but a defect. But no; God's attributes are never at variance. There is no goodness in God which forbids or prevents the fullest exercise of justice. If ever he chooses to rescue sinners from the consequences of their sins, it will not be by sacrificing his justice, but by fully satisfying it. But this is an affair of which mere reason knows nothing. But if the deist should insist, that all moral goodness consists in benevolence, and nothing else, and therefore God will not punish any one but for his own good, I answer, that the good of the whole is to be preferred, by a benevolent being, to the happiness of an offending individual; and in all communities, the general good requires, that transgressors should be intimidated and restrained by punishment; so that it must be proved, that the good of the universe does not require the punishment of the guilty, before any such conclusion can be drawn from the benevolence of God.

It is manifest, therefore, that the suggestion which we have been considering, however pleasing to the mind in love with sin, and however plausible at first sight, will not bear examination; and instead of tending to the honor of God, takes from him all that is estimable in moral character. It allows him no other excellence than an indiscriminate benevolence to his creatures, without the least regard to their moral character. Such a being would not be the object of veneration and esteem, by all holy intelligences. An infinitely good God may punish transgressors according to the demerit of their crimes, without any disparagement of his goodness; and an infinitely just and holy God must punish sin. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Another suggestion, supposed by many to be a dictate of reason, is, that all the punishment ever inflicted on men for their sins, is the evil which arises out of it from the laws of nature, and the constitution of the human mind; and, that there is no good ground for any apprehension of any further or greater penalty. Now, let it be, in the first place, observed, that there is no proof adduced of the truth of this position; nor does it admit of proof. Who can tell what the Judge of all may think it necessary to inflict, hereafter, on sinners, for the manifestation of his justice, the vindication of his law, and as a terror to other offenders? Indeed, as far as we can judge of the facts, men do not suffer in this life, in any just proportion to their crimes: the wicked are often prosperous; and when

the conscience becomes callous, they experience but little remorse for their worst crimes. Transgressors, who are only beginning their career, experience the agonies of an accusing conscience in the keenest manner; while the veteran in iniquity has long since ceased to be much troubled with these “compunctious visitations.” But, supposing it true, that all the punishment of sin is that which naturally follows it, yet who can tell what all the consequences are, or where they will end? Crimes do not always produce their bitterest fruit, immediately. We see the sins of the intemperate, the lewd, and the dishonest, often overtaking them with their saddest consequences, long after the acts were committed. Sins committed in youth often produce a miserable old age. Look into the history of multitudes, whose vices have consigned them to a prison, or a mad house, and you will find that the cause of their wretchedness and disgrace, may be traced back to the sins of their youth: yes—those very sins, on which many are disposed to look with so indulgent an eye. And as these evils go on increasing until death, who can assure the sinner that this fearful progression will not continue beyond the grave? As we are not now arguing with atheists, we have a right to assume as a truth, the soul’s future existence, and if it exist in conscious activity, will it not carry with it, the moral character acquired in this world? Will not the selfish, the proud, and malignant, be selfish, proud, and malignant, when the clay tabernacle is dropped? Can death transform a sordid, and guilty creature, into an angel? Will not the man who is wicked up to the moment of dissolution, continue to be wicked, after death? And will not he carry with him, his memory, his conscience, and his craving desires? There is then but little comfort for the sinner in this suggestion, if true; for he may find springing out of his own corruption, a worm which will never die, and which will gnaw his vitals with as corroding a pain, as any which he is capable of enduring. Be it so, that conscience is the only fire to be dreaded in another world—who can tell us how intense and interminable the pain which this principle of our nature is capable of inflicting on the sinner? The fear, remorse, and horrible perturbation, which sometimes surround the death-beds of profligate sinners, afford a tremendous intimation, of what they may expect in a future, state. How great, or how long, the evil consequences of sin may be, our reason certainly cannot tell; as far as her dictates extend, we can see no end to this progression in vice and misery. But I come now to the consideration of a much more specious opinion, on which, deists, and others who agree with them in these matters, place great confidence. It is, that whatever the deserved penalty of sin may be, reason teaches us, that it can be set wide, or evaded, by a sincere and seasonable repentance. This principle has been assumed as a fundamental article in all the systems of sober deists. It is well known, that lord Herbert laid it down as one of the five positions, on which he founded his system; and, therefore, as perfectly understood by all men. And as many who wish to be considered rational Christians, adopt the same principle, it has gained very general possession of the public mind. And again, as pardon and repentance are closely connected, according to the doctrines of the Gospel, this truth of revelation, is by many, not distinguished from what is considered a dictate of reason; and hence it becomes a matter of real difficulty to separate truth from error, on this point; and in attempting it, we must encounter a formidable front of prejudice, not only from infidels, but also from others. And before I proceed further, I must request the reader to separate the evangelical doctrine of pardon, on repentance, from the deistical principle under consideration; for they stand on entirely different grounds, as will appear in the course of the discussion. And here let it be carefully remarked, that before this doctrine of reason, as it is called, can become a practical principle, two things must be pre-supposed; first, that all men know what that repentance is, which will insure our pardon; and

next, that every sinner has ability to perform it. The reasonableness of these pre-requisites is self-evident. But great difficulty attends the theory, as it relates to these points. For we would ask, whether by that repentance which reason inculcates, any thing more is meant than sorrow or compunction for our sins; or whether it includes a thorough reformation of life, and that not merely extending to external acts, but to the motives and affections of the heart? It is also reasonable to ask, whether any certain degree or continuance of sorrow is requisite? And whether repentance will not cease to be available, if the sinner revert to his former ways of iniquity? Moreover, whether repentance, flowing simply from fear of punishment, is genuine; and if not, what sort of principles must it have, as its source? It is also needful and important to inquire, whether an inveterate, hardened sinner, can repent of his sins, so as to hate and forsake them;—and surely no other repentance is worth any thing. With a mind filled with error, his conscience seared; and his habits deeply radicated, what hope is there of his turning about, and commencing a new life? From what principle could we anticipate such a change in a confirmed villain, or debauchee? You might as reasonably expect the Ethiopian to change his skin, as for him that has been long accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well. And it will answer no purpose to say, that he can repent if he will, and if he will not, the blame is all his own; for, we are inquiring, whether reason can teach a method of salvation adapted to the condition of sinners, and it matters not whether the obstacle be in the will or in something else: if it uniformly prevents the desired effect, it is plain, that something else is needed. And as to the blame being on his own head, it is admitted; but this is true in regard to every sin; for, in every act of transgression the sinner is culpable, otherwise it would be no sin; and if the only object be, to fix the blame upon the culprit, this is sufficiently provided for, without offering him pardon upon repentance; for, life and happiness can be secured, without repentance, if men will only obey the law of God perfectly. And there is no greater, nor other inability, in the way of his doing this, than in the way of his exercising true penitence. There is, manifestly, a radical defect in the deistical theory, on this very point; for it makes no provision for bringing the sinner to repentance, but merely offers pardon, in case he will do that to which his whole heart is averse. And does not fact accord with our sentiments? Where are the instances of deists repenting of their sins, and yet adhering to this system? There are indeed many glorious examples of infidels being brought to repentance and reformation, by the Gospel; but I would challenge the world to produce an instance of any one being brought to repentance, and a thorough change of life, merely on the principles of deism. And if the principle is in practice utterly ineffectual, of what value is it? and why should it be magnified into a matter of so much importance, as to be adduced as a proof that a revelation is not needed?

As, however, I wish to give a full and impartial discussion to this point, I will now, for the sake of argument, suppose, that the repentance which is necessary to pardon, is understood by all men, and that all have ability to perform it. The opinion then is, that all sinners by repentance may escape the punishment justly due to their sins; and this repentance they can bring into exercise, at any time, when it may be needed. Now, if this be true, and a dictate of reason, then it must be confessed, that a revelation is not absolutely necessary; for what method of salvation can be simpler, easier, or more intelligible than this? But, I deny that any such doctrine belongs to the system of natural religion, or is dictated by the light of reason. This opinion of the efficacy of repentance, is borrowed from the Gospel; and has been tacked to deism, with which: it has no coherence. The truth is, it is altogether incompatible with the first great fundamental principle of natural religion; namely, that God being just, will render to every one according to his moral

character and conduct. And, here, I would repeat what has often been remarked by writers on this subject, that deists have ever been in the habit of borrowing from revelation, without giving' credit for what they take; and perhaps, without knowing whence the sentiment is derived. Men, born and educated under the light of revelation, however they may come to reject the Bible, and all the positive institutions of Christianity, cannot divest themselves of all those important moral principles, which, directly or indirectly, they have derived from this source. The light of divine revelation is widely diffused in Christian countries, and has given complexion to all our laws, institutions, and systems of education; so, that a man can no more escape entirely from its influence, than, from the effect of the light of the sun. Many truths which the deist pretends to have discovered by the light of reason, are nothing else than the reflected light of divine revelation; for how else can you account for it, that the theory and moral system of our sober deists, should be so much superior to the attainments of Socrates, Plato, and Cicero? Their conduct resembles that of a man, who should light his taper by means of the sun's rays, and then pretend that all the light around him, he had struck out himself; or, that it was produced by the feeble taper which he held in his hand.

But, to return to the point under discussion. If a man, now he is a sinner, can certainly know that the punishment of his sins can be evaded by a repentance completely in his own power, he could also know this before he sinned. Then, with the law written on his heart, and sanctioned with a penalty, he had the clear knowledge from reason, that commit whatever atrocious sins he might, and incur whatever punishment he might, that he would at any, and at every moment of his existence, have it in his power, to escape all the punishment which he had merited, simply by the act of repentance. This is a plain and fair statement of the case; and it is easy to see, that it is completely subversive of the law of God, as a binding rule; and leaves it fully in the power of the creature to do whatever he pleases. He may deliberately determine, that he will rebel against his Maker, till the last moment of life, and then disarm his vengeance, by repentance. The penalty of the law may be in itself, tremendous, but it can deter no one from any course which he may be inclined to pursue, because, he can, at any moment, remove himself from its operation. What greater license could the most daring rebel wish, than what is thus granted? This single principle admitted into the moral government of God, would be a complete nullification of the divine authority.

These consequences of the doctrine under consideration, are evident and inevitable, and demonstrate that it cannot be a principle of reason, or natural religion. But it may be thought by some, that the same objection will lie, with all its force, against the doctrine of the Gospel, which promises a plenary pardon to every true penitent. But this is a mistake: the evangelical doctrine of repentance stands on entirely different grounds. That such an offer would be made, could be known by no creature before he sinned. This doctrine does not in the least clash with the justice of God; for all the sins of the penitent, to which pardon is granted, are virtually and actually punished in the sinners substitute. Here is the grand point of difference between Christianity, and deism and all other systems. The former maintains the glory and harmony of all the divine attributes; the latter obscures, or would destroy one attribute, to make way for another. The consequence is, that the way in which pardon is granted to the penitent, according to the Gospel, has no tendency to relax our obligation to obedience, or to lessen our sense of the evil of sin; but the deistical principle of forgiveness, as we have seen, nullifies the law and authority of the Governor of the universe; and

leaves it completely at the option of the creature, whether he will obey or transgress the law of God. The former is perfectly consistent with the justice of God, extending pardon to no sin for which satisfaction has not been made; while the latter is in direct repugnance to the clearest demands of justice. But another objection to the opinion that the punishment of sin is remitted upon repentance, is, that this is contrary to experience, and fact. We have seen that the deist is fond of considering the punishment of sin as being nothing else but its consequences, arising out of the laws of nature. Is it true, then, that the laws of nature change their course as soon as a sinner repents? Is it not a fact, that the penitent thief, in the penitentiary, and the repentant debauches, in the hospital, are still suffering the consequences of their crimes, long since committed? Repentance cannot bring back lost health, ruined reputation, dissipated fortune, and alienated friends. How then, can the deist, on his own principles, pretend, that the punishment of sin is removed by repentance? He may allege, that the future punishment of sin will be remitted; but how does he know this? reason can judge nothing in regard to the future, but by some analogy with what is observed to take place in this life; and from the facts stated, it is manifest, that all analogy is against the opinion, that the evil consequences of sin will be terminated by death.

Again, if pardon be granted only to the penitent; and the impenitent be punished according to the demerit of their crimes, then there is a state of sinning which renders it proper that sin should be punished rigidly according to its desert. There can, therefore, be no argument drawn from the goodness and compassion of God, against the condign punishment of sinners. But why is impenitence alone to be considered as exposing a sinner to the wrath of God? And why are the penitent alone, exempt from the penalty of the law? The answer must be, either, that the sin of impenitence is so great as to deserve this severe treatment; or, the merit of repentance is such as to atone for the greatest sins, which man can commit. But supposing that impenitence draws after it deeper guilt than all other sins, this does not prove that this alone should be punished; it only proves, that it should be punished more: but if there be a plain principle in jurisprudence, it is, that every sin should certainly be visited with punishment, but exactly according to its' nature. There is no reason why a less sin should be suffered to pass rather than a greater. Strict justice says, let every sin have its due retribution. The greatness of the sin of impenitence, therefore, cannot be a reason why the impenitent alone are to be punished. Nor can this great difference in the treatment of sinners, be owing to the merit of repentance; for it would be difficult to tell, wherein its most extraordinary merit consisted. It must either be in the obedience, or the suffering involved in the exercise of repentance. But it cannot consist in the degree of obedience which it contains; for, if this were perfect, it could do no more than answer the demands of the moral law, for the time being, but could have no effect on sins already committed. I think it a self-evident truth, that my obedience, this moment, cannot atone, or satisfy, for my disobedience, the preceding moment; for in the latter case, I do no more than my duty. Then, certainly, the obedience included in repentance cannot atone for all past sins, however enormous, for it is imperfect; and, moreover, has nothing in it which enhances its value, above other acts of obedience. Neither can the suffering involved in repentance atone for past sins; for, these pangs of compunction owe all their virtue to the obedience with which they are connected, and without which they would not even be of a moral nature. Unless some one should be of opinion, that these penitential sorrows are to be considered as an equivalent for the penalty of the law: but this cannot be correct, because an equivalent for the penalty of the law, would be an equal degree and duration of suffering. If, indeed, a person of higher dignity and greater worth is permitted to suffer in the place of another,

in proportion to the difference in dignity, the sufferings may be diminished. It is, however, always a matter in the breast of the Supreme Judge, whether to allow of such a substitution. I see nothing unreasonable in it. But in the case under inquiry, the same person who owes the suffering, if I may so speak, endures the sorrows of repentance; and how, I would ask, can the pious grief of a few hours or days, be an equivalent for the punishment of the most heinous transgressions? Besides, the penitent sinner ever feels, and is ready to confess, that he deserves further punishment. No one who ever truly repented entertained the idea, that by this, he had made a complete atonement for his sins. These stains are of too deep a dye, to be washed out by a few penitential tears. Nothing can be more opposed to this opinion, than the views and feelings, involved in the exercises of true repentance. Every true penitent is deeply convinced, that he deserves heavier punishment, than what is involved in the sorrows which he now experiences.

There is, however, one ground for the opinion, that there is a reasonable connexion between repentance and forgiveness, which is, perhaps, more plausible than any other argument; and therefore merits a distinct consideration. It is, that all good men acknowledge, that it is a virtue to forgive those who offend us, when they appear to be penitent; and Christians cannot deny that this is a part of moral duty, for it is repeatedly and emphatically enjoined, in the New Testament, as a thing essential. What is here alleged, we fully admit; and are willing to go farther, and say, that it is made the duty of Christians to forgive those who injure them, whether they repent or not; for they are required to "love their enemies; to do good to them that hate them; to bless them that curse them; and pray for them which despitefully use them." But this is entirely a distinct case, and resting on principles entirely different, from the one under consideration. It is no part of the duty of Christians to inflict condign punishment on those who sin, even if they have been injured by them. They are forbidden to seek for revenge, or to render to the wicked according to their iniquities; not because there is any thing improper or inconsistent with moral goodness, in punishing the guilty as they deserve; but because this is the peculiar prerogative of the Governor of the universe. In those very passages of Scripture, where vengeance is forbidden to the creature, in express and emphatical language it is claimed for the Almighty. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord; therefore, if thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." If this duty of forgiveness, in the Christian, proved any thing, it would prove more than is wished; it would follow, that God would certainly pardon not only the penitent, but all sinners, however obstinate in their rebellion. But this conclusion is altogether at variance with the opinion which we have had under discussion, and is not even held up by the deist.

Another argument in favor of the doctrine that repentance is naturally connected with pardon, is derived from the practice of granting pardon, in human governments. But here, there is a mistake respecting the real state of the fact; for, although, it is true, that in all human governments, it is found expedient, to have a pardoning power, lodged somewhere; yet, no government ever yet professed to act on the principle of pardoning all offences, on the condition of repentance: nor, indeed, is the extension of mercy to certain criminals who have incurred the penalty of the law, at all connected with this principle. The reason why it is sometimes right to pardon offences against the state, is, either because in some particular case, the rigid execution of law would not be entirely just; or, that on account of the number of persons implicated, sound policy may dictate, that only the most guilty should be held up as an example. It appears, then, that the weakness of human governments is the ground on which the penalty of the law is remitted; but no such reason

can exist in the divine government. But, in the execution of human laws, no inquiry is ever instituted, whether the criminal be penitent: yea, although his repentance should be most evident, yet this never disarms the law of its penalty. The penitent thief or murderer, are punished by our laws, as well as the obstinate and impenitent. If, in a few cases, rulers who possessed the power of granting pardon, have acted on the principle, that criminals who discovered signs of penitence, should be, on that account, pardoned, it only proves, that men entrusted with power may be misled; for undoubtedly, this principle carried out, would soon be subversive of all law. If the only end of punishment was the good of the culprit, then, indeed, such a course might be defended; but as long as the good of the community is the chief end of punishment, it never can be safe to offer pardon to all who profess repentance; or who, for a while, appear to be reformed.

I think it is manifest, from the preceding discussion, that the idea of a certain connexion between repentance and pardon, in the moral government of God, is not derived from the light of nature, but from the Gospel; and, therefore, if pardon is to be had in this way, it is only on the ground of the atonement of Christ; and not on account of any merit or efficacy in repentance, to take away the guilt of sin. And if these views are correct, then is a divine revelation absolutely necessary to teach us, that God is willing to receive the penitent into favor; and to inform us, on what terms this is practicable.

Revelation is reasonable

CHAPTER V.

THERE IS NOTHING IMPROBABLE OR UNREASONABLE IN THE IDEA OF A REVELATION FROM GOD; AND CONSEQUENTLY, NOTHING IMPROBABLE OR UNREASONABLE IN SUCH A MANIFEST DIVINE INTERPOSITION, AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A REVELATION. THAT a revelation is possible, will not be called in question by any who believe in the existence of a God; nor can it be believed that there is any thing in the notion of a revelation, repugnant to the moral attributes of the Supreme Being. It cannot be inconsistent with the wisdom, goodness, or holiness of God, to increase the knowledge of his intelligent creatures. The whole end of a revelation is to make men wiser, better, and happier; and what can be conceived more accordant with our ideas of divine perfection, than this? That man is capable of receiving benefit from a revelation, is a truth so evident, that it would be folly to spend time in demonstrating it; for whatever may be thought of the sufficiency of Natural Religion, if it was fully understood and improved; yet all must admit, that men, generally, have not been sufficiently enlightened on the subject of religion. The history of the world, in all ages, proves the deplorable ignorance of the greater part of the human race, even on those subjects, which the advocates of Natural Religion, confess to be most important and fundamental, as has been proved in the preceding chapter.

It cannot be thought an unreasonable supposition, that when God made the original progenitors of our race, he should furnish them with such knowledge as was absolutely necessary, not only for their comfort, but for their preservation. As they were without experience, and had none upon earth from whom they could derive instruction, is it unreasonable to suppose, that the beneficent Creator communicated to them such a stock of knowledge, as was requisite for the common purposes of life? The theory of those who suppose, that man was at first a dumb, irrational animal, very little different from those which now roam the forest;—and that from this state lie emerged by his own exertions;—that he invented articulate speech, and all the arts of life, without ever receiving any aid, or any revelation from his Creator, has already been sufficiently refuted.

If, then, man received, at first, such ideas as were necessary to his condition, this was a revelation; and if afterwards he should at any time need information, on any subject connected with his happiness, why might not the benevolent Creator, who does not abandon the work of his hands, again vouchsafe to make a communication to him? Such an exigency, deists themselves being judges, did arise. Men, almost universally, fell into the practice of idolatry, and lost the knowledge of the true God. They betook themselves to the worship of the luminaries of heaven, of dead men, of beasts, and inanimate things. They invented superstitious rites, not only irrational, but cruel and abominable. These were transmitted from generation to generation; and the children became still more involved in ignorance, than their parents. Now, that the righteous Governor of the universe may leave men to follow their own inventions, and suffer by their own folly, is certain; for he has done so. But is it not consistent with his wisdom and goodness to use extraordinary means to rescue them from a state so degraded and wretched? Would not every sober deist

admit, that some means of bringing them back to just ideas of Natural Religion would be desirable? If then the apostacy of man from his Maker should render some farther revelation necessary, would it not be highly benevolent to communicate whatever knowledge his circumstances required? Why would it be thought unreasonable, that God should sometimes depart from his common mode of acting, to answer great and valuable ends? What is there in the established course of nature so sacred or so immutable, that it must never on any occasion or for any purpose be changed? The only reason why the laws of nature are uniform, is, that this is for the benefit of man, but if his interest requires a departure from the regular course, what is there to render it unreasonable? The Author of the universe has never bound himself to pursue one undeviating course, in the government of the world. The time may come when he may think proper to change the whole system. As he gave it a beginning, he may also give it an end. General uniformity is expedient, that men may know what to expect, and may have encouragement to use means to obtain necessary ends; but occasional and unfrequent deviations from this uniformity have no tendency to prevent the benefit arising from it. This is so evident a truth that I am almost ashamed to dwell so long upon it; but by the sophistry of infidels a strange darkness has been thrown over the subject, so that it seems to be thought that there would be something immoral, or unwise and inconsistent, in contravening the laws of nature.

Let it be remembered that the object here is not to prove that there must be a revelation; it is only to show that there would be nothing unreasonable in the thing; and farther, that it would be a very desirable thing for man, and altogether consistent with the perfections of God, and the principles on which he governs the world.

If God should determine to reveal his will to man, how could this be most conveniently effected? We can conceive of two ways. The first, by inspiring all who needed knowledge with the ideas which he wished to communicate. The second, by inspiring a few persons, and directing them to make known to others the truths received. The first would seem to be the most effectual, but the last is more analogous to his other dispensations. Reason might have been given in perfection at once, and not left to the uncertainty of education and human improvement; but such is not the fact. By slow degrees and much culture this faculty attains its maturity, and when neglected never acquires any high degree of strength. In regard to the best mode of making a revelation, however, we are totally incompetent to judge; but of one thing we may be certain, that if God should give a revelation to men, he would so attest it as to enable all sincere inquirers to know that it derives its origin from him; for otherwise it would be useless, as there would be no evidence of its truth. Supposing a revelation to be given, what would be a satisfactory attestation of its divine origin? It must be some sign or evidence not capable of being counterfeited; something by which God should in some way manifest himself. And how could this be effected, but by the exertion of his power or the manifestation of his infinite knowledge? That is, by miracles, or by prophecies, or by both. There is then just as much probability that miracles will exist, (for prophecy may be considered one kind of miracle) as that a revelation will be given. The conjunction of these two things is reasonable; if we find the one, we may be sure the other exists also.

It is admitted that a revelation from God would have internal evidence of its origin, but this does not strike the attention at once. It requires time before it can be perceived; but in the first establishment of a revelation, there is need of some evidence which is obvious to the senses and level to the capacities of all. Just such an evidence are miracles. Moreover, internal evidence

requires, in order that it may be perceived and appreciated, a certain favourable state of the moral feeling, without which it is apt to be overlooked, and produces no conviction; whereas external evidence is not only level to every capacity, but adapted to bring home conviction to every description of men, to the bad as well as the good.

Miracles then furnish the best proof for the establishment of a revelation. They seem to be its proper seal. They are the manifest attestation of God. Nothing can be conceived which will more strikingly indicate his power and presence than a visible suspension of the laws of nature. He is invisible: he must make himself known by his works, and a miracle is such a work as no other can perform. When therefore a person professes to have received a revelation from God, and when we behold the effects of Almighty power accompanying his words, all are sure that God is with him, and that he is a teacher sent from God; for otherwise he could never perform such wonderful works; or rather, to speak more correctly, God would never exert his power to confirm the pretensions of an impostor or to attest doctrines which are not true.

Miracles are capable proof

CHAPTER VI.

MIRACLES ARE CAPABLE OF PROOF FROM TESTIMONY.

I do not know that any one has denied that a miracle would be credible, if exhibited to our senses. A man might, indeed, be deceived by an illusion arising from some disorder in his senses; but if he was conscious of being in a sound state of body and mind, and should witness not only one, but a variety of miracles; not only a few times, but for years, in succession; and, if he should find, that all around him had the same perceptions of these facts as himself, I need not say, that it would be reasonable to credit his senses, for the constitution of his nature would leave him no choice: he would be under the necessity of believing, what he saw with his eyes, heard with ears, and handled with his hands. But are there facts which a man would credit on the evidence of his senses, which can, by no means, be rendered credible by the testimony of any number of witnesses? Then there might be facts, the knowledge of which could never be so communicated as to be worthy of credit. According to this hypothesis, the constitution of our nature would require us to withhold our assent from what was true, and from what others knew to be true. If a thousand persons of the strictest veracity should testify, that they had repeatedly witnessed a miracle, and if all circumstances should concur to corroborate their testimony, yet upon this principle it would be unreasonable to credit them; even if they should consent to die in confirmation of what they declared to be the fact. This is the ground taken by Mr. Hume, in his boasted argument against miracles. But, it appears to me, that every man, previously to examination, must be convinced that it is false; for it is contrary to common sense, and universal experience of the effect of testimony. The true principle on this subject, is, that any fact which would be believed on the evidence of the senses, may be reasonably believed on testimony. For there may be testimony of such a nature, as to produce conviction as strong as any other conceivable evidence; and such testimony in favor of a miracle, would establish it as firmly as if we had witnessed it ourselves. But, notwithstanding this is the conclusion of common sense and experience, the metaphysical argument of Mr. Hume has had the effect of perplexing and unsettling the minds of many: and as he boasts, that “it will be useful to overthrow miracles as long as the world endures,” it seems necessary to enter into an examination of his argument, that we may be able to expose its fallacy. This has already been done, in a convincing manner, by several men, [5] eminent for their learning and discrimination: and if their works were read by all who peruse Hume, I should think it unnecessary to add a single word on the subject. But it may not be without use, to present a refutation, in a condensed form, for the sake of those who will not take the trouble to go through a minute and extended demonstration. The argument of Mr. Hume will be best exhibited in his own words. “A miracle,” says he, “supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision, than of argument. No testimony for any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability.”—“We establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force, as to prove a miracle, and make a just foundation for any system of religion.”—“Our belief or assurance of any fact from the report of eye witnesses, is derived from no other principle, than experience; that is, our

observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. Now, if the fact attested partakes of the marvellous, if it is such as has seldom fallen under our own observation; here is a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes. Further, if the fact affirmed by the witness, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous; if, besides, the testimony considered apart, and in itself, amounts to an entire proof; in that case there is proof against proof; of which the strongest must prevail. A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. And if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony. A miracle, therefore, however attested, can never be rendered credible, even in the lowest degree.”

Here we have the substance of Mr. Hume's argument, on which I propose to make some remarks, intended to show that its whole plausibility depends on the assumption of false principles and the artful use of equivocal terms.

1. Some prejudice is created in the mind of the Unsuspecting reader, by the definition of a miracle here given. It is called “a violation of the laws of nature,” which carries with it an unfavorable idea, as though some obligation was violated, and some injury was done. But the simple truth is, that the laws of nature are nothing else than the common operations of divine power, in the government of the world, which depend entirely, for their existence and continuance, on the divine will; and a miracle is nothing else, than the exertion of the same power in a way different from that which is common; or, it may be a mere suspension of that power, which is commonly observed to operate in the world.

2. Mr. Hume's argument will apply to the evidence of the senses as well as to that derived from testimony, and will prove (if it prove any thing) that it would be impossible to believe in a miracle, if we should witness it ever so often. “The very same principle of experience,” says he, “which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance against the fact which they endeavor to establish, from which contradiction there arises necessarily a counterpoise, and mutual destruction of belief and authority.” The very same counterpoise and mutual destruction of belief, must also occur between the assurance derived from the senses, and that derived from experience. The reason why testimony cannot be believed in favor of a miracle, is not, according to Mr. Hume, because it has no force; for taken by itself, it may be sufficient to produce assurance; but let this assurance be as strong as it may, it cannot be stronger than that derived from universal experience. “In that case,” says he—“there is proof against proof.” Now, it is evident, that upon these principles, the same equilibrium from contradictory evidence, must take place, between experience and the senses. If one evidence be stronger than another, “the stronger must prevail, but with a diminution of force in proportion to that of its antagonist.” But in the case of the senses, and a firm and unalterable experience, the evidence is perfect on both sides, so that the “counterpoise and mutual destruction of belief,” must occur. According to this metaphysical balance of Mr. Hume, a miracle could not be believed if we witnessed it ever so often; for although there is a great weight of evidence on each side, yet as there is an equilibrium, neither can have any influence on our assent. Whether Mr. Hume would have objected to this conclusion, does not appear; but it is manifest, that it logically follows from his argument, as much as in the case to which he has applied it. And here we see to what a pitch

of skepticism his reasoning leads.

3. Mr. Hume makes an unnecessary distinction between that which is marvellous, and that which is miraculous; for although there is a real difference, yet as to his argument, there is none. The force of his reasoning does not relate to events as being miraculous, but as being opposite to universal experience. If the conclusion, therefore, be correct, it will equally prove, that no testimony is sufficient to establish a natural event, which has not before been experienced. If ever so many witnesses should aver, that they had seen meteoric stones fall from the clouds, or the galvanic fluid melt metals, yet if we have never experienced these things ourselves, we must not believe them.

4. The opposite or contrary experience of Mr. Hume, in regard to miracles, can mean nothing more, than that such things have not been experienced. There is no other opposite experience conceivable, in this case, unless a number of persons present, at the same time, should experience opposite impressions. The distinction which he artfully makes, in relation to “the king of Siam, who refused to believe the first reports concerning the effects of frost,” between that which is contrary to experience, and not conformable to experience, is without foundation. For a fact cannot be contrary to experience in any other way, than by being not conformable to it. There neither is, nor can be, any experience against miracles, except this, that they have not occurred in our own experience or that of others. When the proposition of our author is expressed in language free from ambiguity, it will amount to this, that what has never been experienced, can never be believed on any testimony; than which nothing can easily be conceived more false. In what a situation must man have been, at the beginning of the world, if he had adopted the principles of this skeptic.

5. Mr. Hume uses the word experience in a twofold sense, changing from one to the other, as best suits his purpose. Sometimes it means, personal experience, and at other times, and more commonly, the experience of the whole world. Now, if it be taken to mean our own individual experience, the argument will be, that no fact which we ourselves have not witnessed, can be established by testimony; which, if correct, would cut off, at a stroke, the greater part of human knowledge. Much the most numerous class of facts are those which we receive upon the testimony of others, and many of these are entirely different from any thing that we have personally experienced. Many learned men never take the trouble to witness the most curious experiments in philosophy, and chemistry; yet they are as well satisfied of their truth, as if they had personal experience of it. But although an argument founded on an opposition between testimony and experience, in order to be of any validity, must relate to personal experience; yet, Mr. Hume commonly uses the term to signify the experience of all men in all ages. This extensive meaning of the term must be the one which he affixes to it in most places of his essay; because, it is an experience by which we know that the laws of nature are uniform and unalterable; and he has given an example which clearly determines the sense of the word,. “That a dead man should come to life,” says he, “has never been witnessed in any age or country.” Now, according to this use of the word, what he calls an argument, is a mere assumption of the point in dispute; what logicians call, a *petitio principii*;—a begging of the question. For, what is the question in debate? is it not whether miracles have ever been experienced? And how does Mr. Hume undertake to prove that they never did exist? By an argument intended to demonstrate that no testimony can establish them; the main principle of which argument is, that all experience is against them. if miracles have

ever occurred, they are not contrary to universal experience; for whatever has been witnessed at any time, by any person, makes part of universal experience. What sort of reasoning is it, then, to form an argument against the truth of miracles, founded on the assumption, that they never existed? if it be true, as he says, "That it has never been witnessed, in any age or country, that a dead man should come to life," then, indeed, it is useless to adduce testimony to prove, that the dead have, on some occasions, been brought to life. If he had a right to take this for granted, where was the use of such a parade of reasoning on the subject of testimony? The very conclusion to which he wished to come, is here assumed, as the main principle in the argument. It is, however, as easy to deny as to affirm; and we do utterly deny the truth of this position; so, that after all, we are at issue, precisely on the point, where we commenced. Nothing is proved by the argument which promised so much, except the skill of the writer in sophistical reasoning.

6. Our author falls into another mistake in his reasoning. The object is to prove, that testimony in favor of miracles, can never produce conviction, because it is opposed by uniform and unalterable experience. But how do we know what this universal experience is? Is it not by testimony, except within the narrow circle of our own personal experience? Then it turns out, that the testimony in favor of miracles is neutralized or overbalanced, by other testimony. That is, to destroy the force of testimony, he assumes a principle founded on testimony. It is admitted, that when testimony is adduced to establish any facts, if other and stronger testimony can be brought against them, their credibility is destroyed. But, if I bring testimony for a fact, and some One alleges that he can show that this testimony is unworthy of credit, because he can bring witnesses to prove that many persons in different countries and ages never saw any such thing; to such a person I would reply, that even if these witnesses declared the truth, it could not overthrow the positive testimony which I had adduced, as they did not contradict the facts asserted; and, besides, it must be determined, which witnesses are the most credible, yours or mine. Just so it is in the case of Mr. Hume's argument. He sets up uniform experience against testimony, and gives a preponderance to the former, on the ground, that witnesses are known sometimes to lie; but all that he knows of what has happened in other ages-and countries, is by testimony; and they who give this testimony are as fallible as others; therefore, there existed no ground for preferring the evidence of experience, to testimony. Besides, he is not in possession of testimony to establish a thousandth part of what has been experienced; and as far as it goes, it amounts to no more than non-experience; a mere negative thing, which can never have any weight to overthrow the testimony of positive witnesses. In a court of justice, such a method of rebutting testimony, would be rejected as totally inadmissible. If we had sufficient evidence of a fact of any kind, that testimony would not be invalidated, if it could be proved, that no person in, the world had ever witnessed the like before. This want of previous experience naturally creates a presumption against the fact, which requires some force of evidence to overcome: but in all cases, a sufficient number of witnesses, of undoubted intelligence and veracity, will be able to remove the presumption, and produce conviction.

7. Mr. Hume lays it down as a principle, that our belief in testimony arises from "experience; that is, observation of the veracity of human testimony." But this is not correct. Our belief in testimony is as natural and constitutional, as our belief in our senses. Children, at first, believe implicitly all that is told them: and it is from experience that they learn to distrust testimony. If our faith in testimony arose from experience, it would be impossible to acquire any knowledge from instruction. If

children were to believe nothing that was told them, until they had made observations on the veracity of human testimony, nothing would ever be believed; for they would never arrive at the maturity and judgment necessary to make observations on a subject so complicated. But although, I perceive, Mr. Hume's object in wishing to establish this false principle, was, to exalt the evidence of what he calls experience, above testimony; yet, I think, if we should concede it to him, it could answer him no purpose, since we have shown, that this experience itself, depends on testimony. Whatever use he can make, of this principle, therefore, against testimony, can be turned against himself, since his knowledge of what the experience of the world is, can only be obtained by the report of witnesses, who, in different ages, have observed the course of nature.

8. Mr. Hume, on reflection, seems to have been convinced, that his argument was unsound; for in a note, appended to his Essay on Miracles, he makes a concession, which entirely overthrows the whole. But mark the disingenuity, or shall I not rather call it, the malignity of the man, against religion, which is manifested in this only evidence of his candor. He concedes that there may be miracles of such a kind, as to admit of proof from human testimony, in direct contradiction to his reiterated maxim, and in complete repugnance to all his reasoning; but. he makes the concession with the express reservation, that it shall not be applied to the support of religion. He, however, not only makes this concession, but gives an example of such miracles, and of the testimony which he admits to be sufficient to establish it. "Suppose," says he, "all authors in all languages agree, that from the first of January, 1600, there was a total darkness all over the earth for eight days; suppose that the tradition of this event is still strong and lively among the people; that all travellers bring us accounts of the same tradition, &c.—IT IS EVIDENT THAT OUR PHILOSOPHERS OUGHT TO RECEIVE IT FOR CERTAIN." And this is a part of the same Essay, in which it is said, "That a miracle, supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision than argument." "No kind of testimony for any kind of miracle can possibly amount to a probability, much less to a proof."

It might appear, that after so complete a renunciation of the principle which at first he so strenuously asserted, we might have spared ourselves the pains of a formal refutation. But not so. The author is resolved, that his concession shall be of no service, whatever, to religion. Hear his own words: "But should this miracle be ascribed to any new system of religion; men in all ages have been so imposed upon by ridiculous stories of that kind, that this very circumstance would be full proof of a cheat, and sufficient with all men of sense, not only to make them reject the fact, but even reject it, without further examination." I have heard of a maxim, which, I believe, the Jesuits introduced, that, that might be true in philosophy, which was false in theology; but I never could have expected that a philosopher, a logician, and a metaphysician too, would utter any thing so unreasonable, and so marked with prejudice, as the declaration just quoted. The fact was admitted to have such evidence, that. even philosophers ought to receive it as certain. But not if it is ascribed to a new religion. On this subject no evidence is sufficient. It is perfectly unexceptionable in philosophy; but in religion a sensible man will reject it, whatever it may be; even without further examination. The circumstance of its being a miracle connected with religion, is sufficient, in his opinion, to prove it a cheat, however complete the testimony. The world, it seems, has been so imposed on by ridiculous stories of this kind, that we must not even listen to any testimony in favor of religious miracles. This author would, indeed, reduce the advocates of religion to an awkward dilemma. They are called upon to produce evidence for their religion, but if they adduce it, sensible

men will not notice it; even if it is good every where else, it must go for nothing in religion. Upon these principles, we might indeed give up the contest; but we are not willing to admit that this is sound logic, or good sense. The reason assigned for proscribing, in this summary way, all the testimony in favor of religion, will apply to other subjects. Men have been imposed on by ridiculous stories in philosophy, as well as in religion; but when evidence is proposed, shall we not even examine it, because there have been impositions? This is the very reason why we should examine with care, that we may distinguish between the true and the false.

If it were true, that miracles had often been ascribed to new religions, it would not prove that there never were any true miracles, but rather the contrary; just as the abounding of counterfeit money is evidence that there is some genuine; for that which has no existence is not counterfeited. But the clamor that has been raised by infidels about new religions being commonly founded on miracles, or the pretence of miracles, has very little foundation in fact. Besides the Jewish and Christian religions, (which are indeed parts of the same,) it would, I believe, be difficult to designate any other, which claims such an origin.

After all that has been said of the false maxims of the Jesuits, I doubt whether any one could be selected so perfectly at war with reason, as this of the Scotch philosopher: nay, I think, I may challenge all the enemies of revelation, to cull from any Christian writer, a sentence, so surcharged with prejudice.

But, to do justice to Mr. Hume—although he seems to have closed the door against all discussion, on our part—yet, in one of his general maxims, he leaves us one alternative. The maxim is this, “That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless it be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact.” An ingenious writer [6] has undertaken to meet Mr. Hume on his own ground; and has endeavored to prove, that the testimony of the apostles and early Christians, if the facts reported by them were true, is a greater miracle than any which they have recorded. But the maxim, as stated by Mr. Hume, is not correct. With the change of a single word, perhaps, it may be adopted, and will place the question on its proper ground. The change which I propose, is to substitute the word improbable, for miraculous. And it will then read, No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more improbable, than the fact which it endeavors to establish. The ground of objection to the word miraculous, is, that it involves a false principle, which is, that facts are incredible in proportion as they are miraculous; which principle, he, in several places avows, and which is, indeed, a cardinal point in his system of evidence. But it is not true. There are many cases which might be proposed, in which, of two events, one of which must be true, that which is miraculous is more probable than the one which is merely natural. I will mention only one at present. Man was either immediately created by God, or he proceeded from some natural cause. Need I ask, which of these is most probable? and yet the first is miraculous; the second not. The plain truth is, that in all cases, the fact which has most evidence is most probable, whether it be miraculous or natural. And when all evidence, relating to a proposition, is before the mind, **THAT IS TRUE, WHICH IS EASIEST TO BE BELIEVED**; because it is easier to believe with evidence, than against it.

We are willing, therefore, that this maxim, as now stated, should be the ground of our decision, and we pledge ourselves to prove, that, the falsehood of the miracles of the Gospel, would be

more improbable, and consequently more incredible, than the truth of the facts recorded in them. But this discussion will be reserved for another place. To conclude; since, it has been shown, that there is no antecedent presumption against miracles from the nature of God, or from the laws by which he governs the universe;—since, a miraculous fact is not more difficult to be accomplished by omnipotence, than any other;—since, miracles are no further improbable, than as they are unusual;—since, they are the most suitable and decisive evidences which can be given of a revelation;—since, even by the concession of Mr. Hume himself, there may be sufficient testimony fully to establish them:—and, since, the many false pretences to miracles, and the general disposition to credit them, are rather proofs that they have existed, than the contrary; we may safely conclude, that Mr. Hume's argument, on this subject, is sophistical and delusive; and that it is so far from being true, as he alleges, that they are incredible, whatever may be their evidence, when brought to support religion, that this is, of all others, that department, in which they are most reasonable and credible.

[5] Dr. Campbell, Prof. Vince, Mr. Adam, Dr. Douglas.

[6] Dr. Gleig.

Gospel Miracles are credible

CHAPTER VII. THE MIRACLES OF THE GOSPEL ARE CREDIBLE.

HAVING shown, in the preceding chapter, that miracles may be so attested as to be credible, I come now to examine the evidence by which the miraculous facts recorded in the New Testament, may be established. This is the main point in our inquiry; for, after all that has been said, it must be admitted, that unless the Christian religion is attended with sufficient evidence, we cannot believe in it, even if we would.

Before entering directly on this discussion, it may be useful to premise a few things respecting the nature and force of testimony, which, it is presumed, will be admitted by all who have attended to the subject. This species of evidence admits of all conceivable degrees, from the weakest probability to the fullest assurance; for while, on this ground, we yield to some reports, the most hesitating assent, we are as certainly persuaded of others, as of those things which we perceive by our senses, or have demonstrated by mathematical reasoning. The exact force of testimony cannot be calculated by rule, nor estimated by reason; but is known, only from experience. Many things are believed on testimony, with the most unwavering confidence, when we are utterly unable to explain the precise ground on which our conviction rests. The sources of our information have been so numerous, and the same facts presented to us in so many forms, that it is impossible to attribute to each its influence in gaining our assent. If we were asked, on what particular testimony we believe there is such a place as Rome, or why we believe that such a person as Buonaparte lately figured in Europe, we could only answer, in the general, that multiplied testimonies of these facts, had reached us, so that all possibility of doubting was excluded. The same assurance, and resting on the same grounds, is experienced in relation to facts, which occurred in ages long past. Who can bring himself to doubt, whether such persons as Julius Cæsar, Paul, Mohammed, Columbus, or Luther, ever existed? When we have obtained evidence to a certain amount, nothing is gained by the admission of more. The mind becomes, as it were, saturated, and no increase of conviction is produced, by multiplying witnesses. One sound demonstration of a theorem in mathematics, is as good as a hundred. A few upright witnesses who agree, and are uncontradicted by other evidence, are as satisfactory as any conceivable number. On a trial for murder, if there were a thousand witnesses who could attest the fact, a judicious court would not deem it necessary to examine more than half a dozen, or at most, a dozen, if there were a perfect agreement in their testimony. Experience only can inform us, what degree of evidence will produce complete conviction; but we may judge from former experience, what will be the effect of the same evidence, in future: and from the effect on our own minds, what it will be on the minds of others.

Testimony, not of the strongest kind, may be so corroborated by circumstances, and especially by the existing consequences of the facts reported, that it may be rendered credible, and even irresistible. Should a historian of doubtful credit attest, that an eclipse of the sun occurred, on a certain day, and was visible in a certain place; if we possessed no other evidence of the fact, it

might be considered doubtful, whether the testimony was true or false; but if by astronomical calculation, it should be found, that there must have been an eclipse of the sun at the time, and visible at that place, the veracity of the witness, in this case, would be confirmed, beyond all possibility of doubt. Or, should we find it recorded by an anonymous author, that an earthquake, at a certain time, had overthrown a certain city; without further evidence, we should yield but a feeble assent to the statement; but if, on personal observation, or by the report of respectable travellers, it was ascertained, that the ruins of an ancient city existed in that place, we should consider the truth of the history as sufficiently established. The evidences of the Christian religion may be sufficient, and yet not so strong as inevitably to produce conviction. Our conduct in the pursuit and reception of truth, may be intended by our Creator, to be an important part of the probation to which we are subjected; and, therefore, the evidence of revelation is not so great as to be irresistible; but is of such a kind, that the sincere and diligent inquirer will be in no danger of fatal mistake; while men of pride and prejudice, who prefer darkness to light, will be almost sure to err. [7]

It is natural for all men to speak the truth; falsehood requires an effort. Wicked men lie, only when they have some sinister end in view. Combinations to deceive, are never formed, but with a view to accomplish some object desirable to those concerned. No set of men will be at the trouble of forging and propagating a falsehood, which promises them no profit or gratification. Much less will they engage in such an enterpriser with the view of bringing evil on themselves; or, when they foresee, that it can be productive of nothing, but pain and reproach.

Between truth and falsehood there is so great a difference, that it is extremely difficult for the latter, so effectually to assume the garb, and exhibit the aspect of the former, as, upon a strict scrutiny, not to be detected. No imposture can stand the test of rigid inquiry; and when the inquisition is made, the truth seldom, remains doubtful: the fraud is pretty sure to become manifest. The style and manner of truth are entirely different from those of falsehood. The one pursues a direct course, is candid, unaffected, and honest; the other, evasive, cunning, tortuous, and inconsistent; and is often betrayed, by the efforts made to avoid detection. When both sides of a question are pressed with difficulties, reason teaches us to choose that which is attended with the fewest. Objectors to Christianity often forget to notice the difficulties of their own hypothesis. Every question has two sides—if we, reject the affirmative, we, of necessity, receive the negative with the consequences with which it may be burdened. If we reject the evidence of Christianity, and deny that miracles ever existed, we are bound to account for the existence of the Christian church, and for the conduct of the first preachers and primitive believers, on other principles. And whoever seriously undertakes this, will impose on himself a difficult task. Gibbon, has put forth his strength, on this subject, with very small success. His account of the origin of Christianity is very unsatisfactory, and is totally defective in historical evidence. [8]

If the evidences, on both sides of an important question, appear to be pretty equally balanced, it is the dictate of wisdom to lean to the safe side. In this question, undoubtedly, the safe side is that of religion; for, if we should be mistaken here, we shall suffer no loss, and obtain sonic good by our error; but a mistake on the other side, must prove fatal. When a proposition has been established by proper and sufficient evidence, our faith ought not to be shaken by every objection, which we may not be able to solve. To admit this, would be to plunge into skepticism, on all subjects; for, what truth is there to which some objection may not be raised that no man can fully answer? Even the clearest truths in science are not exempt from objections of this sort. It must be so, as long as

our minds are so limited, and the extent of human knowledge so narrow. That man judges incorrectly, who supposes, that when he has found out some objection to Christianity which cannot be satisfactorily answered, he has gained a victory. There are, indeed, objections, which relate to the essence of a proposition, which, if sustained, do overthrow the evidence; but there are other numerous objections which leave the substantial evidence undisturbed. Concerning them, I speak, when I say, that objections, though not capable of an answer, should not be permitted to unsettle our faith.

Let us now proceed to the examination of the testimony for the miracles recorded in the Gospel. In this discussion we shall take it for granted, that such a person as Jesus Christ lived in Judea, about the time mentioned by the evangelists;—that he inculcated a pure and sublime morality; lived a virtuous and unblamable life; and was put to death by Pontius Pilate, at the instigation of the Jewish rulers. Also, that his apostles went forth into various countries preaching to the people, and declaring that this crucified Jesus was, a person sent from God, for the salvation of the world; and that many were induced to connect themselves with the Christian church. These facts not being of a miraculous nature, and it being necessary to suppose some such events, deists have commonly been disposed, to admit them. But Volney, in his Ruins, and some others, have imagined, that such a person as Jesus Christ never existed;—that this is the name of one of the celestial luminaries;—and that the Gospel history is an allegory. Such visionary theories do not deserve a serious answer; they are subversive of all historical truth, and have not a shadow of evidence. They may be well left to sink by the weight of their own extravagance. Mons. Volney, however, has received a learned answer from a gentleman, [9] who has met him, on his own ground; and being as much attached to astronomical allegories as the Frenchman, has vanquished him with his own weapons. In the examination of written testimony, the first thing requisite, is to prove the authenticity of the documents, in which it is recorded. The evidence, on which we depend, for the truth of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ, and by his apostles, is contained in the New Testament. Here we have four distinct narratives of the life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth; and also a history of the acts and sufferings of the apostles in preaching the Gospel, and laying the foundation of the first Christian churches, after the resurrection and ascension of their Master. We have, also, in this collection of writings, a number of epistles, addressed to the church in general, to particular churches, and to individuals. These, with a book of prophecy, compose the volume, called the New Testament.

These books are certainly not of recent origin; for there are extant, copies of the New Testament, in the original Greek, which are, at the least, twelve hundred, years old. And before the time when these manuscripts were penned, we have, in other books, numerous testimonies to the existence of the Christian Scriptures. They are not only mentioned, but quoted, expounded, and harmonized so that if every copy of the New Testament had been lost, a large portion of it might be recovered, by means of the numerous quotations in the early Christian writers. Besides, there are extant, versions of the New Testament, into several languages, made at a very early period. By these means, we are able to trace these writings up to the time, in which the apostles lived.

There is also ample proof, not only from Christian, but heathen authors, that a society, calling themselves Christians, existed as early as the reign of Nero, who was contemporary with the apostles. It is evident, from the necessity of the case, that some such accounts as those contained in the Gospels, must have been received as true, from the first existence of the Christian church.

Unless it had been preached and believed that Christ was a divine Teacher, and performed extraordinary works in attestation of his mission, how is it possible that such a society could have been formed? To suppose such a thing, would be to conceive of a, superstructure, without a foundation. The resurrection of Christ from the dead, must have been an article of the faith of Christians, from their very origin; for it is the corner stone of the whole edifice. Take the belief of this away, and the Christian system has no existence. There are also some external institutions peculiar to Christianity, which we must suppose to be coeval with the formation of the society, for they are the badges of the Christian profession, and constitute a part of their worship. I refer to baptism, and the eucharist. To suppose, that, in some way, Christianity first existed, and afterwards received these articles of faith, and these institutions of worship, is too improbable to be admitted by any impartial man. It would be to suppose that a religious society existed without any principles; or that they rejected their original principles, and adopted new ones; and that they who imposed these upon them, had the address to persuade them, that they had always belonged to their system;—than which is not easy to conceive any thing more improbable. Let us, for a moment, attempt to imagine, that previously to the publication of the Gospels, the Christian Church had among them no report of the miracles, and no account of the institutions, recorded in these books. When they opened them, they would read, that their society was founded on the belief of the resurrection of Jesus; and that baptism and the eucharist were instituted by him before he left the world, and had existed among them ever since. Nothing can be more evident, therefore, than that the substance of what is contained in the Gospels, was believed and practised by Christians, from the commencement of the society. As these books have come down to us under the names of certain apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, so they were ascribed to the same persons, from the earliest mention of them. It is, by the ancient Fathers, spoken of as a fact, universally believed among Christians, and contradicted by nobody. And we must not suppose, that in the first ages of Christianity, there was little care or discrimination exercised, in ascertaining the true authors and genuine character of the books in circulation. The very reverse is the fact, The most diligent inquiries were instituted into matters of this kind. Other books were published in the name of the apostles, professing to give an account of. Jesus Christ, which were not genuine. The distinction between the books of the New Testament, and all others, of every class, was as clearly marked, in the earliest ages, as it has ever been since. The writings of the apostles were held in great veneration; were received by the churches, all over the world, as the rule of their faith, and directory of their lives; and publicly read at their meetings for the instruction of the people. When any controversy arose, they were appealed to as an authoritative standard. As soon as published, they were so widely scattered, and so carefully guarded, that no persons had it in their power to make any alteration in them. The style, or dialect, in which these books are written, furnishes an evidence of their authenticity, of peculiar kind. It does not, indeed, ascertain the persons of the writers, but proves, that they must have been exactly in the circumstances of those to whom these books have been uniformly ascribed. The words are Greek but the idiom is Hebrew, or rather Syro-Chaldaic, the vernacular tongue of Judea, in the time of Christ and his apostles. This is a peculiarity which none could counterfeit, and which demonstrates, that the New Testament was not composed by men of a different country and age, from those in which the apostles lived. In the New Testament, there are numerous references to rivers, mountains, seas, cities, and countries, which none but a person well acquainted with the geography of Judea and the neighboring countries, could have made, without falling into innumerable errors. There is,

moreover, incidental mention, of persons and facts, known from other authorities to have existed, and frequent allusions to manners and customs, peculiar to the Jews. From all these considerations, it ought to be admitted without dispute, that these are indeed the writings of the apostles, and of those particular persons to whom they are ascribed. It would not, however, destroy their credibility, even if other persons had written them, since they were certainly composed at that age, and were received by the whole body of Christians. But what imaginable reason is there for doubting of the genuineness of these books? What persons were so likely to write books to guide the faith of the church, as the apostles? If they did not write them, who would? And why would they give the credit of them to others? But their universal reception, without opposition or contradiction, should silence every cavil. The persons who lived at this time, knew the apostles, and were deeply interested in the subject, and these are the proper judges of this question. And they have decided it, unanimously, as it relates to the historical books of the New Testament. From them the testimony has come down, through all succeeding ages, without a chasm. Even heathen writers and heretics are witnesses, that the Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear. [10] In other cases, we usually possess no other evidence of the genuineness of the most valued writings of antiquity, except the opinion of contemporaries, handed down by uncontradicted tradition. How soon would Homer be deprived of his glory, if such evidence was insisted on as is required for the genuineness of the New Testament? Certainly, as it respects evidence of genuineness, no books of antiquity stand upon a level with the books of the New Testament. The works of the Greek and Latin historians and poets, have no such evidence of being the writings of the persons whose names they bear, as the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For we have the testimony, not merely of individuals, but of numerous societies, widely scattered over the world. We have internal evidence, of a kind, which cannot be counterfeited. We have, in short, every species of evidence, of which the case admits. It may, therefore, be considered, as an established fact, that the books of the New Testament are the genuine productions of the apostles; and consequently, contain their testimony to the miracles of Jesus Christ, and also to those miracles, which, in his name, they performed after his ascension.

It is also certain, that the books of the New Testament have not undergone any material change, since they were written; for there is a general agreement in all the copies, in all the versions, and in all the quotations. There are, it is true, small discrepancies, which have occurred, through the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers; but, not more than might naturally be expected. There is no ancient book which has come down to us so entire as the Scriptures, and which is accompanied by so many means of correcting an erroneous reading, where it has occurred. This representation may appear surprising to those, who have heard of the vast multitude of various readings, which learned critics have collected from a collation of the manuscripts; but it ought to be understood by all who have ever heard of these discrepancies, that not one in a thousand of them, is of the least consequence;—that a great majority of them are merely differences in orthography, in the collocation of words, or in the use of words perfectly synonymous, by which the sense is not in the least affected. A cursory reader would find as little difference in the various manuscripts of the New Testament, as in the different printed editions of the English version.

Having established the authenticity of the record which contains the testimony, we shall next proceed to consider its credibility. The serious and candid attention of the reader, is requested to the following remarks:

I. Many of the facts related in the Gospels, are undoubtedly of a miraculous nature. It is declared that Jesus Christ, in several instances, raised the dead;—in one of which, the person had been dead four days, so that the body began to be offensive to the smell. In every case, this miracle was wrought instantly, and without any other means, than speaking a word. It is declared, that he healed multitudes of the most inveterate and incurable diseases;—that he gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and active limbs to the withered and the maimed: that he delivered those who were furious and unmanageable, by reason of the possession of demons; that, on different occasions, he fed thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes until they were satisfied; and that the fragments which were gathered up, were much greater in quantity than the original materials; that he walked upon the sea, and with a word allayed the raging storm, and produced a great calm. And, finally, it is repeatedly and solemnly declared, by all the witnesses, that Jesus Christ, after being crucified, and after having continued in the sepulchre three days, rose from the dead, and after showing himself, frequently, to his disciples, ascended to heaven, in their presence. That all these were real miracles, none can for a moment doubt. It is true, we do not know all the powers of nature; but we do know, as certainly as we know any thing, that such works as these could not be performed, but by the immediate power of God. The same remark may be extended to the miracles wrought by the apostles, in the name of the Lord Jesus; and especially, to that stupendous miracle on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles, in visible form, and conferred on them the gift of tongues, and other extraordinary endowments. All must admit, that if these events ever occurred, then there have existed undoubted miracles.

II. The miracles of Jesus were performed, for the most part, in an open and public manner, in the presence of multitudes of witnesses, under the inspection of learned and malignant enemies; in a great variety of circumstances, and for several years in succession. There was here no room for trick, sleight of hand, illusion of the senses, or any thing else, which could impose on the spectators. This circumstance is important, because it proves to a certainty, that the apostles themselves could not be deluded and deceived, in the testimony which they have given. To suppose that they could think that they saw such miracles every day, for years, and yet be deceived, would be nearly as extravagant a supposition, as that we were deceived in all that we ever experienced.

III. The character of the miracles recorded in the Gospels, ought to be carefully observed. They were all worthy of the majesty, justice, and benevolence of the Son of God. They are characterized by dignity, propriety, and kindness. Most of them, indeed, were acts of tender compassion to the afflicted. Although so many miracles were performed, in so great a variety of circumstances, yet there is nothing ludicrous, puerile, or vindictive, in any of them. Christ never exerted his power to gratify the curiosity of any, or to supply his own daily wants. He made no ostentatious display of his wonderful power, and never used it to acquire wealth and influence. While he fed hungry multitudes by a miracle, he submitted to hunger and want himself; while he could command all nature, he remained in poverty;—not having so much as a home of any kind, to which he could retire to find repose. Although he was rejected and ill-treated by the Jews, yet he never refused to relieve any who sincerely sought his aid. His life, in consequence of the multitudes who flocked to him, was fatiguing, and on many accounts unpleasant, but he never grew weary in doing good.

Let any man compare the narrative of the miracles of Christ, contained in the genuine Gospels, with those fictitious accounts, which may be found in the apochryphal and spurious Gospels, still extant, and he will be struck with the remarkable contrast between them. The same result will be the consequence of a comparison of the miracles of Christ, with those, ascribed by the followers of Mohammed, to the impostor; or those contained in the legends of the church of Rome. I know not how any impartial man can read attentively the account of the miracles recorded in the Gospels, and not be convinced, from the very nature and circumstances of the facts reported, that they were real.

IV. There are no signs of fraud or imposture to be discovered in the record itself. There is, on the contrary, every indication of truth, honesty, and good intention, in the writers. Although they differ from each other in style and manner, so much, that it is evident, that the same person did not compose the four Gospels; yet there is a character of style which belongs to the whole of them, and which is without a parallel among any writers but the penmen of the Sacred Scriptures. It is an apparent exemption from the passions and frailties of human nature. The most stupendous miracles, are related without one exclamation of wonder from the historian: and without the least appearance of a desire to excite the wonder of the reader. The character of Christ is drawn in no other way, than by simply telling what he did and said. There is no portraying of character in the way of general description, or by using strong epithets to set him forth. There is, perhaps, no such thing, in the Gospels, as an expression of admiration of any discourse or action, by the evangelists. If they relate such things, they are the words of others, which they faithfully set down. When they describe the sufferings of Christ, they never fall, as men usually do, into pathetic declamation. They are never carried away from their simple course by the power of sympathy. The facts are related, as though the writer felt nothing, but the strong purpose of declaring the truth, without giving any color whatever to the facts. Neither do they indulge themselves in those vehement expressions of indignation against the enemies of Christ, which we should naturally have expected. They never give utterance to a harsh expression against any one. They relate the treachery of Judas with the same unaffected simplicity, as if they had no feelings relative to his base conduct. But there is something which exhibits the true character of the writers, in a light still stronger. It is the manner in which they speak of themselves. Few men can write much concerning themselves, without betraying the strength of self-love. Weak men, when they get on this topic, are commonly disgusting: and even when persons seem willing to let the truth be known, there is usually an effort discoverable, to seek compensation, in something, for every sacrifice which they make of reputation. But we may challenge any one to designate any instance, in which the least indication of this moral weakness has been given by the evangelists? They speak of themselves, and their companions, with the same candor, which characterizes their narrative in regard to others. They describe, in the most artless manner, the lowness of their origin, the meanness of their occupation, the grossness of their ignorance, the inveteracy of their prejudices, their childish contentions for superiority, their cowardice in the hour of danger, and the fatal apostacy of one, and temporary delinquency of another of their number. If any person supposes that it is an easy thing to write as the evangelists have done, he must have attended very little to the subject. The fact is, it cannot be imitated now, when the model is fully before us. That these unlearned men should be able to write books at all, with propriety, is a wonderful thing. Few fishermen, or mechanics, confined all their lives to laborious occupations, and untutored in the art of composition, could produce, without committing great faults, a narrative of their own lives. But that

men of such an education should possess such self-command and self-denial, as is manifest in these compositions, cannot be easily accounted for, on common principles.

That, however, which deserves our special attention, is the absence of all appearance of ill design. I should like to ask a candid infidel, to point out, in the Gospel, some fact, or speech, which in the remotest degree, tends to prove, that the writers had a bad end in view. I need not say, that he could find nothing of the kind. Then, upon his hypothesis, we have this extraordinary fact; that four books, written by impostors, who have imposed on the world a series of falsehoods, do, in no part of them, betray the least appearance of ill design, or sinister purpose. Certainly, no other books, written by deceivers, possess the same characteristics.

We have some instances of men of learning and piety, manifesting uncommon candor, in the accounts which they have left of their own errors, prejudices, and faults; but in all of them you perceive the semblance, if not the reality of human frailty. These works, however, are very valuable. Some eminent infidels, also, have come forward before the world, with CONFESSIONS, and narratives of their lives, and even of their secret crimes.

None has made himself more conspicuous in this way, than J. J. Rosseau, who professes to exhibit to the world, a full confession of his faults, during a period of many years. And to do him justice, he has exposed to view moral turpitude enough, to make, if it were possible, a demon blush. But this infatuated man gloried in his shame: and declared it to be his purpose, when called before the tribunal of Heaven, to appear with his book in his hand, and present it to his Judge, as his confession and apology. Through the transparent covering of affectation, we may observe the most disgusting pride and arrogance. While common sense and decency are outraged, by a needless confession of deeds which ought not to be once named, he is so far from exhibiting any thing of the character of a true penitent, that he rather appears as the shameless apologist of vice. By his unreserved disclosures, he aspired to a new sort of reputation and glory. Perhaps, there is not, in any language, a composition more strongly marked with pride and presumption. His confessions were manifestly made, in a confidence of the corruption of mankind, from whom he expected much applause for his candor, and small censure for his vices; but as he has appealed, also, to another tribunal, we may be permitted to doubt, whether he will there find as much applause, and as slight condemnation, as he affected to expect. Between such impious confessions as these, and the simple, humble, and sober statements of the evangelists, there can be no comparison.

There is only, one other thing, in the style of the apostles, which I wish to bring into view. In all the detailed narratives which they have given of Jesus Christ, no allusion is ever made to his personal appearance. We are as much unacquainted with his stature, his aspect, his complexion, and his gait and manner, as if the Gospels had never been written. There is profound wisdom in this silence: yet I doubt whether any writers, following merely the impulse of their own feelings, would have avoided every allusion to tilts subject.

V. There is no just ground of objection to the testimony, on account of the paucity of the witnesses. In regard to most facts handed down to us by authentic history, it is seldom, that we have more than two or three historians, testifying the same things; and in many cases, we receive the testimony of one as sufficient, if all the circumstances of the fact corroborate his narrative. But here, we have four distinct and independent witnesses, who were perfectly acquainted with the

facts which they relate. Two of these, Matthew and John, were of the number of the twelve, who accompanied Jesus, wherever he went, and saw, from day to day, the works which he performed. Mark and Luke might also have been eye-witnesses. Many think that they were of the number of the seventy disciples, sent out by Christ to preach; but if they were not, they might have been his followers, and have been often present, in Jerusalem and other places, where he exhibited his miracles. It is not necessary, however, to resort to either of these suppositions. They were contemporaries, early disciples, constant companions of the apostles, and travelled much among the churches. Mark was, at first, the companion of Paul and Barnabas, and afterwards, attached himself to Peter, from whose preaching, according to the universal tradition of the early Fathers, he composed his Gospel. Luke was chosen by the churches in Asia to accompany Paul in his labors, and was almost constantly with him, until his first imprisonment at Rome; at which time, his history of the life and labors of that apostle terminates

Besides these four evangelists, who have professedly written an account of the miracles of Jesus Christ, we have the incidental testimony of those apostles, who wrote the epistles, especially of Paul. It is true, Paul was not one of the twelve apostles who accompanied Christ on earth; but he became an apostle, under such circumstances, as rendered his testimony as strong, as that of any other witness. He informs us, that he was met by Jesus near to Damascus, when he was "breathing out threatening and slaughter" against the disciples of Christ: who appeared to him in the midst of a resplendent light, and spoke to him. From that moment he became his devoted follower, and the most laborious and successful preacher of the Gospel. He abandoned the most flattering worldly prospects, which any young man in the Jewish nation could have. He possessed genius, learning, an unblemished character for religion and morality; was in high favor with the chief men of his nation, and seems to have been more zealous than any other individual, to extirpate Christianity. How can it be accounted for, that he should suddenly become a Christian, unless he did indeed see the risen Jesus? Instead of bright worldly prospects, which he had before, he was now subjected to persecution and contempt, wherever he went. The catalogue of only a part of his sufferings, which he gives in one of his epistles, is enough to appeal the stoutest heart; yet, he never repented of his becoming a Christian, but continued to devote all his energies to the promotion of the Gospel, as long as he lived. This change, in a person of Paul's character and prospects, will never be accounted for upon principles of imposture, or enthusiasm. [11] Here, then, we can produce what deists often demand, the testimony of an enemy. Not of one who was unconvinced by the evidence of Christianity, which would be an inconsistent testimony, and liable to great objections; but of one whose mind had been long inflamed with zeal against Christianity; and yet, by the force of evidence, was converted to be a zealous disciple, and retained, all his life, a deep and unwavering conviction of the truth of the Gospel. [12] This man, although he has not written a Gospel, has given repeated testimonies to the truth of the leading facts, which are now in question. Especially, he is one of the best witnesses on the subject of the resurrection of Christ; for he not only saw and conversed with Jesus after his ascension, but has informed us of some circumstances, of great importance, not mentioned by any of the evangelists. He asserts that Christ was seen by five hundred persons at one time, most of whom were still living when he wrote. If there had been any falsehood in this declaration, how soon must it have been detected? His letters, no doubt, were immediately transcribed, and conveyed to every part of the church; and how easy would it have been to prove the falsehood of such a declaration, if it had not been a fact? But almost every page of Paul's writings recognises as true, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

his constantly assumed as a truth most assuredly believed by all Christians. It is the great motive of exertion and source of consolation, in all his epistles. And when he would convince certain heretics of the absurdity of denying the resurrection of the body, he reduces them to this conclusion, that "if the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen," which would be, at once, to subvert the Christian religion. His appeal to the common assured belief of Christians, is remarkably strong, and pertinent to our purpose; "If," says he, "Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." Would any man in his senses, have written thus, if the resurrection of Christ had not been a fundamental article of faith among Christians; or if he had not been fully persuaded of its truth? Had Paul been an impostor, would he have dared to appeal to five hundred persons, most of whom were living, for the truth of what he knew to be false? How easy, and how certain, must have been the detection of an imposture thus conducted? The same is evident from the epistles of the other apostles, and from the Apocalypse.

Now, when we can clearly ascertain what any persons believed in relation to a we have, virtually their testimony to that fact; because, when they come forward and give testimony, explicitly, they do no more than express the conviction of their own minds. Certainly, then, if we can by any means, ascertain what the primitive Christians believed in regard to the resurrection of Christ, and other miraculous facts, we are in possession of all the testimony which they could give. [13] This is an important point as it relates to the number of witnesses. Now, that all Christians, from the beginning, did believe in the facts recorded in the Gospels and Epistles of the apostles, we have the strongest possible evidence. It is proved incontestably, from the fact of their becoming Christians; for how could they be Christians without faith in Christianity? unless any one will be so extravagant as to believe, that not only the apostles, but all their converts, were wilful deceivers. It is proved also from the manner in which Christians are addressed by the apostles, in all the epistle. Suppose, for a moment, that the Corinthian church had no belief in the resurrection of Christ, when they received the above-mentioned epistle from Paul; would they not have considered him perfectly insane? But the universal reception of the Gospels and Epistles, by all Christian churches, throughout the world, is the best possible evidence that they believed what they contained. These books were adopted as the creed and guide of all Christians. It is manifest, therefore, that we are in possession of the testimony of the whole primitive church, to the truth of the miracles recorded in the Gospels. Suppose a document had come down to us, containing a profession of the belief of every person who embraced the Christian religion, and a solemn attestation to the facts on which Christianity is founded, would any man object, that the witnesses were too few? The fact is, that we have substantially, this whole body of testimony. I do not perceive, that its force would have been sensibly greater had it been transmitted to us with all the formalities just mentioned. There is, therefore, no defect in the number of witnesses. If every one of the twelve apostles had written a Gospel, and a hundred other persons had done the same, the evidence would not be essentially improved. We should have no more, after all, than the testimony of the whole primitive church, which, as has been proved, we possess already.

VI. The credibility of the testimony is not impaired by any want of agreement among the witnesses. In their attestation to the leading facts, and to the doctrines and character of Christ, they are perfectly harmonious. The selection of facts by the several evangelists is different, and the same

fact is sometimes related more circumstantially by one, than another; yet there is no inconsistency between them. In their general character, and prominent features, there is a beautiful harmony in the Gospels. There is no difference which can affect, in the judgment of the impartial, the credibility of the testimony, which they contain. If all the evangelists had recorded precisely the same facts, and all the circumstances, in the same order, the Gospels would have the appearance of having been written in concert, which would weaken their testimony. But it is almost demonstrable, from internal evidence, that the evangelists, with the exception of John, never had seen each other's productions, before they wrote. Their agreement, therefore, ought to have the effect of witnesses examined apart from each other; and their discrepancies serve to prove, that there could be no concerted scheme to deceive; for in that case every appearance of this kind would have been carefully removed.

I am aware, however, that on the ground of supposed contradictions, or irreconcilable discrepancies, the most formidable attacks have been made on Christianity. It is entirely incompatible with the narrow limits of this essay, to enter into a consideration of the various methods which have been adapted for harmonizing the Gospels, and removing the difficulties which arise from their variations. I can only make a few general observations, with the view of leading the reader to the proper principles of solution.

It ought to be kept in mind, that the Gospels were written almost two thousand years ago, in a language not now spoken; in a remote country, whose manners and customs were very different from ours. In all such cases, there will be obscurities and difficulties, arising entirely from the imperfection of our knowledge. The Gospels do not purport to be regular histories of events, arranged in exact chronological order, but a selection of important facts, out of a much greater number left unnoticed. The time when, or the place where, these facts occurred, is of no consequence to the end contemplated by the evangelists. In their narratives, therefore, they have sometimes pursued the order of time; and in other cases, the arrangement has been suggested by the subject previously treated, or by some other circumstance. In recording a miracle, the number of persons benefitted, is not of much consequence; the miracle is the same, whether sight be restored to one person, or two; or whether demons be expelled from one, or many. If one historian, intent on recording the extraordinary facts, selects the case of one person, which might, in some accounts, be more remarkable; and another mentions two, there is no contradiction. If they had professed to give an accurate account of the number healed, there would be ground for this objection; but this was no part of the design of the evangelists.

If a writer, with a view of exhibiting the skill of an oculist, should mention a remarkable instance of sight being restored to a person who had been long blind, it could not be fairly inferred from the narrative, that no other person received the same benefit, at that time; and, if, another person should give a distinct account of all the cases, there would be no contradiction between these witnesses. All the difference is, that one selects a prominent fact out of many; the other descends to all the particular.

There is no source of difficulty more usual, than the confounding of things which are distinct. The narratives of events truly distinct, may have so striking a similarity, that the cursory reader will be apt to confound them. It has been remarked by a learned man, [14] that if the two miracles of feeding the multitude, had been mentioned by two different evangelists, each giving an account of

one case, it would have been supposed by many that they were accounts of the same occurrence, and that the evangelists did not agree in their testimony: but in this case, both these miracles are distinctly related by the same evangelist, and distinctly referred to by Christ, in his conversation with his disciples. This confounding of distinct things is never more commonly done, than when a fact was attended with a great number of circumstances and occurrences, rapidly succeeding each other, and the historian mentions only a few out of many. This remark is fully verified with respect to Christ's resurrection. The narrative of all the evangelists is very concise. Few particulars are mentioned; and yet from the nature of the case, there must have been an extraordinary degree of agitation among the disciples; a great running from one part of Jerusalem to another, to tell the news; and a frequent paging to and from the sepulchre. It is not wonderful, therefore, that, as each evangelist mentions only a few of the accompanying occurrences; there should seem, at first view, to be some discrepancy in their accounts.

Companies of women are mentioned by each, and it is hastily taken for granted, that they were all the same; and the objector proceeds on the supposition, that these women all arrived at the sepulchre, at the same time, and that they continued together. He forgets to take into view, that the persons who might agree to meet at the sepulcher, probably lodged at very different distances from the place, and allows nothing for the agitation and distraction produced by the reports and visions of this interesting morning. But on this, as on several other subjects, we are indebted to the enemies of revelation for being the occasion of bringing forward able men, who have shed so much light on this part of the Gospel history, that even the appearance of discrepancy is entirely removed. [15] The genealogy of Jesus Christ, as given by Matthew and Luke, has furnished to modern infidels much occasion of cavil; but it ought to be sufficient to silence these objectors, that the early enemies of Christianity made no objections on this ground. If one of these is the genealogy of Joseph and the other of Mary, there will be no discrepancy between them. Why it was proper to give the descent of Joseph, the husband of Mary, it is not now necessary to inquire. But on this whole subject, I would remark, that we are very little acquainted with the plan on which genealogical tables were constructed. It seems to have been a very intricate business, and it is not surprising that we should be at a loss to elucidate every difficulty.

Again, it is highly probable, that these lists were. taken from some genealogical tables of the tribe and family of the persons to whom they refer. Every family must have had access to such tables; on account of their inheritance. Public tables of acknowledged authority, would be far better for the purpose which the evangelists had in view, than new ones, even though these should have been more full and accurate. These genealogies had no other object than to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was a lineal descendant of David and Abraham; which purpose. is completely answered by them; and there are no difficulties which may not be accounted for by our ignorance of the subject.

Finally, it may be admitted, that some slight inaccuracies have crept into the copies of the New Testament, through the carelessness of transcribers. It is impossible for men to write the whole of a book, without making some mistakes; and if there be some small discrepancies, in the Gospels, with respect to names and numbers, they ought to be attributed to this cause.

VII. The witnesses of the miracles of Christ could have had no conceivable motive for propagating an imposture. That they were not themselves deceived is manifest from the nature of the facts,

and from the full opportunity which they had of examining them. It is evident, therefore, that if the miracles recorded by them never existed, they were wilful impostors. They must have wickedly combined, to impose upon the world. But what motives could have influenced them to pursue such a course, we cannot imagine; or how men of low condition and small education, should have ever conceived it possible to deceive the world, in such a case, is equally inconceivable. These men had worldly interests, which it was natural for them to regard; but every thing of this kind, was fully relinquished. They engaged in an enterprise not only dangerous, but attended with certain and immediate ruin to all their worldly interests. They exposed themselves to the indignation of all authority, and to the outrageous fury of the multitude. They must have foreseen, that they would bring down upon themselves the vengeance of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, and that every species of suffering awaited them. Their leader was crucified, and what could they expect from declaring that he was alive, and had performed wonderful miracles? If they could have entertained any hopes of exemption from evils so apparent, experience must soon have convinced them, that they had engaged not only in a wicked, but most unprofitable undertaking. It was not long after they began their testimony, before they were obliged to endure unrelenting persecution from Jews and Gentiles. Could they have been influenced by a regard to fame? What renown could they expect from proclaiming a crucified man to be their master, and the object of all their hope and confidence? If this was their object, why did they give all the glory to another who was dead? But the fact is, that instead of fame, they met with infamy. No name was ever more derided and hated than that of Christian. They were vilified as the most contemptible miscreants that ever lived; as the refuse and offscouring of all things; as the pests and disturbers of society, and the enemies of the gods. They were pursued as outlaws, and punished for no other reason, but because they acknowledged themselves to be Christians. Would men persevere in propagating an imposture for such fame as this? It cannot be supposed that they expected their compensation in another world; for, the supposition is, that they were wilful impostors, who were, every day, asserting, in the most solemn manner, that the murderer or highway robber is influenced in the commission of his atrocious crimes, by the hope of a future reward. The only alternative is, to suppose, that they were fanatics; as it is known, that men under the government of enthusiasm, condemn all the common considerations, which usually influence human conduct; and often act in a way totally unaccountable. This representation of enthusiasm is just, but it will not answer the purpose for which it is adduced. Enthusiasts are always strongly persuaded of the truth of the religion which they wish to propagate; but these men, upon the hypothesis under consideration, knew that all which they said was false. Enthusiasm, and imposture are irreconcilable. It is true, that, what begins in enthusiasm, may end in imposture; but in this case, the imposture must have been the beginning, as well as the end, of the whole business. There was no room for enthusiasm; all was imposture, if the facts reported, were not true. But the best evidence, that the evangelists were not wild fanatics, is derived from their writings. These are at the greatest remove from the ravings or reveries of enthusiasm. They are the most simple, grave, and dispassionate narratives, that ever were written. These books, certainly, were not the production of crazy fanatics. The writers are actuated by no frenzy; they give no indication of a heated imagination; they speak, uniformly, the language of "truth and soberness."

VIII. But if we could persuade ourselves, that the apostles might have been actuated by some unknown and inconceivable motive, to forge the whole account of Christ's miracles; and were impelled by some unaccountable phrensy, to persevere, through all difficulties and sufferings, to

propagate lies; yet, can we believe, that they could have found followers, in the very country, and in the very city, where the miracles were stated to have been performed? When these accounts of stupendous and numerous miracles were published in Jerusalem where the apostles began their testimony, what would the people think? Would they not say, "These men bring strange things to our ears? They tell us of wonders wrought among us, of which we have never before heard. And they would not only have us to believe their incredible story, but forsake all that we have, abandon our friends, and relinquish the religion of our fore-fathers, received from God: and not only so, but bring upon ourselves and families, the vengeance of those that rule over us, and the hatred and reproach of all men." Is it possible to believe, that one sane person, would have received their report?

Besides, the priests and rulers who had put Jesus to death, were deeply interested to prevent the circulation of such a story. It implicated them in a horrid crime. Would they not have exerted themselves to lay open the forgery, and would there have been the least difficulty in accomplishing the object, if the testimony of these witnesses had been false? The places of many of the miracles are recorded, and the names of the persons healed, or raised from the dead, mentioned. It was only one or two miles to the dwelling of Lazarus; how easy would it have been to prove that the story of his resurrection was a falsehood, had it not been a fact? Indeed, Jerusalem itself, and the temple, were the scenes of many of the miracles ascribed to Christ. As he spent much time in that city, it is presumable, that not a person residing there, could have been totally ignorant of facts which must have occupied the attention and excited the curiosity of every body. An imposture like this could never be successful, in such circumstances. The presence of an interested, inimical, and powerful body of men, would soon have put down every attempt at an imposition so gross and groundless. If the apostles had pretended, that at some remote period, or in some remote country, a man had performed miracles, they might have persuaded some weak and credulous persons; but they appealed to the people to whom they preached, as the witnesses of what they related. No more than a few weeks had elapsed after the death of Jesus, before this testimony was published in Jerusalem: and, notwithstanding all the opposition of those in authority, it was received, and multitudes willingly offered themselves as the disciples of him, whom they had recently crucified. The success of the Gospel, under the circumstances of its first publication, is one of the most wonderful effects recorded in history; and it is a fact beyond all dispute. In a little time, thousands of persons embraced the Christian religion, in Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea. In heathen countries, its success was still more astonishing.

Churches were planted in all the principal cities of the Roman Empire, before half a century had elapsed from the resurrection of Christ. The fires of persecution raged; thousands and tens of thousands of unoffending Christians were put to death, in a cruel manner; yet this cause seemed to prosper the more, so that it became a proverb, that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." And it went on increasing and prevailing, until, in less than three centuries, it became the religion of the empire.

Learned infidels have in vain attempted to assign an adequate cause for this event, on natural principles. Gibbon, as has been before stated, exerted all his ingenuity to account for the progress and establishment of Christianity; but although he has freely indulged conjecture, and disregarded the testimony of Christians, his efforts have been unavailing. The account which he has given, is entirely unsatisfactory. Upon the deistical hypothesis, it is a grand revolution, without any

adequate cause. That a few unlearned and simple men, mostly fishermen of Galilee, should have been successful in changing the religion of the world, without power or patronage, and employing no other weapons but persuasion, must, forever, remain an unaccountable thing, unless we admit the reality of miracles, and supernatural aid. The argument from the rapid and extensive progress of the Gospel may be estimated, if we consider the following circumstances:

1. The insufficiency of the instruments to accomplish such a work, without supernatural aid. They had neither the learning nor address to make such an impression on the minds of men, as was requisite, to bring about such a revolution.

2. The places in which the Gospel was first preached and had greatest success, furnish proof, that it could not have been propagated merely by human means. These were not obscure corners, remote from the lights of science, but the most populous and polished cities, where every species of the learning of the age was concentrated, and whither men of learning resorted. Damascus, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Phillippi, and Rome, furnished the theatre for the first preachers of the Gospel. It is believed, that there was no conspicuous city, in the central part of the Roman empire, in which a Christian church was not planted, before the death of the apostles. And it ought to be remembered, that this did not occur in a dark age, but in what is acknowledged by all, to be the most enlightened age of antiquity: it was the period which immediately succeeded the Augustan Age, so much, and so deservedly celebrated, for its classical authors. If the Gospel had been an imposture, its propagators would never have gone to such places, in the first instance; or if they had, they could not have escaped detection.

3. The obstacles to be overcome were great, and insurmountable by human effort. The people were all attached to the respective superstitions, in which they had been educated, and which were all adapted to retain their hold on corrupt minds. How difficult is it to obtain, even a hearing, from people in such circumstances, is manifest from the experience of all missionaries, in modern times. Philosophers, priests, and rulers, were combined against them. All that learning, eloquence, prejudice, interest, and power, could oppose to them, stood in their way.

4. It would have been impracticable for a few unlettered Jews to acquire the languages of all the nations, among whom the Gospel spread, in so short a time. They must have had the gift of tongues; or this conquest could never have been achieved. Besides, it ought to be remembered, that Jews were held in great contempt, by all the surrounding nations. A few persons of this nation, exhibiting a very mean appearance, as must have been the case, would have called forth nothing but derision and contempt, in any of the large cities of the Empire. It is more unlikely that they should have been able to make many converts, than it would be now, for a few poor Jewish mechanics to proselyte to Judaism, vast multitudes, in all the principal cities of Europe and America. [16]

5. The terms of discipleship, which the apostles proposed, and the doctrines which they preached, were not adapted to allure and flatter the people, but must have been very repulsive to the minds of men.

6. Many Christians were cut off by persecution, but still Christianity made progress, and was extended in all directions. Because Christianity increased and flourished under bloody persecutions, many persons have adopted it as a maxim, that persecution has a tendency to

promote any cause; than which it is difficult to conceive of any thing more contrary to common sense and experience. In most cases, by cutting off the leaders of a party, however furious their fanaticism, the cause will decline, and soon become extinct. The increase of Christianity, under ten bloody persecutions, can only be accounted for, by supposing, that God by his grace on the hearts of men, persuaded them to embrace the truth, and inspired them with more than heroic fortitude, in suffering for the sake of their religion.

IX. The apostles and many of the primitive Christians, attested the truth by martyrdom. They sealed their testimony with their blood. To this argument it is sometimes answered, that men may suffer martyrdom for a false as well as a true religion; and that, in fact, men have been willing to die for opinions, in direct opposition to each other. While this is admitted, it does not affect the argument now adduced. All, that dying for an opinion can prove, (and of this it is the best possible evidence,) is, the sincerity of the witnesses. But in the case before us, the sincerity of the witnesses proves the facts in question; for we have seen, that they could not themselves have been deceived. Every martyr had the opportunity of knowing the truth of the facts on which Christianity was founded; and by suffering death in attestation of them, he has given the most impressive testimony that can be conceived. [17] The sufferings of the primitive Christians, for their religion, were exceedingly great, and are attested by heathen, as well as Christian writers. It is a circumstance of great importance, in this argument, that they could at once have escaped all their torments, by renouncing Christianity. To bring them to this, was the sole object of their persecutors; and, uniformly, it was put to their choice, to offer sacrifice or incense to the heathen gods, or be tormented. One word would have been sufficient to deliver them; one easy action would have restored them to worldly comforts and honors: But they steadfastly adhered to their profession. Some, indeed, were overcome by the cruelty of their persecutors; but was it ever heard that any of them confessed that there was any fraud or imposture, among them? So far from it, that they, whose courage had failed them in the trying hour, were commonly deep penitents on account of their weakness, all the rest of their days. Let it be remembered, that no person suffered for Christianity through necessity. Every martyr made a voluntary sacrifice of himself, to maintain the truth, and to preserve a good conscience.

There is yet another light in which these sufferings of the primitive Christians ought to be viewed. It is the temper with which they endured every kind of torment. Here again is a problem for the deist to solve. Persons of all ages, of all conditions of life, and of both sexes, exhibited under protracted and cruel torments, a fortitude, a patience, a meekness, a spirit of charity and forgiveness, a cheerfulness, yea, often a triumphant joy, of which there are no examples to be found in the history of the world. They rejoiced when they were arrested; cheerfully bid adieu to their nearest and dearest relatives; gladly embraced the stake; welcomed the wild beasts let loose to devour them; smiled on the horrible apparatus by which their sinews were to be stretched, and their bones dislocated and broken; uttered no complaint; gave no indication of pain when their bodies were enveloped in flames; and when condemned to die, begged of their friends to interpose no obstacle to their felicity, (for such they esteemed martyrdom,) not even by prayers for their deliverance. [18] What more than human fortitude was this? By what spirit were these despised and persecuted people sustained? What natural principles, in the human constitution, can satisfactorily account for such superiority to pain and death? Could attachment to an impostor inspire them with such feelings? No; it was the promised presence of the risen Jesus which upheld them, and filled them

with assurance and joy. It was the Paraclete, promised by their Lord, who poured into their hearts a peace and joy so complete, that they were scarcely sensible of the wounds inflicted on their bodies.

Proud and obstinate men may, for aught I know, suffer death for what they are secretly convinced is not true; but that multitudes, of all conditions, should joyfully suffer for what they knew to be an imposture, is impossible. Tender women, and venerable old men, were among the most conspicuous of the martyrs of Jesus. They loved not their lives unto the death, and having given their testimony and sealed it with their blood, they are now clothed in white robes, and bear palms in their hands, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Blessed martyrs, they have rested from their labors, and their works have followed them!

X. The last particular which I shall mention, to set the testimony of the witnesses to the miracles of the Gospel in its true light, is, that there is no counter testimony. These witnesses have never been confronted and contradicted by others. Whatever force or probability their declarations are entitled to, from the circumstances of the case, and from the evidences which we possess of their integrity and intelligence, suffers no deduction, on account of other persons giving a different testimony. The Jewish priests and rulers did, indeed, cause to be circulated, a story, relative to the dead body of Christ, contrary to the testimony of the apostles, which has been handed down to us by the evangelists. They hired the soldiers to report, that Christ's disciples had come by night, and stolen the body, while they slept—a story too absurd and inconsistent to require a moment's refutation. But as the body was gone out of their possession; t

Bible predictions are unseen

CHAPTER VIII. THE BIBLE CONTAINS PREDICTIONS OF EVENTS, WHICH NO HUMAN SAGACITY COULD HAVE FORESEEN, AND WHICH HAVE BEEN EXACTLY AND REMARKABLY ACCOMPLISHED. THE subject of prophecy is so extensive, and the difficulty of presenting, with brevity, the argument which it furnishes, so great, that if I had not determined to give a general outline of the evidences of revelation, I should have omitted this topic, as one to to which justice cannot be done, in so short an essay.

But, I would not be understood as intimating, that the evidence from prophecy is of an inferior kind. So far from believing this to be the fact, I am persuaded, that whoever will take the pains to examine the subject thoroughly, will find that this source of evidence for the truth of revelation, is exceeded by no other, in the firmness of conviction which it is calculated to produce. Prophecy possesses, as a proof of divine revelation, some advantages which are peculiar. For the proof of miracles we must have recourse to ancient testimony; but the fulfilling of prophecy may fall under our own observation, or may be conveyed to us by living witnesses. The evidence of miracles cannot, in any case, become stronger than it was at first; but that of prophecy is continually increasing, and will go on increasing, until the whole scheme of predictions are fulfilled. The mere publication of a prediction furnishes no decisive evidence, that it is a revelation from God: it is the accomplishment which completes the proof. As prophecies have been fulfilled in every age, and are still in a course of being fulfilled; and as some most remarkable predictions remain to be accomplished, it is plain, from the nature of the case, that this proof will continue to increase in strength.

It deserves to be well weighed, that any one prediction which has been fulfilled, is, of itself, a complete evidence of divine revelation; or to speak more properly, is itself a revelation. For, certainly, no one but God himself can foretell distant future events which depend entirely on the purpose of Him, "who worketh all things after the council of his own will."

If then, we can adduce one prophecy, the accomplishment of which cannot be doubted, we have established the principle, that a revelation has been given; and if in one instance, and to one person, the probability is strong, that he is not the only person, who has been favored with such a communication. The remark, which is frequently made, that most prophecies are obscure, and the meaning very uncertain, will not affect the evidence arising from such as are perspicuous, and of which the accomplishment is exact. There are good reasons, why these future events should sometimes be wrapped up in the covering of strong figures and symbolical language; so that often the prophet himself, probably, did not understand the meaning of the prediction which he uttered. It was not intended, that they should be capable of being clearly interpreted, until the key was furnished, by the completion. If these observations are just, the study (of the prophecies will become more and more interesting, every day; and they will shed more and more light on the truth of the Scriptures.

What I shall attempt at present, and all that is compatible with the narrow limits of this discourse, will be to exhibit a few remarkable predictions, and refer to the events, in which they have been fulfilled. They who wish for further satisfaction, will find it, in the perusal of Bishop Newton's excellent Dissertations on the prophecies, to which I acknowledge myself indebted for a considerable part of what is contained in this chapter. The first prophecies which I will produce; are those of Moses, respecting the Jews. They are recorded, principally, in Leviticus 26:1-41, and in Deuteronomy 28:1-68; of which, the following predictions deserve our attention.

1. The Lord shall bring, a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand. This prophecy had an accomplishment, both in the invasion of Judea by the Chaldeans, and by the Romans; but more especially, the latter. Jeremiah, when predicting the invasion of the Chaldeans, uses nearly the same language as Moses. Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from afar, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not. [19] —And again, Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven. [20] But with still greater propriety may it be said, that the Romans were a nation from afar; the rapidity of whose conquests resembled the eagle's flight; the standard of whose armies was an eagle; and whose language was unknown to the Jews. The enemies of the Jews are also characterized as a nation of fierce countenance, who shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young. Which was an exact description of the Chaldeans. It is said, 2 Chronicles 36:17, that God brought upon the Jews, the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age. Such also were the Romans. Josephus informs us, that when Vespasian came to Gadara, "he slew all, man by man, the Romans showing mercy to no age." The like was done at Gamala.

2. It was predicted, also, that their cities should be besieged and taken. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst. This was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came against Samaria, and besieged it: [21] when Sennacherib came up against all the fenced cities of Judah; and when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and burned the temple, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem round about. [22] The Jews had great confidence in the strength of the fortifications of Jerusalem. And Tacitus, as well as Josephus, describes it as a very strong place; yet it was often besieged and taken, before its final destruction by Titus. In their sieges they were to suffer much by famine, in the straitness wherewith their enemies should distress them. Accordingly, at Samaria, during the the siege, there was a great famine, so that an asses head was sold for four score pieces of silver. [23] And when Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. [24] And in the siege of the same city by the Romans, there was a most distressing famine. [25]

It was foretold, that in these famines, women should eat their own children. Ye shall eat, says Moses, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters. And again, thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body. [26] The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness—she shall eat her children for want of all things, secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates. This extraordinary prediction was fulfilled, six hundred years after it. was spoken, in the siege of Samaria, by the king of Syria; when two women agreed together to give up their

children to be eaten; and one of them was eaten accordingly. [27] It was fulfilled again, nine hundred years after Moses, in the siege of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans. The hands of the pitiful women, says Jeremiah, have sodden their own children. [28] And again, fifteen hundred years after the time of Moses, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, Josephus informs us, of a noble woman killing and eating her own sucking child, and when she had eaten half; she secreted the other part for another meal.

3. Great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude. In the siege of Jerusalem, by Titus, it is computed that eleven hundred thousand persons perished, by famine, pestilence, and sword. Perhaps, since the creation of the world, so many persons never perished in any one siege as this. The occasion of so great a multitude of people being found at Jerusalem, was, that the siege commenced about the celebration of the passover; and the people throughout the adjacent country, took refuge in Jerusalem, at the approach of the Roman army.

Moses also predicted, that the Jews should be carried back to Egypt, and sold as slaves, for a very low price, and described the method of their conveyance thither; And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, where you shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you. Josephus informs us, that when the city was taken, the captives who were above seventeen years of age, were sent to the works in Egypt: but so little care was taken of these captives, that eleven thousand of them perished for want. There is every probability, though the historian does not mention the fact, that they were conveyed to Egypt, in ships, as the Romans had then a fleet in the Mediterranean. The market was so overstocked, that there were no purchasers, and they were sold for the merest trifle.

4. It is, moreover, predicted in this wonderful prophecy of Moses, that the Jews should be extirpated from their own land, and dispersed among all nations. And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth, even unto the other.

How remarkably this has been fulfilled, is known to all. The ten tribes were first carried away from their own land, by the King of Assyria; and next, the two other tribes were carried captive to Babylon; and, finally, when the Romans took away their place and nation, their dispersion was complete.

Afterwards, Adrian forbade the Jews, by a public edict, to set foot in Jerusalem, on pain of death; or even to approach the country around it. In the time Of Tertullian and Jerome, they were prohibited from entering into Judea. And from that day to this, the number of Jews, in the holy land, has been very small. They are still exiles from their own land, and are found scattered through almost every country on the globe.

5. But it is foretold, that, notwithstanding their dispersion, they should not be totally destroyed, but should exist still, as a distinct people. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them; to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them. "What a marvellous thing is this," says Bishop Newton, "that after so many wars, battles, and sieges; after so many rebellions, massacres, and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery, and misery; they are not destroyed utterly, and though scattered among

all people, yet subsist a distinct people by themselves! where is any thing like this to be found in all the histories, and in all the nations under the sun?" The prophecy goes on to declare, that they should be; every where, in an uneasy condition; and should not rest long, in any one place. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. How exactly this has been verified, in the case of this unhappy people, even unto this day, is known to all. There is scarcely a country in Europe, from which they have not been banished, at one time or another. To say nothing of many previous scenes of bloodshed and banishment, of the most shocking kind, through which, great multitudes of this devoted people passed, in Germany, France, and Spain, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; eight hundred thousand Jews, are said by the Spanish historian, to have been banished from Spain, by Ferdinand and Isabella. And how often, when tolerated by government, they have suffered by the tumults of the people, it is impossible to enumerate. The prophet declares, That they should be oppressed and crushed away; that their sons and their daughters should be given to another people; that they should be mad for the sight of their eyes, which they should see. Nothing has been more common in all countries, where the Jews has resided, than to fine, fleece, and oppress them at will; and in Spain and Portugal, their children have been taken from them, by order of the government, to be educated in the Popish religion. The instances, also, in which their oppressions have driven them to madness and desperation, are too numerous to be here stated in detail.

6. Finally, it is foretold by Moses, That they should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations; and that their plagues should be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance. In every country the Jews are hated and despised. They have been literally a proverb, and a by-word. Mohammedans, Heathens, and Christians, however they differ in other things, have been agreed in vilifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews. Surely, the judgments visited on this peculiar people, have been wonderful, and of long continuance. For nearly eighteen hundred years, they have been in this miserable state of banishment, dispersion, and persecution.

"What nation," says the distinguished writer already quoted, "hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country, so long, as these have done in their dispersion, into all countries? And what a standing miracle is this exhibited to the view and observation of the whole world!"—"Here are instances of prophecies delivered above three thousand years ago, and yet., as we see, fulfilling in the world, at this very time; and what stronger proof can we desire of the divine legation of Moses? How these instances may affect others, I know not, but for myself, I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression." The prophecies, in the Old Testament, concerning Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, are highly deserving our attention; not only because they are expressed in the plainest language, but because the fulfilment of them has not been confined to one age, but has continued for thousands of years, and is as remarkable at this time, as in any former period; but the narrow limits which we have prescribed to ourselves, forbid our entering on this subject.

It may be safely affirmed, however, that the more closely these prophecies are compared with subsequent events—events altogether improbable in themselves, and of a truly extraordinary character—the more dearly will the impartial and discerning see in them, marks of a divine origin. The prophecy of Isaiah respecting Cyrus, by name, two hundred years before he was born, is very clear, and no less remarkable.

“That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus his anointed, to Cyrus whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two leaved gates, that shall not be shut. I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and will cut in sunder the bars of iron, and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know, that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob, my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. [29] ”

We are informed by Josephus, that after Cyrus had got possession of Babylon, this prophecy was shown to him; and that he was struck with admiration at the manifest divinity of the writing. Besides the name of Cyrus, two extraordinary events are foretold; the capture of Babylon, with its iron bars and gates of brass, and containing hidden treasures;—and the restoration of the Jews, and the rebuilding of their city and temple. And every thing is so plain, that there is no possibility of evading the force of the argument. The prophecies recorded in the book of Daniel; also, are very wonderful. There we have described, the rise and fall of four successive monarchies, or empires; also, a prophecy concerning the conquests of Alexander the Great, and concerning his successors, embracing so many particulars, that it assumes the appearance of a history of the events which it predicts. Porphyry, an early and learned opposer of Christianity, was so struck with the coincidence between the predictions, and the history of the events by which they are fulfilled; that he declared that the prophecy must have been written after the events occurred. The infidel can make no complaint of obscurity here, as he commonly does, when prophecies are adduced; the objection now is, that the prediction is too manifest, and circumstantial. This objection of Porphyry, induced Jerome to use the following pertinent language: “Cujus impugnatio testimonium veritatis est. Tanta enim dictorum fides fuit, ut propheta incredulis hominibus non videatur futura dixisse, sed narrasse, præterita.” The meaning of which is, “This objection is a testimony to the truth; for such is the perspicuity of the language, that the prophet, in the opinion of infidel men, seems rather to be narrating past events, than predicting those which are future.”

It will be sufficient to observe, that there is not the least foundation for this opinion of Porphyry, that the book of Daniel was written after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Josephus relates, that the prophecies of Daniel were shown to Alexander the Great, when he visited Jerusalem; and that this was the reason of his granting so many privileges to the Jewish people. However this may be, Daniel is spoken of in the first book of Maccabees; and Josephus himself reckons him among the greatest of prophets. And if they had been written at that late period, they never could have found a place in the Jewish canon, as the prophecies of Daniel. These prophecies are also recognised and quoted by Jesus Christ, as the productions of Daniel. The prophecies which relate to the Messiah are so numerous and interesting, and involve so much critical discussion, that to exhibit them in their proper light, a volume would scarcely be sufficient. I must, therefore, be contented to refer to the most remarkable of these predictions, in a very brief and general way.

1. It is plain, from a cursory perusal of the Old Testament, that frequent intimations are given of the coming of a remarkable personage. From these, the Jewish nation have been led, in all ages, to entertain the expectation of a Messiah; and from them, the idea of a distinguished person who was to proceed from Judea, seems to have pervaded the surrounding nations. Some of the

passages of Scripture, on which this opinion was founded, were, the promise of The seed of the woman;—The seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed;—The Shiloh who was to come out of Judah, before the dominion of that tribe should depart.—The prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord would raise up;—The king whom the Lord would set upon his holy hill;—The priest after the order of Melchisedek; The anointed One, or Messiah—The righteous branch—The corner stone—The desire of all nations—The Shepherd of Israel.

2. The time of the arrival of the Messiah is designated in prophecy. He was to come before the sceptre departed from Judah, at the end of seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, from the time of the going forth of the command, to restore and build Jerusalem, and while the second temple was yet standing.

3. The place of his birth, and the family from which he was to descend, were also explicitly mentioned in prophecy. From the evangelical history, and from the acknowledgment of the Jews, it is evident, that they well knew, that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, and to be of the family of David:

4. Things of an apparently contradictory nature: are predicted concerning the Messiah. At one time he is represented as a king and conqueror, whose dominion would be co-extensive with the earth, and' who would flourish in righteousness and peace forever; at another, he is exhibited as one despised and rejected; a man of sorrow and grief; as wounded and bruised;—as cut off out of the land of the; and as pouring out his soul unto death. These apparently irreconcilable characters, led the Jews at one time, to entertain the opinion, that two Messiahs were predicted; the one a triumphant conqueror; the other a persecuted and patient sufferer.. But, however great the apparent inconsistency, there is an exact accomplishment of both characters, in Jesus of Nazareth. And, certainly, the same cannot be said of any other person who ever lived.

5. It is predicted of the Messiah, that he should be a light to the Gentiles; and that under his administration, the face of the world should be changed; and that peace and righteousness should prevail. Although this prophecy is only in part fulfilled, yet so much has been accomplished in the call of numerous Gentile nations to the standard of the Messiah, and in the benign and salutary influence of Christianity, that we must conclude that it was uttered under the influence of inspiration.

6. It was not only predicted, that Messiah should be cut off, but it is expressly stated, that he should die as a vicarious sacrifice—an expiatory victim for sin and transgression. "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." For the fulfilling of these predictions, I need only refer to the New Testament. That there is a remarkable coincidence between the language of the prophets and the history of the evangelists, cannot be denied, however it may be accounted for. Isaiah 53:1-12 has a counterpart in the sufferings and death of Christ, which has forced conviction on the minds of many unbelievers. But there are also many particular facts and circumstances foretold respecting the Messiah, which it may be proper, briefly to mention. His forerunner, John the Baptist, is predicted by Isaiah and Malachi. His miracles, his uncomplaining meekness and tranquil submission under cruel sufferings, by Isaiah. His riding on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass;—his being pierced where the wound should be visible.;—his being sold for thirty pieces of silver, which should be, appropriated to buy the Potter's Field, by Zechariah. It is predicted in the Psalms, that they would part his raiment and cast lots for his vesture; and that vinegar would be

given to him to drink. The very words, also, which he uttered on the cross, when forsaken of God, are set down in Psalms 22:1.

It was also predicted in the Law of Moses, by an expressive type, that not a bone of Icing should be broken; the fulfilment of which was wonderful, since the legs of both those crucified with him were broken.

Isaiah foretold, that he should make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, which was literally accomplished, when Jesus Christ was suspended on the between two thieves; and when he was taken down from the cross, by a rich man, and buried by him, in his own new tomb. The most of these particulars were fulfilled by the free actions of the enemies of Jesus, who had no idea that they were fulfilling any divine prophecy. It is impossible, that so many circumstances, literally predicted, should have been fulfilled by a mere fortuitous concurrence. The truth is, the whole ritual law is a prophecy of Jesus. To him the whole Old Testament dispensation had reference. The Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, all testify of him. As said the angel to St. John, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Christ himself delivered, while upon earth, many clear and remarkable prophecies. Most of his parables have a prophetic character, and in a striking manner represented the Gospel, the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the future condition of the Church. He also foretold, in express words, the treatment which his followers should receive from the world, the treachery of Judas Iscariot, the conduct of Peter in denying him three times in one night, and the particular circumstances and exact manner of his own death, and also his resurrection on the third day. But I must pass over all these, at present, and confine my attention to that astonishing prophecy, which Jesus delivered to his disciples on Mount Olivet, concerning the utter destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, and of the whole Jewish, nation. This prediction was uttered about forty years before the events occurred, to which it relates; and was recorded by St. Matthew, according to the common opinion of early writers, thirty, or at least twenty years before it was fulfilled. The same was recorded by Mark, and Luke, a few years after the writing of Matthew's Gospel, but several years before the occurrence of those prodigious things, which are foretold in it. The testimony of antiquity is, that both these evangelists were dead before the invasion of Judea, by the Romans. John was the only one of the evangelists, or perhaps of the apostles, who lived to witness the fulfilling of his Lord's prophecy; and it is remarkable, that in his Gospel, this subject is never mentioned.

Let it be remembered, that when this prophecy was delivered by our Saviour, there was not the least human probability of such an event, as the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews were in a state of profound peace; and the power of the Romans was such, that it could not have been conjectured, that one small nation would think of rebelling against them. The words of this prophecy may be read in Matthew 24:1-51; also in Mark 13:1-37; and in Luke 19:1-48 and Luke 21:1-38.

I will first collect into one view, all the most remarkable particulars of this prophecy, and then show how they were fulfilled. The predictions relate, 1. to the signs and precursors of the desolation of the holy city; 2. to the circumstances of its siege and capture; and 3. to the consequences of this tremendous catastrophe.

1. The signs and precursors of this event were to be, false Christs,—seditions and wars,—famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and extraordinary appearances in the heavens;—the persecution of Christians;—the apostacy of professors; and the great want of charity and depravation of morals among the people.

2. The circumstances of this tremendous judgment of heaven, are such as these: the event should occur before the existing generation had completely passed away;—that it should be brought on by a war waged against the Jews, by a heathen nation, bearing idolatrous ensigns:—that Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed, and the temple so completely demolished, that one stone of that sacred edifice, should not be left on another:—that multitudes should perish by the sword:—that great numbers should be carried away captives:—that the distress should exceed any thing, which had ever occurred in the world;—and that the divine wrath should be manifest in all these calamities, as it is called the day of vengeance; and it is said, that there should be wrath against the people.

3. The consequences of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, as predicted by Christ, were to be, the dispersion of the Jews through all the nations;—the total overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth, which is expressed by the prophetic symbols of the sun being darkened, the moon not giving her light, and the stars falling from heaven;—the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles;—the rising of false prophets, and false Messiahs;—the extent and continuance of these judgments on the Jewish nation; with some intimation of their restoration. The escape of the Christians from these calamities, is also foretold, and directions given for their flight; and on their account, it is promised, that those days should be shortened; and finally, it is predicted that the Gospel should be preached among all nations.

Let us now proceed to inquire, in what manner these numerous and extraordinary predictions were accomplished; and we cannot but remark, that it seems to have been ordered, specially, by Providence, that the history of the series of events by which this prophecy was fulfilled, should be written by a man who was not a Christian; and who was an eye-witness of the facts, which he records. I allude to the Jewish historian, Josephus, who is an author of high respectability, and of great value to the cause of Christianity.

1. In regard to false Christs, of which the prophecy speaks so emphatically, we learn from the historian, just mentioned, that impostors and magicians drew multitudes after them, into the wilderness, promising to show them signs and wonders, some of whom became deranged, and others were punished by Felix, the procurator. One of these impostors was, that Egyptian, spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, who drew multitudes of people after him to Mount Olivet, promising that he would cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall down at his word.

Theudas was another, who pretended to be a prophet, and gave out that he would divide the waters of Jordan; but he was quickly routed by Cuspius Fadus, and all his followers scattered. The impostor himself was taken alive, and his head cut off, and brought to Jerusalem. In the reign of Nero, and during the time that Felix was procurator of Judea, impostors arose in such numbers, that the historian informs us, “many of them were apprehended and killed every day.”

There were also, at this time, great commotions, and horrible seditions and wars, in various places; as at Cesarea, Alexandria, and Babylonia. There were great contentions between the

Jews and Samaritans; and also between the Jews and people of other nations, who dwelt in the same cities with them. Both Josephus and Philo, give a particular account of these disturbances, in which multitudes of the people were slain.

Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, are mentioned by Seutonius, and by several other profane historians, who are cited by Eusebius, by Josephus, by Tacitus, and by Seneca. That prodigies were frequent, is expressly asserted, by Josephus and Tacitus. The former declares that a star hung over the city like a sword, for a whole year;—that at the ninth hour of the night, a bright light shone round the altar and the temple, so that for the space of half an hour, it appeared to be bright day;—that the eastern gate of the temple, which it required twenty men to shut, and which was fastened by strong bars and bolts, opened of its own accord:—that before sun set, there was seen in the clouds, the appearance of chariots and armies fighting;—that at the feast of Pentecost, while the priests were going into the inner temple, a voice was heard, as of a multitude, saying, Let us depart hence. And what affected the people more than any thing else, was, that four years before the war began, a countryman came to Jerusalem, at the feast of Tabernacles, and ran up and down, crying day and night, “A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple. Wo! Wo! to Jerusalem?” It was in vain that by stripes and torture the magistrates attempted to restrain him: he continued crying, especially at the public festivals, for seven years and five months, and yet never grew hoarse, nor appeared to be weary: until during the siege, while he was crying on the wall, a stone struck him, and killed him instantly. Tacitus, the Roman historian, joins his testimony to that of Josephus:—“Armies,” says he, “were seen engaged in the heavens, the glittering of arms was observed; and suddenly the fire from the clouds illuminated the temple; the doors of the inner temple were suddenly thrown open; and a voice more than human was heard proclaiming, the gods are departing: and at the same time, the motion of their departure was perceived.” Men may form what judgment they please of these narratives; but one thing is certain, that the minds of men were, about this time, much agitated and terrified with what appeared to them to be prodigies. There were, fearful sights, and great signs from heaven.

2. The circumstances accompanying the siege and rapture of the city, were as exactly foretold, as the preceding signs. “The abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, was nothing else than the Roman armies, whose ensign was an eagle perched upon a spear: which ensigns were worshipped, as divinities. These stood where “they ought not,” when they were planted, not only in the holy land, but on the consecrated spot, where the temple had stood. But the Christians had been warned, at the first appearance of this desolating abomination, immediately to betake themselves to flight; which they did, and instead of going into the city, they retired to Pella, beyond Jordan. The distress of the Jews, within the city, during the siege, where two or three millions of people were crowded into a narrow space, almost exceeds belief. What with their continual battles with the Romans; what with intestine feuds and tumults; and what with famine and pestilence, the sufferings which they endured, cannot now be conceived. No such distress was ever experienced by any people, before or since.

Jerusalem was hemmed in on all sides, by the besieging army, and notwithstanding the great strength of its fortifications, was taken. Although Titus had given express orders, that the temple should be preserved; yet the mouth of the Lord, had declared, that it should be otherwise: and, accordingly, it was burnt to the ground, and the very foundation dug up by the soldiers, with the

hope of finding hidden treasures. After the city had been destroyed, Titus ordered the whole space to be levelled like a field; so that a person approaching the place, would hardly suspect that it had ever been inhabited. The number slain in the war has already been mentioned; to which we may now add, that the captives amounted to ninety-seven thousand. Josephus, in relating these events, adopts a language remarkably similar to that used by Christ, in the prophecy. "The calamities of all people," says he, "from the creation of the world, if they be compared with those suffered by the Jews, will be found to be far surpassed by them." The words of Christ are; There shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be. That these unparalleled calamities proceeded from the vengeance of heaven, against a people whose iniquities were full, was not only acknowledged by Josephus, but by Titus, the Roman general. After taking a survey of the city, the height of the towers and walls, the magnitude of the stones, and the strength of the bands by which they were held together, he broke out into the following exclamation: "By the help of God, we have brought this war to a conclusion. It was God, who drew out the Jews from these fortifications; for what could the hands, or military engines of men, avail, against such towers as these?" And he refused to be crowned, after the victory, saying, "That he was not the author of this achievement, but the anger of God against the Jews, was what put the victory into his hands."

3. Finally, the consequences of this catastrophe were as distinctly predicted, and as accurately fulfilled, as the preceding events. The Jews, who survived, were dispersed over the world, in which condition they continue until this day. The Christians, availing themselves of the warnings of their Lord, escaped all the calamities of the siege. Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles; and continues thus to be trodden down, until this day.

Jerusalem was rebuilt by Adrian, but not precisely on the old site; and was called *Ælia*, which name it bore, until the time of Constantine. The apostate Julian, out of hatred to Christianity, and with the view of defeating the prediction, "That Jerusalem should be trodden down by the Gentiles," determined to restore the Jews, and rebuild their temple. Immense sums were appropriated for the work; the superintendence of which was assigned to one of his lieutenants; and the governor of the province to which Jerusalem belonged, assisted in it. "But horrible balls of fire, bursting forth from the foundations, rendered the place inaccessible to the workmen, who were often much burnt, so that the enterprise was laid aside." The account now given is attested by Julian himself, and his favorite heathen historian, Ammianus. The witnesses are indeed numerous, and unexceptionable; "Annnianus Marcellinus, a heathen; Zemach David, a Jew, who confesses that Julian was, *divinitus impeditus*, providentially hindered, in his attempt; Nazianzen and Chrysostom, among the Greeks; Ambrose and Ruffin, among the Latins; all of whom flourished, at the very time when this wonderful event occurred. Theodoret, Socrates, Sozomen, and Philostorgius, respectable historians, recorded it within fifty years after the event; and while the eye witnesses of the fact were still surviving." [30] That part of the prophecy, which relates to the restoration of the Jews, remains to be accomplished, and we hope the accomplishment is not far distant. When this event shall take place, the evidence from this prophecy will be complete, and almost irresistible. This shall occur when "The times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." The circumstances of this glorious event, are more particularly described by Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. xi. "If the fall if them be the riches. of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? for I would not, brethren, that ye should be

ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved.” The preaching of the Gospel to all nations, has been considered in another place.

After this concise review of some remarkable prophecies contained in the Bible, is there any one, who can persuade himself, that all these coincidences are accidental? or that the whole is a cunningly, devised fable? That man must indeed be blind, who cannot see “This Light which shineth in a dark place:”—“This SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, which holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

_____ [19] Jeremiah 10:15.

[20] Lamentations 4:19.

[21] 2 Kings 18:9-10.

[22] 2 Kings 25:10.

[23] 2 Kings 6:5.

[24] 2 Kings 25:3.

[25] Josephus de Jud. Bello.

[26] Jer. 26:29; Deuteronomy 28:53.

[27] 2 Kings 6:28-29.

[28] Lamentations 4:10.

[29] Isaiah 44:1-28. Isaiah 45:1-25.

[30] See Whitby's General Preface to the New Testament.

Others religions has evidence like Christianity

CHAPTER IX. NO OTHER RELIGION POSSESSES THE SAME KIND AND DEGREE OF EVIDENCE AS CHRISTIANITY: AND NO OTHER MIRACLES ARE AS WELL ATTESTED, AS THOSE RECORDED IN THE BIBLE.

HAVING given a brief view of the external evidences of Christianity, it is now proper to inquire, whether any system of religion, ancient or modern, is as well supported by evidence; and whether, other miracles have testimony in their favor, as satisfactory, as that by which the miracles of the Gospel are accompanied. The usual declamation of infidel writers, on this subject, is calculated to make the impression on unsuspecting readers, that all religions are similar in their origin;—that they all lay claim to miracles and divine communications;—and that all stand upon an equal footing. But when we descend to particulars, and inquire, what religions that now exist, or ever did exist, profess to rest their claims on well attested miracles, and the exact accomplishment, of prophecy, none besides the Jewish and Christian can be produced. Among the multiform systems of Paganism, there is not one, which was founded on manifest miracles or prophecies. They had, indeed, their prodigies and their oracles, by which the credulous multitude were deceived; and their founders pretended to have received revelations, or to have held communion with the gods. But what well attested miraculous fact can be produced, from all the religions of the heathen world? What oracle ever gave responses so clear and free from ambiguity, as to furnish evidence, that the knowledge of futurity was possessed? It is easy to pretend to divine revelation: this is done by every fanatic.

It is not disputed, that many impostors have appeared in the world, as well as many deluded fanatics. But the reason why all their claims and pretensions may with propriety be rejected, is, that they were not able to exhibit any satisfactory evidence, that they were commissioned from heaven, to instruct mankind in religion. In this we are all agreed. Of what use, therefore, can it be, to bring up these impostures and delusions, when the evidences of the Christian religion are under consideration? Can it be a reason for rejecting a religion which comes well attested, that there have been innumerable false pretensions to divine revelation? Must miracles, supported by abundant testimony, be discredited, because there have been reports of prodigies and miracles which have no evidence? And because heathen oracles have given answers to inquiries respecting future events, dark, indeterminate, and designedly ambiguous; shall we place no confidence in numerous authentic prophecies, long ago committed to writing, which have been most exactly and wonderfully accomplished?

It is alleged, that the early history of all ancient nations is fabulous, and abounds in stories of incredible prodigies; and hence it is inferred, that the miracles of the Old and New Testament, should be considered in the same light. To which it may be replied, that this general consent of nations, that miracles have existed, is favorable to the opinion that true miracles have at some time occurred. It may again be observed, that the history of Moses, which is more than a thousand years older than any profane history, has every deuce of being a true relation of facts;—and,

moreover, that the age in which the miracles of the New Testament were performed, so far from being a dark and fabulous age, was the most enlightened period of the heathen world. It was the age of the most celebrated historians, orators, and poets. There never was a time, when it would have been more difficult to gain a general belief in miracles, which had no sufficient testimony, than in the Augustan, and succeeding age. Not only did learning flourish; but there was at that period, a general tendency to skepticism and atheism. There can evidently, therefore, be no inference unfavorable to Christianity, derived from the belief of unfounded stories of miraculous events, in the dark ages of antiquity. The only effect of the prevalence of false accounts of miracles, should be, to produce caution and careful examination into the evidence of every report of this kind. Reason dictates, that truth and falsehood should never be confounded. Let every fact be subjected to the test of a rigid scrutiny, and let it stand or fall, according as it is supported or unsupported by testimony. If the miracles of the Bible have no better evidence than the prodigies of the heathen, they ought to receive no more credit; but if they have solid evidence, they ought not to be confounded with reports which carry imposture on their very face; or, at least, have no credible testimony in their favor.

There is no other way of deciding on facts, which occurred long since, but by testimony. And the truth of Christianity is really a matter of fact. In support of it, we have adduced testimony which cannot be invalidated; and we challenge our opponents to show, that any other religion stands on the same firm basis. Instead of this, they would amuse us with vague declamations on the credulity of man, and the many fabulous stories which have been circulated and believed. But what has this to do with the question? We admit all this, and maintain that it does not furnish the semblance of an argument against the truth of the well attested facts, recorded by the evangelists. Because there is much falsehood in the world, is there no such thing as truth? It would be just as reasonable to conclude, that, because many men have been convicted of falsehood, there were no persons of veracity in the world; or that because there were many knaves, all pretensions, to honesty were unfounded. The Mohammedan religion is frequently brought forward by the enemies of revelation, with an air of confidence, as though the pretensions and success of that impostor, would derogate from the evidences of Christianity. It is expedient, therefore, to bring this, subject under a particular examination. And here, let it be observed, that we do not reject any timing, respecting the origin and progress of this religion, which has been transmitted to us by competent and credible witnesses. We admit that Mohammed existed, and was the founder of a new sect; and, that from a small beginning, his religion spread with astonishing rapidity over the fairest portion of the globe. We admit, also, that he was the author of the Koran, which he composed, from time to time, probably with the aid of some one or two, other persons. Moreover, it is admitted; that he was an extraordinary man, and prosecuted the bold scheme which he had projected, with uncommon perseverance and address. Neither are we disposed to deny, that the Koran contains many sublime passages, relative to God and his perfections, and many sound and salutary precepts of morality. That the language is elegant, and a standard of purity in the Arabic tongue, has been asserted by all Mohammedan writers, and conceded by many learned Christians. But as to his pretended revelations, there is no external evidence, whatever, that they were real; and there is an overwhelming weight of internal evidence, that they are not from God. To bring this subject fairly before us, let the following considerations be impartially weighed:

1. The pretensions of Mohammed were supported by no miracles, or prophecies. He was often called upon by his opposers to confirm his mission, by this decisive proof; but he always declined making the attempt; and resorted to various excuses and subterfuges. In the Koran, God is introduced, as saying, "Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture:—thou art a preacher only." Again, "That if he did perform miracles, the people would not believe, as they had before rejected Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, who performed them."

Dr. Paley [31] has enumerated thirteen different places in the Koran, where this objection is considered, in not one of which, it is alleged, that miracles had been performed for its confirmation. It is true, that this artful man told of things, sufficiently miraculous; but for the truth of these assertions, we have no manner of proof, except his own word, which, in this case, is worth nothing.

Now, if it had been as easy a thing to obtain credit to stories of miracles, publicly performed, as some suppose, surely Mohammed would have had recourse to this measure, during the period, that he was so pressed and teased by his enemies, with a demand for this very evidence. But he had too much cunning to venture upon an expedient so dangerous: his opposers would quickly have detected and exposed the cheat. At length, however, he so far yielded to the demand of his enemies, as to publish one of the most extravagant stories, which ever entered into the imagination of man; and solemnly swore that every word of it was true. I refer to his night journey to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, under the guidance of the angel Gabriel. As this story may afford some amusement to the reader, I will subjoin, in a note, the substance of it, omitting those particulars which are most ridiculous and extravagant. [32] This marvellous story, however, had well nigh ruined his cause. His enemies treated it with deserved ridicule and scorn; and a number of his followers forsook him, from that time. In fact, it rendered his further continuance at Mecca, entirely inexpedient; and having before despatched some of his disciples to Medina, he betook himself, with his followers, to that city, where he met with a more cordial reception, than in his native place. The followers of Mohammed, hundreds of years after his death, related many miracles, which they pretended that he performed: but their report is not only unsupported by testimony, but is in direct contradiction to the Koran, where he repeatedly disclaims all pretensions to miraculous powers. And the miracles which they ascribe to him, while they are marvellous enough, are of that trifling and ludicrous kind, commonly to be met with in all forgeries, in which miracles are represented as having been performed; such as, that the trees walked to meet him;—that the stones saluted him;—that a beam groaned to him;—that a camel made complaint to him;—and that a shoulder of mutton told him that it was poisoned.

It appears, then, that Mohammedanism has no evidence, whatever, but the declaration of the impostor. It is impossible, therefore, that Christianity should be placed in a more favorable point of light, than in comparison with the religion of Mohammed. The one, as we have seen, rests on well attested miracles; the other does not exhibit the shadow of a proof, that it was derived from heaven.

2. It is fair to compare the moral characters of the respective founders of these two religions. And here we have as perfect a contrast as history can furnish. Jesus Christ was, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. His life was pure, without a stain. His most bitter enemies

could find no fault in him. He exhibited, through life, the most perfect example of disinterested zeal, pure benevolence, and unaffected humility, which the world ever saw. Mohammed was an ambitious, licentious, cruel, and unjust man. His life was stained with the most atrocious crimes. Blasphemy, perjury, murder, adultery, lust, and robbery, were actions of daily occurrence. And to shield himself from censure, and open a door for unbridled indulgence, he pretended revelations from heaven, to justify all his vilest practices. He had the effrontery to pretend, that God had given him privilege to commit, at pleasure, the most abominable crimes. The facts which could be adduced in support of these general charges, are so numerous, and so shocking, that I will not defile my paper, nor wound the feelings of the reader, by a recital of them.

3. The Koran itself can never bear a comparison with the New Testament, in the view of any impartial person. It is a confused and incongruous heap of sublime sentiments, moral precepts, positive institutions, extravagant and ridiculous stories, and manifest lies and contradictions. Mohammed, himself, acknowledged, that it contained many contradictions; but he accounted for this fact by alleging, that what had been communicated to him in one chapter, was repealed in a subsequent one;—and so he charges this inconsistency on his Maker. The number of abrogated passages is so great, that a mussulman cannot be easily confuted by proving the falsehood of any declaration in the Koran; for, he will have recourse to this doctrine of abrogation. There is nothing in this book, which cannot easily be accounted for; nothing above the capacity of impostors to accomplish. It is artfully accommodated to the religions of Arabia, prevalent at the time. It gives encouragement to the strongest and most vicious passions of human nature; promotes ambition, despotism, revenge, and offensive war; opens wide the door of licentiousness; and holds out such rewards and punishments, as are calculated to make an impression on the minds of wicked men. It discourages, and indeed forbids, all free inquiry, and all discussion of the doctrines which it contains. Whatever is excellent in the Koran, is in imitation of the Bible; but wherever the author follows his own judgment, or indulges his own imagination, we find falsehood, impiety, or ridiculous absurdity. [33]

4. The means by which the religion of Mohammed was propagated, were entirely different from those employed in the propagation of the Gospel. If there is any point of strong resemblance between these two systems, it consists merely in the circumstance of the rapid and extensive progress, and permanent continuance, of each. But when we come to consider the means by which this end was attained in the two cases, instead of resemblance we find again, a perfect contrast. Mohammed did, indeed, attempt, at first, to propagate his religion by persuasion and artifice; and these efforts he continued for twelve years, but with very small success. At the end of three years, he had gained no more than fourteen disciples; and at the end of seven years, his followers amounted to little more than eighty; and at the end of twelve years, when he fled from Mecca, the number was very inconsiderable. As far, therefore, as there can be a fair comparison between the progress of Christianity and Mohammedanism; that is, during the time that Mohammed employed argument and persuasion alone, there is no resemblance. The progress of Christianity was like the lightning, which shineth from one part of heaven to the other; extending in a few years, not only without aid from learning and power, but in direct opposition to both, throughout the whole Roman empire, and far beyond its limits. But Mohammedanism, for twelve years, made scarcely any progress; yet it commenced among an ignorant and uncivilized people. During this period, the progress was scarcely equal to what might be expected from any artful

impostor. This religion never spread in any other way than by the sword. As soon as the inhabitants of Medina declared in favor of Mohammed, he changed his whole plan, and gave out that he was directed to propagate his religion by force. From this time, he is found engaged in war. He began by attacking mercantile caravans, and, as his force increased, went on to conquer the petty kingdoms, into which Arabia was then divided. [34] Sometimes, he put all the prisoners to death, and at other times, sold them into slavery. At first, the order was, to massacre every creature that refused to embrace his religion; but he became more lenient afterwards, especially to Jews and Christians. The alternative was, "The Koran, death, or tribute." But it is a great mistake, to suppose, that the conquests of Mohammed, himself, were very extensive. The fact is, that he, never, during his life, extended his dominion beyond the limits of Arabia; except, that he overran one or two inconsiderable provinces of Syria. It was by the Caliphs, his successors, that so great a part of Asia, and Egypt, were brought into subjection. But what is there remarkable in these successes, more than those of other conquerors? Surely, the propagation of Mohammedanism by the sword, however rapid or extensive, can never bear any comparison with that of Christianity, by the mere force of truth, under the blessing of heaven.

5. The tendency and effects of Mohammedanism, when compared with the tendency and effects of Christianity, serve to exhibit the latter in a very favorable light. The Christian religion has been a rich blessing to every country which has embraced it; and its salutary effects have borne proportion to the care which has been taken to inculcate its genuine principles, and the cordiality with which its doctrines have been embraced. if we cast our eyes over the map of the world, and inquire what nations are truly civilized? Where does learning flourish? Where are the principles of morality and the dictates of humanity best understood? Where are the poor and afflicted most effectually relieved? Where do men enjoy the greatest security of life, property, and liberty? Where is the female sex treated with due respect, and exalted to their proper place in society? Where is the education of youth most assiduously pursued? Where are the brightest examples of benevolence; and where do men enjoy most rational happiness?—I say, if we were called upon to designate those countries, in which these advantages are, most highly enjoyed, every one of them would be found in Christendom; and the superiority enjoyed by some over the others, would be found to bear an exact proportion to the practical influence of pure Christianity. On the contrary, if we take a survey of the rich and salubrious regions, possessed by Mohammedans, we behold a wide spread desolation. The fairest portion of the globe, where arts, literature, and refinement, formerly most flourished, are now blighted. Every noble institution has sunk into oblivion. Despotism extends its iron sceptre over these ill-fated countries, and all the tranquillity ever enjoyed, is the dead calm of ignorance and slavery. Useful learning is discouraged; free inquiry proscribed, and servile submission required of all. Justice is perverted, or disregarded. No man has any security for life or property; and as to liberty, it is utterly lost, wherever the Mohammedan religion prevails. While the fanatic ardor of making proselytes continued, the fury of the propagators of this faith rendered them irresistible. Indeed, their whole system is adapted to a state of war. The best work that can be performed, according to the Koran, is to fight for the propagation of the faith; and the highest rewards are promised to those who die in battle. There is no doubt, but that the principles of the Koran greatly contributed to the conquests of the Saracens; by divesting them of all fear of death, and inspiring them with an assurance of being admitted into a sensual paradise, if it should be their fate to be slain in battle. "The sword," said he, "is the key of heaven and hell: a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent under arms, is of more

avail than two months of fasting and prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven. At the day of judgment, his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be replaced by the wings of angels and cherubim." But when they had finished their conquests, and a state of peace succeeded their long and bloody wars, they sunk into torpid indolence and stupidity. While other nations have been making rapid improvements in all the arts, they have remained stationary; or rather have been continually going backward. They have derived no advantages from the revival of letters, the invention of printing, or the improvement in the arts and sciences. The people who have been subjected to their despotism, without adopting their religion, are kept in the most degrading subjection. At present, [35] the Greeks are making noble exertions to break the cruel yoke, which has oppressed them, and though unsupported by Christian nations, have succeeded in expelling the Turks from a large portion of their country. God grant them success, and give them wisdom to make a good use of their liberty and independence, when acquired and established! [36] Mohammedanism was permitted to prevail, as a just punishment to Christians, for their luxury and dissensions. It is to be hoped, however, that the prescribed time of these locusts of the abyss, [37] is nearly come to an end; and that a just God, who has so long used them as a scourge to Christians, as he formerly did the Canaanites to be thorns in the eyes and in the sides of the Israelites, will soon bring to an end this horrible despotism, which has been founded on a vile imposture. The signs of the times give strong indications, that the Mohammedan power will shortly be subverted. But it is not for us "to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." The only thing further, necessary to be considered, in this chapter, is, the miracles which have been brought forward as a counterpoise to the miracles of Christ and his apostles. This is an old stratagem—at least as early as the second century, when one, Philostratus, at the request of Julia Augusta, wife of the emperor Severus, wrote a history, or rather romance, of Apollonius of Tyana, a town in Capadocia. This Apollonius, was nearly contemporary with Jesus Christ; but whether he was a philosopher, or a conjurer, cannot now be ascertained; for as to the story of Philostratus, which is still extant, it is totally unsupported by any reference to eye-witnesses of the facts, or any documents of credit, and has, throughout, as much the air of extravagant fiction, as any thing that was ever published. That the design of the writer was to set up this Apollonius as a rival to Jesus Christ, is not avowed, but is sufficiently evident from the similarity of many of the miracles ascribed to him, to facts recorded in the Gospels, and which are manifestly borrowed from the evangelical history. He is made to raise the dead, to cast out demons, and to rise from the dead, himself. In one instance, the very words of the demons expelled by Jesus Christ, as recorded by St. Luke, "Art thou come to torment us before the time," are put into the mouth of a demon, said to be cast out by Apollonius. But in addition to these miracles, his biographer pretends, that he saw beasts with a human head and lion's body;—women half white and half black;—together with phoenixes, griffins, dragons, and similar fabulous monsters. In the fourth century, Hierocles, a bitter enemy of Christianity, instituted a comparison between Jesus and Apollonius, in which, after considering their miracles, he gives the preference to the latter. This book was answered by Eusebius, from whose work only, we can now learn how Hierocles treated the subject, as the book of the latter is not extant. The only conclusion which can be deduced from this history of Apollonius, is, that the miracles of Christ were so firmly believed, in the second century, and were attended by such testimony, that, the enemies of Christianity could not deny the facts, and therefore resorted to the expedient of circulating stories of equal miracles performed by another.

Modern infidels have not been ashamed to resort to the same stale device. Mr. Hume has taken much pains to bring forward a great array of evidence, in favor of certain miracles, in which he has no faith, with the view of discrediting the truth of Christianity. These have been so fully and satisfactorily considered by Dr. Douglass, Bishop of Salisbury, in his *Criterion*; and Dr. Campbell, in his *Essay on Miracles*, that I need only refer to these learned authors, for a complete confutation of Hume's arguments, from this source. For the sake, however, of those who may not have access to these works, I will lay down a few general principles, by which we may distinguish between true and false miracles; for which I am indebted, principally, to the author of the *Criterion*, above mentioned.

1. The nature of the facts should be well considered, whether they are miraculous. The testimony which supports a fact may be sufficient, and yet it may have been brought about by natural causes. The miracles of Jesus Christ were such, that there was no room for doubt respecting their supernatural character; but a great part of those performed by others, which have received the best attestation, were of such a nature, that they may readily be accounted for, without supposing any divine interposition. The case of the man diseased in his eyes, said to have been cured by Vespasian's rubbing his hand over them, and the lame man cured by a touch of the emperor's foot, were, no doubt, impositions practised by the priests of the temple, where they were performed. The emperor did not pretend to possess any miraculous power, and was induced, only after much persuasion, to make the experiment. The facts, as related by Tacitus, though he was not an eye-witness—it may be admitted—are true. Such persons were probably brought forward, and a cure pretended to be made, but there is no evidence that there was a real miracle. There was no one present who felt interested, to examine into the truth of the miracle. The priests, who proposed the thing, had, no doubt, prepared their subjects; and the emperor was flattered by the honor of being selected by their god, to work a miracle. How often do beggars in the street impose upon many, by pretending to be blind and lame? The high encomiums which Mr. Flume bestows on the historian Tacitus, in order to set off the testimony to the best advantage, can have no weight here; for he only related what he had heard from others, and showed pretty evidently, that he did not credit the story himself. The same may be said, respecting the man spoken of by Cardinal de Retz, at Saragossa, who was represented as having been seen without a leg, but obtained one by rubbing the stump with holy oil. The cardinal had no other evidence of his having ever been maimed, than the suspicious report of the canons of the Church; and he took no pains to ascertain, whether the leg which he obtained, was really flesh and blood, or an artificial limb. A great part of the cures said to have been performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, were proved, upon examination, to be mere pretences; and those, which were real, may easily be accounted for, from the influence of a heated imagination, and enthusiastic feelings; especially, since we have seen the wonderful effects of animal magnetism, and metallic tractors. [38]

2. A second consideration of great weight, is, that in true miracles, we can trace the testimony to the very time when the facts are said to have occurred, but in false miracles, the report of the facts originates a long time afterwards, as in the case of Apollonius. And in the case of the miracles ascribed to Mohammed by Abulfeda and Al-Janabbi; and, also, of the miracles ascribed by the Jesuits, to Ignatius Loyola, their founder; which were never heard of, until long after his death.

3. Another criterion of importance, is, that the report of miracles should originate, and first obtain credit, in the place, and among the people, where they are said to have been performed. This is too remarkably the fact, in regard to the miracles of the Bible, to require any proof. But many stories of miracles are rendered suspicious by the circumstance that they were first reported and believed, in some place, far from that in which they were alleged to have been wrought. The miracles ascribed by the Romanists to Francis Xavier, are condemned by both the rules last mentioned. In all his letters, while a missionary in the east, he never hints that miracles had been wrought; and a reputable writer, who gave some account of his labors, nearly forty years after his death, not only is silent about Xavier's miracles, but confesses, that no miracles had been performed among the Indians. These miracles were said to be performed in the remote parts of India, and Japan, but the report of them was published first, in Europe. Almost all the miracles ascribed by the Romish Church, to her saints, fall into the same predicament. The history of them was written long after they are said to have been performed, and often in countries remote from the place where it is pretended they occurred.

4. Another thing necessary to be taken into view, in judging of the genuineness of miracles, is, whether the facts were scrutinized at the time, or were suffered to pass without examination. When the miracles reported, coincide with the passions and prejudices of those before whom they are performed;—when they are exhibited by persons in power, who can prevent all examination, and put what face they please on facts, they may well be reckoned suspicious. Now, the cures at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, were not performed in these circumstances. The Jansenists were not in power, and their enemies not only had the opportunity to examine into the facts, but actually did so, with the utmost diligence. We have reason to believe, therefore, that we have now a true report of those occurrences. The defect of these miracles is, in their nature, not in their evidence. But in most cases, the miracles which have been reported, took place, when there was no opportunity of examining into the facts—when the people were pleased to be confirmed in their favorite opinions—or, when the ruling powers had some particular end to answer. [39]

But, supposing these miracles to be ever so well attested, I do not perceive how the evidence of divine revelation can be affected by them; for, if it could be made to appear, that these were supported by testimony, as strong as that which can be adduced in favor of the miracles of the New Testament, the only fair conclusion is, that, in consistency, they who believe in Christianity, should admit them to be true—but what then? Would it follow, because miracles had been wrought on some rare occasions, different from those recorded in the Bible, that, therefore, these were of no validity, as evidence of divine revelation? Would not the fact, that other miracles had been wrought, rather confirm our belief in those which were performed with so important a design? Mr. Hume does, indeed, artfully insinuate, that the various accounts of miracles which exist, cannot be true, because the religions which they were wrought to confirm, are opposite; yet not one of those which he brings forward, as being best attested, was performed in confirmation of any new religion, or to prove any particular doctrine, therefore they are not opposed to Christianity. If they had actually occurred, it would not in the least disparage the evidence for the facts recorded in the New Testament. And, especially, it is a strange conceit, that miracles performed within the bosom of the Christian Church, should furnish any proof against Christianity.

It is, however, no part of the object of those who bring forward such an array of testimony, in support of certain miracles, to prove that such facts ever occurred. This is diametrically opposite to

their purpose. Their design is, to discredit all testimony in favor of miracles, by showing, that facts acknowledged to be false, have evidence as strong as those on which revealed religion rests. But they have utterly failed in the attempt, as we have shown; and if they had succeeded in adducing as strong testimony for other miracles, then we would readily admit their truth, and that, in perfect consistency with our belief in Christianity.

[31] Paley's Evidences.

[32] See Note A.

[33] See Ryan's History of the Effects of Religion on Mankind.

[34] See Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.

[35] A. D. 1825

[36] Since the above was written, several of the governments of Europe have interposed to rescue the Greeks from the persecution and oppression of the Ottoman power; but they are yet in a very unsettled state, and it cannot be foreseen what will be the result of all their struggles. A. D. 1832.

[37] Revelation 9:3.

[38] See Note B.

[39] On this whole subject, see Douglass' Criterion.

a. Divine Internal Evidence of Bible

CHAPTER X.

THE BIBLE CONTAINS INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT ITS ORIGIN IS DIVINE.

Part 1 As the Old and New Testaments are intimately connected, and form parts of the same system, it is unnecessary to make any distinction between them, in considering this branch of the evidence of divine revelation. A late writer, [40] of great eminence and popularity, has represented this species of evidence as unsatisfactory; as not capable of being so treated, as to produce conviction in the minds of philosophical infidels; and as opening a door to their most specious objections to Christianity. But, certainly, this is not the most effectual method of supporting the credit of the Scriptures. Another popular writer [41] has gone to the other extreme; and seems to set little value on the external evidences of Christianity, while he exhibits the internal, in a light so strong, that his argument assumes the appearance of demonstration. But these two species of evidence, though distinct, are harmonious, and strengthen each other. There is, therefore, no propriety in disparaging the one, for the purpose of enhancing the value of the other. I believe, the fact is, however, that more instances have occurred of skeptical men being convinced of the truth of Christianity, by the internal, than the external evidences. It is the misfortune of most infidels, that they have no intimate acquaintance with the Bible; and even many of those who have undertaken to write against it, appear never to have read it, with any other view, than to find some ground of objection. No doubt, it is necessary to come to the examination of this species of evidence, with a candid and docile disposition. If reason be permitted proudly to assume the seat of judgment, and to undertake to decide what a revelation ought to contain in particular; in what manner, and with what degree of light it should be communicated; whether it should be made perfectly at once, or gradually unfolded; and whether, from the beginning, it should be universal: no doubt, the result of an examination of the contents of the Bible, conducted on such principles, will prove unsatisfactory; and insuperable objections will occur at every step in the progress. It was wise in Dr. Chalmers, to endeavor to discourage such a mode of investigation, as being most unreasonable; for how is it possible, that such a creature as man, should be able to know what is proper for the infinite God to do, or in what way he should deal with his creatures upon earth? To borrow the language of this powerful writer; [42] "We have experience of man, but we have no experience of God. We can reason upon the procedure of man in given circumstances, because this is an accessible subject, and comes under the cognizance of observation; but we cannot reason on the procedure of the Almighty in given circumstances." But when he speaks "of disclaiming all support from what is commonly understood by the internal evidence," and "saving a vast deal of controversy, by proving that all this is superfluous and uncalled for," I am constrained to think, that, instead of aiding the cause of Christianity, the excellent author has attempted to take away one of its firmest props. The internal evidence of revelation is analogous to the evidence of the being and perfections of God, from the works of creation: and the same mode of reasoning which the deist adopts, relative to the doctrines and institutions of the Bible, the atheist may adopt, with equal force, against the existence of a God. If men will be so presumptuous as to determine,

that if God makes a world, he will form it according to their idea of fitness, and that the apparent imperfections and incomprehensibilities in the material universe, could never have proceeded from a Being of infinite perfection, atheism must follow of course. But, if, notwithstanding all these apparent evils and obscurities, there is in the structure of the world, the most convincing evidence of the existence of an all-wise and all-powerful Being; why may we not expect to find the same kind of evidence, impressed on a revelation from God? Upon Dr. Chalmers' principles, we ought to depend simply on historical testimony, for the fact, that God created this world; and "disclaim all support" from what, may, without, impropriety, be termed the internal evidence of the existence of God, derived from the contemplation of the work itself. The truth, however, is, that every thing which proceeds from God, whatever difficulties or obscurities accompany it, will contain and exhibit the impress of his character. As this is resplendently visible in the heavens and the earth, it is reasonable to think that it will not be less manifest in his word. If the truths contained in a revelation be worthy of God, they will be stamped with his image; and if this can be, in any measure, discovered, undoubtedly it furnishes the most direct and convincing evidence of their divine origin. In fact this is, without being reduced to the form of a regular argument, precisely the evidence on which the faith of the great body of Christians has always rested. They are incapable of appreciating the force of the external evidence. It requires an extent, of learning, which plain laboring Christians, cannot be supposed commonly to possess. But the internal evidence is within their reach: it acts directly upon their minds, whenever they read or hear a portion of the word of God. The belief of common, unlearned Christians, is not necessarily founded in the mere prejudice of education: it rests on the best possible evidence. And as there is a faith which is saving, and to which a purifying efficacy is ascribed; if we inquire, on what species of evidence this depends, it must be answered, on internal evidence: not, indeed, as perceived by the unaided intellect of man, but as it is exhibited to the mind, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. We cannot consent, therefore, to give up this species of evidence, as "superfluous and uncalled for," but must consider it, if not the most effectual to silence gainsayers, yet certainly the most useful to the real Christian; and if unbelievers could be induced to attend to it, with docility and impartiality, there is reason to think, that they would experience its efficacy, in the gradual production of a firm conviction of the truth of Christianity. The internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, cannot be fully brought into view, in any other way, than by a careful study of the Bible. It cannot easily be put into the form, of logical argument, for it consists in moral fitness and beauty: in the adaptation of truth to the constitution of the human mind; in its astonishing power of penetrating and searching the heart, and affecting the conscience. There is a sublime sanctity in the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel; a devotional and heavenly spirit pervading the Scriptures; a purity and holy tendency, which cannot but be felt by the serious reader of the word of God; and a power to soothe and comfort the sorrowful mind: all which qualities may be perceived, and will have their effect, but cannot be embodied and presented, with their full force, in the form of argument. But, although this evidence, from the nature of the case, cannot be exhibited in its entire body, to any but those who study the Scriptures, and meditate on their truths, day and night, yet it is possible to select some prominent points, and present them to the reader, in such a light, as to produce a salutary impression. This is what will now be briefly attempted, in the following remarks, which might, without difficulty, be greatly enlarged:

1. The Scriptures speak of God and his attributes; in a way which accords with what right reason would lead us to expect, in a divine revelation. He is uniformly represented in the Bible, as ONE,

and as a Being of infinite perfection; as eternal,—omnipotent,—omniscient,—omnipresent—and immutable. And it is truly remarkable, that these correct and sublime views of theology were entertained by those who possessed the Scriptures, when all other nations had fallen into the grossest polytheism, and most degrading idolatry. Other nations were more powerful, and greatly excelled the Israelites in human learning; but in the knowledge of God, all were in thick darkness, whilst this people enjoyed the light of truth. Learned men and philosophers arose in different countries, and obtained celebrity on account of their theories, but they effected no change in the popular opinions; indeed, they could not enlighten others, when they were destitute of the light of truth, themselves. However deists may deride and scoff at the Bible, it is a fact capable of the clearest proof, that had it not been for the Scriptures, there would, not, at this time, be such a thing as pure theism upon earth. There is not now in the world, an individual who believes in one infinitely perfect God, whose knowledge of this truth may not be traced, directly or indirectly, to the Bible.

How can it be accounted for, that the true theology should be found accompanying the Scriptures, in ages, while it was lost, every where else, unless we admit that they are a revelation from God? If the knowledge of the true God, as received by the Jews, was the discovery of reason, why was it that other nations, advanced far beyond them in learning and mental culture, never arrived at the knowledge of his important truth?

It is true, indeed, that the Scriptures sometimes represent God as having bodily parts, and human passions; but a little consideration will show the attentive reader that all these expressions are used in accommodation to the manner of speaking among men. The truth is, that all human language is inadequate to express the attributes and operations of the Supreme Being. He is infinitely above our conceptions, both in his essence; and mode of existence and acting. We can do no more than approximate towards just ideas, on this subject. When we speak of Him, we are under the necessity of conceiving of his perfections, with some relation to the operations of the human mind, and to employ language expressive of human acts, and feelings: for all other language would be unintelligible. The necessity of this accommodation extends much further than many seem to suppose: it exists not only in relation to words, which taken literally, convey the idea of bodily members and human passions, but also in regard to those which express the operations of will and intellect. This mode of speaking, therefore, instead of being an objection against the Bible, is an argument of the wisdom of its Author, who has spoken to man in the only way in which he could be understood.

Again, it is seen by the most cursory reader, that truth is not taught in the Bible, in a scientific, or-systematic order. We have here no profound metaphysical disquisitions; no discussion of philosophical principles; no array of artificial dialectics; and no systematic arrangement of the subjects treated. In all this, there may be great wisdom, and whether we can see the reason or not, the objection to revelation, on this ground, is not greater than the one which may be made to the natural world, because the materials for building, which it contains, are not found erected into houses; and because all its fields and forests, are not placed in the order of an artificial garden, or regular orchard. The method of speaking of God, in the Sacred Scriptures, is at once most simple, and sublime. Few words are employed, but these are most significant. When Moses wished to receive an appropriate name, which he might mention to Pharaoh, to whom he was sent, he was directed to say, I am that I am hath sent me. And when, on another occasion, the name of the Most High was declared to Moses, it was in the following remarkable words, THE LORD, THE

LORD GOD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONG SUFFERING AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS AND TRUTH. KEEPING MERCY FOR THOUSANDS; FORGIVING INIQUITY, AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN; AND THAT WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY. If the most perfect simplicity, united with the highest sublimity, would be received as a proof; that the writers of these books were inspired, we could adduce hundreds of passages of this description; but we mean not to lay any undue stress on the argument derived from this source. The glory of the Scriptures is, the revelation which they contain of the moral attributes of God. These are manifested with but a feeble light, in the works of creation; but, in the Bible they shine with transcendent lustre. It would, by no means comport with the intended brevity of this work, to enter much into detail on this subject, but I must beg the indulgence of the reader, while I endeavor to bring distinctly into view, the account which the Scriptures give us, of the HOLINESS, and the GOODNESS of GOD.

These two attributes are stamped on the pages of the Bible, and form its grand characteristic. It is of no importance, whether we consider these as distinct, or as expressive of two aspects, in which the same infinite excellence is exhibited. Who can open this sacred book, without perceiving that the God of the Bible was Holy? All his laws, institutions, and dispensations, are holy; even those laws which are ceremonial, have this characteristic. Every person, edifice, and utensil, employed in his worship, must be solemnly consecrated; and all must approach God with caution and reverence, because he is Holy. The very ground where he occasionally makes himself known, is rendered holy. Every external sign and emblem of profound reverence, is required in them, who worship Him; and when he manifests himself with more than usual clearness, the holiest men are overwhelmed, and become as dead men, under a sense of their own vileness. And not only so, but even the heavenly hosts, who are free from every stain of sin, seem to be overwhelmed with the view of the HOLINESS of God: They not only cry to one another, as they worship around his august throne, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, but they are represented, as falling prostrate at his feet, and veiling their faces, in token of profound veneration. All those passages of Scripture, which speak of the WRATH, the INDIGNATION, the FURY, the JEALOUSY, or the ANGER of the Almighty, are no more than strong expressions of his infinite holiness. All his severe judgments and threatenings; all the misery which he ever inflicts on his creatures, in this world, or the next; and above all, the intense and ineffable sufferings of Christ, are exhibitions of the holiness of God.

Now, if there be a God, he must be holy; and if he make a revelation of himself, it will be marked with. this impress of character. But. wicked men would, never have made this attribute so prominent; they would rather have been disposed to keep it entirely out of view. There is no truth more evident to the attentive observer of human nature, than that men do not naturally love holiness, although they are obliged to acknowledge its worth. This, I believe, is the true reason, why the Scriptures, although they contain the highest excellence in composition, both in prose and poetry, of which a good taste cannot be insensible, are neglected by literary men; or rather studiously avoided. A mere fragment of any other book, if it could claim pp equal antiquity with. the Bible; and, especially, if it contained any thing like as much excellence of composition, would be sought after with avidity, by all men of taste; but the Bible remains almost as much unstudied by men of this description, as the Koran. This has often appeared to me paradoxical; but I am now persuaded, that the true reason is, the awful holiness of God, as exhibited in this book, and impressed on almost every page. This glares upon the conscience of an unholy man, as the

meridian sun on diseased eyes. God is a consuming fire. But this common dislike of the Bible, even in men of refined taste and decent lives, furnishes a strong argument for its divine origin. The question before us, is, who composed this book—inspired men, or wicked impostors? The characteristic, which we have been considering, will accord perfectly with the former supposition, but never can be reconciled with the latter. There is a moral certainty, that base impostors never would have written a book, the most remarkable trait of which is HOLINESS. The goodness of God, or that benevolence which he exercises towards his creatures, as it appears in the providence which sustains and feeds so great a multitude of creatures, and which is conspicuously manifested to the human family, is often celebrated in the Scriptures. Some of the most beautiful and sublime poems which were ever written, are employed in celebrating the praise of God, for his marvellous goodness. The reader is requested to turn to Psalms 34:1-22, Psalms 103:1-22, Psalms 104:1-35, Psalms 145:1-21, Psalms 146:1-10, Psalms 147:1-20, and Psalms 148:1-14, as an exemplification of this remark. But there is another, and a peculiar view of the divine goodness, given in the Scriptures. It is that form of goodness, called MERCY. It is the love of creatures, who had forfeited all claim to any kindness. It is the bestowing of pardon and salvation on those, who are condemned to death by the righteous laws of God; and this, without showing himself less displeased with their sins, than if he had punished them forever. This is the view of divine goodness, which is peculiar to the Bible. Reason could not have formed a conjecture concerning it. It is the development of a trait in the divine character, before unknown. To reveal the mercy of God, may, with truth, be said, to be the principal object of the Bible. But our idea of this divine goodness is very imperfect, until we learn, in what way it was manifested. No words can express this so well, as those of Christ himself, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” To many, perhaps, it will appear, that this love is so extraordinary, that it rather forms an objection against the Bible, than an argument in its favor. If the wonderful and unparalleled nature of any thing were an objection to it, then I acknowledge, that there would be some ground for this opinion. But what is there which is not full of wonders, when we come to contemplate it attentively? It is wonderful that there should exist such a creature as man, or such a body of light as the sun; but shall we, therefore; refuse to believe in their existence? To conic nearer to the subject, what is there in the character of God, or his works, which is not calculated to fill the mind with surpassing wonder! His eternity—His omniscience—His omnipresence—His creating power, and universal providence, are so wonderful, that we are at a loss to say which is most wonderful; or whether any thing else can be more wonderful. But is this any argument against their reality? And if God is so wonderful in his other attributes, shall we expect to find nothing of this kind, in his LOVE, which is his highest glory? There is, indeed, no goodness of this sort among men; but shall we make our faint and limited shadow of perfection, the measure by which to judge of the character of the infinite God? How unreasonable such a procedure! The objection derived from the insignificance of man, the object of this wonderful love, is delusive; for the same objection would lie, if his powers were increased ever so much. in comparison with God, all creatures may be considered as on a level; in this view, all distinctions among them are, as it were, annihilated. How easy would it be to construct an argument against the providence of God, on the same principles! There are innumerable myriads of animalcules, invisible to man, all of which have a perfect organization, and no more than an ephemeral existence, It might be said, these minute creatures are too diminutive, to occupy the attention of an infinite Being. It might be said, that the display of so much skill in the

organization of creatures of a day, was unsuitable to the wisdom of God. But however plausible such objections may be made to appear, they are all founded in a presumptuous intrusion into what does not appertain to us, and concerning which we have no ability to form any correct judgment. The truth is, that man has an infinitude below him, as well as above him, in the gradation of being. I do not mean to say, that creation is absolutely infinite, but that we can fix no bounds to the possibility of a continual existence of creatures in the scale of perpetual diminution, any more than we can to the possibility of creatures still increasing in magnitude above us. In this respect, as in others, we stand between two infinitudes, the great and the small, if I may so speak. A single drop of liquid contains myriads of perfectly organized creatures; and who knows but every particle of the blood of these invisible animalcules may contain other worlds of beings still more minute, without it being possible for us to fix any limit to the diminution in the size of creatures.

But, to return; unless it can be shown, that such love, as that exhibited in the Gospel, is impossible, which will not be pretended, or that it is repugnant to the moral attributes of God, its wonderful nature can never be properly used as an argument against its existence. Rather, it should be argued, the more wonderful, the more like God; the more wonderful, if no appearance of human weakness accompany it, the more unlikely to be the invention of man.

And, here, I would mention an idea, which, if correct, will shed light on the subject; namely, that wonder is congenial to the constitution of our minds. The soul of man never enjoys more elevated emotions, and more exalted pleasure, than in the contemplation of objects so great and vast, as to be perfectly incomprehensible. This is the foundation of that perpetual adoration which occupies the inhabitants of heaven. An incomprehensible God, is the object of contemplation and wonder to every creature.

2. The account which the Bible gives of the origin and character of man, accords, very exactly, with reason and experience.

Indeed, this is the only source of our knowledge respecting the circumstances in which man was placed, when he came from the hand of his Creator. Here we learn the origin of many things which we observe, but the reason of which we never could have discovered. The Bible teaches us, that the wickedness which has existed in all ages and among all people, originated in the apostacy of the first pair. It tells us the reason of covering the body with clothing, which is the custom of all nations, even where clothing is unnecessary to preserve the body from the effects of cold. Here, we learn the cause of the earth's producing briars and thorns spontaneously, while useful grain and fruits must be cultivated. Here, we learn the origin of marriage, and, of the curse which has followed the female sex, through all ages. Moses has also given us the origin of that species of religious worship, which was anciently practised among all people, but of which, reason can teach us nothing. I mean the sacrifice of animals on an altar, and the offerings of grain, of incense, &c. He has also related the fact of a universal deluge, of which we have so many ocular proofs, in every country, and on every mountain, as well as so many ancient traditions. The dispersion of the human family over the face of the earth, and the origin of the several nations of antiquity, are recorded in the Bible: and, although, this record is contained in a single short chapter, and has to us much obscurity, yet Bishop Watson declared, that if he had no other evidence of the authenticity of the Pentateuch, besides the tenth chapter of Genesis, he would deem that alone satisfactory. [43] The origin of the diversity of language, is also found in the Bible, and not learned

from any other source. Indeed, the origin of language itself, concerning which philosophers have disputed so much, is very evident, from the history of Moses. Many learned men have thought, that alphabetical writing took its rise from the writing of the decalogue, by the finger of God, upon the tables of stone; and I believe, that it would be found very difficult to prove, by any authentic documents, that this art existed before. Be this as it may, it must be admitted, that the earliest specimen of alphabetical writing now extant, is contained in the Bible. To these particulars it may be added, that we have an account in the Bible, of those nations and people, concerning whom the earliest profane historians treat, long before their histories commence; and when history comes down to that period when the affairs of nations are described by others, it receives ample corroboration from their narratives, as well as gives great light, to enable us to understand many things which they have imperfectly recorded. But the account which the Bible gives of the moral condition of man, is that which is now most to our purpose. In all ages and circumstances, the human race are represented as exceedingly depraved and wicked. Every man is declared to be a transgressor, and the root of this depravity is placed in the heart. Many of the gross crimes, to which we all are inclined, and into the practice of which many fall, are enumerated; and where these are avoided and concealed, the heart is described as deceitful and desperately wicked; and that pride and hypocrisy, which spread a false covering over the true character of man, are denounced, as among the things most hateful to God. Now, if this picture is not taken from the life; if the character of man is entirely different from that delineated in the Scriptures; or, if the vices of our nature are exaggerated; however difficult it may be to account for such misrepresentation, still it would furnish a strong argument against the inspiration of the writers of the several books of which the Bible consists. But on the other hand, if the character of man, as given in the Scriptures, is found exactly to correspond with universal experience and observation, it will be an incontestable proof, that the writers were guided by a strict regard to truth, in their compositions. To enter into a particular consideration of this subject, does not comport with the plan of this work; but for the truth of the representations of Scripture, I would appeal to all authentic history, and to every man's own observation and experience. The description which the apostle Paul gives of the vices of the heathen world, in his time, is corroborated by all the historians and satirists who lived near that period. And who needs a labored proof, to show, that men have generally a tendency to be wicked? Every civil institution, and all the most expensive provisions of civil government, are intended to set up barriers against the violence, injustice, and licentiousness of man. Indeed, civil government itself, originated in nothing else, than the necessity of protection against the wickedness of men. This, however, is a painful and mortifying conclusion; and it is not wonderful, that pride and self-flattery should render us reluctant to admit it; nevertheless, every impartial man must acknowledge, that our character is correctly drawn in the Bible.

There is something wonderful in the power, which the word of God possesses over the consciences of men. To those who never read or hear it, this fact must be unknown; but it is manifest to those who are conversant with the sacred volume, or who are in the habit of hearing it expounded. Why should this book, above all others, have the power of penetrating, and, as it were, searching, the inmost recesses of the soul, and shewing to a man, the multitude and enormity of the evils of his heart and life? This may, by some, be attributed to early education, but I believe, that if the experiment could be fairly tried, it would be found, that men who had never been brought up with any sentiments of reverence for the Bible, would experience its power over the conscience. The very best cure, therefore, for infidelity, would be, the serious perusal of the Holy

Scriptures. "The entrance of thy word giveth light. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

3. It deserves our special attention, in considering the internal evidences of Christianity, that the Scriptures contain explicit information on those points, on which man stands most in need of instruction. These may be reduced to three: first., the doctrine of a future state of retribution; secondly, the assurance that sin may be pardoned, and the method by which this can consistently be done; and, thirdly, the means for restoring the depraved nature of man, to a state of rectitude. We are not capable of determining, in particular, as we have before shown, what a revelation should contain, but it is reasonable to think, that if God gives a revelation, it will contain some instruction on these important points. And when we examine what the Scriptures teach, on these subjects, it is found, that the doctrine is worthy of God, and so adapted to the necessities of man, that it affords a strong argument in favor of their inspiration. The certainty of a future existence to man, is a prominent feature in the New Testament. The connexion between our present conduct and future condition, is clearly and expressly inculcated. Many interesting and momentous truths, connected with the world to come, are presented in a light, the best calculated to make a deep and salutary impression on the mind. It is revealed, that there will be a general judgment of all then and that God hath appointed a day when this event shall take place. It is, moreover, taught, in the New-Testament, that not only will every man be judged, but every action of every individual, whether it be good or bad, will be brought under review; and that the eternal destiny of all men will be fixed, agreeably to the judicial decision of this impartial trial. Some will be admitted to everlasting life, in the world above, while others shall go away into everlasting misery, into that place, "prepared for the devil and his angels."

Another interesting fact revealed in the New Testament, is, that there will be a general resurrection of the bodies of all men, previously to the final judgment. This fact, reason could never have conjectured: it must, from its nature, be a matter of pure revelation. We may, indeed, discover some remote analogy to the resurrection, in the apparent death and resuscitation of vegetables and some animals, but this could never have authorized, the conclusion that the bodies of men, after being mingled with the dust of the earth, would be reorganized and re-animated, by the same souls which were connected with them before their death. This doctrine, however, is very interesting; and to the pious, must be very pleasing and animating, as we may learn from the beautiful and striking description of the resurrection, given by Paul, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body;—For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

It is worthy of remark, that although the Scriptures express the joys of heaven, and the miseries of hell, by the strongest figures, they do not enter much into detail, respecting the condition of men, in the future world. There is true wisdom in this silence; because it is a subject, of which we are, at present, incapable of forming any distinct conceptions. Paul, after being caught up "to paradise, and to the third heaven," gave no account of what he saw and heard, when he returned. How different is this from the ridiculous description of the seven heavens, by Mohammed; and from the reveries of Emmanuel Swedenborg! The account of a future state, contained in the New Testament, is just that which is best suited to our present imperfect mode of conceiving; and at the same time, adapted to make the deepest impressions on the minds of men. The method of

obtaining the pardon of sin, which is made known in the Scriptures, is so extraordinary, and yet so perfectly calculated to reconcile the forgiveness of the sinner, with the justice and holiness of God, that it seems very improbable, that it is a mere human device. The mission from heaven, of a person called the Son of God; his miraculous assumption of human nature; his holy and benevolent character; and his laying down his life as an expiation for the sins of men, are, indeed wonderful events, but on that account, not likely to be the invention of impostors. The death of Christ, may be considered the central point in the Christian system. This was so far from being an incidental thing, or an event occurring in the common course of nature, that it is, every where, represented to be the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world. This, according to the Gospel, is the grand means of obtaining all blessings for sinners. It is the great vicarious sacrifice, offered up to God in behalf of the people, in consequence of which God can be just and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. To know Christ crucified, therefore, is to know the whole Gospel;—to preach Christ crucified, is to preach the whole Gospel;—for all its doctrines are involved in this event. The plan of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, is founded on the principle of receiving satisfaction for the transgressions of the sinner, from another person, who is able to render to the law all that is required from the offender. This satisfaction was made by the obedience of Christ unto death, and is accepted by the Judge of all, in place of a perfect obedience of the sinner, in behalf of all those to whom it shall be applied. This method of obtaining pardon is honorable to God, because, while he receives the transgressor into favor, he expresses his hatred of sin in the strongest manner, and requires that the demands of his holy law be perfectly fulfilled; and it is suited to man, for it comes down to his impotence and wretchedness, and offers him a finished and gratuitous salvation, without works or merit of his own. And that there may be no room for an abuse of this doctrine of FREE GRACE, it is provided, that all who hope for the benefits of this redemption, shall yield a sincere obedience to the Gospel; and thus evince their penitence for their sins, and their love to the Saviour. Ungodly men may pervert this doctrine, and turn the grace of God into licentiousness, but this receives no encouragement from the principles of the Gospel: it is merely the effect of the perverseness of sinful men. This leads me to speak of the third thing, which was mentioned as important to be known by man, which is the means by which a depraved nature may be restored to rectitude; or in other words, how the thorough reformation of a sinner may be effected. On this subject, philosophy has never been able to shed any light. And this is not wonderful; for the most that human wisdom if ever so perfect could effect, would be the direction and regulation of the natural principles and passions of men; but in this way no true reformation can be produced. Whatever changes are effected, will be only from one species of sin to another. In order to a radical restoration of the soul to moral rectitude, or to any degree of it, there is a necessity for the introduction, into the mind, of some new and powerful principle of action, sufficient to counteract or expel the principles of sin. It is in vain that men talk of producing a restoration to virtue, by reason: the mere perception of the right way will answer no purpose, unless there is some inclination to pursue it. Now, the want of virtuous affections, or to speak more correctly, of holy dispositions, is the great defect of our nature, in which our depravity radically consists; and the only way by which man can be led to love and pursue the course of obedience to the law of God, is, by having love to God and to holiness excited, or implanted in his soul. But to effect this, is not in the power of any creature; it is a work which requires a divine energy—a creating power; and therefore a true conversion from the ways of sin, was never effected without supernatural aid. There may be an external reformation. There may be, and often

is, a change of governing principles. The man who in his youth was under the predominant influence of the love of pleasure, may, in advanced years, fall completely under the control of avarice or ambition; but in every such case, the change is effected by one active principle becoming so strong, as to counteract or suppress another. It may be laid down as a universal maxim, that all changes of character are brought about by exciting, implanting, or strengthening, active principles, sufficient to overcome those which before governed the man.

Now let us inquire, what plan of reformation is proposed in the Scriptures. It is such a one, as precisely accords with the principles laid down. The necessity of regeneration, by the power of God, is taught almost in every variety of form, both in the Old and New Testament. The effect of the divine energy on the soul, is, A NEW HEART; or, new principles of moral action, the leading exercises of which are love to God, and love to man. Let a philosophical survey be taken of the nature of man, with his complete system of perceptions, passions, appetites, and affections; and then suppose this powerful and holy principle introduced into the soul, and it will be seen, that all the faculties and propensities of man, will be reduced to order; and the vices of our nature will be eradicated. Pretenders to reason and philosophy have often ridiculed this doctrine, as absurd; whereas, it is, in every respect, consistent with the soundest philosophy. It is the very thing which a wise philosopher, who should undertake to solve the problem, how depraved man might be restored to virtue, would demand. But like the foundation Archimedes required for his lever to raise the principle necessary for a sinner's reformation, which reason and philosophy cannot furnish. The Bible is the only book which ever taught the method of purifying the soul from sin. A thousand actual devices have been tried by philosophers, and as of other systems. One of the most common seen, to endeavour to extricate the soul from the snare of the body, by various methods of mortification, and purgation; but all these plans have adopted the principle, that the body is the chief seat of sin, and therefore they have ever proved unsuccessful. The disease lies deeper, and is further removed ... the reach of their remedies, than they supposed. The Gospel which teaches the true philosophy regarding the seat of sin, and its cure. Out of the heart comes all evils, according to the Bible. And if we make the fruit good, we must first make the seed good. This necessity of divine agency to make men truly us, does not, however, supersede the use of means, exclude the operation of rational motives. When a principle is introduced into a rational soul, in the case of this principle, the soul is governed by the general laws of understanding and choice, as before. The principle of piety is pre-eminently a rational principle, in its operation. God is loved, because he is viewed to be a most excellent and amiable being. Heaven is preferred to earth, because it is seen to be a better and more enduring inheritance; and so of all exercises. naturally led, from the consideration of this text, to speak of the moral system of the New Testament. I confine my remarks here, to the New Testament, not because it teaches a different rule of moral duty, from the Old, but because it teaches it more clearly.

I need say nothing in general commendation of the moral precepts of the Gospel. They have extorted the highest praise from many of the most determined enemies of Christianity. No man has been able to show how they could be improved in any one point. It has sometimes, indeed, been objected, that this system was not suited to man, because it requires a purity and perfection to which he can never attain; but the objection concedes the very point which we wish to establish,—namely, the absolute perfection of the Gospel system of morality. It surely requires no argument to prove, that if God revealed a rule for the regulation of his creatures, it will be a perfect

rule. It will never do to admit, that the law must be lowered in its demands, to adapt it to the imperfection of creatures. This would be destructive of all law.

It has again been objected, that in the precepts of the New Testament, many splendid virtues, acknowledged by the heathen moralists, have been omitted. Patriotism, friendship, bravery, &c., have been specified as belonging to this class. To which we reply, that so far as patriotism and friendship are moral virtues, they are included in the general precepts of the Gospel, which require us to love our fellow men, and do them good; and in those which command us to think of "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" but when the love of country, and the attachment to a friend, interfere with the general obligations of loving all men, they are no longer virtues, but vices. The excellence of the moral system of the New Testament, will be manifest, if we consider,—

1. Its simple, yet comprehensive character. All moral duties which can be conceived, as obligatory on man, are here reduced to two grand principles, the love of God, and the love of man. The measure of the first is, the full extent of our capacity; of the second, the love which we have for ourselves. On these two, says Christ, hang all the law and the prophets. The duties which relate to temperance and self-government, do not need any additional principle. If the soul be filled with love to God, and with love to man, self-love will be so regulated and directed, as to answer every purpose in moving us to perform what has been called our duty to ourselves.

2. The precepts of morality, in the New Testament; although sometimes expressed in comprehensive language, are often applied to the actual relations and various conditions of men. We are not left to infer particular duties from general principles, but the duties of individuals, according to their circumstances, are distinctly enjoined. Parents and children, husbands and wives, magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, the rich and the poor, the friend and the stranger, have all their respective duties clearly marked out.

3. Moral duties which have been overlooked, or misunderstood, by other teachers, are here prominently exhibited, and solemnly inculcated. The virtues of humility, meekness, forbearance, and the forgiveness of injuries were not acknowledged by the heathen moralists; but in the New Testament they are made to assume their proper place, and much of true goodness is made to consist in their exercise. At the time of the advent of Christ, many false principles of morality had gained currency. The duty of loving all men, had been circumscribed within narrow limits. Men charged with heresy, as the Samaritans, or notorious sinners, as the Publicans, were, by the Jews, considered as properly excluded from all participation in their kindness, or courtesy. The duty of subjection to a foreign power, by which they had been conquered; and especially, the duty of yielding obedience to a wicked tyrannical prince, was one on which it required much wisdom to decide aright. The people were divided among themselves on this point; it was therefore selected by a combination of both parties, as a fit subject to entangle our Lord, by obliging him to decide one way or the other, and thus expose himself to the opposition of one of the parties. But when they asked him whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not, he called for a denarius, and looking at the image stamped upon it, asked whose it was; and upon being answered, Cæsar's, made the following remarkable reply, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." By which he decided, that, inasmuch as they permitted the coin of Cæsar to circulate among them, which was an evidence of his sovereignty over them,

and availed themselves of this money for purposes of trade, there could be no impropriety in rendering to Cæsar what properly belongs to him; and, also, that this was not incompatible with their allegiance to God. So that, virtually, in this answer, he reproved both the Pharisees and the Herodians; the former, of whom made their duty to God a pretext for refusing to pay tribute to the Emperor; and the latter, to secure the favor of the reigning powers, neglected their duty to God.

Paul, living under the government of Nero, prescribes obedience to the existing powers, not from fear of suffering their displeasure, but “for conscience sake.” This is the general rule of duty, on this difficult subject, than which none can be wiser; but it must not be considered, as inculcating passive obedience and nonresistance, in all cases. Yet, as long as a government has authority, so long we are bound to obey. Christianity is so constituted, as not to interfere with any civil institution. It takes men as it finds them, in all the relations of life, and teaches them their duty. It never can, therefore, be the cause of sedition, and opposition to existing governments. It considers all civil rulers, as the ministers of God, for the peace and good order of society, and for the punishment of those that do evil. It is made the duty of Christians, therefore, to be “subject unto the higher powers,” and “not to resist the ordinance of God.—To render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.” [44] —But when they who have the right to change the government, of a country, exercise it, and put down one set of rulers, and set up another, the principle of Christian duty remains the same. And if, in any country, Christians form a majority of the nation, there is no reason why they may not exercise this right of new modelling their government, or changing their rulers, as well as others.

4. The moral system of the New Testament traces all virtue to the heart, and sets no value on the most splendid and costly offerings, or the most punctilious discharge of religious duties, when the motives are not pure. The first inclination of the mind to an illicit object, is denounced to be a violation of the law; and words of reproach, and all idle words, are among the sins for which an account must be given in the Judgment. Prayers and alms, proceeding from vain glory, are represented as receiving no reward from God, however they may be applauded by men. The love of this world, and the love of money, are represented as radical sins, from which many others proceed.

Pride and revenge are exhibited as not only odious, but incompatible with the divine favor. Purity of heart, and heavenly mindedness, with trust in God. and submission to his will, are; in this system, cardinal, virtues.

5. The moral precepts of the New Testament were exemplified in the lives of the apostles and primitive Christians; and especially, and to the utmost perfection, in the example of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to conceive a character more perfect than that given by the evangelists, of the Founder of the Christian religion; and it has already been observed, that this character, embracing every variety of excellence, often exhibited in delicate and difficult circumstances, is delineated by a simple narrative of facts. There is no panegyric; no effort or art to excite admiration; but the writers merely inform us what Jesus said, did, and suffered. From this narrative we learn, that he connected himself with no sect, and courted the favor of neither the rich nor the poor. He adopted none of the errors or prejudices of his nation; but by his discourses and his conduct, showed that he acted from far higher views than national prejudices. The apparent sanctity of the Pharisees, he denounced as hypocrisy;—the traditions of the elders, as subversive of the law of God;—the

sceptical opinion of the Sadducees, as proceeding from ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ continually turned the attention of his hearers, from earthly to heavenly things, as alone worthy of their affections and pursuit. Although he flattered no class of men, his attention was particularly directed to the poor; their spiritual necessities and their bodily afflictions excited his most tender compassion; and to them he addressed many kind and encouraging declarations. But his healing power was exerted in behalf of all applicants, rich and poor; and without regard to their sect or nation. Jews, Samaritans, Heathens, Publicans, and sinners, were the objects of his compassion. He was not deterred by the proud prejudices of the Scribes and Pharisees, from associating with penitents, however vile and infamous they had before been. He graciously received returning sinners, comforted them with the assurance of pardon, and permitted them to manifest their grateful affection to his person; by, the most expressive signs and actions.

He manifested the kindest sympathy with his friends in their afflictions, weeping with those that wept, and often exerting his omnipotence in raising their dear relations from the bed of sickness, or from death. And although he often uttered severe rebukes against the incorrigibly wicked, and was sometimes grieved and angry with them, yet his compassion towards them never failed; and even when their day of grace was ended, he wept over them with the most affecting tenderness.

Jesus Christ was often brought into conflict with insidious, malignant, and learned adversaries. They attacked him with deliberate craft, and proposed to him questions on delicate and difficult subjects, to which he was required to return an immediate answer; but in no case of this sort was he ever confounded, or even puzzled by the cunning craftiness of his enemies. His answers were so appropriate, and so fraught with wisdom, that his adversaries were commonly confounded, and the audience filled with admiration. The parables of Christ are unparalleled for beauty and force, in the species of composition to which they belong. But this is the smallest part of their excellence. They contain so much important truth, and so happily adapted to the subject, and the occasion, that often, the persons intended to be reproved by them, were constrained to give judgment against themselves. In these discourses, the leading doctrines of the Gospel are exhibited in a beautiful dress of allegory, which rivets the attention, and greatly aids us in understanding the fulness and freeness of the grace of the Gospel. They are also prophetic of the rejection of the Jews, and of the calling of the Gentiles; of the various reception of the Gospel by different classes, of hearers; of the mixture of sincere and unsound Christians, of which the Church should consist; of the cruel persecutions which the followers of Christ should endure; and of the final overthrow and destruction of his enemies.

Jesus Christ spake, in all his discourses; as never man spake. He removed the false glosses which had been put on the law, and set its precepts in their proper light. He mingled the dogmas of no philosophical system with his instructions. He entered into no metaphysical and abstruse disquisition, but taught the truth with simplicity and authority. His zeal for the honor of God, and for the purity and sanctity of his worship, and his dislike of all human inventions and will-worship, are manifest, in all his conduct. A spirit of fervent and, elevated devotion, was a remarkable characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth. Whole nights he spent in prayer; and before day he would retire for the purposes of devotion. He was in the habit of praying and giving thanks on all occasions; but his devotion was free from all tincture of superstition, or enthusiasm. He taught, that

not the words, but the heart;—not the length of prayers, but their spirit, was regarded. His benevolence, meekness, and laborious diligence, in promoting the welfare of men, were manifested, every day of his life. But in his acts of mercy, and in his most extraordinary miracles, there was no appearance of parade or ostentation. “He went about doing good,” but he sought no glory from men. He was humble, retired, and contented with the lowest state of poverty. When the people applauded him, he withdrew unto some other place. When they would have made him a king, he escaped from their hands. When they asked curious questions, he directed them to something important. When they uttered unmeaning expressions of praise, he took occasion to announce some important truth, or deliver some interesting discourse. In nothing did he discover more profound wisdom, than in declining to interfere, in any case, with temporal concerns, and disputes about earthly possessions. He showed by his conduct, what he solemnly declared on his trial, that, “his kingdom was not of this world.” In his intercourse with his disciples, we observe a sweet mixture of dignity and gentleness, of faithfulness and humble condescension to their weakness and prejudices. No wonder that they should love such a Master. But his last discourses with them before his passion, and the remarkable prayer offered in their behalf, for affectionate tenderness, and the sweet spirit of consolation which pervade them, are altogether inimitable. How flat and unsatisfactory are the conversations of Socrates with his friends, when compared with those of Christ, recorded in the xiv, xv, and xvi chapters of the Gospel of St. John! Indeed, it would be impossible to refer to any discourses, in any language, which could bear a comparison with this valedictory of Christ: and that which should enhance our admiration of the pure benevolence of the author; is, that he was aware, that his own sufferings were near, and would be most cruel and ignominious; and yet his attention is turned to the case of his sorrowful disciples; and all that he says has relation to them. The institution of the Eucharistical Supper, intended to be commemorative of his death, was attended with circumstances, which exhibit the character of Jesus, in a very peculiar and interesting light. This scene will be best understood by a perusal of the simple and affecting narrative of the evangelists, to which the reader is referred. The last thing in the character of Christ, which I shall bring into view at this time, is the patience and fortitude with which he endured sufferings, which were intense and overwhelming, beyond conception. There is something mysterious in this whole affair. The intense agonies which Jesus suffered, seem to have had no connexion with external circumstances. When he was betrayed, deserted, and arrested, he discovered no signs of fear or perturbation. He gave himself up, and submitted with unruffled composure, to every species of contumely and insult. While his trial was going on before the Sanhedrim, and before Pilate, he maintained, for the most part, a dignified silence, uttering no reproaches or complaints; not even speaking in his own defence. When particularly interrogated by the judges, he answered directly to the questions proposed, and avowed himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Under the mockery and insult which were heaped upon him, he remained perfectly composed, and uttered not a word indicative of impatience or resentment. “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” When he was bewailed by the daughters of Jerusalem, as he ascended the hill of Calvary, bearing his cross, he requested them not to weep for him, but for themselves and their children, on account of the calamities that were coming on that devoted city. While suspended on the cross, he saw his beloved mother among the spectators, and knowing that she would need a friend and protector, he recommended her to the care of the disciple he most tenderly loved. Although no compassion was mingled with the vindictive feelings with which he was persecuted, yet he set a glorious

example of that most difficult duty, of loving our enemies: as says the apostle Peter, "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his month; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered; he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Among his last words, before he expired, was a prayer for those that were then engaged in crucifying him;—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." A penitent thief, who was crucified with him, implored his blessing and remembrance, when he should come to the possession of his kingdom, to whom he replied, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And finally, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and bowed his head, and died. The moral excellence of the character of Christ is very remarkable, for uniting in perfection, qualities which among men are considered almost incompatible, He exhibited a complete indifference to the possessions and glory of the world, and a devout and heavenly temper, without the least mixture of austerity. He combined uniform dignity, with humility and condescension:—manifested strong indignation against all manner of sin, and against impenitent sinners, but the most affectionate tenderness, towards every humble penitent. He united the spirit of elevated devotion also, with a life of activity and incessant exertion. While he held free intercourse with men of all classes, he adopted the prejudices, and spared the vices of none. On this subject, I will take the liberty of quoting a passage from an excellent discourse of Dr. Charming, referred to already: "I will only observe," says the eloquent author, speaking of the character of Christ, "that it had one distinction, which, more than any thing, forms a perfect character. It was made up of contrasts: in other words, it was a union of excellencies which are not easily reconciled, which seem at first sight incongruous, but which, when blended, and duly proportioned, constitute moral harmony, and attract with equal power, love, and veneration. For example, we discover in Jesus Christ an unparalleled dignity of character, a consciousness of greatness, never discovered or approached by any other individual in history; and yet this was blended with a condescension, loveliness, and unostentatious simplicity, which had never before been thought consistent with greatness. In like manner, he puffed an utter superiority to the world, to its pleasures and ordinary interests, with suavity of manners, and freedom from austerity. He joined to strong feeling and self-possession, an indignant sensibility to sin, and compassion to the sinner; an intense devotion to his work, and calmness under opposition and ill success; a universal philanthropy, and a susceptibility of private attachments; the authority which became the Saviour of the world, and the tenderness and gratitude of a son." The salutary effects of Christianity on communities and individuals, open a wide field for important remarks; but it is a subject which we have not time to pursue; yet we must not pass it over in entire silence. The argument from this topic may, however, be reduced to a point. Take a survey of the whole world, at this time, and let an impartial judgment be formed, of the condition of all the nations; and let the question be answered, whether Christian nations are in a less favorable, or more favorable condition, than others. And again, whether among Christians, those nations who have the free use of the Bible, and are carefully instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, are in a better or worse condition, than those to whom the Scriptures are interdicted, and who are permitted to remain in ignorance of the religion which they profess? The answers to these questions are so obvious, that I cannot but presume, that all readers will be of the same mind. It may then be asked, would a vile imposture be the means of meliorating the condition of the world, and prove salutary in proportion as it is known and obeyed? "I speak as unto wise men judge ye what I say."

We have, moreover, seen, in our own time, the wonderful effects of the Gospel, in civilizing some of the most barbarous people on the face of the earth. Men who seemed to be sunk to a level with the beasts, have been reclaimed, enlightened, and exalted, to a participation of the blessings of civilized life—their ferocious temper being completely subdued and softened. Look at Greenland, at Africa, at the islands in the Pacific; and nearer home, at the Cherokees, Choctaws, and other Indian tribes, and see what the Gospel can effect! I know not what infidels think of these things, but for my own part, I should not esteem one coming from the dead, or a voice of thunder from the heavens. so undoubted an evidence of the truth of the Gospel, as these effects. Will a series of falsehoods produce such effects as these?

I know that it has been objected, that Christianity has been the cause of many bloody wars and cruel persecutions;—but this is impossible. That religion which breathes nothing but benevolence and peace, and which requires its disciples not to resist evil, but freely to forgive their most malignant enemies, never can be the cause of war and persecution. It may indeed be the occasion, and no doubt has been made the occasion. of such evils; but it would be absurd to attribute to Christianity, the evils of which it has been the innocent. occasion, when its own spirit is in direct opposition to those evils. As well might we charge civil government with all the wars and tumults which it has occasioned. As reasonably might we accuse liberty, as being the cause of all the atrocities of the French revolution. The truth is, that the wickedness of man is the cause of these evils; and the most excellent things in the universe, may be made the occasion of exciting, or calling it into exercise. Christ foretold that his religion would be an occasion of family discord; and to express the certainty of the event predicted, he said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword; which some superficial readers have strangely misconstrued, as though he had signified, that it was the tendency of his religion to produce strife among friends. No man can remain in error on this subject who will take the pains to read the New Testament. And I will venture to predict, or rather to publish what is already predicted, that as soon as the world shall sincerely embrace the Christian religion, wars will cease to the ends of the earth. Then shall men beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more. But the salutary effects of the Gospel on those individuals who cordially embrace it, furnish the most manifest proof of its divinity. flow often, by the secret, powerful influence of the truths of the Bible, have the proud been humbled; the impure rendered chaste; the unjust, honest; the cruel and revengeful, meek and forgiving; the drunkard, temperate; the profane, reverent; and the false swearer and liar, conscientious in declaring nothing but the truth! Under the influence of what other system are such salutary changes effected? Will it be said, that many who profess to experience such a change, prove themselves to be hypocrites? Admitted; but does this evince that they who give evidence of sincerity by the most incontestible proofs, all their lives, are also hypocrites? All men wish to be thought honest; but if many are discovered to be knaves, does this prove that there is not an honest man in the world? But however this argument may affect those who have had no experience of the power of the Gospel, it will have great weight with all those who have, by means of the truth, been converted from the error of their ways. There are thousands who can attest that they have experienced the salutary efficacy of the Bible, in turning them away from their iniquities and enkindling within them the love of God, and of virtue. They cannot but believe that the Christian religion is from God, and are persuaded that no imposture could so elevate and sanctify the mind:—that no human device could possess such a power over the conscience and the heart, as they have experienced from the

Scriptures. These persons, therefore, may truly be said to have the witness of the truth in themselves.

b. Divine Internal Evidence of Bible

CHAPTER X.

THE BIBLE CONTAINS INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT ITS ORIGIN IS DIVINE.

Part 2 But there is an efficacy in the truths of the Bible, not only to guide and sanctify, but also to afford consolation to the afflicted, in body or mind. Indeed, the Gospel brings peace into every bosom, where it is cordially received. When the conscience is pierced with the stings of guilt, and the soul writhes under a wound which no human medicine can heal, the promises of the Gospel are like the balm of Gilead, a sovereign cure for this intolerable and deeply seated malady. Under its cheering influence, the broken spirit is healed, and the burden of despair is removed far away. The Gospel, like an angel of mercy, can bring consolation into the darkest scenes of adversity; it can penetrate the dungeon, and soothe the sorrows of the penitent in his chains, and on his bed of straw. It has power to give courage to the heart, and to brighten the countenance of the man who meets death on the scaffold, or on the gibbet, if its precious invitations to the chief of sinners, be sincerely embraced. It mitigates the sorrows of the bereaved, and wipes away the bitter tears, occasioned by the painful separation of affectionate friends and relatives. By the bright prospects which it opens, and the lively hopes which it inspires, the darkness of the tomb is illumined; so that Christians are enabled, in faith of the resurrection of the body, to commit the remains of their dearest friends to the secure sepulchre, in confident hope, that after a short sleep, they will awake to life everlasting. The cottages of the poor, are often blessed with the consolation of the Gospel, which is peculiarly adapted to the children of affliction and poverty. It was one of the signs of Jesus being the true Messiah, "that the poor had the Gospel preached unto them." Here, it produces contentment, resignation, mutual kindness, and the longing after immortality. The aged and infirm, who, by the gradual failure of their faculties, or by disease and decrepitude are shut out from the business and enjoyments of this world, may find in the word of God, a fountain of consolation. They- may, while imbued with its celestial spirit, look upon the world without the least regard for its loss, and may rejoice in the prospect before them, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. The Gospel can render tolerable, even the yoke of slavery, and the chains of the oppressor. How often is the pious slave, through the blessed influence of the word of God, a thousand Limes happier than his lordly master! He cares not for the short deprivation of liberty; he knows and feels that he is "Christ's freeman," and believes "that all things work together for his good," and that "these light afflictions which are for a moment, will work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" But, moreover, this glorious gospel is an antidote to death itself. He that does the sayings of Christ shall never taste of death; that is, of death as a curse;—he shall never feel the envenomed sting of death. How often does it overspread the spirit of the departing saint, with serenity! How often does it elevate, and fill with celestial joy, the soul which is just leaving the earthly house of this tabernacle? It actually renders, in many instances, the bed of the dying, a place of sweet repose. No terrors hover over them;—no anxious care corrodes their spirit;—no burden oppresses their heart. All is light;—all is hope and assurance;—all is joy and triumph!

Now, the question to be decided is, whether a book which is replete with such sublime and correct views of theology;—which exhibits the true history and true character of man, without flattery, distortion, or exaggeration; and which possesses such an astonishing power of penetrating the human heart and affecting the conscience,—which gives us information on the very points, with which it is most important that we should be acquainted;—which opens to us the future world, and shows us how we may attain its felicity and glory;—which exhibits a perfect system of moral duty adapted to our nature and circumstances, and free from all the defects of other systems of morality; forbidding nothing which is innocent, and requiring nothing which is not reasonable and virtuous;—which reduces all duty to a few general principles, and yet illustrates the application of these principles by a multitude of particular precepts, addressed to persons in every relation of life, and exemplifies them, by setting before us the lives of holy men, who are portrayed according to truth, with such imperfections, as experience teaches us, belong to the best men;—which delineates the character of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, with such a perfection of moral excellencies, by simply relating his words, actions, and sufferings, that nothing can be taken from it, or added to it, without detracting from its worth;—and finally, which contains the true sources of consolation for every species of human suffering, and comfort in death itself. I say, is it reasonable to believe, that such a book is the production of vile impostors; and especially, of uneducated fishermen of Galilee? Would such men have fallen into no palpable blunders in theology or morality? Could they have preserved so beautiful a harmony and consistency between all the parts? Could they have exhibited such a character as that of Jesus Christ? and while they introduce him acting and speaking so often, and in circumstances so peculiar and difficult, never ascribe to him any error or weakness, in word or deed? Would impostors have denounced all manner of falsehood and deceit, as is done in the New Testament? Would they have insisted so much on holiness, even in the thoughts and purposes of the heart? Could they have so perfectly adapted their forgery to the constitution of the human mind, and to the circumstances of men? Is it, probable that they would have possessed the wisdom to avoid all the prejudices of their nation, and all connexion with existing sects and civil institutions? And finally, could they have provided so effectually for the consolation of the afflicted? What man now upon earth could compose even the discourses, said by the evangelists to have been spoken by Christ?

If any man can bring himself, after an impartial examination of the Scriptures, to believe that they were written by unprincipled impostors, then he may believe, that an untutored savage might construct a ship of the line; that a child might have written the Iliad, or Paradise Lost: or even that the starry firmament was the work of mere creatures. No: it cannot be, that this is a forgery. No man or set of men ever had sufficient talents and knowledge, to forge such a book as the Bible. It evidently transcends all human effort. It has upon its face the impress of divinity. It shines with a light, which from its clearness and its splendor, shows itself to be celestial. It possesses the energy and penetrating influence which bespeak the omnipotence and omniscience of its Author. It has the effect of enlightening, elevating, purifying, directing, and comforting all those who cordially receive it. Surely, then, it is the word of God, and we will hold it fast, as the best blessing which God has vouchsafed to man.

O precious gospel! Will any merciless liana endeavor to tear away from our hearts this best, this last, this sweetest consolation? Would you darken the only avenue through which one ray of hope can enter? Would you tear from the aged and infirm poor, the only prop on which their souls can

repose in peace? Would you deprive the dying of their only source of consolation? Would you rob the world of its richest treasure? Would you let loose the flood-gates of every vice, and bring back upon the earth, the horrors of superstition, or the atrocities of atheism? Then endeavor to subvert the Gospel—throw around you the fire-brands of infidelity—laugh at religion, and make a mock of futurity;—but be assured, that for all these things, God will bring you into judgment. But no; I will not believe, that any who reflect on what has been said in these pages, will ever cherish a thought so diabolical. I will persuade myself, that a regard for the welfare of their country, if no higher motive, will induce them to respect the Christian Religion. And every pious heart will say, RATHER LET THE SUN BE DARKENED IN THE HEAVENS, THAN THE PRECIOUS LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL BE EXTINGUISHED!

[40] Dr. Chalmers.

[41] Soame Jenyns.

[42] Chalmers' Evidences.

[43] See Watson's Address to Scoffers.

[44] Romans 13:1-14.

Scriptures are inspired, plenary

CHAPTER XI. THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, WERE WRITTEN BY THE INSPIRATION OF GOD; AND THIS INSPIRATION, HOWEVER IT MAY BE DISTINGUISHED, WAS PLENARY; THAT IS, THE WRITERS WERE UNDER AN INFALLIBLE GUIDANCE, 130TH AS IT RELATES TO THE IDEAS AND WORDS: AND YET, THE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, HABITS, AND PECULIAR DISPOSITIONS OF THE WRITERS, WERE NOT SUPERSEDED.

HAVING endeavored to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures, I come now to say something respecting the inspiration of the writers of the several books. These two subjects are, it is true, involved, in each other; and many of the arguments for the former, are conclusive in favor of the latter; but still, there is a distinction which it is important to observe. A book may be authentic, without having the least claim to inspiration, as are all true narratives of facts, written by men of veracity, in the exercise of their unassisted powers. The gospel history may be established on the common principles of human testimony, in the same manner, as any other history. Indeed, this must be done, in the order of proof, before any convincing argument can be formed, in favor of divine revelation. Accordingly, all judicious writers on the Evidences of Christianity, first attempt to establish the facts recorded in the Gospels, by an appeal to merely human testimony. This distinction is so clear, and practically so important, that many persons believe in the facts—miracles as well as others—and yet have no conviction that the history of these events was written by divine inspiration. This is understood to be the case in regard to most of those called Unitarians. Dr. Priestley, in his “Institutes of the Christian Religion,” has established the authenticity of the facts, recorded by the evangelists, with great force of reasoning; and yet, in the same work, he utterly denies the plenary inspiration of these writers; but alleges, that they were men of veracity, and that their testimony should be received, just as we receive that of other credible historians; but without ascribing infallibility to them. The same opinions have been maintained by many others. The authenticity of the facts is sufficient to demonstrate, that the Christian religion is of divine origin; but it does not follow, as a matter of course, that the historian who gives an account of the facts on which it rests, was inspired. This is a distinct inquiry; and, although, not so vitally important as the former, yet is of great moment, and deserves a serious and impartial consideration.

It may be proper, also, in this place, to distinguish between inspiration, and that illumination, which every true Christian must receive, and which is the foundation of that saving faith which is produced in the mind, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The distinction is, that the object of inspiration is commonly to reveal some new truths; or more clearly to reveal such as were before but obscurely revealed; or, it is intended, to direct the mind, in a supernatural way, to write and speak certain things; and so superintends or strengthens its faculties, that it is enabled to communicate, with unerring certainty, truths before known; or, to form ideas and adopt expressions so sublime, as to be above the range of the natural powers of the person. But the illumination of the Holy Spirit communicates no new truths, but enables the soul spiritually to

apprehend truths already revealed. Here then is the grand distinction between those spiritual influences which all Christians enjoy, and enthusiasm, which claims something of the nature of inspiration. The sober Christian can appeal to the word of God, as containing all the ideas by which his mind is affected, in its highest elevations of joy and love: but the enthusiast departs from the written word, and trusts to impulses, impressions on the imagination, immediate suggestions, dreams, or supposed visions. If these impulses or suggestions were from the Spirit of God, they would be strictly of the nature of inspiration. And, accordingly, most fanatics believe themselves to be inspired; but however strong their persuasion, we are not bound to believe in their pretensions, unless they can exhibit these external proofs, by which God is pleased to give attestation to those communications which he makes to men.

There is also a difference between inspiration, and revelation. All revelations are not made by a suggestion of truth to the mind of an individual. God often spoke to people of old, by audible voices; and communicated his will by the missions of angels. Many persons have thus received divine revelations, who had no pretensions to inspiration. All the people of Israel, who stood before God at Mount Sinai, heard his voice, uttering the ten commandments, and yet no one would say, that all these were inspired. So, also, when Christ was upon earth, in more instances than one, a voice was heard declaring, that he was the beloved Son of God. Indeed, all who had the opportunity of hearing Christ's discourses, might be said to receive a revelation immediately from God; but it would be absurd to say, that all these were inspired. Dr. Dick is of opinion, that the word revelation would be more expressive, as being more comprehensive than suggestion, which last conveys the idea of an operation on the mind; whereas, truth, in many cases was made known, in other ways. But for the reasons stated above, it would not do to substitute the word revelation for inspiration; inasmuch as, multitudes received revelations, who had no claim to inspiration. And when inspiration is confined to those who wrote the books of Scripture, no other word would so clearly express the idea.

Inspiration has, by theologians, been distinguished into three kinds; that of superintendence, of suggestion, and elevation. The first of these takes place, when a historian is influenced, by the Holy Spirit, to write, and in writing is so directed as to select those facts and circumstances, which will answer the end proposed; and so assisted and strengthened in the narrative of events, as to be preserved from all error and mistake. The facts need not be revealed, because they may be well known to the writer from his own observation, and may be deeply impressed on his memory; but, no man can avoid inaccuracies and mistakes, in a narrative of facts, long past. If it is important that such a narrative be exempt from error, the writer must be inspired. But as the chief object of inspiration is, to communicate truths before unknown; so, the inspiration of suggestion is requisite, in all such cases; as when the prophets were inspired to predict the revolutions of empires; or, to communicate a message from God to a whole people, or to an individual, the ideas must of course, have been immediately suggested, by the Holy Spirit. The third species of inspiration, is, when, by a divine influence, persons are enabled to bring forth productions, in speaking or writing, far more sublime and excellent, than they could have attained, by the exercise of their own faculties. Thus, often, women, under the inspiration of God, have instantly uttered, in elevated strains of poetry, discourses in praise of God, which, by their unassisted powers, they could never have produced. In these compositions, there may be no revelation of new truth; nor is there a mere superintendence of the human faculties, as in the first case, was described; but the powers

of the mind, are, for the occasion, wonderfully elevated above their common level, so that the conceptions are more vivid and sublime, and expressed in language more appropriate and striking, than would have naturally occurred to them. By an inspiration of this sort, David wrote the Psalms, and Solomon the Proverbs, and the Speakers in the book of Job, the sublime discourses, which are there recorded. Many things of this kind, are also found in the writings of the prophets.

Here, another question of some perplexity, demands our attention. It is, whether the words of Scripture, as well as the ideas, were given by inspiration. On the one hand, it is alleged, that there is no necessity for supposing that the words used in communicating revealed truth, should be suggested by the Holy Spirit; and that the fact proves that no such inspiration existed, because the style of each of the writers is peculiar, and accords precisely with his education, disposition, and turn of mind. But on the other hand, it is argued that unless the words were inspired, as well as the ideas we cannot be certain, that the writer has, in any case, communicated accurately, the mind of the Spirits; for, men are liable to mistake, in the selection of appropriate words, as much as in any thing else; and as men often fail in conveying their own ideas, in language which correctly expresses their meaning; so, also, they might make similar mistakes in the use of language, to express ideas received by inspiration; if in this matter they were left to the guidance of their own minds. It has also been plausibly urged in favor of inspiration extending to the words, that we can scarcely conceive of a revelation of truths to the mind, without supposing, that they were clothed in language. We cannot even think distinctly, much less reason conclusively, on any subject, without the intervention of words.

Now, it is probable, that, that has occurred in this controversy, which has in many others; namely, that both parties are right; or, rather, that the truth will be fully possessed, by adopting the views entertained on both sides, and endeavoring to reconcile them. The fact is, that the same principles which apply to the ideas, may, without any alteration, be applied to the words. When the truths revealed were before unknown to the inspired person; and, especially—as seems often to have been the case with the prophets—when they did not fully comprehend the import of what was revealed, it is necessary to suppose, that the words, as well as ideas, were immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit. This was remarkably the case, when the apostles and others received the gift of tongues; which was nothing else but the inspiration of words, as they were needed, for the communication of the truths of the Gospel. But as in the narration of well-known facts, the writer did not need a continual suggestion of every idea, but only to be so superintended, as to be preserved from error; in the use of language, in recording such familiar things, there existed no necessity that every word should be inspired; but there was the same need of a directing and superintending influence, as in regard to the things themselves. Here then, we see, that the language of the sacred writers might be preserved from impropriety, and inaccuracy; and yet, all the characteristics of style, peculiar to each writer, be retained. Just as if a master should so guide the hand of a child in writing, that the pen should be actually moved by the pupil; but governed and directed by the master, so as not to transgress the limits prescribed. Or, this superintendence, both as to ideas and words, may be illustrated, by the case of a father conducting a child along a narrow path. The child walks by its own activity, and takes steps according to its ability; but the father preserves it from falling, and keeps it in the straight path. Just so it is with men, when under the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit. Their own powers of understanding, memory, and invention, are not superseded, but only directed, and preserved from inaccuracy and error; but the

man pursues his own peculiar method of thinking, reasoning, and expression. He speaks or writes in the language which he has learned, and uses that idiom and style, which have become habitual; so that inspired men, will, according to this theory, retain their peculiarity of style and expression, just as fully as if they were writing or speaking, without inspiration.

Some object to this theory of superintendence, under the impression, that it is less perfect, than if every thing was inspired by direct suggestion of the Holy Spirit. But there is really no foundation for this objection. It certainly is a matter of no consequence, how our knowledge is obtained, if only it is rendered infallibly certain. There are many things, concerning which we could not acquire a greater degree of assurance than we already possess, by inspiration of any kind: and such knowledge, acquired by the exercise of reason or intuition, is not the less valuable, because it has been obtained in a natural way. Indeed, these natural faculties, by which we are so constituted as to be capable of certain knowledge of the first principles of truth, are the gift of God, as much as any inspiration can be; and the clear intuitive knowledge, which we possess of certain truths, may be considered as a sort of permanent inspiration; for, suppose a man, by a constant plenary inspiration, to be made absolutely sure of the truth of certain propositions, so that he could not entertain any doubt respecting them, in what respect would there be any difference between this, and the intuitive perception of self-evident principles, which every rational man by nature possesses? There would, then, be nothing gained by the inspiration of direct suggestion, in regard to our knowledge of those things, of which we already possess intuitive certainty; so, it is also evident, that in relation to all our knowledge acquired by experience, or testimony, we only need such an influence, as will enable us to communicate what ought to be recorded, for the benefit of the church, and to do this without error, either as to matter or manner.

Some, who do not deny the inspiration of the sacred writers, in the general, have thought it necessary to make concessions on this subject, which are not called for, from the nature of the case, and have thus involved the cause which they defend, in real difficulties. They have granted, that while, in all matters of real importance, the penmen of the Scriptures were guided by a plenary inspiration; yet, in trivial matters, and the relation of unimportant circumstances, they were left to their own unassisted powers; and in such matters; have, therefore, fallen into mistakes, such as are incident to other honest historians, in similar circumstances. Now, no evil or inconvenience would result from this hypothesis, if the line could be definitely drawn, between the parts of the book, written by inspiration, and those in which the writers were left, to themselves. But as no human wisdom is sufficient to draw this line, the effect of this opinion is, to introduce uncertainty and doubt, in a matter, concerning which assurance is of the utmost importance. And it is in itself an improbable supposition, that the spirit of God should infallibly guide a writer in some parts of his discourse, and forsake him in other parts. If we find a witness mistaken in some particulars, it weakens our confidence in his general testimony. And could it be shown, that the evangelists had fallen into palpable mistakes, in facts of minor importance, it would be impossible to demonstrate, that they wrote any thing by inspiration. The case of Paul is often adduced to prove, that a writer, who, for the most part, was inspired, may, in particular cases, be left to follow his own opinions. [45] If the meaning here ascribed to this apostle, and which, perhaps, is the most obvious, should be admitted, yet it would not authorise the opinion which we are now opposing. It would only follow, that in these few excepted cases, Paul was not inspired; which would leave us to enjoy full confidence in what he says, in all other cases, as being spoken by divine inspiration. But it may

well be doubted, whether this was the true meaning of the apostle. It is much more probable, that all that he intended to teach, was, that our Lord Jesus Christ had delivered no opinion on the point which he was treating; but that he, by the aid of the spirit which was in him, expressed an opinion, which evidently he intended should be authoritative. And he plainly intimates, that he spoke by inspiration, when he says, "And I think also that I have the spirit of God." The import of this declaration, according to the usage of the New Testament, is, that Paul was persuaded that he was inspired, in uttering the sentiments which he did. The words "I think" should not be interpreted as signifying any doubt or uncertainty, for that is not at all the meaning of the original; but as being the expression of the conviction of his own mind. There is, therefore, no need to suppose, that Paul intended to intimate, that he wrote any thing without the aid of divine inspiration. It would be strange, indeed, that he who was inspired for all other purposes, should be left to himself in this one instance: and this is not to be reckoned among the least important matters which have fallen from his pen. The true doctrine of inspiration then, is, SUCH A DIVINE INFLUENCE ON THE MINDS OF THE SACRED WRITERS, AS RENDERED THEM EXEMPT FROM ERROR, BOTH IN REGARD TO THE IDEAS AND WORDS. This is properly called PLENARY inspiration. Nothing can be conceived more satisfactory. Certainty, infallible certainty, is the utmost that can be desired, in any narrative; and if we have this, in the sacred Scriptures, there is nothing more to be wished, in regard to this matter. That the Scriptures of the Old Testament were appealed to, and constantly spoken of; as inspired, and as free from error, is capable of the clearest proof. Christ said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, but they are they which testify of me." "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." On another occasion, he said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," where, it is evidently implied, that the Scriptures are an unerring rule. In the same chapter, it is recorded, that Jesus confounded the Pharisees by asking them, how David could, IN SPIRIT, call Christ, Lord, when he was his son. Again, Christ, after his resurrection, expresses this sentiment in the strongest terms: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you; THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they should understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, on the third day." In the preceding part of the same discourse, this idea is also clearly exhibited. "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" So, also, in the garden of Gethsemane, our Lord in addressing Peter, said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be." The same infallible authority is ascribed to the Old Testament, by Christ, in his dispute with the Jews, recorded in the tenth chapter of John. "Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came; and THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN." We have, besides, many passages, in which the evangelists refer to the Holy Scriptures, as an infallible standard of truth. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake—Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is

the arm of the Lord revealed?" "Therefore, they could not believe, because that Esaias said again—he hath blinded their eyes," &c. "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again, another Scripture saith, they shall look on him whom they have pierced." The apostles are not less explicit, in testifying to the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, than Christ and the evangelists. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, puts him in mind, "that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus;" and then adds, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Scriptures, which Timothy knew from his childhood, must have been the books of the Old Testament, for, at that time, no others had been written: but when Paul goes on to declare, that "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God," he might have included under this general expression, all the books of the New Testament, which had been published, before his second imprisonment at Rome; and this would comprehend, probably, the first three Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and all his own epistles, besides; for this seems to have been the last of Paul's writings; for in the close of this epistle, he says, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." And that, about this time, the writings of Paul were, by the Church, reckoned among the sacred Scriptures, we learn from the second epistle of Peter, which was probably written about this time, or a little before. His words are remarkable, as containing the only clear testimony, on record, of one apostle, to the writings of another. "And account," says he, "that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you. As, also, in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned and unstable pervert, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." Hence, it would appear, that Paul's epistles were now well known, and were reckoned among the other Scriptures, by the apostle Peter. Certainly, then, Paul himself might have included them, as well as the other published books of the New Testament, under the phrase "all Scripture;" and if so, this passage will contain a strong testimony to the inspiration of the whole of the Old Testament, and a large part of the New Testament. And admitting the facts, of Paul's miraculous conversion, divine mission as an apostle, and that he was richly endowed with the gifts of tongues, of healing, of prophecy, &c., we cannot deny that he is a witness, in this case, on whom we may repose the most perfect confidence. The apostle Peter has also given the most unequivocal testimony, to the inspiration of the prophets who penned the Old Testament. He had been speaking concerning the wonderful scene of which he was a witness, on the mount of transfiguration, whereupon, he goes on to say, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." There is another testimony of this apostle, in his first epistle; in which he clearly speaks of the inspiration of the prophets. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it certified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that

have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” That the Scriptures of the Old Testament were continually recognized by the apostles, as given by inspiration of God, is so evident from every mention of them, that it may seem to be a waste of time, to adduce the testimonies; but the subject is exceedingly important, and we cannot too frequently have these evidences set before our eyes. In the epistle to the Hebrews, there are many clear testimonies, some of which I will bring forward. In the very first sentence, it is said, “God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son.” Whatever is spoken by the prophets is represented throughout this book, as spoken by God himself. Thus, in the same chapter, it is declared, “And when he bringeth the first begotten into the world, HE saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And to the angels, HE saith, who maketh his angels spirits—but to the Son, HE saith, thy throne O God is for ever and ever.” Now, all these passages, where God is said to speak, are quotations from the Psalms. Certainly then, we may conclude, that whatever is spoken in this book of Psalms, is from the inspiration of God. The same is the fact, in the next chapter, where a large part of the eighth Psalm is quoted, and applied to Christ. So, also, the Captain of our Salvation is represented as saying certain things, which are found written in the Old Testament. “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren”—“And again, I will put my trust in him.” And in the third chapter of this epistle, we have a quotation from the Psalms in the following remarkable words, “Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” And in the fourth chapter, the same style is used as before.” For HE spake in a certain place of the seventh day, in this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” And in the fifth. “But HE said unto him, thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, thou art a priest, forever after the order of Melchisedek.” And God is represented as the speaker; not only in what is written in the Psalms, but in the prophets also. Thus, in the eighth chapter, we have a long quotation from Jeremiah, which is declared to be, the word of the Lord. “Behold the days come saith the Lord,” &c. One more testimony from this book shall suffice. In the tenth chapter, it is said, “Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness unto us; for after that he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord.”

Nothing can be more evident then, than that as the writers of the Old Testament declared themselves to speak what they received from the Lord, so the whole of the Scriptures are continually referred to, and recognized, as given by inspiration; insomuch, that it would be difficult to find a single passage, in which these Scriptures are mentioned, in which this idea is not expressed, or clearly implied. And it will be shown, hereafter, that the writers of the New Testament claim inspiration for themselves. If, as has been shown, the Old Testament was written by inspiration, and if the New Testament contains a revelation from God, not less important; and which, in fact, is the completion of the Old, can we believe, that while prophets were inspired to write the former, the latter was left to be marred and obscured, by the weaknesses of uninspired men? To accomplish the purpose intended by revelation, it seems necessary, that the writers who communicate it to posterity, should be guided by inspiration. The end of revelation is, to convey to men, a certain knowledge of truth, to guide their faith and practice. But if the book which contains such a revelation, is composed by erring, fallible men, we never can be sure, in any particular case, that we are in possession of the truth revealed. The men may be honest and faithful, but we know that all men are liable to errors and mistakes; and all men are more or less under the influence of prejudices and prepossessions. It is evident, therefore, that the purpose of giving a

revelation, would be, in a great measure defeated, unless inspired men were employed to make the record by which it is to be transmitted to the various nations of the earth, and to posterity.

Again, when we carefully consider the subject matter of the books of the New Testament, we cannot repose implicit confidence in what is taught, unless we have evidence that the pens of the writers were under the guidance of inspiration. To record the discourses which a man hears, and transactions which he sees, seems, at first sight, to require nothing more than veracity and integrity, in the historian. This might, to a certain extent, be admitted, if the witness instantly noted down what he heard, or saw; but who can believe, that after the lapse of eight, fifteen, or fifty years, the evangelists would be able to record, with perfect accuracy, long discourses of their Master; and, to relate correctly, all the circumstances of the miracles, of which they have given an account? It may be said, indeed, that they could give, substantially, the facts of which they were witnesses; but this is far from being satisfactory. Such a record would lose a portion of that reverence which it ought to receive, to give it a commanding authority over the conscience, and to be a solid foundation for unshaken confidence. And in regard to mysterious and sublime doctrines, which the apostles teach in their epistles, if once we admit the idea, that they were fallible men, we shall continually be liable to doubt;—we shall be afraid that they have misapprehended, or forgotten, what they had heard: or, that under the bias of prejudice or inclination, they may have been led, insensibly, to give a distorted view of the truths which they inculcate. But we are not left to conclude, from the necessity of the case merely, that the writers of the New Testament were inspired, by the Holy Ghost. We have clear and abundant proof, that our blessed Lord promised infallible guidance to his disciples, whom he chose to be his witnesses to the world; and to whom he committed the propagation of his religion, through all nations, and all ages, “And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” And that the Holy Spirit here promised, was to guide the apostles in delivering their testimony, may be inferred from what is said in the xv. chapter. “But when the COMFORTER is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” The promise of plenary inspiration is, however, more explicitly given, in the xvi. chapter of John. “Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.” Christ also promised the inspiration of immediate suggestion to his disciples, when called to answer before kings and rulers, and commanded them not to premeditate what they should say, for it would be given to them at the moment what they ought to say, “For,” said he, “It is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost who speaketh in you.” Now we may argue, with irresistible force, if plenary inspiration was granted to the apostles to enable them to make a proper defence, when arraigned at a human tribunal, surely they would not be abandoned to their own weakness, when preparing a record of Christ’s words and actions, which was, through all ages, to be the guide of his church? If the apostles were ever inspired, we may be sure that it was, when directed to finish and record the testimony of God. The very idea, that every book of the Old Testament was given by inspiration, but that the whole of the New was composed without this aid, is revolting to the reason of man. And this will appear the

more unreasonable, when we consider, that the light of the new dispensation is seven-fold clearer than that of the Old. The very forerunner of Christ, was superior to all the prophets that preceded him: but the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. Then, certainly, if all the prophets only spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the apostles, who were the chosen witnesses of Christ, and chief officers of his kingdom, were not left without this infallible guidance, when engaged in performing the most important part of the responsible duty assigned them; when executing that part of their commission, which was most effectual in extending and perpetuating his spiritual kingdom? Accordingly, the apostles claim to be inspired men; and speak with an authority which would be arrogant, if they had not written under an infallible guidance. They do not merely express their own private opinions, and endeavor to support them by argument; but they speak as men assured of the truth of what they deliver; and decide with authority and without hesitation, questions, which none but men inspired by the Holy Spirit could undertake thus positively to determine, without, exposing themselves to the charge of dogmatism and self-sufficiency.

Besides, some parts of the New Testament—like much of the old—are prophetic; and if true, could be written in no other way, than by inspiration. The Apocalypse, or Revelation given to John, is either a mere enthusiastic fable, or, it was written by inspiration; and such is the majesty of the ideas here presented, and the awful sublimity of the style, that even Dr. Priestly, was constrained to acknowledge, that it bore on its face, marks of a superhuman origin. And if we had time to compare the prophetic representations of this singular book with authentic history, there would arise an evidence of its inspiration, which could not be easily contradicted. Such men as, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Clarke, bishop Hurd, bishop Newton, and a multitude of others, have seen in this book, the most convincing proof of divine inspiration. The same may be said of all the prophecies of the Old and New Testament. if there is any truth, whatever, in them, they must be inspired; for, none but inspired men can foretell future, contingent events. Indeed, in all the cases, where Moses and others declare, that God spoke to them, and communicated instructions, or laws, they must be considered as divinely directed, unless we deny their veracity. But we are now reasoning on the hypothesis, that the books are authentic, and written by men of truth and honesty. The style of the evangelists has often been adduced as an evidence of their inspiration. Not that they write with an elegance and sublimity which cannot be imitated; but because they write as persons divested of the feelings which commonly belong to men. They write with an unaffected simplicity, and with an impartial, dispassionate regard to truth, that has no parallel, and has never been successfully imitated. How could illiterate men produce such works as the Gospels, without inspiration? Select a thousand sensible men, but unaccustomed to composition, and set them to write a simple history of the most remarkable transactions with which they have been conversant, and there will not be in any one of them, an approximation to the characteristic manner of the evangelists. Others, and men possessed of more learning than the apostles, have undertaken, without inspiration, to write Gospels, as if composed by some one or other of these holy men; but you cannot place the evidence of the inspiration of the genuine Gospels, in a stronger light, than by contrasting them with any, or all the apocryphal writings, under the names of the apostles. But we are in danger here of repeating what has already been said, under the head of the Internal Evidences of Christianity. The truth is, that the whole of the arguments from this source, for divine revelation, are directly in point, to prove the doctrine of inspiration; and, therefore, instead of going over the ground a second time, I would refer to what has been said, in the preceding chapter.

Miracles, also, furnish the most conclusive proof of inspiration, where it can be ascertained, that the writer of any book of Scripture possessed the power of performing such works; for, the very end for which miracles were exhibited, was to prove that the person speaking was sent from God, to deliver some message. As Nicodemus properly said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles which thou doest, unless God be with him." Well, if miracles are sufficient to prove the truth of an oral communication, will they not also be equally conclusive, in favor of a written declaration? If there be any difference, it is in favor of the latter, because it is much more important, that a written discourse, intended for the instruction of all ages, should be well attested, than a discourse from the lips, which is heard by few, and can never be recovered after it has been spoken. In the whole of what has been said on the subject of inspiration, the truth of the facts recorded in the New Testament has been taken for granted; and, also, that the Scriptures contain a divine revelation. We are not arguing with infidels, but with those, who, while they acknowledge the divine origin of the Christian religion, doubt, or deny, that the persons who wrote the books of the Old and New Testament, were guided by a plenary inspiration. Now, as these persons admit that the apostles and evangelists were men of veracity and integrity, their testimony, on this subject, ought to be decisive. If they claim inspiration, we cannot deny it to them, without invalidating all the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity. Why were they endowed with the power of working miracles, but that full credence might be given to what they testified; and when they declare, that they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and that what they delivered, was not the word of men but the word of God, received by divine revelation, do not these miraculous powers which they possessed, as fully confirm what they wrote, as what they spoke?

Having before shown, that the apostles furnish ample testimony to the inspiration of the Old Testament, we shall now adduce a few texts to prove, that they claimed inspiration for themselves. Their message is every where called THE WORD OF GOD; and Paul declares, that what he preached, he received not from man, but "from the revelation of Jesus Christ." that the things which he wrote, were "The commandments of the Lord;" and that the things which he and his brethren taught, "God had revealed them to them by his Spirit." He, therefore, declared, "He who despiseth the things which he taught, despised not men but God." Peter ranks "the commandments delivered by the apostles, with the words of the Holy Prophets; and as has been before remarked, reckons the epistles of Paul, with the other Scriptures." John says, "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." The only thing wanting to complete the evidence of the inspiration of the New Testament, and consequently that of the Old, is to show, that these writings were received unanimously by the Christian Church, as inspired writings. But although, there exists abundant evidence of this fact, yet to pursue it would lead, us too much into detail, and would not comport with the studied brevity of this work. And I am the less inclined to enter on the labor of collecting this testimony, here, because I have attempted this in another work. I may say, however, that in the early ages of the Church, no Christian ever called in question the inspiration of the sacred volume; but all held this as a fundamental point, in their religion. It was left for those, who chose to style themselves rationalists, in modern times, to admit the authenticity of the facts recorded in the Bible; while they utterly deny the plenary inspiration of the writers. But this is ground on which no consistent reasoner can long stand. The truth is, if the miracles and prophecies of the Scriptures be acknowledged, and the divine origin of Christianity be admitted,

the inspiration of the penmen of these books must follow as a corollary. It cannot be denied without the greatest inconsistency. And, on the other hand, if inspiration be denied, the authenticity of the miracles and prophecies will soon be abandoned. The course of theological opinion among the neologists of Germany, for a number of years past, furnishes a striking illustration of the truth of the aforesaid observations. For a while, the assault, in that country, was merely upon the doctrine of inspiration; but no sooner was that ground conceded, than the critics directed their artillery against the authenticity of the miraculous facts and prophecies.

There is no end to the objections which may be started against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, just as is the fact in regard to the visible universe, as the work of God; and it cannot be denied, that there is a striking analogy between the mode of reasoning pursued by atheists and deists. But the foundation of all their arguments is human ignorance and they cannot, form the conception of a creation, by a Being of almighty power and infinite wisdom, and of a supernatural revelation from such a being, which would not be liable to as great, and much greater objections, than they are able to bring forward against his works and word, as they do actually exist. If such men could be induced, in a calm and unprejudiced manner, to examine this subject, I would recommend to them a careful perusal of Butler's Analogy, between Natural and Revealed Religion; and to the deist, I would especially recommend the seventh chapter, of the second Part, where the author, in a manner peculiar to himself, makes first, some observations ON THE PARTICULAR EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, and then, in the close, exhibits a view of the evidence arising from a general survey of the contents of the Bible. The argument, as presented in this last form, is so original and striking, that I would insert it in this place, were I not afraid of swelling this volume to an inconvenient size. The whole of the second book of the Analogy may be considered as the most satisfactory method of meeting the popular objections to divine revelation, which was ever adopted. And in regard to particular objections, arising from apparent discrepancies, from extraordinary facts, and from mysterious doctrines, found in the sacred volume, it will be sufficient to refer the inquisitive reader, to the first volume of Horne's Introduction, and to Dr. Dick's deservedly popular work, on Inspiration; and also, to learned commentators, some of whom have taken much pains to reconcile seeming contradictions, and to elucidate obscure passages, by an application of the rules of sacred criticism. I would only further remark, in relation to the usual objections to the inspiration of the Scriptures, that they militate as fully against the authenticity of the facts, as against, the inspiration of the writers; and, therefore, do not require to be considered and obviated under this head. A summary of the whole evidence for the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, is as follows:—All the Internal Evidences of Christianity, whether arising from the peculiar excellence of the matter, or the simplicity and sublimity of the style—from the perfection of the character ascribed to Jesus Christ—from the continual recognition of the over-ruling Providence of God—from the pure and elevated spirit of devotion which breathes through the sacred pages—from the penetrating and transforming efficacy of the Holy Scriptures—and from, their adaptation to the constitution of the human mind, and to the existing relations among men;—go to prove, that they were written under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Again, every prophecy which has been fulfilled, furnishes undoubted and independent evidence of the inspiration of that particular part of the Scriptures; and all the laws which proceeded from the mouth of Jehovah, must be considered as infallible precepts, unless we should call in question the

whole truth of the narrative. The writers, for the most part, were endued with the power of working miracles. These facts, it is admitted, prove that God spake by them; and if the: prophets and apostles were inspired in the discourses, which they delivered, then a fortiori, they must have been inspired in preparing those writings which were intended to guide the faith and practice of believers, through all ages.

Moreover, the sacred writers, generally lay claim to inspiration. They speak authoritatively in the name of the Lord. They call their message, the WORD OF GOD and Christ has set his seal to the plenary inspiration of all the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The apostles and evangelists, in the most explicit manner; declare the same truth.

Besides, Christ promised plenary inspiration to his disciples; and they professed to be under the guidance of the Spirit, in what they wrote.

And, finally, while some of the apostles were living, their writings were classed with the divine Scriptures; and were universally received as inspired, and as the infallible word of God, by the whole primitive Church.

We cannot but conclude, therefore, that all the books of the Old and New Testament, were written by the inspiration of God; and contain an infallible rule, to guide the faith and practice of the church, to the end of the world.

_____ [45] See 1 Corinthians 7:12-40.

Notes and Indexes

NOTES.

NOTE A. AN APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VI. On the Proof of Miracles by Testimony. IN a recent popular, but anonymous publication, entitled, *Essays on the Pursuit of Truth, on the Progress of Knowledge, and the Fundamental Principles of all Evidence and Expectation, By the Author of Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions,* the doctrine of me, on the subject of testimony, has been exhibited in a...a somewhat new and imposing, And as this writer has ired considerable celebrity in England, and his Essays have been republished in Philadelphia, and recommended strongly to the public, upon the authority of the Westminster Review, it seems necessary to guard the public against the insidious design of these Essays; which we have reason to think, was not known to those concerned in the republication of the work in this country. Indeed, the ingenious author, never brings the subject of divine revelation directly into view, in all that he has written; and I believe, the word “miracles” does not occur in either of the volumes which he has published nevertheless, it is a fact, that in the last of his essays, he has revived, in substance, the famous argument of Hume, on miracles; and has, with even more concealed istry; than that celebrated infidel employed, endeavored to e that no testimony, however strong, is sufficient to establish fact which involves a deviation from the regular course of the laws of Nature. But that I may not be suspected of misrepresenting the sentiments of this discriminating and popular writer, I will here insert an extract, from the Essay before-mentioned, which contains the substance of the whole argument.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“For let us put the strongest case imaginable; let us suppose that the circumstance of the ice remaining unmelted, rests on the concurrent testimony of a great number of people, people too of reputation, science, and perspicacity, who had no motive for falsehood, who had discernment to perceive and honesty to tell the real truth, and whose interests would essentially suffer from any departure from veracity. Under such circumstances false testimony it may be alleged is impossible.

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

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

Now it will abbreviate the answer to this specious argument, to acknowledge, that the general principle which this author takes so much pains to establish, and on which he builds his reasoning, is freely admitted, to be not only correct, but self-evident. That the same causes uniformly produce the same effects, is a truth so obvious, and so generally admitted, that it was unnecessary for the ingenious author of this essay, to spend so much time in rendering it evident. And I am willing to admit its certainty to be as undoubted in moral, as in physical subjects. But while I freely admit, that the same causes will uniformly be followed by the same effects, I do by no means accede to the proposition, which our author seems to consider as of the same import; namely, that the course of nature, or the laws of nature, never have been interrupted, or suspended; and the whole appearance of force and plausibility which the argument of this writer possesses, arises from the artful confounding of these distinct propositions. I agree, that no testimony can be strong enough to induce a rational man to believe that the same causes will not be attended with the same effects: for this would be to assent to an evident absurdity. But it is an entirely different thing to believe, that the laws of nature have sometimes been suspended; for in this case, we suppose, that an extraordinary cause has intervened. To believe, that a divine power has interposed to change the course of nature, is surely not the same thing, as to believe that the same cause which commonly produced one effect, is now attended by another entirely different. The natural causes, it is true, remain the same, but the general proposition slated above, is not true, if confined only to these. If there exist supernatural causes, or a power superior to the laws of nature,—and this our author does not profess to deny—then the laws of nature, or mere natural causes may remain the same; and yet, by the operation of these supernatural causes, effects entirely diverse from those that would be the sequence of natural causes, may take place, And the author himself seems in one place to, have been aware of this distinction, and to admonish the reader of its existence; and yet, through the whole of the argument he proceeds, as if the two propositions were identical. fie

ought, however, to have recollected, that while no man in his senses disbelieves the first proposition, much the greater number of men have believed, that in some cases the laws of nature have been suspended; not, that they thought that the same causes did not, in these instances, produce the same effects, but that other causes of greater potency than natural causes, were put into operation. When our author, therefore, infers from the uniformity of causation, that no testimony is sufficient to be the foundation of a rational belief, that there has been a deviation from the common course of nature, he applies a correct principle to a case to which it evidently does not belong. Because, the same cause must produce the same effects, does it follow, that when another and superior cause operates, the same effects must be produced? This would be in direct repugnance to his own maxim. Then, before this principle of the uniformity of causes and effects can be applied, it must be demonstrated, that in the case under consideration, no other causes operate, but such as are usual and natural, and whenever he shall be able to establish this, there will be no further contest respecting the matter. That I do not misrepresent the argument of the author, will appear satisfactorily, by considering the cases which he has adduced. "Suppose, for instance," says he, "any person to affirm, that he had exposed a cubic Inch of ice to a temperature of 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, and that at the expiration of an hour, it had retained its solidity. Here is a sequence of events asserted, which is entirely at variance with the admitted course of nature; and the slightest reflection is sufficient to show, that to believe the assertion, would involve a logical absurdity. The intrinsic discrepancy of the facts could never be overcome by any possible proofs of the truth of testimony." In another page, he says, "If a number of Men were to swear, that they had seen the mercury of the barometer remain at the height of thirty inches, when placed in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, their testimony would be instantly rejected. The universal conclusion would be, that such an event was impossible." What is here so confidently asserted, would only be true upon the supposition, that no causes but such as were natural operated in the cases adduced; but on the hypothesis of the operation of a supernatural cause, there would be neither absurdity nor impossibility in either of the facts. What! could not He, who established these laws, and gave to heat and air, respectively, their peculiar powers and qualities, suspend their usual operation? Could not He, cause the ice to remain unmelted in any temperature; and the mercury to remain suspended, without the pressure of the atmosphere? But the sophistical nature of the argument used, is most evident. The principle is, that similar causes must have similar effects. Very good—what then? Why, if ice remain unmelted at 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, then this principle would be violated. I answer, not at all, provided another cause is in operation, of such potency as to counteract the usual effects of caloric; or to counteract the gravity of the quicksilver, in vacuo. And it will not do to allege, that God, who established these laws, will not contravene them, on any occasion; for this would be an entire change of the ground of the argument, and a relinquishment of the principle on which the reasoning of our author is founded. Besides, it would be a mere begging the question in dispute.

Now, in both the cases adduced by this writer, to illustrate and confirm his argument, on which he pronounces so confidently, that the judgment of men would universally reject any testimony, I beg leave to be of a different opinion, and will appeal to the common sense of all reflecting men, whether, on the supposition, that a dozen men of perspicacity and undoubted integrity, should solemnly affirm that they had seen a cubic inch of ice remain an hour unmelted at 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, whether they could refuse their assent? even if they knew of no good reason why the laws of nature should be suspended. But if they knew that an important purpose in the divine

government could be answered by such a miracle, much less testimony would be sufficient to produce unwavering conviction of the truth of the extraordinary fact. And while they assent to such facts, on sufficient testimony; they are guilty of no absurdity, and violate no rule of common sense. It is true, that the credibility of the event reported, may be reduced to this question—whether is it more probable, that the laws of nature should, for a good end, be suspended, or that twelve men of tried veracity, should agree to assert a falsehood, without any motive to induce them to do so? And here our ingenious author revives the metaphysical balance or Mr. Hume; and after admitting that the evidence from testimony may be so strong that nothing is wanting to give it force, yet the maxim, that the same causes must have the same effects, is also a truth so certain, that no evidence can countervail it. We have, therefore, according to this statement, the equipoise of evidence, which we have already considered, in Mr. Hume's argument. The rational mind, in such circumstance, must remain neutral; it can neither believe nor disbelieve; for the evidence for the one exactly counterbalances that for the other. But after stating this hypothesis, our author finds that the evidence from testimony never can be so convincing, as that which we have for the uniformity of causation. His words are—"If the rejection and the admission of the testimony equally implied a deviation from the uniform sequence of causes and effects, there could be no reason for rejecting or admitting it."—"But the rejection of the testimony is not in this predicament. The causes of testimony, or in other words, those considerations which operate on the minds of the witness, cannot always be ascertained; and as we are uncertain as to the causes in operation, we cannot be certain of the effects, we cannot be sure that the circumstances of the witness are such as have given rise to true testimony, and consequently we cannot be sure that the testimony is true." On this whole subject I have several remarks to make.—First, this method of destroying the equipoise of evidence granted by Mr. Hume, and conceded by himself, is not altogether fair; because it does not admit what is obviously true, that in regard to some kinds of testimony, the evidence is so certain, that we might as soon doubt of our own existence as of the truth of the facts attested. Now, this being the case, there was no propriety in representing all testimony as being involved in some degree of uncertainty.

Again, what is here said of testimony will apply just as fully to what we ourselves witness, and for the truth of which we have the testimony of our own senses. I mean, that if the argument of our author is at all valid, it will prove, that if we saw the ice remain unmelted in the heat, and beheld it ever so often; and found that thousands around us received the same impression, we must not credit our own senses, nor believe what we saw with our own eyes; because, however certain this kind of evidence may be, it cannot be more certain, than the principle, that the same causes will uniformly produce the same effects. Therefore, although we should, under all manner of circumstances, see such events, they could not be believed; for to believe them would be a logical absurdity. And thus, would these men, by their metaphysics, reason us out of the evidence of our very eye-sight. I know, indeed, that neither Hume, nor the author whose reasoning, we are now considering, have pushed the argument to this its just consequence; but I would defy any man to show, that it is not as applicable to the evidence of the senses as to that derived from testimony. Now, as the kind of evidence which will invariably command assent, is not learned by metaphysical reasoning, but by experience, I would leave the matter to be decided by every man of impartial judgment, for himself. Every man knows, whether or not, he would believe his own eyes, if he should see ice remain unmelted in 200 degrees of temperature, according to Fahrenheit: or would he say, it seems to be so, but it cannot be true, because it contradicts a

self-evident principle, “that the same causes must always be followed by the same effects.” To which a man of plain, unsophisticated common sense would reply, “I must believe my own senses; if doing so contradicts a thousand abstract principles, I care not—‘seeing is believing.’” And the same may be said in regard to testimony. Suppose a thousand persons entirely disinterested to aver, that they had seen ice remain unmelted in a very high temperature, we could not but believe them, account for the fact as we might. But we have already proved, that believing in such an event violates no maxim, but only supposes that some extraordinary power or cause is in operation; and when it is understood, that this deviation from the laws of nature is intended to confirm the declarations of some person who claims to be a messenger of God, there is not only no absurdity in the thing; but all presumption against the probability of such supernatural interposition is removed, as has been shown in the argument on that subject.

It might also be demonstrated, that upon the principles of this author, not only would it be absurd, upon any evidence, to believe in a fact which involved a real deviation from the laws of nature, but in any one which was entirely different from all our own experience of the laws of nature. For if it would be absurd to believe, on the testimony of thousands of unconnected witnesses that ice did not melt in a certain case when placed in the fire; then it was altogether rational for the king of Siam, and all others in similar circumstances, to disbelieve the fact, that water had been known to become as hard as a stone so that men and animals could walk upon it. Persons so situated never could know that. such an effect existed but by testimony; yet as this testimony contradicted all their own experience about the laws of nature, in relation to water, they ought rather to reject the testimony, however strong, than to credit a fact which seemed to involve a deviation from “the sequence of causes and effects,” to use the language of this author. And thus we should be reduced to the necessity of rejecting all facts not consonant to our own personal experience; for to receive them on the ground of testimony, would be to violate the principle, that causation is uniform. But the zeal of our author to establish his favorite point, has led him, not only to assert, that a deviation from the regular succession of the laws of nature was incredible, on the ground of testimony, but that it is, in the nature of things. impossible. In this assertion, he certainly may lay claim to originality; for I believe no one before him, not even Hume, has gone so far, in bold affirmation. His words are—“An event is impossible which contradicts our experience, or which implies that the same causes have produced different effects, or the same effects been preceded by different causes. Thus, when we pronounce that it was impossible for a piece of ice to remain in the midst of burning coals without being dissolved,. our conclusion involves a complete knowledge of this particular effect of fire on ice.” And he is so confident that this is the true import of the word impossible, that he says, “If I am not greatly deceived, the acutest reasoner, the closest thinker, the most subtle analyser of words, will find himself unable to produce any other meaning of the term, impossible, than that which is here assigned to it.” But he seems to have felt that he had gone too far in this dogmatical, and I must say, irrational assertion; for in a note he gives himself, another, and one of the true meanings of the word, impossible. But as confident assertion, accompanied by no proof nor reason, is sufficiently answered by a confident denial, I would take the liberty of saying, therefore, that if I am not greatly mistaken, no accurate philologist will admit, that this is the true meaning of the word, impossible. And certainly, men of plain common sense, never can be persuaded, that it is impossible for the succession of events according to the laws of nature, to be changed. It is true, when we confine our ideas to the mere powers and qualities of nature, we do assert that their effects will be uniform, and that it is impossible that the same

causes should produce different effects; but when we extend our views to the Great FIRST CAUSE, it is not only absurd, but impious, to assert, that he cannot suspend or alter the laws of nature. Nothing is impossible to him which does not imply a contradiction, or is not repugnant to his attributes. The conclusion which is rational on this subject, is, that all things are possible to God, and whatever is possible may be believed on sufficient testimony; which testimony, however, must be strong, in proportion to the improbability of the event to be confirmed.

NOTE B.

Mohammed asserted, that while he was in his bed one night, the Angel Gabriel knocked at his door, and that when he went out, he saw him with seventy pair of expanded wings, whiter than snow, and clearer than chrystal. The angel informed him that he had come to conduct him to heaven; and directed him to mount an animal, which stood ready at the door, and which was between the nature of an ass and a mule. They name of this beast was Alborak, in color whiter than milk, and swift as lightning. But when the prophet went to mount, the animal proved refractory, and he could not seat himself upon its back, until he promised it a place in Paradise. The journey from Mecca to Jerusalem was performed in the twinkling of an eye. When he arrived at the latter place, the departed prophets and saints came forth to meet him, and saluted him. Here, he found a ladder of light, and tying Alborak to a rock, he followed Gabriel on the ladder, until they arrived at the first heaven, where admittance was readily granted by the porter, when he was told by Gabriel, that the person who accompanied him, was Mohammed, the prophet of God. Here, he met an old decrepit man, who it seems was no other than our father Adam; and who greatly rejoiced at having so distinguished a son. He saw also innumerable angels, in the shape of birds, beasts, and men. This heaven was made of pure silver, and he saw the stars suspended from it, by chains of gold. In like manner, he ascended to the second heaven, a distance of five hundred years journey, which was of pure gold, and contained twice as many angels as the former. Here, he met Noah. Thence he proceeded to the third, which was made of precious stones, where he met Abraham. The fourth was all of emerald, where he met Joseph, the son of Jacob. In the fifth, which was of adamant, he met Moses. In the sixth, which was of carbuncle, he saw John the Baptist. In the seventh which was made of divine light, he saw Jesus Christ, and commended himself to his prayers. All the persons he had seen before, however, begged an interest in his prayers. Here Gabriel informed him, that he could go no further, and he proceeded alone, through snow and water, until he came near the throne of God, when he heard a voice, saying, "O Mohammed, salute thy Creator!" He was not permitted to come near the throne of the Almighty, on the right side of which he saw inscribed the sentence, there is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet; which is the fundamental article of the Mohammedan creed.

After being permitted to hold a long conversation with the Creator, he returned as he came, and found Alborak ready to convey him home, on whose back he swiftly glided again to Mecca. All this happened in the space of the tenth part of a night. In the third heaven, he says, he saw an angel of so great a size, that the distance between his eyes, was of seventy thousand days journey. This was the angel of death, who has a large table before him on which he is ever writing and blotting out; whenever a name is blotted, the person immediately dies. He speaks also of another angel, in the sixth heaven; which had seventy thousand heads and as many tongues.

NOTE C. The Abbe Paris was the oldest son of a counsellor of Paris, but being much inclined to a life of devotion, he relinquished his patrimony to his younger brother, and retired to an obscure part of Paris, where he spent his life in severe penance, and in charitable exertions, for the relief of the distressed poor, He was buried in the ground of the church of St. Medard, near the wall, where his brother erected a tomb-stone over the grave. To this spot many poor people, who knew his manner of life, came to perform their devotions, as much, probably out of feelings of gratitude, as any thing else. Some among the devotees who attended at this place, professed that they experienced a salutary change in their ailments. This being noised abroad, as the Abbe had been a jealous Jansenist, all who were of this party encouraged the idea of miracles having been performed; and multitudes who were indisposed, were induced to go to the tomb of the saint; and some, as they confessed before a competent tribunal, were persuaded to feign diseases which they never had. It is a fact, however, that the greater part received no benefit, and that more diseases were produced than were cured; for, soon, many of the worshippers were seized with convulsions, from which proceeded the sect of Convulsionists, which attracted attention for many years. It was soon found expedient to close up the tomb; but cures were still said to be performed by the saint, on persons in distant places. The Jesuits exerted themselves to discredit the whole business, and the Archbishop of Paris had a judicial investigation made of a number of the most remarkable cases, the results of which were various, and often ludicrous. A young woman, said to have been cured at the tomb of blindness and lameness, was proved to have been neither blind nor lame. A man with diseased eyes was relieved, but it appeared that he was then using powerful medicine, and that after all, his eyes were not entirely healed. A certain Abbe who had the misfortune to have one of his legs shorter than the other, was persuaded that he experienced a sensible elongation of the defective limb, but on measurement no increase could be discovered. A woman in the same situation danced on the tomb daily, to obtain an elongation of a defective limb, and was persuaded that she received benefit; but it was ascertained, that she would have to dance there fifty-four years, before the cure would be effected, at the rate at which it was proceeding; but for the unfortunate Abbe, seventy-two years would have, been requisite. In short, the whole number of cures, after examination, was reduced to eight or nine, all of which can be easily accounted for, on natural principles; and in several of these instances, the cures were not perfect.

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· Cujus impugnatio testimonium veritatis est. Tanta enim dictorum fides fuit, ut propheta incredulis hominibus non videatur futura dixisse, sed narrasse, præterita.: [45]1 * a fortiori: [46]1 * divinitus impeditus: [47]1 * in vacuo: [48]1 * petitio principii: [49]1

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Handbook of Christian Ethics

AlexanderA - Christianity and Ethics: A Handbook of Christian Ethics (1914) CHRISTIANITY AND ETHICS A Handbook of Christian Ethics by ARCHIBALD B. D. ALEXANDER, M.A., D.D.

Author of 'A Short History of Philosophy,' 'The Ethics of St. Paul,' etc. London: Duckworth & Colossians 3:1-25 Henrietta St., Covent Garden 1914 All rights reserved {v}

PREFACE The object of this volume is to present a brief but comprehensive view of the Christian conception of the moral life. In order to conform with the requirements of the series to which the volume belongs, the writer has found the task of compression one of almost insurmountable difficulty; and some topics, only less important than those dealt with, have been necessarily omitted. The book claims to be, as its title indicates, simply a handbook or introduction to Christian Ethics. It deals with principles rather than details, and suggests lines of thought instead of attempting an exhaustive treatment of the subject. At the same time, in the author's opinion, no really vital question has been overlooked. The treatise is intended primarily for students, but it is hoped that it may prove serviceable to those who desire a succinct account of the moral and social problems of the present day. A fairly full bibliography has been added, which, along with the references to authorities in the body of the work, may be helpful to those who wish to prosecute the study. For the convenience of readers the book has been divided into four sections, entitled, Postulates, Personality, Character, and Conduct; and a detailed synopsis of contents has been supplied. To the Rev. W. R. Thomson, B.D. of Bellshill, Scotland, who read the chapters in type, and generally put at his disposal much valuable suggestion, the author would record his most sincere thanks.

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INTRODUCTION A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

If, as Matthew Arnold says, conduct is three-fourths of life, then a careful inquiry into the laws of conduct is indispensable to the proper interpretation of the meaning and purpose of life. Conduct of itself, however, is merely the outward expression of character; and character again has its roots in personality; so that if we are to form a just conception of life we have to examine the forces which shape human personality and raise it to its highest power and efficiency. In estimating the value of man all the facts of consciousness and experience must be considered. Hence no adequate account of the end of life can be given without regard to that which, if it is true, must be the most stupendous fact of history--the fact of Christ.

If the Christian is a man to whom no incident of experience is secular and no duty insignificant, because all things belong to God and all life is dominated by the spirit of Christ, then Christian Ethics must be the application of Christianity to conduct; and its theme must be the systematic study of the ideals and forces which are alone adequate to shape character and fit man for the highest conceivable destiny--fellowship with, and likeness to, the Divine Being in whose image he has been made. This, of course, may be said to be the aim of all theology. The theologian must not be content to discuss merely speculative problems about God and man. He must seek above all things to bring the truths of revelation to bear upon human practice. All knowledge has its practical implicate. The dogma which cannot be translated into duty is apt to be a vague abstraction. In all ages there has been a tendency to separate truth and duty. But knowledge has two sides; it is at once a revelation and a challenge. There is no truth which has not its corresponding obligation, and no obligation which has not its corresponding truth. And not until every truth is rounded into its duty, and every duty is referred back into its truth shall we attain to that clearness of vision and consistency of moral life, to promote which is the primary task of Christian Ethics.

It is this practical element which gives to the study of morals its justification and makes it specially important for the Christian teacher. In this sense Ethics is really the crown of theology and ought to be the end of all previous study. As a separate branch of study Christian Ethics dates only from the Reformation. It was natural, and perhaps inevitable that the first efforts of the Church should be occupied with the formation and elaboration of dogma. With a few notable exceptions, among whom may be mentioned Basil, Clement, Alquin and Thomas Aquinas, the Church fathers and schoolmen paid but scanty attention to the ethical side of religion. It was only after the Reformation that theology, Roman and Protestant alike, was divided into different branches. The Roman Catholic name for what we style Ethics is 'moral philosophy,' which, however, consists mainly of directions for father confessors in their dealing with perplexed souls. Christian Ethics appears for the first time as the name of a treatise by a French theologian of the Calvinistic persuasion--Danaeus, whose work, however, is confined to an exposition of the Decalogue. The first recorded work of the Lutheran church is the *Theologia Moralis*, written in 1634, by George Calixtus. But the modern study of the subject really dates from Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who divides theology into two sections, Dogmatics and Ethics, giving to the latter an independent treatment. Since his time Ethics has been regarded as a separate discipline, and within the last few decades increasing attention has been devoted to it. This strong ethical tendency is one of the most noticeable features of the present age. Everywhere to-day the personal human interest is in evidence. We see it in the literature of the age and especially in the best poetry, beginning already with Coleridge and Wordsworth, and continued in Tennyson and Browning. It is the inner life of

man as depicted to us by these master singers, the story of the soul, even more than the delineation of nature which appeals to man's deepest experience and evokes his finest response. We see it in the art of our times, which, not content to be a mere expression of sensuous beauty or lifeless nature, seeks to be instinct with human sympathy and to become the vehicle of the ideas and aims of man. We see it in modern fiction, which is no longer the narration of a simple tale, but the subtle analysis of character, and the intricate study of the passions and ambitions of common life. History to-day is not concerned so much with recording the intrigues of kings and the movements of armies as with scrutinising the motives and estimating the personal forces which have shaped the ages. Even in the domain of theology itself this tendency is visible. Our theologians are not content with discussing abstract doctrines or recounting the decisions of church councils, but are turning to the gospels and seeking to depict the life of Jesus--to probe the secret of His divine humanity and to interpret the meaning for the world of His unique personality. Nor is this tendency confined to professional thinkers and theologians, it is affecting the common mind of the laity. 'Never was there a time,' says a modern writer, 'when plain people were less concerned with the metaphysics or the ecclesiasticism of Christianity. The construction of systems and the contention of creeds which once appeared the central themes of human interest are now regarded by millions of busy men and women as mere echoes of ancient controversies, if not mere mockeries of the problems of the present day.' The Church under the inspiration of this new feeling for humanity is turning with fresh interest to the contemplation of the character of Jesus Christ, and is rising to a more lofty idea of its responsibilities towards the world. More than ever in the past, it is now felt that Christianity must vindicate itself as a practical religion; and that in view of the great problems--scientific, social and industrial, which the new conditions of an advancing civilisation have created, the Church, if it is to fulfil its function as the interpreter and guide of thought, must come down from its heights of calm seclusion and grapple with the actual difficulties of men, not indeed by assuming a political rôle or acting as a divider and judge amid conflicting secular aims, but by revealing the mind of Christ and bringing the principles of the gospel to bear upon the complex life of society. No one who reflects upon the spirit of the times will doubt that there are reasons of urgent importance why this aspect of Christian life and duty, which we have been considering, should be specially insisted upon to-day. Of these the first and foremost is the prevalence of a materialistic philosophy. Taking its rise in the evolutionary theories of last century, this view is now being applied with relentless logic as an interpretation of the problems of society by a school of socialistic writers. Man, it is said, is the creature of heredity and environment alone. Condition creates character, and relief from the woes of humanity is to be sought, not in the transformation of the individual but in the revolutionising of the circumstances of life. As a consequence of this philosophy of externalism there is a filtering down of these materialistic views to the multitude, who care, indeed, little for theories, but are quick to be affected by a prevailing tone. Underlying the feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction, so marked a feature of our present day life, there is distinctly discernible among the masses a loosening of religious faith and a slackening of moral obligation. The idea of personality and the sense of duty are not so vivid and strong as they used to be. A vague sentimentalising about sin has taken the place of the more robust view of earlier times, and evil is traced to untoward environment rather than to feebleness of individual will. And finally, to name no other cause, there is a tendency in our day among all classes to divorce religion from life--to separate the sacred from the secular, and to regard worship and work as belonging to two entirely distinct realms of existence. For these reasons, among others, there is a

special need, as it seems to us, for a systematic study of Christian Ethics on the part of those who are to be the leaders of thought and the teachers of the people. The materialistic view of life must be met by a more adequate Christian philosophy. The unfaith and pessimism of the age must be overcome by the advocacy of an idealistic conception which insists not only upon the personality and worth of man, involving duties as well as rights, but also upon the supremacy of conscience in obedience to the law of Christ. Above all, we need an ethic which will show that religion must be co-extensive with life, transfiguring and spiritualising all its activities and relationships. Life is a unity and all duty is one, whether it be duty to God or duty to man. It must be all of a piece, like the robe of Christ, woven from the top to the bottom without seam. It takes its spring from one source and is dominated by one spirit. In the Christianity of Christ there stand conspicuous two great ideas bound together, indeed, in a higher--love to God the Father. These are personal perfection and the service of mankind--the culture of self and the care of others. 'Be ye perfect' and 'love your neighbour as yourself.' It is the glory of Christianity to have harmonised these seemingly competing aims. The disciple of Christ finds that he cannot realise his own life except as he seeks the good of others; and that he cannot effectively help his fellows except by giving to them that which he himself is. This, as we take it, is the Christian conception of the moral life; and it is the business of Christian Ethics to show that it is at once reasonable and practical. The present volume will be divided into four main parts, entitled, Postulates, Personality, Character and Conduct. The first will deal with the meaning of Ethics generally and its relation to cognate subjects; and specially with the Philosophical, Psychological and Theological presuppositions of Christian Ethics. The second part will be devoted to man as moral subject, and will analyse the capacities of the soul which respond to the calls and claims of the new Life. The third Section will involve a consideration of the formative Principles of Character, the moulding of the soul, the Ideals, Motives and Forces by means of which the 'New Man' is 'recreated' and fashioned. Finally, under Conduct, the Virtues, Duties and Rights of man will be discussed; and the various spheres of service and institutions of society examined in relation to which the moral life in its individual and social aspects is manifested and developed.

Nature and Scope of Ethics

CHAPTER I THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF ETHICS

Philosophy has been defined as 'thinking things together.' Every man, says Hegel, is a philosopher, and in so far as it is the natural tendency of the human mind to connect and unify the manifold phenomena of life, the paradox of the German thinker is not without a measure of truth. But while this is only the occasional pastime of the ordinary individual, it is the conscious and habitual aim of the philosopher. In daily life people are wont to make assumptions which they do not verify, and employ figures of speech which of necessity are partial and inadequate. It is the business of philosophy to investigate the pre-suppositions of common life and to translate into realities the pictures of ordinary language. It was the method of Socrates to challenge the current modes of speaking and to ask his fellow-men what they meant when they used such words as 'goodness,' 'virtue,' 'justice.' Every time you employ any of these terms, he said, you virtually imply a whole theory of life. If you would have an intelligent understanding of yourself and the world of which you form a part, you must cease to live by custom and speak by rote. You must seek to bring the manifold phenomena of the universe and the various experiences of life into some kind of unity and see them as co-ordinated parts of a whole. When men thus begin to reflect on the origin and connection of things, three questions at once suggest themselves--what, how, and why? What is the world? How do I know it? and why am I here? We might briefly classify the three great departments of human thought as attempts to answer these three inquiries. What exists is the problem of Metaphysics. What am I and how do I know? is the question of Psychology. What is my purpose, what am I to do? is the subject of Ethics. These questions are closely related, and the answer given to one largely determines the solution of the others. The truths gained by philosophical thought are not confined to the kingdom of abstract speculation but apply in the last resort to life. The impulse to know is only a phase of the more general impulse to be and to act. Beneath all man's activities, as their source and spring, there is ever some dim perception of an end to be attained. 'The ultimate end,' says Paulsen, 'impelling men to meditate upon the nature of the universe, will always be the desire to reach some conclusion concerning the meaning of the source and goal of their lives.' The origin and aim of all philosophy is consequently to be sought in Ethics.

I. If we ask more particularly what Ethics is, definition affords us some light. It is to Aristotle that we are indebted for the earliest use of this term, and it was he who gave to the subject its title and systematic form. The name *ta ethika* is derived from *êthos*, character, which again is closely connected with *ethos*, signifying custom. Ethics, therefore, according to Aristotle is the science of character, character being understood to mean according to its etymology, customs or habits of conduct. But while the modern usage of the term 'character' suggests greater inwardness than would seem to be implied in the ancient definition, it must be remembered that under the title of Ethics Aristotle had in view, not only a description of the outward habits of man, but also that which gives to custom its value, viz., the sources of action, the motives, and especially the ends which guide a man in the conduct of life. But since men live before they reflect, Ethics and Morality are

not synonymous. So long as there is a congruity between the customs of a people and the practical requirements of life, ethical questions do not occur. It is only when difficulties arise as to matters of right, for which the existing usages of society offer no solution, that reflection upon morality awakens. No longer content with blindly accepting the formulae of the past, men are prompted to ask, whence do these customs come, and what is their authority? In the conflict of duties, which a wider outlook inevitably creates, the inquirer seeks to estimate their relative values, and to bring his conception of life into harmony with the higher demands and larger ideals which have been disclosed to him. This has been the invariable course of ethical inquiry. At different stages of history--in the age of the Sophists of Ancient Greece, when men were no longer satisfied with the old forms of life and truth: at the dawn of the Christian era, when a new ideal was revealed in Christ: during the period of the Reformation, when men threw off the bondage of the past and made a stand for the rights of the individual conscience: and in more recent times, when in the field of political life the antithesis between individual and social instincts had awakened larger and more enlightened views of civic and social responsibility--the study of Ethics, as a science of moral life, has come to the front.

Ethics may, therefore, be defined as the science of the end of life--the science which inquires into its meaning and purpose. But inasmuch as the end or purpose of life involves the idea of some good which is in harmony with the highest conceivable well-being of man--some good which belongs to the true fulfilment of life--Ethics may also be defined as the science of the highest good or *summum bonum*.

Finally, Ethics may be considered not only as the science of the highest good or ultimate end of life, but also as the study of all that conditions that end, the dispositions, desires and motives of the individual, all the facts and forces which bear upon the will and shape human life in its various social relationships.

II. Arising out of this general definition three features may be mentioned as descriptive of its distinctive character among the sciences.

1. Ethics is concerned with the ideal of life. By an ideal we mean a better state of being than has been actually realised. We are confessedly not as we should be, and there floats before the minds of men a vision of some higher condition of life and society than that which exists. Life divorced from an ideal is ethically valueless. Some conception of the supreme good is the imperative demand and moral necessity of man's being. Hence the chief business of Ethics is to answer the question: What is the supreme good? For what should a man live? What, in short, is the ideal of life? In this respect Ethics as a science is distinguished from the physical sciences. They explain facts and trace sequences, but they do not form ideals or endeavour to move the will in the direction of them.

2. Ethics again is concerned with a norm of life, and in this sense it is frequently styled a normative science. That is to say, it is a science which prescribes rules or maxims according to which life is to be regulated. This is sometimes expressed by saying that Ethics treats of what ought to be. The ideal must not be one which simply floats in the air. It must be an ideal which is possible, and, therefore, as such, obligatory. It is useless to feel the worth of a certain idea, or even to speak of the desirability of it, if we do not feel also that it ought to be realised. Moral judgments imply an 'ought,' and that 'ought' implies a norm or standard, in the light of which, as a criterion, all

obligation must be tested, and according to which all conduct must be regulated.

3. Ethics, once more, is concerned with the will. It is based specifically on the fact that man is not only an intellectual being (capable of knowing) and a sensitive being (possessed of feeling) but also a volitional being; that is, a being endowed with self-determining activity. It implies that man is responsible for his intentions, dispositions and actions. The idea of a supreme ideal at which he is to aim and a norm or standard of conduct according to which he ought to regulate his life, would have no meaning if we did not presuppose the power of self-determination. Whatever is not willed has no moral value. Where there is no freedom of choice, we cannot speak of an action as either good or evil.[1] When we praise or blame a man's conduct we do so under the assumption that his action is voluntary. In all moral action purpose is implied. This is the meaning of the well-known dictum of Kant, 'There is nothing in the world... that can be called good without qualification except a good will. A good will is good, not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition.'[2] It is the inner aim, the good will which alone gives moral worth to any endeavour. It is not what I do but the reason why I do it which is chiefly of ethical value. The essence of virtue resides in the will, not in the achievement; in the intention or motive, not in the result.

III. The propriety of styling Ethics a science has sometimes been questioned. Science, it is said, has to do with certain necessary and uniform facts of experience; its object is simply to trace effects from causes and to formulate laws according to which sequences inevitably result from certain ascertained causes or observed facts. But is not character, with which Ethics confessedly deals, just that concerning which no definite conclusions can be predicted? Is not conduct, dependent as it is on the human will, just the element in man which cannot be explained as the resultant of calculable forces? If the will is free, and is the chief factor in the moulding of life, then you cannot forecast what line conduct will take or predict what shape character will assume. The whole conception of Ethics as a science must, it is contended, fall to the ground, if we admit a variable and incalculable element in conduct.

Some writers, on this account, are disposed to regard Ethics as an art rather than a science, and indeed, like every normative science, it may be regarded as lying midway between them. A science may be said to teach us to know and an art to do: but as has been well remarked, 'a normative science teaches to know how to do.'[3] Ethics may indeed be regarded both as a science and an art. In so far as it examines and explains certain phenomena of character it is a science: but in so far as it attempts to regulate human conduct by instruction and advice it is an art.[4] Yet when all is said, in so far as Ethics has to do with the volitional side of man,--with decisions and acts of will,--there must be something indeterminate and problematic in it which precludes it from being designated an exact science. A certain variableness belongs to character, and conduct cannot be pronounced good or bad without reference to the acting subject. Actions cannot be wholly explained by law, and a large portion of human life (and that the highest and noblest) eludes analysis. A human being is not simply a part of the world. He is able to break in upon the sequence of events and set in motion new forces whose effects neither he himself nor his fellows can estimate. It is the unique quality of rational beings that in great things and in small things they act from ideas. The magic power of thought cannot be exaggerated. Great conceptions have great consequences, and they rule the world. A new spiritual idea shoots forth its rays and enlightens to larger issues generations of men. There is a mystery in every forth-putting of

will-power, and every expression of personality. Character cannot be computed. The art of goodness, of living nobly, if so unconscious a thing may be called an art, is one certainly which defies complete scientific treatment. It is with facts like these that Ethics has to do; and while we may lay down broad general principles which must underlie the teaching of every true prophet and the conduct of every good man, there will always be an element with which science cannot cope.

IV. It will not be necessary, after what has been said, to trace at any length the relations between Ethics and the special mental sciences, such as Logic, Aesthetics, and Politics.

1. Logic is the science of the formal laws of thought, and is concerned not with the truth of phenomena, but merely with the laws of correct reasoning about them. Ethics establishes the laws according to which we ought to act. Logic legislates for the reason, and decerns the laws which the intellect must obey if it would think correctly. Both sciences determine what is valid; but while Logic is confined to the realm of what is valid in reasoning, Ethics is occupied with what is valid in action. There is, indeed, a logic of life; and in so far as all true conduct must have a rational element in it and be guided by certain intelligible forms, Ethics may be described as a kind of logic of character.

2. The connection between Ethics and Aesthetics is closer. Aesthetics is the science of the laws of beauty, while Ethics is the science of the laws of the good. But in so far as Aesthetics deals with the emotions rather than the reason it comes into contact with Ethics in the psychological field. In its narrower sense Aesthetics deals with beauty merely in an impersonal way; and its immediate object is not what is morally beautiful, but rather that which is beautiful in itself irrespective of moral considerations. Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned with personal worth as expressed in perfection of will and action. Conduct may be beautiful and character may afford Aesthetic satisfaction, but Ethics, in so far as it is concerned with judgments of virtue, is independent of all thought of the mere beauty or utility of conduct. Aesthetic consideration may indeed aid practical morality, but it is not identical with it. It is conceivable that what is right may not be immediately beautiful, and may indeed in its pursuit or realisation involve action which contradicts our ideas of beauty. But though both sciences have different aims they are occupied largely with the same emotions, and are connected by a common idealising purpose. In the deepest sense, what is good is beautiful and what is beautiful is good; and ultimately, in the moral and spiritual life, goodness and beauty coincide. Indeed, so close is the connection between the two conceptions that the Greeks used the same word, to kalon, to express beauty of form and nobility of character. And even in modern times the expression 'a beautiful soul,' indicates the intimate relation between inner excellence of life and outward attractiveness. Both Aesthetics and Ethics have regard to that symmetry or proportion of life which fulfils our ideas at once of goodness and of beauty. In this sense Schiller sought to remove the sharpness of Kant's moral theory by claiming a place in the moral life for beauty. Our actions are, indeed, good when we do our duty because we ought, but they are beautiful when we do it because we cannot do otherwise, because they have become our second nature. The purpose of all culture, says Schiller, is to harmonise reason and sense, and thus to fulfil the idea of a perfect manhood.[5] 'When I dared question: "It is beautiful, But is it true?" Thy answer was, "In truth lives beauty."'[6]

3. Politics is still more closely related to Ethics, and indeed Ethics may be said to comprehend Politics. Both deal with human action and institution, and cover largely the same field. For man is

not merely an individual, but is a part of a social organism. We cannot consider the virtues of the individual life without also considering the society to which he is related, and the interaction of the whole and its part. Politics is usually defined as the science of government, which of course, involves all the institutions and laws affecting men's relations to each other. But while Politics is strictly concerned only with the outward condition of the state's well-being and the external order of the community, Ethics seeks the internal good or virtue of mankind, and is occupied with an ideal society in which each individual shall be able to realise the true aim and meaning of life. But after all, as Aristotle said, Politics is really a branch of Ethics, and both are inseparable from, and complementary of each other. On the one hand, Ethics cannot ignore the material conditions of human welfare nor minimise the economic forces which shape society and make possible the moral aims of man. On the other hand, Economics must recognise the service of ethical study, and keep in view the moral purposes of life, otherwise it is apt to limit its consideration to merely selfish and material ends.

V. While Ethics is thus closely connected with the sciences just named, there are two departments of knowledge, pre-supposed indeed in all mental studies, which in a very intimate way affect the science of Ethics. These are Metaphysics on the one hand and Psychology on the other.

1. Metaphysics is pre-supposed by all the sciences; and indeed, all our views of life, even our simplest experiences, involve metaphysical assumptions. It has been well said that the attempt to construct an ethical theory without a metaphysical basis issues not in a moral science without assumptions, but in an Ethics which becomes confused in philosophical doubts. Leslie Stephen proposes to ignore Metaphysics, and remarks that he is content 'to build upon the solid earth.' But, as has been pertinently asked, 'How does he know that the earth is solid on which he builds?' This is a question of Metaphysics.[7] The claim is frequently made by a certain class of writers, that we withdraw ourselves from all metaphysical sophistries, and betake ourselves to the guidance of commonsense. But what is this commonsense of which the ordinary man vaunts himself? It is in reality a number of vague assumptions borrowed unconsciously from old exploded theories--assertions, opinions, beliefs, accumulated, no one knows how, and accepted as settled judgments.[8] We do not escape philosophy by refusing to think. Some kind of theory of life is implied in such words, 'soul,' 'duty,' 'freedom,' 'power,' 'God,' which the unreflecting mind is daily using. It is useless to say we can dispense with philosophy, for that is simply to content ourselves with bad philosophy. 'To ignore the progress and development in the history of Philosophy,' says T. H. Green,[9] 'is not to return to the simplicity of a pre-philosophic age, but to condemn ourselves to grope in the maze of cultivated opinion, itself the confused result of these past systems of thought which we will not trouble ourselves to think out.' The aim of all philosophy, as Plato said, is just to correct the assumptions of the ordinary mind, and to grasp in their unity and cohesion the ultimate principles which the mind feels must be at the root of all reality. We have an ethical interest in determining whether there be any moral reality beneath the appearances of the world. Ethical questions, therefore, run back into Metaphysics. If we take Metaphysics in its widest sense as involving the idea of some ultimate end, to the realisation of which the whole process of the world as known to us is somehow a means, we may easily see that metaphysical inquiry, though distinct from ethical, is its necessary pre-supposition. The Being or Purpose of God, the great first cause, the world as fashioned, ordered and interpenetrated by Him, and man as conditioned by and dependent upon the Deity--are postulates of the moral life and must be accepted as a basis of

all ethical study. The distinction between Ethics and Philosophy did not arise at once. In early Greek speculation, almost to the time of Aristotle, Metaphysics and Morals were not separated. And even in later times, Spinoza and to some extent Green, though they professedly treat of Ethics, hardly dissociate metaphysical from ethical considerations. Nor is that to be wondered at when men are dealing with the first principles of all being and life. Our view of God and of the world, our fundamental Welt-Anschauung cannot but determine our view of man and his moral life. In every philosophical system from Plato to Hegel, in which the universe is regarded as having a rational meaning and ultimate end, the good of human beings is conceived as identical with, or at least as included in the universal good.

2. But if a sound metaphysical basis be a necessary requisite for the adequate consideration of Ethics, Psychology as the science of the human soul is so vitally connected with Ethics, that the two studies may almost be treated as branches of one subject. An Ethic which takes no account of psychological assumptions would be impossible. Consciously or unconsciously every treatment of moral subjects is permeated by the view of the soul or personality of man which the writer has adopted, and his meaning of conduct will be largely determined by the theory of human freedom and responsibility with which he starts. Questions as to character and duty invariably lead to inquiries as to certain states of the agent's mind, as to the functions and possibilities of his natural capacities and powers. We cannot pronounce an action morally good or bad until we have determined the extent and limits of his faculties and have investigated the questions of disposition and purpose, of intention and motive, which lie at the root of all conduct, and without which actions are neither moral nor immoral. It is surely a mistake to say, as some do, that as logic deals with the correctness of reasoning, so Ethics deals only with the correctness of conduct, and is not directly concerned with the processes by which we come to act correctly.[10] On the contrary, merely correct action may be ethically worthless, and conduct obtains its moral value from the motives or intentions which actuate and determine it. Ethics cannot, therefore, ignore the psychological processes of feeling, desiring and willing of the acting subject. It is indeed true that in ordinary life men are frequently judged to be good or bad, according to the outward effect of their actions, and material results are often regarded as the sole measure of good. But while it may be a point of difficulty in theoretic morality to determine the comparative worth and mutual relation of good affections and good actions, all surely will allow that a certain quality of disposition or motive in the agent is required to constitute an action morally good, and that it is not enough to measure virtue by its utility or its beneficial effect alone. Hence all moralists are agreed that the main object of their investigation must belong to the psychical side of human life--whether they hold that man's ultimate end is to be found in the sphere of pleasure or maintain that his well-being lies in the realisation of virtue for its own sake. The problems as to the origin and adequacy of conscience, as to the meaning and validity of voluntary action; the questions concerning motives and desires, as to the historical evolution of moral customs, and man's relation at each stage of his history to the social, political and religious institutions amid which he lives--are subjects which, though falling within the scope of Ethics, have their roots in the science of the soul. The very existence of a science of Ethics depends upon the answers which Psychology gives to such questions. If, for example, it be decided that there is in man no such faculty or organ as conscience, and that what men so designate is but a natural manifestation gradually evolved in and through the physical and social development of man: or if we deny the self-determining power of human beings and assume that what we call the freedom of the will is a delusion (or at least, in the last resort, a negligible

element) and that man is but one of the many phenomena or facts of a physical universe--then we may continue, indeed, as some evolutionary and naturalistic thinkers do, to speak of a science of Ethics, but such a science will not be a study of the moral life as we understand it and have defined it.

Ethics, therefore, while dependent upon the philosophical sciences, has its own distinct content and scope. The end of life, that for which a man should live, with all its implications, forms the subject of moral inquiry. It is concerned not merely with what a man is or actually does, but more specifically with what he should be and should do. Hence, as we have seen, the word 'ought' is the most distinctive term of Ethics involving a consideration of values and a relation of the actual and the ideal. The 'ought' of life constitutes at once the purpose, law, and reason of conduct. It proposes the three great questions involved in all ethical inquiry--whither? how? and why? and determines the three great words which are constantly recurring in every ethical system--end, norm, motive. Moral good is the moral end considered as realised. The moral norm or rule impelling the will to the realisation of this end is called Duty. The moral motive considered as an acquired power of the acting will is called Virtue.[11] [1] Cf. Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, p. 32; also Wuttke, *Christian Ethics* (Eng. Trans.), vol. i. p. 14.

[2] *Metaph. of Morals*, sect. i.

[3] Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, p. 8. See also Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*.

[4] Hyslop, *Elements of Ethics*, p. 1.

[5] Schiller, *Über Anmuth und Würde*. Cf. also Ruskin, *Mod. Painters*, vol. ii.; Seeley, *Natural Religion*, and Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 203 ff. See also Bosanquet *Hist. of Aesthetic*. We are indebted to Romanticism, and especially to Novalis in Germany and Cousin in France for the thought that the good and the beautiful meet and amalgamate in God.

[6] Browning.

[7] Cf. Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 8.

[8] See Author's *History of Philosophy*, p. 585.

[9] *Introduction to Hume's Works*.

[10] Mackenzie seems to imply this view. *Ethics*, p. 25.

[11] Cf. Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 9.

Postulates of Ethics

CHAPTER II THE POSTULATES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

We now proceed to define Christian Ethics and to investigate the particular postulates, philosophical and theological, upon which it rests.

Christian Ethics presupposes the Christian view of life as revealed in Christ, and its definition must be in harmony with the Christian ideal. The prime question of Christian Ethics is, How ought Christians to order their lives? It is therefore the science of morals as conditioned by Christian faith; and the problems it discusses are, the nature, meaning and laws of the moral life as dominated by the supreme good which has been revealed to the world in the Person and Teaching of Christ. It is based upon an historical event, and presupposes a particular development and consummation of the world.

I The Relation of Christian to Philosophical Ethics.--Christian Ethics is a branch of general Ethics. But it is something more; it is Ethics in its richest and fullest expression--the interpretation of life which corresponds to the supreme manifestation of the divine will. For if the revelation of God in Christ is true, then that revelation is not merely a factor, but the factor, which must dominate and colour man's whole outlook and give an entirely new value to all his aims and actions. In Christianity we are confronted with the motive-power of a great Personality who has entered into the current of human history and given a new direction to the moral life of man. Man's life at its highest can only be interpreted in the light of this supreme revelation, and can only be accounted for as the creation of the dynamic force of this unique Personality. But while this truth gives to Christian Ethics its distinctive character and pre-eminent worth it does not throw discredit upon philosophical Ethics, nor indeed separate the two departments by any hard and fast lines. They have much in common. A large domain of conduct is covered by both. The so-called pagan virtues have their value for Christian character and are in the line of Christian virtue. Even in his natural state man is constituted for the moral life, and, as St. Paul states, is not without some knowledge of right and wrong. The moral attainments of the ancients are not to be regarded simply as 'splendid vices,' but as positive achievements of good. Duty may differ in content, but it is of the same kind under any system. Purity is purity and benevolence benevolence, whether manifested in a heathen or a Christian. While, therefore, Christian Ethics takes its point of departure from the special revelation of God and the unique disclosure of man's possibilities in Christ, it gladly accepts and freely uses the results of moral philosophy in so far as they throw light upon the fundamental facts of human nature. As a system of morals Christianity claims to be inclusive. It takes cognisance of all the data of consciousness, and assumes as its own, from whatever quarter it may come, all ascertained truth. The facts of man's natural history, the conclusions from philosophy, the manifold lights afforded by previous speculation--all are gathered up, sifted and tried by one all-authoritative measure of truth--the mind of Christ. It completes what is lacking in other systems in so far as their conclusions are based upon an incomplete survey of facts. It deals, in short, with personality in its highest ranges of moral power and spiritual consciousness and

seeks to interpret life by its greatest possibilities and loftiest attainments as they are revealed in Christ. But while Christian Ethics is at one with philosophic Ethics in postulating a natural capacity for spiritual life, it is differentiated from all non-Christian systems by its distinctive belief in the possibility of the re-creation of character. Speculative Ethics prescribes only what ought ideally to be done or avoided. It takes no account of the foes of the spiritual life; nor does it consider the remedy by which character, once it is perverted or destroyed, can be restored and transformed. Christian Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned primarily with the question, By what power can a man achieve the right and do the good? It is not enough to postulate the inherent capacity of man. Experience of human nature shows that there are hostile elements which too often frustrate his natural development. Hence the practical problem which Christian Ethics has to face is, How can the spiritual ideal be made a reality? It regards man as standing in need of recovery, and it is forced to assume, that which philosophical Ethics does not recognise, a divine power by which character can be renewed. Christianity claims to be 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' Christian Ethics therefore is based upon the twofold assumption that the ideal of humanity has actually been revealed in Christ, and that in Him also is the power by which man may realise this ideal.

II The relation of Christian Ethics to Dogmatics.--Within the sphere of theology proper the two main constituents of Christian teaching are Dogmatics and Ethics, or Doctrines and Morals. Though it is convenient to regard these separately they really form a whole, and are but two aspects of one subject. It is difficult to define their limits, and to say where Dogmatics ends and Ethics begins. The distinction is sometimes expressed by saying that Dogmatics is a theoretic science, whereas Ethics is practical. It is true that Ethics stands nearer to everyday life and deals with matters of practical conduct, while Dogmatics is concerned with beliefs and treats of their origin and elucidation. But, on the other hand, Ethics also takes cognisance of beliefs as well as actions, and is interested in judgments not less than achievements. There is a practical side of doctrine and there is a theoretic side of morals. Even the most theoretic of sciences, Metaphysics, though, as Novalis said, it bakes no bread, is not without its direct bearing upon life. Dogmatic theology when divorced from practical interest is in danger of becoming mere pedantry; and ethical inquiry, if it has no dogmatic basis, loses scientific value and sinks into a mere enumeration of duties. Nor is the common statement, that Dogmatics shows what we should believe and Ethics what we ought to do, an adequate one. Moral precepts are also objects of faith, and what we should believe involves moral requirements and pre-supposes a moral character. Schleiermacher has been charged with ignoring the difference between the two disciplines, but with scant justice. For, while he regards the two subjects as but different branches of Christian theology, and insists upon their intimate connection, he does not neglect their distinction. There has been a growing tendency to accentuate the difference, and recent writers such as Jacoby, Haering and Lemme, not to mention Martensen, Dorner and Wuttke, claim for Ethics a separate and independent treatment. The ultimate connection between Dogmatics and Ethics cannot be ignored without loss to both. It tends only to confusion to speak as some do of 'a creedless morality.' On the one hand, Ethics saves Dogmatics from evaporating into unsubstantial speculation, and by affording the test of workableness, keeps it upon the solid foundation of fact. On the other hand, Dogmatics supplies to Ethics its formative principles and normative standards, and preserves the moral life from degenerating into the vagaries of fanaticism or the apathy of fatalism. But while both sciences form complementary sides of theology and stand in relations of mutual service, each deals with the

human consciousness in a different way. Dogmatics regards the Christian life from the standpoint of divine dependence: Ethics regards it from the standpoint of human determination. Dogmatics deals with faith in relation to God, as the receptive organ of grace: Ethics views faith rather in relation to man, as a human activity or organ of conduct. The one shows us how our adoption into the kingdom of God is the work of divine love: the other shows how this knowledge of salvation manifests itself in love to God and man, and must be worked out through all the relationships of life.

III

We may define more particularly the relation of Ethics to Dogmatics by enumerating briefly the doctrinal postulates or assumptions with which Ethics starts.

1. Ethics assumes the Christian idea of God. God is for Ethics not an impersonal force, nor even simply the creator of the universe as philosophy might conceive Him.[1] Creative power is not of course denied, but it is qualified by what theology calls the 'moral attributes of God.' We do not ignore His omnipotence, but we look beyond it, to 'the love that tops the power, the Christ in God.' [2] It is not necessary here to sketch the Old Testament teaching with regard to God. It is sufficient to state that the New Testament writers, while not attempting to proclaim abstract doctrines, took over generally the Hebrew conception of the Deity as a God who was at once almighty, holy and righteous. The distinctive note which the New Testament emphasises is the Personality of God, and personality includes reason, will and love. The fact that we are His offspring, as St. Paul argues, is the basis of our true conception of God's nature. Through that which is highest in man we are enabled to discern something of His character. But it is specially in and through Jesus Christ that the distinctive character of the Divine Personality is declared. Christ reveals Him as our Father, and everywhere the New Testament writers assume that men stand in the closest filial relations to him. In the fundamental conception of divine Fatherhood there are implicitly contained certain elements of ethical significance.[3] Of these may be mentioned:

(1) The Spiritual Perfection of God.--The Christian doctrine of God includes not only His personality, but His spiritual perfection. All that is highest and best in life is attributed to God. What we regard as having supreme moral worth is eternally realised in Him. It is this fact that prescribes man's ideal and makes it binding. 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect,' says Christ. Because of what God is, spiritual and moral excellence takes precedence of all other aims which can be perceived and pursued by man. Morality is the revelation of an ideal eternally existing in the divine mind. 'The belief in God,' it has been said, 'is the logical pre-supposition of an objective or absolute morality.' [4] The moral law, as the norm and goal of our life, obtains its validity and obligation for us not because it is an arbitrarily-given command, but because it is of the very character of God.

(2) The Sovereignty of God.--Not only the spiritual perfection but the moral sovereignty of God is pre-supposed. He is the supreme excellence on whom all things depend, and in whom they find their ultimate explanation. The world is not merely His creation, it is the expression of His mind. He is not related to the universe as an artist is related to his work, but rather as a personal being to his own mental and moral activities.[5] He is immanent in all the phenomena of nature and movements of life and thought; and in the order and purpose of the world His character and will are manifested. The fact that the meaning and order of things are not imposed from without, but

constitute their inner nature, reveals not only the completeness of His sovereignty, but the purpose of it. The highest end of God, as moral and spiritual, is fulfilled by the constitution and education of spiritual beings like Himself, and in laying down the conditions which are necessary for their existence and perfecting. No definition of divine sovereignty can exclude the idea of moral freedom and the consequences bound up with it. Hence God must not only confer the gift of individual liberty, but respect it throughout the whole course of His dealings with man.

(3) The Supremacy of Love.--This is the highest and most distinctive feature of the divine personality. It is the sum of all the others; as well as the special characteristic of the Fatherhood of God as revealed by Christ. 'God is love' is the crowning statement of the Gospel and the fullest expression of the divine nature. The essential of all love is self-giving; and the peculiarity of God's love is the communication and imparting of Himself to His creatures. The love of God finds its highest manifestation in the gift and sacrifice of His Son. He is the supreme personality in history, revealing God in and to the world. In the light of what Christ is we know what God is, and from His revelation there flows a new and ever-deepening experience of the divine Being.

2. Christian Ethics presupposes the Christian doctrine of Sin. It is not the province of Ethics to discuss minutely the origin of evil or propound a theory of sin. But it must see to it that the view it takes is consistent with the truths of revelation and in harmony with the facts of life. A false or inadequate conception of sin is as detrimental to Ethics as it is to Dogmatics; and upon our doctrine of evil depends very largely our interpretation of life in regard to its difficulties and purposes, its trials and triumphs. In the meantime it is enough to remark that considerable vagueness of idea and looseness of expression exist concerning this subject.

While some regard sin simply as a defect or shortcoming, a missing of the mark, as the Greek word *hamartia* implies, others treat it as a disease, or infirmity of the flesh--a malady affecting the physical constitution which may be incurred by heredity or induced by environment. In both cases it is regarded as a misfortune, rather than a fault, or even as a fate from which the notion of guilt is absent. While there is an element of truth in these representations, they are defective in so far as they do not take sufficient account of the personal and determinative factor in all sinful acts. The Christian view, though not denying that physical weakness and the influence of heredity and environment do, in many cases, affect conduct, affirms that there is a personal element always present which these conditions do not explain. Sin is not merely negative. It is something positive, not so much an imperfection as a trespass. It is to be accounted for not as an inherited or inherent malady, but as a self-chosen perversity. It belongs to the spirit rather than to the body, and though it has its seat in the heart and in the emotions, it has to do principally with the will. 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then when lust has conceived it bringeth forth sin.' [6] The essence of sin is selfishness. It is the deliberate choice of self in preference to God--personal and wilful rebellion against the known law of righteousness and truth. There are, of course, degrees of wrongdoing and undoubtedly extenuating circumstances which must be taken into account in estimating the significance and enormity of guilt, but in the last resort Christian Ethics is compelled to postulate the fact of sin, and to regard it as a personal rebellion against the holy will of God, the deliberate choice of self and the wilful perversion of the powers of man into instruments of unrighteousness.

3. A third postulate, which is a corollary of the Christian view of God and of sin, is the Responsibility of Man. Christian Ethics treats every man as accountable for his thoughts and actions, and therefore, as capable of choosing the good as revealed in Christ. While not denying the sovereignty of God, nor minimising the mystery of evil, Christianity firmly maintains the doctrine of human freedom. An Ethic would be impossible if, on the one side, grace were absolutely irresistible; or, on the other, sin were unalterably necessitated. Whatever be the doctrine we formulate on these subjects, Ethics demands that what we call freedom be safeguarded. An interesting question emerges at this point as to the possibility, apart from a knowledge of Christ, of choosing the good. Difficult as this question is, and though it was answered by Augustine and many of the early Fathers in the negative, the modern, and probably the more just view, is that we cannot hold mankind responsible unless we allow to all men the larger freedom and judge them according to their light and opportunity. If non-Christians are fated to do evil, then no guilt can be imputed. History shows that a love of goodness has sometimes existed, and that many isolated acts of purity and kindness have been done, among people who have known nothing of the historical Christ. The New Testament recognises degrees of depravity in nations and individuals, and a measure of noble aspiration and honest endeavour in ordinary human nature. St. Paul plainly assumes some knowledge and performance on the part of the heathen, and though he denounces their immorality in unsparing terms, he does not affirm that pagan society was so corrupt that it had lost all knowledge of moral good.

IV

Before concluding this chapter some remarks regarding the authority and method of Christian Ethics may be not inappropriate.

1. Christian Ethics is not directly concerned with critical questions as to the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings. It is sufficient for its purpose that these have been generally received by the Church, and that they present in the Person of Christ the highest embodiment of the law and spirit of the moral life. The writings of the New Testament thus become ethically normative in virtue of their direct reflection of the mind of Christ and their special receptivity of His spirit. Their authority, therefore, is Christ's own authority, and has a value for us as His word is reproduced by them. It does not detract from the validity of the New Testament as the reflection of the spirit of Christ that there are discernible in it distinct signs of development of doctrine, a manifest growth in clearness and depth of insight and knowledge of the mind of Jesus. Such evidences of advancement are specially noticeable in the application of Christian principles to the practical problems of life, such as the questions of slavery, marriage, work and property. St. Paul does not disclaim the possibility of development, and he associates himself with those who know in part and wait for fuller light. In common with all Christians, Paul was doubtless conscious of a growing enrichment in spiritual knowledge; and his later epistles show that he had reached to clearer prospects of Christ and His redemption, and had obtained a fuller grasp of the world-wide significance of the Gospel than when he first began to preach.

One cannot forget that the battle of criticism is raging to-day around the inner citadel--the very person and words of Jesus. If it can be shown that the Gospels contain only very imperfect records of the historical Jesus, and that very few sayings of our Lord can be definitely pronounced genuine, then, indeed, we might have to give up some of the particular passages upon which we

have based our conception of truth and duty, but nothing less than a wholesale denial of the historical existence of Jesus[7] would demand of us a repudiation of the Christian view of life. The ideals, motives, and sentiments--the entire outlook and spirit of life which we associate with Christ--are now a positive possession of the Christian consciousness. There is a Christian view of the world, a Christian Welt-Anschauung, so living and real in the heart of Christendom that even though we had no more reliable basis than the 'Nine Foundation Pillars' which Schmiedel condescends to leave us, we should not be wholly deprived of the fundamental principles upon which the Christian life might be reared. If to these we add the list of 'doubly attested sayings' collected by Burkitt,[8] which even some of the most negative critics have been constrained to allow, we should at least have a starting-point for the study of the teaching of Jesus. The most reputable scholars, however, of Germany, America and Britain acknowledge that no reasonable doubt can be cast upon the general substance and tone of the Synoptic Gospels, compiled, as they were, from the ancient Gospel of Mark and the source commonly called 'Q' (i.e. the lost common origin of the non-Markian portions of Matthew and Luke). To these we should be disposed to add the Fourth Gospel, which, though a less primary source, undoubtedly records acts and sayings of our Lord attested by one, who (whosoever he was) was in close touch with his Master's life, and had drunk deeply of His spirit. In the general tone and trend of these writings we find abundant materials for what may be called the Ethics of Jesus. It is true, no sharp line can be drawn between His religious and moral teaching. But, taking Ethics in its general sense, as the discussion of the ideals, virtues, duties of man, the relation of man to God and to his fellow-men, it will at once be seen that a very large portion of Christ's teaching is distinctly ethical. The facts of His own earthly existence, all His great miracles, His parables, and above all, the Sermon on the Mount, have an immediate bearing upon human conduct. They all deal with character, and are chiefly illustrations and enforcements of the divine ideal of life and of the value of man as a child of God which He came to reveal. In the example of Jesus Himself we have the best possible illustration of the translation of principles into life. And in so far as we find our highest good embodied in Him, He becomes for us, as J. S. Mill acknowledged, a kind of personified conscience. No abstract statement of ethical principles can possibly influence life so powerfully as the personal incarnation of these principles; and if the greatest means to the true life is personal association with the high and noble, then it need not seem strange that love and admiration for the person of Christ have as a matter of fact proved the mightiest of historical motives to noble living.

However imperfectly we may know the person of Jesus, and however fragmentary may be the record of His teaching, one great truth looms out of the darkness--the peerlessness of His character and the incomparableness of His ideal of life. He comes to us with a message of Good, new to man, based on the great conviction of the Fatherhood of God. The all-dominating faith that a genuine seeking love is at the heart of the universe makes Jesus certain that the laws of the world are the laws of a loving God--laws of life which must be studied, welcomed, and heartily obeyed.

2. The Christian ideal, though given in Christ, has to be examined, analysed, and applied by the very same faculties as are employed in dealing with speculative problems. All science must be furnished with facts, and its task generally is to shape its materials to definite ends. The scientist does not invent. He does not create. He simply discovers what is already there: he only moulds into form what is given. In like manner, the Christian moralist deals with the revelation of life which

has been granted to him partly in the human consciousness, and partly through the sacred scriptures. The scriptures, however, do not offer a systematic presentation of the life of Christ, or a formal directory of moral conduct. The data are supplied, but these data require to be interpreted and unified so as to form a system of Ethics. The authority to which Christian Ethics appeals is not an external oracle which imposes its dictates in a mechanical way. It is an authority embodied in intelligible forms, and appealing to the rational faculties of man. Christian Ethics, though deduced from scripture, is not a cut and dry code of rules prescribed by God which man must blindly obey. It has to be thought out, and intelligently applied to all the circumstances of life. According to the Protestant view, at least, Ethics is not a stereotyped compendium of precepts which the Church supplies to its members to save them from thinking. Slavish imitation is wholly foreign to the genius of the Gospel. Christ Himself appeals everywhere to the rational nature of man, and His words are life and spirit only as they are intelligibly apprehended and become by inner conviction the principles of action.

Authoritative, then, as the scriptures are, and containing as they do the revelation of an unique historical fact, they do not present a closed or final system of truth. Christ has yet many things to say unto us, and the Holy Spirit is continually adding new facts to human experience, and disclosing richer and fuller manifestations of God through history and providence and the personal consciousness of man. No progress in thought or life can indeed be made which is inconsistent with, or foreign to, the fundamental facts which centre in Christ: and we may be justly suspicious of all advancement in doctrine or morals which does not flow from the initial truths of the Master's life and teaching. But, just as progress has been made, both in the increase of materials of knowledge and in regard to the clearer insight and appreciation of the meaning of Christian truth, since the apostles' age, so we may hope that, as the ages go on, we shall acquire a still fuller conception of the kingdom of God and a richer apprehension of the divine will. The task and method of Christian Ethics will be, consequently, the intelligent interpretation and the gradual application to human life and society, in all their relationships, of the mind of Christ under the constant illumination and guidance of the Divine Spirit.

[1] Cf. Dorner, *System der Christl. Ethik*, p. 48. See also Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 44.

[2] Cf. Mackintosh, *Christian Ethics*, p. 11.

[3] Cf. Lidgett, *The Christian Religion*, pp. 106, 485 ff., where the idea of God's nature is admirably developed.

[4] Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii. p. 212.

[5] Lidgett, *idem*. But see Bosanquet, *Principle of Indiv. and Value*, p. 380 ff.

[6] James 1:13; James 1:14.

[7] As, for example, that of Drew's *Christus Myth*.

[8] Cf. *Gospel History and its Transmission*.

Ethical Thought before Christ

CHAPTER III ETHICAL THOUGHT BEFORE CHRIST

Apart from the writings of the New Testament, which are the primary source of Christian Ethics, a comprehensive view of our subject would include some account of the ethical conceptions of Greece, Rome and Israel, which were at least contributory to the Christian idea of the moral life. Whatever view we take of its origin, Christianity did not come into the world like the goddess Athene, without preparation, but was the product of many factors. The moral problems of to-day cannot be rightly appreciated except in the light of certain concepts which come to us from ancient thought; and Greco-Roman philosophy as well as Hebrew religion have contributed not a little to the form and trend of modern ethical inquiry.

All we can attempt is the briefest outline, first, of the successive epochs of Greek and Roman Ethics; and second, of the leading moral ideas of the Hebrews as indicating the preparatory stages in the evolution of thought which finds its completion in the Ethics of Christianity.

I

Before the golden age of Greek philosophy there was no Ethics in the strictest sense. Philosophy proper occupied itself primarily with ontological questions--questions as to the origin and constitution of the material world. It was only when mythology and religion had lost their hold upon the cultured, and the traditions of the poets had come to be doubted, that inquiries as to the meaning of life and conduct arose. The Sophists may be regarded as the pioneers of ethical science. This body of professional teachers, who appeared about the fifth century in Greece, drew attention to the vagueness of common opinion and began to teach the art of conduct. Of these Protagoras is the most famous, and to him is attributed the saying, 'Man is the measure of all things.' As applied to conduct, this dictum is commonly interpreted as meaning that good is entirely subjective, relative to the individual. Viewed in this light the saying is one-sided and sceptical, subversive of all objective morality. But the dictum may be regarded as expressing an important truth, that the good is personal and must ultimately be the good for man as man, therefore for all men.

1. It was Socrates, however, who, as it was said, first called philosophy from heaven to the sphere of this earth, and diverted men's minds from the consideration of natural things to the affairs of human life. He was indeed the first moral philosopher, inasmuch as that, while the Sophists merely talked at large about justice and virtue, he asked what these terms really meant. Living in an age when the old guides of life--law and custom--were losing their hold upon men, he was compelled to find a substitute for them by reflection upon the meaning and object of existence. For him the source of evil is want of thought, and his aim is to awaken men to the realisation of what they are, and what they must seek if they would make the best of their lives. He is the prophet of clear self-consciousness. 'Know thyself' is his motto, and he maintains that all virtue must be founded on such knowledge. A life without reflection upon the meaning of existence is unworthy of a man.[1]

Hence the famous Socratic dictum, 'Virtue is knowledge.' Both negatively and positively Socrates held this principle to be true. For, on the one hand, he who is not conscious of the good and does not know in what it consists, cannot possibly pursue it. And, on the other hand, if a man is once alive to his real good, how can he do otherwise than pursue it? No one therefore does wrong willingly. Let a man know what is right, and he will do it. Knowledge of virtue is not, however, distinct from self-interest. Every one naturally seeks the good simply because he sees that the good is identical with his ultimate happiness. The wise man is the happy man. Hence to know oneself is the secret of well-being. Let each be master of himself, knowing what he seeks, and seeking what he knows--that, for Socrates, is the first principle of Ethics, the condition of all moral life. This view is obviously one-sided and essentially individualistic, excluding all those forms of morality which are pursued unconsciously, and are due more to the influence of intuitive perception and social habit than to clear and definite knowledge. The merit of Socrates, however, lies in his demand for ethical reflection, and his insistence upon man not only acting rightly, but acting from the right motive.

2. While Socrates was the first to direct attention to the nature of virtue, it received from Plato a more systematic treatment. Platonic philosophy may be described as an extension to the universe of the principles which Socrates applied to the life of the individual. Plato attempts to define the end of man by his place in the cosmos; and by bringing Ethics into connection with Metaphysics he asks What is the idea of man as a part of universal reality? Two main influences combined to produce his conception of virtue. First, in opposition to the Heraclitean doctrine of perpetual change, he contended for something real and permanent. Second, in antagonism to the Sophistic theory of the conventional origin of the moral law, he maintained that man's chief end was the good which was fixed in the eternal nature of things, and did not consist in the pursuit of transient pleasures. Hence, in two respects, Plato goes beyond Socrates. He puts opinion, which is his name for ordinary consciousness, between ignorance and knowledge, ascribing to it a certain measure of truth, and making it the starting-point for reflection. And further, he transforms the Socratic idea of morality, rejecting the notion that its principle is to be found in a mere calculation of pleasures, and maintaining that particular goods must be estimated by the good of life as a whole. Plato's philosophy rests upon his doctrine of ideas, which, as the types of permanent reality, represent the eternal nature of things; and the problem of life is to rise from opinion to truth, from appearance to reality, and attain to the ideal principle of unity. The highest good Plato identifies with God, and man's end is ultimately to be found in the knowledge of, and communion with, the eternal. The human soul he conceived to be a mixture of two elements. In virtue of its higher spiritual nature it participates in the world of ideas, the life of God: and in virtue of its lower or animal impulses, in the corporeal world of decay. These two dissimilar parts are connected by an intermediate element called by Plato thymos or courage, implying the emotions or affections of the heart. Hence a threefold constitution of the soul is conceived--the rational powers, the emotional desires, and the animal passions. If we ask who is the good man? Plato answers, it is the man in whom these three elements are harmonised. On the basis of this psychology Plato classifies and determines the virtues--adopting the four cardinal virtues of Greek tradition as the fundamental types of morality. Wisdom is the quality, or condition of all virtue and the crown of the moral life: courage is the virtue of the emotional part of man; temperance or moderation, the virtue of the lower appetites: while justice is the unity and the principle of the others. Virtue is thus no longer identified with knowledge simply. Another source of vice besides ignorance is assumed,

viz., the disorder and conflict of the soul; and the well-being of man lies in the attainment of a well-ordered and harmonious life. As health is the harmony of the body, so virtue is the harmony of the soul--a condition of perfection in which every desire is kept in control and every function performs its part with a view to the good of the whole. Morality, however, does not belong merely to the individual, but has its perfect realisation in the state in which the three elements of the soul have their counterpart in the threefold rank of society. Man is indeed but a type of a larger cosmos, and it is not as an individual but as a citizen that he finds his station and duties, and is capable of realising his true life.

Thus we see how Plato is led to correct the shortcomings of Socrates--his abrupt distinction between ignorance and knowledge, his vagueness as to the meaning of the good, and his tendency to emphasise the subjective side of virtue and withdraw the individual from the community of which he is essentially a part. But in developing his theory of ideas Plato has represented the true life of man as consisting in the knowledge of, and indeed in absorption in, God, a state to which man can only attain by the suppression of his natural impulses and withdrawal from earthly life: and though there is not wanting in Plato's later teaching the higher conception of the transformation of the animal passions, he is not wholly successful in overcoming the dualism between impulse and reason which besets some of the earlier dialogues.

It is a striking proof of the vitality of Plato that his teaching has affected every form of idealism and has helped to shape the history of religious thought in all ages. Not only many of the early Fathers, such as Clement and Origen, but the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century, and also the German theologians, Baur and Schleiermacher, have recognised numerous coincidences between Christianity and Platonism: as Bishop Westcott has said, 'Plato points to St. John.'^[2] His influence may be detected in some of the greatest Christian poetry of our own country, especially in that of Wordsworth and Tennyson. For Plato believes, in common with the greatest of every age, in 'that inborn passion for perfection,' that innate though often unconscious yearning after the true, the beautiful, the good, 'Those obstinate questionings Of sense and outward things,' which are the heritage of human nature.

3. The Ethics of Aristotle does not essentially differ from that of Plato. He is the first to treat of morals formally as a science, which, however, in his hands becomes a division of politics. Man, says Aristotle, is really a social animal. Even more decisively than Plato, therefore, he treats man as a part of society. While in Plato there is the foreshadowing of the truth that the goal of moral endeavour lies in godlikeness, with Aristotle the goal is confined to this life and is conceived simply as the earthly well-being of the moral subject. 'Death,' he declares, 'is the greatest of all evils, for it is the end.' Aristotle begins his great work on Ethics with the discussion of the chief good, which he declares to be happiness or well-being. But happiness does not consist in sensual pleasure, nor even in the pursuit of honour, but in an 'activity of the soul in accordance with reason.'^[3] There are required for this life of right thinking and right doing not only suitable environment but proper instruction. Virtue is not virtuous until it is a habit, and the only way to be virtuous is to practise virtue. To be virtuous a man's conduct must be a law for him, the regular expression of his will. Hence the virtues are habits of deliberate choice, and not natural endowments. Following Plato, Aristotle sees that there is in man a number of impulses struggling for the mastery of the soul, hence he is led to assume that the natural instincts need guidance and control. Moderation is therefore the one chief virtue; and moral excellence consists in an activity which at every point

seeks to strike a 'mean' between two opposite excesses. Virtue in general, then, may be defined as the observation of the due mean in action. Aristotle also follows Plato in assigning the ideal good to contemplation, and in exalting the life of reason and speculation above all others. In thus idealising the contemplative life he was but reflecting the spirit of his race. This apotheosis of knowledge infected all Greek thought, and found exaggerated expression in the religious absorption of Neo-Platonism.

Without dwelling further upon the ethical philosophy of Aristotle, a defect which at once strikes a modern in regard to his scheme of virtues is that benevolence is not recognised, except obscurely as a form of magnanimity; and that, in general, the gentler virtues, so prominent in Christianity, have little place in the list. The virtues are chiefly aristocratic. Favourable conditions are needed for their cultivation. They are not possible for a slave, and hardly for those engaged in 'mercenary occupations.'^[4] Further, it may be remarked that habit of itself does not make a man virtuous. Morality cannot consist in a mere succession of customary acts. 'One good custom would corrupt the world,' and habit is frequently a hindrance rather than a help to the moral life. But the main defect of Aristotle's treatment of virtue is that he tends to regard the passions as irrational, and he does not see that passions if wholly evil could have no 'mean.' Reason pervades all the lower appetites of man: and the instincts and desires, instead of being treated as elements which must be suppressed, ought to be regarded rather as powers to be transformed and employed as vehicles of the moral life. At the same time there are not wanting passages in Aristotle as well as in Plato which, instead of emphasising the avoidance of excess, regard virtue as consisting in complementary elements--the addition of one virtuous characteristic to another--that balance of contrasted qualities which meets us at every turn in the distinguished personalities of the Hellenic race, and which is too often thought of in a merely negative way, as the avoidance of excess rather than as the highest outcome of an intense and many-sided vitality.'^[5]

4. After Aristotle philosophy rapidly declined, and Ethics degenerated into popular moralising which manifested itself chiefly in a growing depreciation of good as the end of life. The conflicting elements of reason and impulse, which neither Plato nor Aristotle succeeded in harmonising, gave rise ultimately to two opposite interpretations of the moral life. The Stoics selected the rational nature as the true guide to an ethical system, but they gave to it a supremacy so rigid as to threaten the extinction of the affections. The Epicureans, on the other hand, fastening upon the emotions as the measure of truth, emphasised the happiness of the individual as the chief good--a doctrine which led some of the followers of Epicurus to justify even sensual enjoyment. It is not necessary to dwell upon the details of Epicureanism, for though its description of the 'wise man,' as that of a person who prudently steered a middle course between passion and asceticism, was one which exercised considerable influence upon the morals of the age, it is the doctrines of Stoicism which more especially have come into contact with Christianity. Without discussing the Stoic conception of the world as interpenetrated and controlled by an inherent spirit, and the consequent view of life as proceeding from God and being in all its parts equally divine, we may note that the Stoics, under the influence of Platonism, regarded self-realisation as the true end of man. This idea they expressed in the formula, 'Life according to nature.' The wise man is he who seeks to live in all the circumstances of life in agreement with his rational nature. The law of nature is to avoid what is hurtful and strive for what is appropriate. Pleasure, though not the immediate object of man, arises as an accompaniment of a well-ordered life. Pleasure and pain are, however,

really accidents, to be met by the wise man with indifference. He alone is free who acknowledges the absolute supremacy of reason and makes himself independent of earthly desires. This life of freedom is open to all: since all men are members of one body. The slave may be as free as the consul, and in every station of life each may make the world serve him by living in harmony with it.

There is a certain sublimity in the ethics of Stoicism which has always appealed to noble minds. 'It inspired,' says Mr. Lecky, 'nearly all the great characters of the early Roman Empire, and nerved every attempt to maintain the dignity and freedom of the human soul.' [6] But we cannot close our eyes to its defects. Divine providence, though frequently dwelt upon, signified little more for the Stoic than destiny or fate. Harmony with nature was simply a sense of proud self-sufficiency. Stoicism is the glorification of reason, even to the extent of suppressing all emotion. Sin is unreason, and salvation lies in an external control of the passions--in indifference and apathy begotten of the subordination of desire to reason. The chief merit of Stoicism is that in an age of moral degeneracy it insisted upon the necessity of integrity in all the conditions of life. In its preference for the joys of the inner life and its scorn of the delights of sense; in its emphasis upon individual responsibility and duty; above all, in its advocacy of a common humanity and its belief in the relation of each human soul to God, Roman Stoicism, as revealed in the writings of a Seneca, an Epictetus, and a Marcus Aurelius, not only showed how high Paganism at its best could reach, but proved in a measure a preparation for Christianity, with whose practical truths it had much in common. The affinities between Stoicism and Paulinism have been frequently pointed out, and the similarity in language and thought can scarcely be accounted for by coincidence. There are, however, elements in Stoicism which St. Paul would never have dreamt of assimilating. The material conception of the world, the self-conscious pride, the absence of all sense of sin, the temper of apathy, and unnatural suppression of feelings were ideas which could not but rouse the apostle's strongest antagonism. But, on the other hand, there were characteristics of a nobler order in Stoic morality which, we may well believe, Paul found ready to his hand and did not hesitate to incorporate in his teaching. Of these we may mention, the Immanence of God, the idea of Wisdom, the conception of freedom as the prerogative of the individual, and the notion of brotherhood as the goal of humanity. [7] The Roman Stoics, notwithstanding their theoretic interest in moral questions, lived in an ideal world, and hardly attempted to bring their views into connection with the facts of life. Their philosophy was a refuge from the evil around them rather than an effort to remove it. They seek to overcome the world by being indifferent to it. In Neo-Platonism--the last of the Greek schools of philosophy--this tendency to withdraw from life and its problems becomes still more marked. Absorption in God is the goal of existence and the essence of religion. 'Man is left alone with God without any world to mediate between them, and in the ecstatic vision of the Absolute the light of reason is extinguished.' [8]

Meagre as our sketch of ancient thought has necessarily been, it is perhaps enough to show that the debt of religion to Greek and Roman Ethics is incalculable. It lifted man above vague wonder, and gave him courage to define his relation to existence. It caused him to ask questions of experience, and awakened him to the value of life and the meaning of freedom, duty, and good. Finally, it brought into view those contrasted aims of life and society which find their solution in the Christian ideal. [9]

II

Christianity stands in the closest relation with Hebrew religion. Much as the philosophy of Greece and Rome have contributed to Christendom, there is no such intimate relation between them as that which connects Christian Ethics with the morality of Israel. Christ Himself, and still more the Apostle Paul, assumed as a substratum of their teaching the revelation which had been granted to the Jews. The moral and religious doctrines comprehended under the designation of the 'law' served, as the apostle said, as a paidagogos or usher whose function it was to lead them to the school of Christ. At the outset we are impressed by the fact that the Ethics of Judaeism was inseparable from its religion. Moral obligations were conceived as divine commands, and the moral law as a revelation of the divine will. At first Jehovah was simply a tribal deity, but gradually this restricted view gave place to the wider conception of God as the sovereign of all men. The divine commandment is the criterion and measure of man's obedience. Evil, while it has its source and head in a hostile but subsidiary power, consists in violation of Jehovah's will.

There are three main channels of Hebrew revelation, commonly known as the Law, the Prophecy, and Poetry of Old Testament.

1. LAW

(1) The Mosaic Legislation centering in the Decalogue[10] is the first stage of Old Testament Ethic. The ten commandments, whether derived from Mosaic enactment or representing a later summary of duty, hold a supreme and formative place in the teaching of the Old Testament. All, not even excepting the fourth, are purely moral requirements. They are, however, largely negative; the fifth commandment only rising to positive duty. They are also merely external, regulative of outward conduct. The sixth and seventh protect the rights of persons, while the eighth guards outward property. Though these laws may be shown to have their roots in the moral consciousness of mankind, they were at first restricted by Israel in their scope and practice to its own tribes.

(2) The Civil laws present a second factor in the ethical education of Israel. The 'Book of the Covenant'[11] reveals a certain advancement in political legislation. Still the hard and legal enactments of retaliation--'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'--disclose a barbarous conception of right. Alongside of these primitive laws must be set those of a more humane nature--laws with regard to release, the permission of gleaning, the privileges of the year of jubilee.

(3) The Ceremonial laws embody a third element in the moral life of Israel. These had to do chiefly with commands and prohibitions relative to personal conduct--'Meats and drinks and diverse washings'; and with sacrifices and forms of ritual worship.[12] With regard to the moral value of the commandments two opposite errors are to be avoided. We must not refuse to recognise in the Old Testament the record of a true, if elementary and imperfect, revelation of God. But also we must beware of exalting the commandments of the Old Dispensation to the level of those of the New; and thus misunderstanding the nature and relation of both. The Christian faith is in a sense the development of Judaeism, though it is infinitely more. The commandments of Moses, in so far as they have their roots in the constitution of man, have not been superseded, but taken up and spiritualised by the Ethic of the Gospel.

2. PROPHECY The dominant factor of Old Testament Ethics lay in the influence exerted by the prophets. They, and not the priests, are the great moralists of Israel. The prophets were speakers for God, the interpreters of His will. They were the moral guides of the people, the champions of

integrity in political life, not less than witnesses for individual purity.[13] We may sum up the ethical significance of the Hebrew prophets in three features.

(1) They were preachers of personal righteousness. In times of falsehood and hypocrisy they were witnesses for integrity and truth, upholding the personal virtues of justice, sincerity, and mercy against the idolatry and formalism of the priesthood. 'What doth the Lord require of thee,' said Micah, 'but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' [14] In the same strain Isaiah exclaimed, 'Bring no more vain oblations, but wash you and make you clean.' [15] And so also Habakkuk has affirmed in words which became the keynote of Paul's theology and the watchword of the Reformation--'The just shall live by faith.' [16]

(2) They were the advocates of the rights of man, of equity and justice between man and man. They denounce the tyranny of kings, and the luxury of the nobles. They protest against the oppression of the poor and befriend the toilers of the cities. They proclaim the worth of man as man. They reveal Jehovah as the God of the common people, and seek to mitigate the burdens which lie upon the enslaved and down-trodden.

(3) They were the apostles of Hope. Not only did they seek to lift their fellow-men above their present calamities, but they proclaimed a message of peace and triumph which was to be evolved out of trouble. A great promise gradually loomed on the horizon, and hope began to centre in an anointed Deliverer. The Hebrew prophets were not probably conscious of the full significance of their own predictions. Like all true poets, they uttered greater things than they knew. The prophet who most clearly outlines this truth is the second Isaiah. As he looks down the ages he sees that healing is to be brought about through suffering, the suffering of a Sinless one. Upon this mysterious figure who is to rise up in the latter days is to be laid the burden of humanity. No other, not even St. Paul himself, has grasped so clearly the great secret of atonement or given so touching a picture of the power of vicarious suffering as this unknown prophet of Israel.

3. THE POETICAL BOOKS

Passing from the prophets to the poets of Israel--and especially to the book of Psalms--the devotional manual of the people, reflecting the moral and religious life of the nation at the various stages of its development--we find the same exalted character of God as a God of Righteousness, hating evil and jealous for devotion, the same profound sense of sin and the same high vocation of man. The Hebrew nation was essentially a poetic people,[17] and their literature is full of poetry. But poetry is not systematic. It is not safe, therefore, to deduce particular tenets of faith or moral principles from passages which glow with intensity of feeling. But if a nation's character is revealed in its songs, the deep spirituality and high moral tone of Israel are clearly reflected in that body of religious poetry which extends over a period of a thousand years, from David to the Maccabean age. It is at once national and personal, and is a wonderful record of the human heart in its various moods and yearnings. Underlying all true poetry there is a philosophy of life. God, for the Hebrew psalmist, is the one pervading presence. He is not a mere impersonation of the powers of nature, but a personal Being, righteous and merciful, with whom man stands in the closest relations. Holy and awful, indeed, hating iniquity and exacting punishment upon the wicked, He is also tender and pitiful--a Father of the oppressed, who bears their burdens, forgives their iniquities, and crowns them with tender mercy.[18] All nature speaks to the Hebrew of God. He is no far-off creator, but immanent in all His works.[19] He presides over mankind, and provides for the manifold wants of

his creatures. It is this thought which gives unity to the nation, and binds the tribes into a common brotherhood. God is their personal friend. In war and peace, in worship and labour, at home and in exile, it is to Jehovah they look for strength and light and joy. He is their Shepherd and Redeemer, under whose wings they trust. Corresponding to this sublime faith, the virtues of obedience and fidelity are dwelt upon, while the ideal of personal righteousness and purity is constantly held forth. It is no doubt largely temporal blessings which the psalmists emphasise, and the rewards of integrity are chiefly those of material and earthly prosperity. The hope of the future life is nowhere clearly expressed in the Old Testament, and while in the Psalter here and there a dim yearning for a future with God breaks forth, hardly any of these poems illumine the destiny of man beyond the grave. The hope of Israel was limited mostly to this earth. The land beyond the shadows does not come within their purview. Like a child, the psalmist is content to know that his divine Father is near him here and now. When exactly the larger hope emerged we cannot say. But gradually, with the breaking up of the national life and under the pressure of suffering, a clearer vision dawned. With the limitations named, it is a sublime outlook upon life and a high-toned morality which the Psalter discloses. Poetry, indeed, idealises, and no doubt the Israelites did not always live up to their aspirations; but men who could give utterance to a faith so clear, to a penitence so deep, and to longings so lofty and spiritual as these Psalms contain are not the least among the heralds of the kingdom of Christ.

We cannot enlarge upon the ethical ideas of the other writings of the Old Testament, the books of Wisdom, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. Their teaching, while not particularly lofty, is generally healthy and practical, consisting of homely commonplaces and shrewd observations upon life and conduct. The motives appealed to are not always the highest, and frequently have regard only to earthly prosperity and worldly policy. It must not, however, be overlooked that moral practice is usually allied with the fear of God, and the right choice of wisdom is represented as the dictate of piety not less than the sanction of prudence. The writers of the Wisdom literature are the humanists of their age. As distinguished from the idealism of the prophets, they are realists who look at life in a somewhat utilitarian way. With the prophets, however, they are at one in regarding the inferiority of ceremonial to obedience and sincerity. God is the ruler of the world, and man's task is to live in obedience to Him. What God requires is correct outward behaviour, self-restraint, and consideration of others. In estimating the Ethics of Israel the fact that it was a preparatory stage in the revelation of God's will must not be overlooked. We are not surprised, therefore, that, judged by the absolute standard of the New Testament, the morality of the Old Testament must be pronounced imperfect. In two respects at least, in intent and extent, it is deficient.

(1) It is lacking in Depth. There is a tendency to dwell upon the sufficiency of external acts rather than the necessity of inward disposition. At the same time, in the Psalter and prophecy inward purity is recognised.[20] Further, the character of Jehovah is sometimes presented in a repellent aspect; as in the threatenings of the second commandment; the treatment of the children of Achan and the Sons of Korah; the seeming injustice of God, implied in the complaint of Moses, and the protests of Abraham and David. But again there are not wanting more kindly features of the Divine Being; and the Fatherhood of God finds frequent expression. Though the penal code is severe, a gentler spirit shines through many of its provisions, and protection is afforded to the wage-earner, the dependent, and the poor; while the care of slaves, foreigners, and even lower animals is not overlooked.[21] Again, it has been noticed that the motives to which the Old Testament appeals

are often mercenary. Material prosperity plays an important part as an inducement to well-doing. The good which the pious patriarch or royal potentate contemplates is something which is calculated to enrich himself or advance his people. But here we must not forget that God's revelation is progressive, and His dealing with man educative. There is naturally a certain accommodation of the divine law to the various stages of the moral apprehension of the Jewish people. Gradually the nation is being carried forward by the promise of material benefits to the deeper and more inward appreciation of spiritual blessings.

(2) It is lacking in Scope. In regard to universality the Hebrew ideal, it must be acknowledged, is deficient. God is usually represented as the God of Israel alone, and not as the God of all men, and the obligations of veracity, honesty, and mercy are confined within the limits of the nation. It is true that a prominent commandment given to Israel and endorsed by our Lord runs thus: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'^[22] But the extent of the obligation seems to be restricted by the context: 'Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.' It is contended that the word translated 'neighbour' bears a wider import than the English term, and is really applicable to any person. The larger idea is expressed in verses 33, 34, where the word 'stranger' or 'foreigner' is substituted for neighbour. And there are passages in which the stranger is regarded as the special client of God, and is enjoined to look to Him for protection. The Jews were not in practice, however, faithful to the humanitarianism of their law, and, in keeping with other nations, showed a tendency to restrict divine favours within the limits of their own land, and to maintain throughout their history an attitude of aloofness and repellent isolation which even amounted to intolerance towards other races. In early days, however, the obligation of hospitality was regarded as sacred.^[23] Nor must we forget that, whatever may have been the Jewish practice, the promise enshrined in their revelation involves the unity of mankind; while several of the prophecies and Psalms look forward to a world-wide blessing.^[24] In Isaiah we even read, 'God of the whole earth shall He be called.'^[25] The stream of preparation for Christianity thus flowed steadily through three channels, the Greek, the Roman, and the Jew. Each contributed something to the fullness of the time. The problem of Greek civilisation was the problem of freedom, the realisation of self-dependence and self-determination. In the pursuit of these ends Greece garnered conclusions which are the undying possessions of the world. If to the graces of self-abasement, meekness and charity it remained a stranger, it gave a new worth to the individual, and showed that without the virtues of wisdom, courage, steadfastness and justice man could not attain to moral character. The Roman's gift was unbending devotion to duty. With a genius for rule he forced men into one polity; and by levelling material barriers he enabled the nations to commune, and made a highway for the message of freedom and brotherhood. But, intoxicated with material glory, he became blind to spiritual good, and in his universal toleration he emptied all faiths of their content, driving the masses to superstition, and the few who yearned for a higher life to withdrawal from the world. The Jewish contribution was righteousness. Not specially distinguished by intellectual powers, nor gifted in political enterprise, his endowment was spiritual insight, and by his dispersion throughout the world he made others the sharers of his inheritance. But his tendency was to keep his privilege to himself, or so to load it with legal restrictions as to bar its acceptance for strangers; and in his pride of isolation he failed to recognise his Deliverer when He came.

Thus, negatively and positively, by failure and by partial attainment, the world was prepared for Him who was the desire of all nations. In Christ were gathered up the wisdom of the Greek, the courage of the Roman, the righteousness of the Jew; and He who came not to destroy but to fulfil at once interpreted and satisfied the longings of the ages.

[1] Apologia, pp. 38-9.

[2] Cf. Adam, Vitality of Platonism, p. 3.

[3] Nic. Ethics, bk. i. chap. 5.

[4] *hitharnikai ergasiai*, Arist., Politics, iii. 'There is nothing common between a master and his slave,' Nic. Ethics, viii.

[5] Butcher, Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects, quoted by Barbour, Philos. Study of Christian Ethics, p. 11. Cf. also Burnet, Ethics of Aristotle, p. 73. 'The "mean" is really the true nature of the soul when fully developed.' [6] Hist. of Europ. Morals, vol. i. chap. ii.

[7] See Author's Ethics of St. Paul for further discussion of relation of Paul to Stoics.

[8] Cf. E. Caird, Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, vol. i. p. 48.

[9] Cf. Caird, idem. Pfeleiderer, Vorbereitung des Christentums in der Griech. Philos.; Wenley, Preparation for Christianity.

[10] Exodus 20:1-26; Deuteronomy 5:1-33.

[11] Exodus 20:-23 [12] Amos 5:25; Hosea 6:6; Isaiah 1:11-13.

[13] Cf. Wallace, Lectures and Essays on Natural Theol. and Ethics, p. 183.

[14] Micah 6:8.

[15] Isaiah 1:13-17; Micah 6:7.

[16] Habakkuk 2:4; cf. Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:2.

[17] Though Houston Chamberlain, in his recent work, The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, maintains that they were 'a most prosaic, materialistic people, without any real sense of poetry.' [18] Psalms 51:1-19.

[19] Psalms 19:1-14.

[20] Psalms 51:1-19; Isaiah 1:1-31.

[21] Deuteronomy 24:14; Deuteronomy 24:15; Jeremiah 22:13-17; Matthew 3:5; Deuteronomy 25:4.

[22] Leviticus 19:18.

[23] Genesis 23:1-20; Genesis 19:1-38 [24] Isaiah 61:1-11; Psalms 22:27; Psalms 48:2-10; Psalms 87:1-7.

[25] Isaiah 54:5.

Estimate of Man

SECTION B PERSONALITY CHAPTER IV THE ESTIMATE OF MAN

Having thus far laid the foundations of our study by a discussion of its presuppositions and sources, we are now prepared to consider man as the personal subject of the new life. The spirit of God which takes hold of man and renews his life must not be conceived as a foreign power breaking the continuity of consciousness. The natural is the basis of the supernatural. It is not a new personality which is created; it is the old that is transformed and completed. If there was not already implicit in man that which predisposed him for the higher life, a consciousness to which the spirit could appeal, then Christianity would be simply a mechanical or magical influence without ethical significance and having no relation to the past history of the individual. But that is not the teaching of our Lord or of His apostles. We are bound, therefore, to assume a certain substratum of powers, physical, mental and moral, as constituting the raw material of which the new personality is formed. The spirit of God does not quench the natural faculties of man, but works through and upon them, raising them to a higher value.[1]

I. But before proceeding to a consideration of these elements of human consciousness to which Christianity appeals, we must glance at two opposite theories of human nature, either of which, if the complete view of man, would be inimical to Christianity.[2]

1. The first view is that man by nature is morally good. His natural impulses are from birth wholly virtuous, and require only to be left to their own operation to issue in a life of perfection. Those who favour this contention claim the support of Scripture. Not only does the whole tone of the Bible imply the inherent goodness of primitive man, but many texts both in the Old and New Testaments suggest that God made man upright.[3] Among the Greeks, and especially the Stoics, this view prevailed. All nature was regarded as the creation of perfect reason, and the primitive state as one of uncorrupted innocence. Pelagius espoused this doctrine, and it continued to influence dogmatic theology not only in the form of Semi-Pelagianism, but even as modifying the severer tenets of Augustine. The theory received fresh importance during the revolutionary movement of the eighteenth century, and found a strong exponent in Rousseau. 'Let us sweep away all conventions and institutions of man's making and get back to the simplicity of a primitive age.' The man of nature is guileless, and his natural instincts would preserve him in uncorrupted purity if they were not perverted by the artificial usages of society. So profoundly did this theory dominate the thoughts of men that its influence may be detected not only in the political fanaticism which found expression in the French Revolution, but also in the practical views of the Protestant Church acting as a deterrent to missionary effort.[4] This view of human nature, though not perhaps formally stated, finds expression in much of the literature of the present day. Professor James cites Theodore Parker and other leaders of the liberal movement in New England of last century as representatives of the tendency.[5] These writers do not wholly ignore moral effect, but they make light of sin, and regard it not as something positive, but merely as a stage in the development of man.

2. The other theory of human nature goes to the opposite extreme. Man by nature is utterly depraved, and his natural instincts are wholly bad. Those who take this view also appeal to Scripture: 'Man is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.' Many passages in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of St. Paul, seem to emphasise the utter degradation of man. It was not, however, until the time of Augustine that this idea of innate depravity was formulated into a doctrine. The Augustinian dogma has coloured all later theology. In the Roman Catholic Church, even in such a writer as Pascal, and in Protestantism, under the influence of Calvin, the complete corruption of man's nature has been depicted in the blackest hues.

These theories of human nature represent aspects of truth, and are false only in their isolation. The doctrine that man is innocent by nature is not in agreement with history. Nowhere is the noble savage to be found. The primitive man exhibits the same tendencies as his more civilised neighbour, and his animal passions are indulged without control of reason or consideration for others. Indeed, Hobbes's view of early society as a state of war and rapacity is much truer to fact than Rousseau's. The noble savage is simply a fiction of the imagination, an abstraction obtained by withdrawing him from all social environment. But even could we conceive of a human being kept from infancy in isolation, he would not fulfil the true idea of virtue, but would simply develop into a negative creature, a mutilated being bereft of all that constitutes our notion of humanity. Such experiences as are possible only in society--all forms of goodness as suggested by such words as 'love,' 'sympathy,' 'service'--would never emerge at all. The native instincts of man are simply potencies or capacities for morality; they must have a life of opportunity for their evolution and exercise. The abstract self prior to and apart from all objective experience is an illusion. It is only in relation to a world of moral beings that the moral life becomes possible for man. The innocence which the advocates of this theory contend for is something not unlike the non-rational existence of the animal. It is true that the brute is not immoral, but neither is it moral. The whole significance of the passions as they exist in man lies in the fact that they are not purely animal, but, since they belong to man, are always impregnated with reason. It is reason that gives to them their moral worth, and it is because man must always put his self into every desire or impulse that it becomes the instrument either of virtue or of vice.[6] But if the theory of primitive purity is untenable, not less so is that of innate depravity. Here, also, its advocates are not consistent with themselves. Even the systems of theology derived from Augustine do not contend that man was created with an evil propensity. His sin was the result of an historical catastrophe. In his paradisiacal condition man is conceived as possessing a nobility and innocence of nature far beyond that even which Rousseau depicted. Milton, in spite of his Calvinistic puritanism, has painted a picture of man's ideal innocence which for idyllic charm is unequalled in literature.[7] Nor does historical inquiry bear out the theory of the utter depravity of man. The latest anthropological research into the condition of primitive man suggests rather that even the lowest forms of savage life are not without some dim consciousness of a higher power and some latent capacity for good.[8] Finally, these writers are not more successful when they claim the support of the Bible. Not only are there many examples of virtue in patriarchal times, but, as we have seen, there are not a few texts which imply the natural goodness of man. Our Lord repeatedly assumes the affinity with goodness of those who had not hitherto come into contact with the Gospel, as in the case of Jairus, the rich young ruler, and the Syrophenician woman. It has been affirmed by Wernle[9] that the Apostle Paul in the interests of salvation grossly exaggerates the condition of the natural man. 'He violently extinguished every other light in the world so that Jesus might shine in it alone.' But

this surely is a misstatement. It is true that no more scathing denunciation of sinful human nature has ever been presented than the account of heathen immorality to be found in the first chapter of Romans. Yet the apostle does not actually affirm, nor even imply, that pagan society was so utterly corrupt that it had lost all knowledge of moral good. Though so bad as to be beyond hope of recovery by natural effort, it was not so bad as to have quenched in utter darkness the light which lighteth every man.

3. Christianity, while acknowledging the partial truth of both of these theories, reconciles them. If, on the one hand, man were innately good and could of himself attain to righteousness, there would be no need of a gospel of renewal. But history and experience alike show that that is not the case. If, on the other hand, man were wholly bad, had no susceptibility for virtue and truth, then there would be nothing in him, as we have seen, which could respond to the Christian appeal.[10] Christianity alone offers an answer to the question in which Pascal presents the great antithesis of human nature: 'If man was not made for God, how is it that he can be happy only in God? And if he is made for God, how is he so opposite to God?'[11] However, then, we may account for the presence of evil in human nature, a true view of Christianity involves the conception of a latent spiritual element in man, a capacity for goodness to which his whole being points. Matter itself may be said not merely to exist for spirit, but to have within it already the potency of the higher forms of life; and just as nature is making towards humanity, and in humanity at last finds itself; as 'Striving to be man, the worm Mounts through all the spires of form,'[13]

{60} so man, even in his most primitive state, has within him the promise of higher things. No theory of his origin can interfere with the assumption that he belongs to a moral Sphere, and is capable of a life which is shaping itself to spiritual ends. Whatever be man's past history and evolution, he has from the beginning been made in God's image, and bears the divine impress in all the lineaments of body and soul. His degradation cannot wholly obliterate his inherent nobility, and indeed his actual corruption bears witness to his possible holiness. Granting the hypothesis of evolution, matter even in its crudest beginnings contains potentially all the rich variety of the natural and spiritual life. The reality of a growing thing lies in its highest form of being. In the light of the last we explain the first. If the universe is, as science pronounces, an organic totality which is ever converting its promise into actuality, then 'the ultimate interpretation even of the lowest existence of the world, cannot be given except on principles which are adequate to explain the highest.'[13] Christian morality is therefore nothing else than the morality prepared from all eternity, and is but the highest realisation of that which man even at his lowest has ever been, though unconsciously, striving after. All that is best and highest in man, all that he is capable of yet becoming, has really existed within him from the very first, just as the flower and leaf and fruit are contained implicitly in the seedling. This is the Pauline view of human nature. Jesus Christ, according to the apostle, is the End and Consummation of the whole creation. Everywhere in all men there is a capacity for Christ. Whatever be his origin, man comes upon the stage of being bearing within him a great and far-reaching destiny. There is in him, as Browning says, 'a tendency to God.' He is not simply what he is now, but all that he is yet to be.

II. Assuming, then, the inherent spirituality of man, we may now proceed to examine his moral consciousness with a view to seeing how its various constituents form what we have called the substratum of the Christian life.

1. We must guard against seeming to adopt the old and discredited psychology which divides man into a number of separate and independent faculties. Man is not made like a machine, of a number of adjusted parts. He is a unity, a living organism, in which every part has something of all the others; and all together, animated by one spirit, constitute a Living whole which we call personality. While the Bible is rich in terms denoting the different constituents of man, neither the Old Testament nor the New regards human nature as a plurality of powers. A kind of unity or hierarchy of the natural faculties is assumed, and amid all the difference of function and variety of operation it is undeniable that the New Testament writers generally, and particularly St. Paul, presuppose a unity of consciousness--a single ego, or Soul. It is unnecessary to discuss the question, much debated by Biblical psychologists, as to whether the apostle recognises a threefold or a twofold division of man.[14] Our view is that he recognised only a twofold division, body and soul, which, however, he always regarded as constituting a unity, the body itself being psychical or interpenetrated with spirit, and the spirit always acting upon and working through the physical powers.

Man is a unique phenomenon in the world. Even on his physical side he is not a piece of dead matter, but is instinct through and through with spirit. And on his psychical side he is not an unsubstantial wraith, but a being inconceivable apart from outward embodiment. Perhaps the most general term which we may adopt is psyche or Soul--the living self or vital and animating principle which is at once the seat of all bodily sensation and the source of the higher cognitive faculties.

2. The fact of ethical interest from which we must proceed is that man, in virtue of his spiritual nature, is akin to God, and participates in the three great elements of the divine Personality--thought, love and will.[15] Personality has been called 'the culminating fact of the universe.' And it is the task of man to realise his true personality--to fulfil the law of his highest self. In this work he has to harmonise and bring to the unity of his personal life, by means of one dominating force, the various elements of his nature--his sensuous, emotional, and rational powers. By the constitution of his being he belongs to a larger world, and when he is true to himself he is ever reaching out towards it. From the very beginning of life, and even in the lowest phases of his nature he has within him the potency of the divine. He carries the infinite in his soul, and by reason of his very existence shares the life of God. The value of his soul in this sense is repeatedly emphasised in scripture. In our Lord's teaching it is perhaps the most distinctive note. The soul, or self-conscious spiritual ego, is spoken of as capable of being 'acquired' or 'lost.' [16] It is acquired or possessed when a man seeks to regain the image in which he was created. It is lost when he refuses to respond to those spiritual influences by which Christ besets him, and by means of which the soul is moulded into the likeness of God.

3. A full presentation of this subject would involve a reference even to the physical powers which form an integral part of man and witness to his eternal destiny.

(1) The very body is to be redeemed and sanctified, and made an instrument of the new life in Christ. The extremes of asceticism and self-indulgence, both of which found advocates in Greek philosophy and even in the early Church, have no countenance in scripture. Evil does not reside in the flesh, as the Greeks held, but in the will which uses the flesh for its base ends. Not mutilation but transformation, not suppression but consecration is the Christian ideal. The natural is the basis of the spiritual. Man is the Temple of God, every part of which is sacred. Christ claims to be King of

the body as of every other domain of life. The secret of spiritual progress does not consist in the unflinching destruction of the flesh, but in its firm but kindly discipline for loyal service. It is not, therefore, by leaving the body behind but by taking it up into our higher self that we become spiritual. As Browning says, 'Let us cry all good things Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now Than flesh helps soul.'

Without dwelling further upon the physical elements of man, there are three constituents or functions of personality prominent in the New Testament which claim our consideration, reason, conscience and will. It is just because man possesses, or is mind, conscience and will, that he is capable of responding to the life which Christ offers, and of sharing in the divine character which he reveals.

(2) The term nous, or reason, is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. Christianity highly honours the intellectual powers of man and accords to the mind an important rôle in apprehending and entering into the thoughts and purposes of God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind,' says Jesus. Many are disposed to think that the exercise of faith, the immediate organ of spiritual apprehension, is checked by the interference of reason. But so far from faith and reason being opposed, not only are they necessary to each other, but in all real faith there is an element of reason. In all religious feeling, as in morality, art, and other spheres of human activity, there is the underlying element of reason which is the characteristic of all the activities of a self-conscious intelligence. To endeavour to elicit that element, to infuse into the spontaneous and unsifted conceptions of religious experience the objective clearness, necessity and organic unity of thought--is the legitimate aim of science, in religion as in other spheres. It would be strange if in the highest of all provinces of human experience intelligence must renounce her claim.[17] The Ritschlian value-judgment theory in its disparagement of philosophy is practically a dethronement of reason. And the protest of Pragmatism and the voluntarists generally against what they term 'Intellectualism'[18] and their distrust of the logical faculty, are virtually an avowal of despair and a resort to agnosticism, if not to scepticism. If we are to renounce the quest for objective truth, and accept 'those ideas only which we can assimilate, validate, corroborate,'[19] those ideas in short which are 'practically useful in guiding us to desirable issues,' then it would seem we are committed to a world of subjective caprice and confusion and must give up the belief in a rational view of the universe.

(3) In spite of the wonderful suggestiveness of M. Bergson's philosophy, we are unable to accept the distinction which that writer draws between intuition and intelligence, in which he seems to imply that intuition is the higher of the two activities. Intelligence, according to this writer, is at home exclusively in spatial considerations, in solids, in geometry, but it is to be repelled as a foreign element when it comes to deal with life. Bergson would exclude rational thought and intelligence from life, creation, and initiative. The clearest evidence of intuition is in the works of great artists. 'What is implied is that in artistic creation, in the work of genius and imagination, we have pure novelty issuing from no premeditated or rational idea, but simply pure irrationality and unaccountableness.'[20] The work of art cannot be predicated; it is beyond reason, as life is beyond logic and law.[21] But so far from finding life unintelligible, it would be nearer the truth to say that man's reason can, strictly speaking, understand nothing else.[22] 'Instinct finds,' says Bergson, 'but does not search. Reason searches but cannot find.'[23] 'But,' adds Professor Dewey, 'what we find is meaningless save as measured by searching, and so instincts and

passions must be elevated into reason.'[24] In the lower creatures instinct does the work of reason--sufficiently for the simple conditions in which the animal lives. And in the earlier stages of human life instinct plays an important part. But when man, both as an individual and as humanity, advances to a more complex life, instinct is unequal to the new task confronting him. We cannot be content to be guided by instinct. Reason asserts itself and seeks to permeate all our experiences, and give unity and purpose to all our thoughts and acts. The recent disparagement of intellectualism is probably a reaction against the extreme absolutism of German idealism which, beginning with Kant, found fullest expression in Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. But the true way to meet exclusive rationalism is not to discredit the function of mind, but to give to it a larger domain of experience. We do not exalt faith by emptying it of all intellectual content and reducing it to mere subjective feeling; nor do we explain genius by ascribing its acts to blind, unthinking impulse. 'The real is the rational,' says Hegel. Truth, in other words, presupposes a rational universe which we, as rational beings, must assume in all our thought and effort. To set up faith against reason, or intuition against intelligence is to set the mind against itself. We cannot set up an order of facts, as Professor James would have us do, outside the intellectual realm; for what does not fall within our experience can have for us no meaning, and what for us has no meaning cannot be an object of faith. An ineradicable belief in the rationality of the world is the ultimate basis of all art, morality and religion. To rest in mere intuition or emotion and not to seek objective truth would be for man to renounce his true prerogative and to open the door for all kinds of superstition and caprice.

III. In the truest sense it may be claimed that this is the teaching of Christianity. When Christ says that we are to love God with our minds He seems to imply that there is such a thing as intelligent affection. The distinctive feature of our Lord's claim is that God is not satisfied when His creatures render a merely implicit obedience; He desires also the enthusiastic use of their intellect, intent on knowing everything that it is possible for men to know about His character and ways. And is there not something sublime in this demand of God that the noblest part of man should be consecrated to Him? God reveals Himself in Christ to our highest; and He would have us respond to His manifestations with our highest. Nor is this the attitude of Christ only. The Apostle Paul also honours the mind, and gives to it the supreme place as the organ of apprehending and appropriating divine truth. Mr. Lecky brings the serious charge against Christianity that it habitually disregards the virtues of the intellect. If there is any truth in this statement it refers, not to the genius of the Gospel itself, nor to the earlier exponents of it, but rather to the Church in those centuries which followed the conversion of Constantine. No impartial reader of St. Paul's Epistles can aver that the apostle made a virtue of ignorance and credulity. These documents, which are the earliest exposition of the mind of Christ, impress us rather with the intellectual boldness of their attempt to grapple with the greatest problems of life. Paul was essentially a thinker; and, as Sabatier says, is to be ranked with Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Kant, as one of the mightiest intellectual forces of the world. But not content with being a thinker himself, he sought to make his converts thinkers too, and he does not hesitate to make the utmost demand upon their reasoning faculties. He assumes a natural capacity in man for apprehending the truth, and appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions. The Gospel is styled by him 'the word of truth,' and he bids men 'prove all things.' Worship is not a meaningless ebullition of feeling or a superstitious ritual, but a form of self-expression which is to be enlightened and guided by thought. 'I will pray with the understanding and sing with the understanding.'

It is indeed a strong and virile Christianity which Paul and the other apostles proclaim. It is no magic spell they seek to exert. They are convinced that there is that in the mind of man which is ready to respond to a thoughtful Gospel. If men will only give their unprejudiced minds to God's Word, it is able to make them 'wise unto salvation.' It would lead us beyond the scope of this chapter to consider the peculiar Pauline significance of faith. It is enough to say that while he does not identify it with intellectual assent, as little does he confine it to mere subjective assurance. It is the primary act of the human spirit when brought into contact with divine truth, and it lies at the root of a new ethical power, and of a deeper knowledge of God. If the apostle appears to speak disparagingly of wisdom it is the wisdom of pride, of 'knowledge that puffeth up.' He warns Timothy against 'science falsely so called.' On the whole St. Paul exalts the intellect and bids men attain to the full exercise of their mental powers. 'Be not children in understanding: but in understanding be men.' [25]

If, as we have seen, the body be an integral part of man, and has its place and function in the Christian life, not less, but even more, has the mind a special ethical importance. It is to the intelligence that Christianity appeals, and it is with the rational faculties that moral truth is apprehended and applied to life. Reason in its broadest sense is the most distinctive feature of man, and by means of it he exerts his mightiest influence upon the world. Mental and moral growth are closely connected, and personal character is largely moulded by thought. 'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.' Not only at the beginning of the new life, but in all its after stages the mind is an important factor, and its consecration and cultivation are laid upon us as an obligation by Him in whose image we have been made, and whom to know and serve is our highest end.

[1] See Author's Ethics of St. Paul.

[2] Cf. Murray, Sandbank of Christian Ethics. See also Hegel, Phil. der Religion, vol. ii. p. 210 ff., where the antithesis is finely worked out.

[3] Genesis 1:26; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9.

[4] See Hugh Miller's Essays, quoted by Murray, op. cit., p. 137.

[5] Cf. W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 81-86.

[6] Cf. Goethe's Faust. See also Nietzsche, Götzendämmerung for trenchant criticism of Rousseau.

[7] Murray, idem.

[8] Max Müller, Fraser, Golden Bough, and others.

[9] Anfänge des Christentums.

[10] Cf. Ottley, Christian Ideas and Ideals, p. 52. 'Christianity does justice both to man's inherent instinct that he has been made for God, and to his sense of unworthiness and incapacity.' [11] Pensées, part ii. art. 1.

[12] Emerson.

[13] Ed. Caird, Critical Philosophy of Kant, p. 35.

[14] See Author's Ethics of St. Paul.

[15] Ottley, idem, p. 55.

[16] Luke 21:19.

[17] Cf. John Caird, Introd. to the Philosophy of Religion.

[18] Cf. Wm. James's Pragmatism and A Pluralistic World.

[19] Idem, p. 201.

[20] Cf. Bosanquet, The Principles of Individuality and Value.

[21] Bergson, Evol. Creat., p. 174 f.

[22] Cf. E. Caird, Kant, vol. ii. pp. 530 and 535.

[23] Evol. Creat., p. 159.

[24] Hib. Jour., July 1911.

[25] Some sentences in the above are borrowed from the writer's Ethics of St. Paul.

Witness of Conscience

CHAPTER V THE WITNESS OF CONSCIENCE

Passing from the physical and mental constituents of man, we turn to the more distinctly moral elements; and in this chapter we shall consider that aspect of the human consciousness to which mankind has given the name of 'conscience.' No subject has presented greater difficulties to the moralist, and there are few which require more careful elucidation. From the earliest period of reflection the question how we came to have moral ideas has been a disputed one. At first it was thought that there existed in man a distinct innate faculty or moral sense which was capable of deciding categorically man's duty without reference to history or condition. But in modern times the theory of evolution has discredited the inviolable character of conscience, and sought rather to determine its nature and significance in the light of its origin and development. Only the barest outline of the subject can be attempted here, since our object is simply to show that however we may account for its presence, there is in man, as we know him, some power or function which bears witness to divine truth and fits him to respond to the revelation of Christ. It will be most convenient to consider the subject under three heads: I. the history of the Conception; II. the nature and origin of Conscience; and III. its present validity.

I. History of the Conception.--'The name conscience,' says a writer on the subject, 'appears somewhat late in the history of the world: that for which it stands is as old as mankind.' [1]

1. Without pushing our inquiries back into the legendary lore of savage life, in which we find evidence of the idea in the social institutions and religious enactments of primitive races, it is among the Greeks that the word, if not the idea of conscience, first meets us. Perhaps the earliest trace of the notion is to be found in the mythological conception of the Furies, whose business it was to avenge crime--a conception which might be regarded as the reaction of man's own nature against the violation of better instincts, if not as the reflection or embodiment of what is popularly called conscience. It can scarcely be doubted that the Erinnyes of Aeschylus were deities of remorse, and possess psychological significance as symbols of the primitive action of conscience. [2] Though Sophocles is less of a theologian than Aeschylus, and problems of Ethics count less than the human interest of his story, the law of Nemesis does find in him dramatic expression, and the noble declaration put into the mouth of Antigone concerning the unwritten laws of God that 'know no change and are not of to-day nor yesterday, but must be obeyed in preference to the temporary commandments of men,' [3] is a protest on behalf of conscience against human oppression. And even in Euripides, regarded as an impious scoffer by some scholars, [4] there are not wanting, especially in the example of Alcestis, evidence of belief in that divine justice and moral order of which the virtues of self-devotion and sacrifice in the soul of man are the witness.

Socrates was among the first teachers of antiquity who led the way to that self-knowledge which is of the essence of conscience, and in the 'Daemon,' or inner voice, which he claimed to possess, some writers have detected the trace of the intuitive monitor of man. Plato's discussion of the

question, 'What is the highest good?' involves the capacity of moral judgment, and his conception of reason regulating desire suggests a power in the mind whose function it is to point to the highest good and to subordinate to it all the other impulses of man. In the ethics of Aristotle there is a reference to a faculty in man or 'rule within,' which, he says, the beasts lack. But it is among the Stoics that the word first appears; and it is to the Roman moralist, Seneca, that we are indebted for the earlier definite perception of an abiding consciousness bearing witness concerning a man's own conduct. The writings of Epictetus, Aurelius, and Seneca approach in moral sublimity and searching self-analysis the New Testament Scriptures. It was probably to the Stoics that St. Paul was indebted for the word *syneidêsis* to which he has given so distinctive a meaning that it has coloured and determined the whole later history of the moral consciousness.

2. But if the word as used in the New Testament comes from Greek sources the idea itself was long prevalent in the Jewish conception of life, which, even more than the Greek, was constitutive of, and preparatory to, the Christian view. The word does not, indeed, occur in the Old Testament, but the question of God to Adam, 'Where art thou?' the story of Cain and the curse he was to suffer for the murder of his brother; the history of Joseph's dealing with his brethren; the account of David's sin and conviction, are by implication appeals to conscience. Indeed, the whole history of Israel, from the time when the promise was given to Abraham and the law through Moses until the denunciations of wrong-doing and the predictions of doom of the later prophets, is one long education of the moral sense. It is the problem of conscience that imparts its chief interest to the book of Job; and one reason why the Psalms in all ages have been so highly prized is because they are the cries of a wounded conscience, and the confessions of a convicted and contrite heart.

3. If we turn to the New Testament we find, as we might expect, a much clearer testimony to the reality of the conscience. The word came into the hands of the New Testament writers ready-made, but they gave to it a richer meaning, so that it is to them we must go if we would understand the nature and the supremacy of the conscience. The term occurs thirty-one times in the New Testament, but it does not appear once in the Gospels. It is, indeed, principally a Pauline expression, and to the apostle of the Gentiles more than to any other writer is due the clear conception and elucidation of the term. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the doctrine itself depends entirely upon the use of the word. Our Lord never, indeed, employs the term, but surely no teacher ever sounded the depths of the human heart as He did. It was His mission to reveal men to themselves, to convict them of sin, and show the need of that life of righteousness and purity which He came to give. 'Why even of yourselves,' He said, 'judge ye not what is right?' Christ, indeed, might be called the conscience of man. To awaken, renew and enlighten the moral sense of individuals, to make them know what they were and what they were capable of becoming was the work of the Son of Man, and in contact with Him every one was morally unveiled. The word occurs twice in Acts, five times in Hebrews, three times in the Epistles of Peter, and more than twenty times in the Pauline Epistles. St. Paul's doctrine of the conscience is contained in Romans 2:14-15, where he speaks of the Gentiles being 'a law unto themselves,' inasmuch as they possess a 'law written in their hearts,' 'their conscience bearing witness, therewith accusing or excusing them.' The idea underlying the passage is the responsibility of all men for their actions, their condemnation in sin, and their acceptance in righteousness. This applies to Gentiles as well as Jews, and it applies to them because, though they have not the explicit revelation of the law, they have a revelation of the good in their hearts. The passage

therefore teaches two things: (1) That man has received a revelation of good sufficient at all stages of his history to make him morally responsible; and (2) That man possesses a moral faculty which indeed is not a separate power, but the whole moral consciousness or personality in virtue of which he recognises and approves of the good which, either as the law written in his heart or as the law communicated in the Decalogue, has been revealed to him, and by whose authority he judges himself.

II. Nature, and Origin of Conscience.--While experience seems to point to the existence of something in man witnessing to the right, there is great diversity of view as to the nature of this moral element. The word 'Conscience' stands for a concept whose meaning is far from well defined, and the lack of definiteness has left its trace upon ethical theories. While some moralists assign conscience to the rational or intellectual side of man, and make it wholly a faculty of judgment; others attribute it to feeling or impulse, and make it a sense of pleasure or pain; others again associate it more closely with the will, and regard its function to be legislative or imperative. These differences of opinion reveal the complexity of the nature of conscience. The fact is, that it belongs to all these departments--the intellectual, emotional, and volitional--and ought to be regarded not as a single faculty distinct from the particular decisions, motives, and acts of man, not as an activity foreign to the ego, but as the expression of the whole personality. The question of the origin of conscience, though closely connected with its nature, is for ethics only of secondary importance. It is desirable, however, to indicate the two main theories which have been held regarding its genesis. While there are several varieties, they may be divided broadly into two--Intuitionism and Evolutionism.

1. Nativism, of which Intuitionism is the most common form, regards the conscience as a separate natural endowment, coeval with the creation of man. Every individual, it is maintained, has been endowed by nature with a distinct faculty or organ by which he can immediately and clearly pronounce upon the rightness or wrongness of his own actions. In its most pronounced form this theory maintains that man has not merely a general consciousness of moral distinctions, but possesses from the very first, apart from all experience and education, a definite and clear knowledge of the particular vices which ought to be avoided and the particular virtues which ought to be practised. This theory is usually connected with a form of theism which maintains that the conscience is particularly a divine gift, and is, indeed, God's special witness or oracle in the heart of man.

Though there would seem to be an element of truth in intuitionism, since man, to be man at all, must be conceived as made for God and having that in him which points to the end or ideal of his being, still in its most extreme form it would not be difficult to show that this theory is untenable. It is objectionable, because it involves two assumptions, of which the one conflicts with experience, and the other with the psychological nature of man.

(1) Experience gives us no warrant for supposing that duty is always the same, and that conscience is therefore exempt from change. History shows rather that moral convictions only gradually emerge, and that the laws and customs of one age are often repudiated by the next. What may seem right to one man is no longer so to his descendant. History records deeds committed in one generation in the name of conscience which in the same name a later generation has condemned with horror. Moreover, the possibility of a conflict between duties proves that

unconditional truth exists at no stage of moral development. There is no law so sacred that it may not in special cases have to yield to the sacredness of a higher law. When duties conflict, our choice cannot be determined by any a priori principle residing in ourselves. It must be governed by that wider conception of the moral life which is to be gained through one's previous development, and on the basis of a ripe moral experience.[5] (2) Nor is this theory consistent with the known nature of man. We know of no separate and independent organ called conscience. Man must not be divided against himself. Reason and feeling enter into all acts of will, since these are not processes different in kind, but elements of voluntary activity itself and inseparable from it. It is impossible for a man to be determined in his actions or judgments by a mere external formula of duty, a 'categorical imperative,' as Kant calls it, apart from motives. Moreover, all endowments may be regarded as divine gifts, and it is a precarious position to claim for one faculty a spiritually divine or supernatural origin which is denied to others. Man is related to God in his whole nature. The view which regards the law of duty as something foreign to man, stern and unchangeable in its decrees, and in nowise dependent upon the gradual development and growing content of the moral life is not consistent either with history or psychology.

2. Evolutionalism, which since the time of Darwin has been applied by Spencer and others to account for the growth of our moral ideas, holds that conscience is the result of a process of development, but does not limit the process to the life of the individual. It extends to the experience of the race. While admitting the existence of conscience as a moral faculty in the rational man of to-day, it holds that it did not exist in his primitive ancestors. Earlier individuals accumulated a certain amount of experience and moral knowledge, the result of which, as a habit or acquired capacity, was handed down to their successors. From the first man has been a member of society, and is what he is in virtue of his relation to it. All that makes him man, all his powers of body and mind, are inherited. His instincts and desires, which are the springs of action, are themselves the creation of heredity, association and environment. The individual takes its shape at every point from its relation to the social organism of which it is a part. What man really seeks from the earliest is satisfaction. 'No school,' says Mr. Spencer, 'can avoid taking for the ultimate moral aim a desirable state of feeling.' [6] Prolonged experience of pleasure in connection with actions which serve social ends has resulted in certain physiological changes in the brain and nervous system rendering these actions constant. Thus, according to Spencer, is begotten conscience.

While acknowledging the service which the evolutionary theory has done in calling attention to the place and function of experience and social environment in the development of the moral life, and in showing that moral judgment, like every other capacity, must participate in the gradual unfolding of personality, as a conclusive explanation of conscience it must be pronounced insufficient. Press the analysis of sensation as far back as we please, and make an analysis of instincts and feelings as detailed as possible, we never get in man a mere sensation, as we find it in the lower animal; it is always sensation related to, and modified by, a self. In the simplest human instincts there is always a spiritual element which is the basis of the possibility at once of knowledge and morality. 'That countless generations,' says Green, 'should have passed during which a transmitted organism was progressively modified by reaction on its surroundings, by struggle for existence or otherwise, till its functions became such that an eternal consciousness could realise or produce itself through them--might add to the wonder with which the consideration of what we do and are

must always fill us, but it could not alter the results of that consideration.'[7] No process of evolution, even though it draws upon illimitable ages, can evolve what was not already present in the form of a spiritual potency. The empiric treatment of conscience as the result of social environment and culture leads inevitably back to the assumption of some rudimentary moral consciousness without which the development of a moral sense would be an impossibility. The history of mankind, moreover, shows that conscience, so far from being merely the reflex of the prevailing customs and institutions of a particular age, has frequently closed its special character by reacting upon and protesting against the recognised traditions of society. The individual conscience has often been in advance of its times; and the progress of man has been secured as much by the champions of liberty as by those who conform to accepted customs. In all moral advance there comes a stage when, in the conflict of habit and principle, conscience asserts itself, not only in revealing a higher ideal, but in urging men to seek it.

III. The Validity and Witness of Conscience.--It is not, however, with the origin of conscience, but with its capacities and functions in its developed state that Ethics is primarily concerned. The beginning must be interpreted by the end, and the process by the result to which it tends.

1. The Christian doctrine is committed neither to the intuitionist nor the evolutionist theory, but rather may be said to reconcile both by retaining that which is true in each. While it holds to the inherent ability on the part of a being made in God's image to recognise at the different stages of his growth and development God's will as it has been progressively revealed, it avoids the necessity of conceiving man as possessing from the very beginning a full-fledged organ of infallible authority. The conscience participates in man's general progress and enlightenment. Nor can the moral development of the individual be held separate from the moral development of the race. As there is a moral solidarity of mankind, so the individual conscience is conditional by the social conscience. The individual does not start in life with a full-grown moral apparatus any more than he starts with a matured physical frame. The most distinctively spiritual attainments of man have their antecedents in less human and more animal capacities. As there is a continuity of human life, so individuals and peoples inherit the moral assets of previous generations, and incorporate in their experience all past attainments. Conscience is involved in man's moral history. It suffers in his sin and alienation from God, becoming clouded in its insight and feeble in its testimony, but it shares also in his spiritual advancement, growing more sensitive and decisive in its judgments.

(1) Conscience, as the New Testament teaches, can be perverted and debased. It is always open to a free agent to disobey his conscience and reject its authority. On the intuitionist theory, which regards the conscience as a separable and independent faculty, it would be difficult to vindicate the terrible consequences of such conduct. It is because the conscience is the man himself as related to the consciousness of the divine will that the effects are so injurious. Conscience may be (a) Stained, defiled, and polluted in its very texture (1 Corinthians 8:7); (b) Branded or seared (1 Timothy 4:2), rendered insensible to all feeling for good; (c) Perverted, in which the very light within becomes darkness. In this last stage the man calls evil good and good evil--the very springs of his nature are poisoned and the avenues of his soul are closed.

'This is death, and the sole death, When man's loss comes to him from his gain.'[8]

(2) But if conscience can be perverted it may also be improved. The education is twofold, social and individual. Through society, says Green, personality is actualised. 'No individual can make a conscience for himself. He always needs a society to make it for him.' [9] There is no such thing as a purely individual conscience. Man can only realise himself, come to his best, in relation to others. The conditions amid which a man is born and reared--the home, the school, the church, the state--are the means by which the conscience is exercised and educated. But the individual is not passive. He has also a part to play; and the whole task of man may be regarded as an endeavour to make his conscience effective in life. The New Testament writers refrain from speaking of the conscience as an unerring and perfect organ. Their language implies rather the possibility of its gradual enlightenment; and St. Paul specially dwells upon the necessity of 'growing in spiritual knowledge and perception.' As life advances moral judgment may be modified and corrected by fuller knowledge, and the perception of a particular form of conduct as good may yield to the experience of something better.

2. 'It is one of the most wonderful things,' says Professor Wundt, 'about moral development, that it unites so many conditions of subordinate value in the accomplishment of higher results,' [10] and the worth of morality is not endangered because the grounds of its realisation in special cases do not always correspond in elevation to the moral ideas. The conscience is not an independent faculty which issues its mandates irrespective of experience. Its judgments are always conditioned by motives. The moral imperatives of conscience may be grouped under four heads: [11] (1) External constraints, including all forms of punishment for immoral actions and the social disadvantages which such actions involve. These can only produce the lowest grade of morality, outward propriety, the mere appearance of virtue which has only a negative value in so far as it avoids what is morally offensive. (2) Internal constraints, consisting of influences excited by the example of others, by public opinion and habits formed through education and training. (3) Self-satisfaction, originating in the agent's own consciousness. It may be a sense of pleasure or feeling of self-approbation: or higher still, the idea of duty for its own sake, commonly called 'conscientiousness.' (4) The ideal of life, the highest imperative of conscience. Here the nobility of life, as a whole, the supreme life-purpose, gives meaning and incentive to each and every action. The ideal of life is not, however, something static and completed, given once and for all. It grows with the enlightenment of the individual and the development of humanity. The consciousness of every age comprehends it in certain laws and ends of life. The highest form of the ideal finds its embodiment in what are called noble characters. These ethical heroes rise, in rare and exceptional circumstances, above the ordinary level of common morality, gathering up into themselves the entire moral development of the past, and radiating their influence into the remotest distances of the future. They are the embodiments of the conscience of the race, at once the standard and challenge of the moral life of mankind, whose influence awakens the slumbering aspirations of men, and whose creative genius affects the whole history of the world, lifting it to higher levels of thought and endeavour. The supreme example--unique, however, both in kind and degree, and differing by its uniqueness from every other life which has in some measure approximated to the ideal--is disclosed in Jesus Christ. Thus it is that the moral consciousness of the world generally and of the individual in particular, of which the conscience is the organ and expression, develops from less to more, under the influence of the successive imperatives of conduct, till finally it attains to the vision of the greatness of life as it is revealed in its supreme and all-commanding ideal. [12]

3. Finally, in this connection the question of the permanence of conscience may be referred to. Is the ultimate of life a state in which conscience will pervade every department of a man's being, dominating all his thoughts and activities? or is the ideal condition one in which conscience shall be outgrown and its operation rendered superfluous? A recent writer on Christian ethics^[13] makes the remarkable statement that where there is no sense of sin conscience has no function, and he draws the inference that where there is complete normality and perfect moral health conscience will be in abeyance. Satan, inasmuch as he lacks all moral instinct, can know nothing of conscience; and, because of His sinlessness, Jesus must also be pronounced conscienceless. Hence the paradox attributed to Machiavelli: 'He who is without conscience is either a Christ or a devil.' But though it is true that the Son of Man had no actual experience of sin, and could not, indeed, feel remorse or contrition, yet in so far as He was man there was in Him the possibility of sin, and in the intimate relation which He bore to the human race He had a most accurate and clear knowledge both of the meaning and consequences of evil. So far from saying that Christ had no conscience, it would be nearer the truth to say that He had a perfect conscience, a personality and fullness of consciousness which was a complete reflection of, and harmony with, the highest conceivable good. The confusion of thought into which Professor Lemme seems to fall is due, we cannot help thinking, to the too restricted and negative signification he gives to conscience. Conscience is not merely the faculty of reproving and approving one's own conduct when brought into relation with actual sin. It is involved in every moral judgment. A good conscience is not only the absence of an evil one. It has also a positive sanctioning value. The 'ought' of life is constantly present. It is the whole man ever conscious of, and confronted by, his ideal self. The conscience participates in man's gradual progress and enlightenment; so far from the individual growing towards a condition in which self-judgment ceases, he is progressing rather in moral discernment, and becoming more and more responsive to the will of Him whose impress and image he bears upon his soul. The tendency of modern physiological accounts of conscience has been to undermine its authority and empty life of its responsibility, but no theory of the origin of conscience must be permitted to invalidate its judgments. If conscience has any moral worth it is that it contains the promise and witness of God. The prime question is, What is the nature of its testimony? According to the teaching of Scripture it bears witness to the existence of a higher than man--to a divine Person with whom he is spiritually akin and to whom he is accountable.

'God's most intimate presence in the soul.' As the revelation of God's will grows clearer man's ideal becomes loftier. Hence a man's conscience is the measure of his moral life. It reveals God, and in the light of God reveals man to himself. We carry a 'forever' within our bosom, 'ein Gott in unserer Brust,'^[14] as Goethe says, which reminds us that even while denizens of this earth we are citizens of heaven and the sharers of an eternal life. Like another John the Baptist, conscience points to one greater than itself. It emphasises the discord that exists between the various parts of man's nature, a discord which it condemns but cannot remove. It can judge, but it cannot compel. Hence it places man before Christ, and bids him yield to the sway of a new transforming power. As one has finely said, 'He who has implanted in every breast such irrefragible testimony to the right, and such unappeasable yearnings for its complete triumph, now comes in His own perfect way to reveal Himself as the Lord of conscience, the Guide of its perplexities, the Strength of its weakness and the Perfecter of its highest hopes.'^[15] [1] Davidson, *The Christian Conscience*.

[2] Cf. Symonds, *Studies of Greek Poets*, first series, p. 191.

[3] Antigone, Plumptre's Trans., 455-9.

[4] Cf. Bunsen, God in History, vol. ii. p. 224; also Campbell, Religion in Greek Literature.

[5] Cf. Wundt, Ethik, vol. ii. p. 66.

[6] Data of Ethics, p. 18.

[7] Proleg., section 83.

[8] Browning.

[9] Proleg., section 321.

[10] Ethik, vol. ii. p. 66.

[11] idem.

[12] Cf. Wundt, Ethik, vol. ii. pp. 67-74.

[13] Lemme, Christliche Ethik, vol. i.

[14] Tasso, act iii. scene 2.

[15] Davidson, The Christian Conscience, p. 113.

Miracle of Will

CHAPTER VI 'THE MIRACLE OF THE WILL'

Closely connected with the conscience as a moral capacity is the power of self-determination, or as it is popularly called--free-will. If conscience is the manifestation of man as knowing, will is more especially his manifestation as a being who acts. The subject which we now approach presents at once a problem and a task. The nature of freedom has been keenly debated from the earliest times, and the history of the problem of the will is almost the history of philosophy. The practical question which arises is whether the individual has any power by which the gulf between the natural and the spiritual can be transcended. Can man choose and decide for a spiritual world above that in which he is by nature involved? The revelation of the good must, indeed, precede the activity of man. But at the same time the change cannot merely happen to him. He cannot simply be a passive recipient. The new life must be taken up by his own activity, and be made his by his own decision and acceptance. This responsive activity on the part of man is the task which life presents to the will.

Much obviously depends upon the answer we are able to give to this question. If man has no power of choice, no capacity of self-determination, and is nothing more than a part of the natural world, then the ethical life is at once ruled out of court. The difficulties connected with the problem of moral freedom resolve themselves mainly into three: a scientific, a psychological, and a theological.

I. On the part of natural science it is claimed that man is subject, like everything else, to physical necessity.

II. From the psychological standpoint it is urged that man's actions are always determined by the strongest motive.

III. On the theological side it is alleged that human freedom is incompatible with divine Sovereignty. A complete doctrine of freedom would require to be examined in the light of these three objections. For our purpose it will be sufficient to indicate briefly the value of these difficulties, and the manner in which they may be met.

I The wonderful progress of the natural sciences in the second half of the nineteenth century has tended to banish the old idea of freedom from the realm of experience. Science, it is maintained, clearly shows that man belongs to a great world-movement, in relation to which his whole life and work are completely determined. Though even in earlier ages, and especially in Stoic philosophy, this conception of life was not ignored, it is more particularly in recent times, under the influence of the evolutionary theory, that the idea of determination has been applied with relentless insistence to the structure of the soul. There is, it is alleged, no room for change or spontaneity. Everything, down to the minutest impulse, depends upon something else, and proceeds from a definite cause. The idea of choice is simply the remnant of an unscientific mode of thinking. It might be sufficient to reply that in thus reducing life and experience to a necessary part of a world-whole, more is

surrendered than even science is willing to yield. The freedom which some writers reject in the interests of science they attempt to introduce in an altered form. Why are these philosophers so anxious to conserve the ethical consequences of life? Is it not because they feel that there is something in man which will not fit into a rigid world-mechanism, and that conduct would cease to have moral worth if life were reduced to a causal series of happenings? But it may be further argued that, if the mechanical conception of life, which reduces the spiritual to the natural, were consistently carried out it would lead not merely to the destruction of the moral life, but to the destruction of science itself. If man is merely a part of nature, subject entirely to nature's law, then the realities of the higher life--love, self-sacrifice, devotion to ends beyond ourselves--must be radically re-interpreted or regarded simply as illusions. But it is also true that from this standpoint science itself is an illusion. For if reality lies only in the passing impressions of our sensible nature, the claim of science to find valid truth must end in the denial of the very possibility of knowledge. Does not the very existence of physical science imply the priority of thought? While in one sense it may be conceded that man is a part of nature, does not the truth, which cannot be gainsaid, that he is aware of the fact, prove a certain priority and power which differentiates him from all other phenomena of the universe? If he is a link in the chain of being, he is at least a link which is conscious of what he is. He is a being who knows himself, indeed, through the objective world, but also realises himself only as he makes himself its master and the agent of a divine purpose to which all things are contributing, and for which all things exist. In all our reasoning and endeavour we must start from the unity of the self-conscious soul. Whatever we can either know or achieve, is our truth, our act presented in and through our self-consciousness. It is impossible for us to conceive any standard of truth or object of desire outside of our experience. As a thinking and acting being man pursues ends, and has the consciousness that they are his own ends, subject to his own choice and control. It is always the self that the soul seeks; and the will is nothing else than the man making and finding for himself another world. The attempt has recently been made to measure mental states by their physical stimuli and explain mental processes by cerebral reaction. It is true that certain physical phenomena seem to be invariably antecedent to thought, but so far science has been unable to exhibit the form of nexus between these physical antecedents and ideas. Even if the knowledge of the topography of the brain were immeasurably more advanced than it now is, even though we could observe the vast network of nerve-fibres and filaments of which the brain is composed, and could discern the actual changes in brain-cells under nerve stimulations, we should still be a long way off from understanding the nature and genesis of ideas which can only be known to us as immediate in their own quality. All that we can ever affirm is that a certain physical excitation is the antecedent of thought. It is illegitimate to say that it is the 'cause' of thought; unless, indeed, the word 'cause' be invested with no other meaning than that which is involved in such a conception. It is, however, in a very general way only, and within an exceedingly narrow range, that such measurement is possible. We do not even know at present what nerves correspond to the sensations of heat and cold, pain and joy; and all attempts to localise will-centres have proved unavailing. The finer and more delicate feelings cannot be gauged. But even though the alleged parallelism were entirely demonstrated, the immediate and pertinent question would still remain, Who or what is the investigator? Is it an ego, a thinking self? or is it only a complex of vibrations or mechanical impressions bound together in a particular body which, for convenience, is called an ego? Are the so-called entities--personality, consciousness, self--but symbols, as Professor Mach says, useful in so far as they help us to express our physical

sensations, but which with further research must be pronounced illusions?[1] Monistic naturalism, which would explain all psychical experiences in terms of cerebral action, must not be allowed to arrogate to itself powers which it does not possess, and quietly brush aside facts which do not fit into its system. The moral sanctions so universally and deeply rooted in the consciousness of mankind, the feelings of responsibility, of guilt and regret; the soul's fidelities and heroisms, its hopes and fears, its aims and ideals--the poetry, art, and religion that have made man what he is, all that has contributed to the uplifting of the world--are, to say the least, unaccounted for, if it must be held that 'man is born in chains.' Primary facts must not be surrendered nor ultimate experiences sacrificed in the interests of theoretic simplicity. In the recent anti-metaphysical movement of Germany, of which Haeckel, Avenarius, Oswald and Mach are representatives, there is presented the final conflict. It is not freedom of will only that is at stake, it is the very existence of a spiritual world. 'Es ist der Kampf um die Seele.'[2]

If the world forms a closed and 'given' system in which every particular is determined completely by its position in the whole, then there can be no place for spontaneity, initiative, creation, which all investigation shows to be the distinctive feature in human progress and upward movement. So far from its being true that the world makes man, it would be nearer the truth to say that man makes the world. A 'given' world can never be primary.[3] There must be a mind behind it. We fall back, therefore, upon the principle which must be postulated in the whole discussion--the unity and self-determining activity of the self-conscious mind.

II

We may now proceed to the second problem of the will, the objection that human action is determined by motives, and that what we call freedom is nothing else than the necessary result of the pressure of motives upon the will. In other words, the conduct of the individual is always determined by the strongest motive. It will be seen on examination that this objection is just another form of that which we have already considered. Indeed, the analogy of mechanical power is frequently applied to the motives of the will. Diverse motives have been compared to different forces which meet in one centre, and it is supposed that the result in action is determined by the united pressure of these various motives. Now it may be freely admitted at the outset that the individual never acts except under certain influences. An uninfluenced man, an unbiassed character cannot exist. Not for one moment do we escape the environment, material and moral, which stimulates our inner life to reaction and response. It is not contended that a man is independent of all motives. What we do affirm is that the self-realising potentiality of personality is present throughout. Much of the confusion of thought in connection with this subject arises from a false and inadequate notion of personality. Personality is the whole man, all that his past history, present circumstances and future aims have made him, the result of all that the world of which he is a part has contributed to his experience. His bodily sensations, his mental acts, his desires and motives are not detached and extraneous forces acting on him from without, but elements which constitute his whole being. The person, in other words, is the visible or tangible phenomenon of something inward--the phase or function by which an individual agent takes his place in the common world of human intercourse and interaction, and plays his peculiar and definite part in life.[4] But this totality of consciousness, so far from reducing man to a 'mere manufactured article,' gives to personality its unique distinction. By personality all things are dominated. 'Other things exist, so to speak, for the sake of their kind and for the sake of other things: a person is never a

mere means to something beyond, but always at the same time an end in himself. He has the royal and divine right of creating law, of starting by his exception a new law which shall henceforth be a canon and a standard.'[5] The objection to the freedom of the will which we are now considering may be best appreciated if we examine briefly the two extreme theories which have been maintained on the subject. On the one hand, determinism or, as it is sometimes called, necessitarianism, holds that all our actions are conditioned by law--the so-called motive that influences a man's conduct is simply a link in a chain of occurrences of which his act is the last. The future has no possibilities hidden in its womb. I am simply what the past has made me. My circumstances are given, and my character is simply the necessary resultant of the natural forces that act upon me. On the other hand, indeterminism, or libertarianism, insists upon absolute liberty of choice of the individual, and denies that necessity or continuity determines conduct. Of two alternatives both may now be really possible. You can never predict what will be, nor lay down absolutely what a man will do. The world is not a finished and fixed whole. It admits of infinite possibilities, and instead of the volition I have actually made, I could just as easily have made a different one.

Without entering upon a detailed criticism of these two positions, it may be said that both contain an element of truth and are not so contradictory as they seem. On the one hand, all the various factors of the complex will may seem to be determined by something that lies beyond our control, and thus our will itself be really determined. But, on the other hand, moral continuity in its last analysis is only a half truth, and must find its complement in the recognition of the possibilities of new beginnings. The very nature of moral action implies, as Lotze has said, that new factors may enter into the stream of causal sequence, and that even though a man's life may be, and must be, largely conditioned by his circumstances, his activity may be really originaive and free. What the determinists seem to forget is, as Green says, that 'character is only formed through a man's conscious presentation to himself of objects as his good, as that in which his self-satisfaction is found.'[6] Desires are always for objects which have a value for the individual. A man's real character is reflected in his desires, and it is not that he is moved by some outside abstract force, which, being the strongest, he cannot resist, but it is because he puts himself into the desire or motive that it becomes the strongest, the one which he chooses to follow. My motives are really part of myself, of which all my actions are the outcome. Human desires, in short, are not merely external tendencies forcing a man this way or that way. They are a part of the man himself, and are always directed towards objects related to a self; and it is the satisfaction of self that makes them desirable. On the other hand, the fallacy lurking in the libertarian view arises from the fact that it also makes a hard and fast distinction between the self and the will. The indeterminists speak as if the self had amongst its several faculties a will which is free in the sense of being able to act independently of all desires and motives. But, as a matter of fact, the will, as we have said, is simply the man, and it cannot be separated from his history, his character, and the objects which his character desires. To speak, as people sometimes do in popular language, of being free to do as they like--that is, to be influenced by no motive whatever, is not only an idea absurd in itself, but one which, if pushed to its consequences, would be subversive of all freedom, and consequently of all moral value. 'The liberty of indifference,' if the phrase means anything at all, implies not merely that the agent is free from all external compulsion, but that he is free from himself, not determined even by his own character. And if we ask what it really is that causes him to act, it must be answered, some caprice of the moment, some accidental impulse or arbitrary freak of

fancy. The late Professor James makes a valiant attempt to solve the 'dilemma of determinism' by resorting to the idea of 'chance' which he defines as a 'purely relative term, giving us no information about that which is predicated, except that it happens to be disconnected with something else--not controlled, secured or necessitated by other things in advance of its own actual presence.' [7] 'On my way home,' he says, 'I can choose either of two ways'; and suppose 'the choice is made twice over and each time falls on a different street.' 'Imagine that I first walk through Divinity Avenue, and then am set again at the door of this hall just as I was before the choice was made. Imagine then that, _everything else being the same_, [8] I now make a different choice and traverse Oxford Street. Looking outwardly at these universes of which my two acts are a part, can you say which is the impossible and accidental one and which the rational and necessary one?' Perhaps an outsider could not say, but Professor James, if he examined his reasons, could say. He assumes that 'everything else is the same.' But that is just what cannot be. A new factor has been introduced, it may be a whim, a sudden impulse, perhaps even a desire to upset calculation--a something in his character in virtue of which his second choice is different from his first. It is an utter misnomer to call it 'chance.' Even though he had tossed a coin and acted on the throw, his action would still be determined by the kind of man he was.

Let us not seek to defend freedom on inadequate grounds, or contend for a spurious liberty. No view of the subject should indeed debar us from acknowledging 'changes in heart and life,' but a misunderstanding of the doctrine of freedom may tend to paralyse moral initiative. The attempt to sunder the will and the understanding and discover the source of freedom in the realm of the emotions, as the voluntarists seek to do, cannot be regarded as satisfactory or sound philosophy. In separating faith and knowledge the Ritschlian school tends to make subjective feeling the measure of truth and life; while recent psychological experiments in America with the phenomena of faith-healing, hypnotism and suggestion, claim to have discovered hitherto unsuspected potencies of the will. This line of thought has been welcomed by many as a relief from the mechanical theory of life and as a witness to moral freedom and Christian hope. But so far from proving the sovereignty and autonomy of the will, it discloses rather the possibilities of its abject bondage and thralldom. No one can doubt the facts which Professor James and others, working from the side of religious psychology, have recently established, or discredit the instances of conversion to which the annals of the Christian life so abundantly testify. But even conversion must not be regarded as a change without motives. There must be some connection between motive, character and act, otherwise the new spiritual experience would be simply a magical happening lacking all moral significance. If there were no continuity of consciousness, if I could be something to-day irrespective of what I was yesterday, then all we signify by contrition, penitence, and shame would have no real meaning. Even the grace of God works through natural channels and human influences. The past is not so much obliterated, as taken up into the new life and transfigured with a new value. The truth of spontaneity and initiative in life has lately found in M. Bergson a fresh and vigorous advocacy, and we cannot be too grateful to that profound thinker for his reassertion of some neglected aspects of freedom and his philosophical vindication of the doctrine which puts it in a new position of prominence and security. 'Life is Creation.' 'Reality is a perpetual growth, a Creation pursued without end.' 'Our will performs this miracle.' 'Every human work in which there is invention, every movement that manifests spontaneity brings something new into the world. In the composition of the work of genius, as in a simple free decision, we create what no mere assemblage of materials could have given.' [9] But yet he says that 'life

cannot create absolutely because it is confronted with matter.... But it seizes upon this matter which is necessity itself, and strives to introduce into it the greatest possible amount of indetermination and liberty.'[10] Even Bergson, though he emphasises so strongly immediacy and incalculableness in all human action, cannot deny that the bodily arrangements and mechanisms are at least the basis of the working of the soul. Man cannot produce any change in the world except in strict co-ordination with the forces and qualities of material things. The idea in his consciousness is powerless save in so far as it is a guide to combinations and modifications which are latent in reality. The man who works with his hands does not create out of nothing a new totality. Even genius is conditioned by the elements he works with and upon. He can do nothing with his materials beyond what it is in themselves to yield. This sense of co-operation is strongly marked in the higher grades of activity. The world may be in the making, as Bergson says, but it is being made of possibilities already inherent in it. Life may be incalculable, and you can never know beforehand what a great man, indeed, what any man may achieve, but even the originality of a Leonardo or a Beethoven cannot effect the impossible or contradict the order of nature. The sculptor feels that the statue is already lying in the marble awaiting only his creative touch to bring it forth. The metal is alive in the worker's hands, coaxing him to make of it something beautiful.[11] Purpose does not come out of an empty mind. Freedom and initiative never begin entirely *_de novo_*. Life is a 'creation,' but it is also, as M. Bergson labours to prove, an 'evolution.' Our ideals are made out of realities. Our heaven must be shaped out of the materials of our earth. A moral personality is a self-conscious, self-determining being. But that is only half the reality. The other half is that it is a self-determining consciousness *_in a world_*. As Bergson is careful to tell us, the shape and extent of self-consciousness are determined by our relation to a world which acts upon us and upon which we act. Without a world in which we had personal business we should have no self-consciousness. The co-operation of spontaneity and necessity is implied in every true idea of freedom. If a man were the subject of necessity alone he would be merely the creature of mechanical causation. If he had the power of spontaneity only his so-called freedom would be a thing of caprice. Necessity means simply that man is conditioned by the world in which he lives. Spontaneity means, not that he can conjure up at a wish a dream-world of no conditions, but that he is not determined by anything outside of himself, since the very conditions amid which he is placed may be transmuted by him into elements of his own character. Moral decisions are never isolated from ideals and tasks presented by our surroundings. The self cannot act on any impulse however external till the impulse has transplanted itself within and become our motive.

'Our life,' says Eucken, 'is a conflict between fate and freedom, between being "given" and spontaneity. Spiritual individuality does not come to any one, but has first to be won by the work of life, elevating that which destiny brings.... The idea of freedom calls man to independent co-operation in the conflict of the worlds. It gives to the simply human and apparently commonplace an incomparable greatness. However powerful destiny may be, it does not determine man entirely: for even in opposition to it there is liberation from it.'[12]

III

It will not be necessary to dwell at any length on the third difficulty--the incompatibility of divine sovereignty and grace with moral personality.

How to reconcile divine power and human freedom is the great problem which meets us on the very threshold of the study of man's relation to God. The solution, in so far as it is possible for the mind, must be sought in the divine immanence. God works through man, and man acts through God. Reason, conscience, and will are equally the testimony to God's indwelling in man and man's indwelling in God. It is, as St. Paul says, God who worketh in us both to will and to do. But just because of that inherent power, it is we who work out our own character and destiny. The divine is not introduced into human life at particular points or in exceptional crises only. Every man has something of the divine in him, and when he is truest to himself he is most at one with God. The whole meaning of human personality is a growing realisation of the divine personality. God's sovereignty has no meaning except in relation to a world of which He is sovereign, and His purposes can only be fulfilled through human agency. While His thoughts far transcend in wisdom and sublimity those of His creatures they must be in a sense of the same kind--thoughts, in other words, which beings made in His image can receive, love and, in a measure, share. And though God cannot be conceived as the author of evil, He may permit it and work through it, bringing order out of chaos, and evolving through suffering and conflict His sovereign purposes. The problem becomes acutest when we endeavour to harmonise the antinomy of man's moral freedom and the doctrine of grace. However insoluble the mystery, it is not lessened by denying one side in the interest of unity. Scripture boldly affirms both truths. No writer insists more strenuously than the Apostle Paul on the sovereign election of God, yet none presents with greater fervour the free offer of salvation. In his ethical teaching, at least, Paul is no determinist. Freedom is the distinctive note of his conception of life. Life is a great and solemn trust committed to each by God, for the use or abuse of which every man will be called to account. His missionary zeal would have no meaning if he did not believe that men were free to accept or refuse his message. Paul's own example, indeed, is typical, and while he knew that he was 'called,' he knew, too, that it lay with him to yield himself and present his life as a living sacrifice to God. Jesus, too, throughout His ministry, assumed the ability of man freely to accept His call to righteousness, and though He speaks of the change as a 'new birth,' a creation from above, beyond the strength of man to effect, He invariably makes His appeal to the will--'Follow Me,' 'Come unto Me.' He assumes in all His dealings with individuals that they have the power of decision. And so far from admitting that the past could not be undone, and no chain of habit broken, the whole purpose of His message and lifework was to proclaim the need and possibility of a radical change in life. So full of hope was He for man that He despaired of none, not even of those who had most grievously failed, or most utterly turned their back on purity. The parables in the Third Gospel of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son lay emphasis upon the possibility of recovery, and, in the case of the prodigal, specially on the ability to return for those who have gone astray. The teaching of Scripture implies that while God is the source of all spiritual good, and divine grace must be present with and precede all rightful action of the human will, it rests with man to respond to the divine love. No human soul is left destitute of the visiting of God's spirit, and however rudimentary the moral life may be, no bounds can be set to the growth which may, and which God intends should, result wherever the human will is consentient. While, therefore, no man can claim merit in the sight of God, but must acknowledge his absolute dependency upon divine grace, no one can escape loss or blame if he wilfully frustrates God's design of mercy. Whatever mystery may attend the subject of God's sovereign grace, the Bible never presents it as negating the entire freedom of man to give or withhold response to the gift and leading of the divine spirit. In the deepest New Testament sense

to be free is to have the power of acting according to one's true nature. A man's ideal is his true self, and all short of that is for him a limitation of freedom. Inasmuch as no ideal is ever completely realised, true freedom is not so much a possession as a progressive appropriation. It is at once a gift and a task. It contains the twofold idea of emancipation and submission. Mere deliverance from the lower self is not liberty. Freedom must be completed by the appropriation of the higher self and the acceptance of the obligations which that self involves. It is to be acquired through submission to the truth. 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' A man is never so free as when he is the bondsman of Christ. The saying of St. Paul sums up the secret and essence of all true freedom: 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

[1] Mach, *„Erkenntniss und Irrtum“*. Vorwort. See also *„Die Analyse der Empfindungen“*, p. 20. 'Das Sich ist unrettbar,' he says.

[2] Cf. W. Schmidt, *„Der Kampf um die Seele“*, p. 13.

[3] Cf. Eucken.

[4] Cf. Wallace, *„Logic of Hegel, Proleg.“*, p. 233.

[5] Wallace, *idem*, p. 235. Cf. Aristotle's wise man whose conduct is not *„kata logon“* but *„meta logon“*.

[6] *„Proleg.“*, section 108.

[7] *„The Will to Believe“*, p. 154.

[8] *„The italics are ours“*.

[9] *„Creative Evolution“* (Eng. trans.), p. 252.

[10] *idem*, p. 265.

[11] Cf. Morris, *„Lects. on Art“*, p. 195; Bosanquet, *„Hist. of Aesthetic“*, p. 445; also *„Individuality and Value“*, p. 166.

[12] *„Life's Basis and Life's Ideals“*, p. 181 f.

Modern Theories of Life

SECTION C CHARACTER CHAPTER VII MODERN THEORIES OF LIFE

Bearing in mind the three fundamental ideas lying at the root of all ethical inquiry--End, Norm, and Motive--we have now to deal with the shaping forces of the Christian life, the making of character. In this section, therefore, we shall be engaged in a discussion of the ideals, laws, and springs of moral action. And first, What is the supreme good? What is the highest for which a man should live? This question determines the main problem of life. It forces itself irresistibly upon us to-day, and the answer to it is the test of every system of morals. But before endeavouring to determine the distinctively Christian ideal, as presented in the teaching of Jesus and interpreted by the growing Christian consciousness of mankind, it may be well to review briefly some of the main theories of life which are pressing their claims upon our attention to-day. Many of these modern views have arisen as a reaction against traditional religion. From the seventeenth century onwards, and especially during the nineteenth, there has been a growing disposition to call in question the Christian conception of life. The antagonism reveals itself not only in a distrust of all forms of religion, but also in a craving for wider culture. The old certitudes fail to satisfy men who have acquired new habits of reflection, and there is a disinclination to accept a scheme of life which seems to narrow human interests and exclude such departments as science, art, and politics. One reason of this change is to be found in the wonderful advance of science during the last century. Men's minds, withdrawn from primary, and fixed upon secondary causes, have refused to believe that the order of nature can be disturbed by supernatural intervention. Whether the modern antipathy to Christianity is justified is not the question at present before us. We may see in the movements of our day not so much a proof that the old faith is false, as an indication that if Christianity is to regain its power a radical re-statement of its truths, and a more comprehensive application of its principles to life as a whole must be undertaken. In the endeavour to find an all-embracing ideal of life two possibilities present themselves, arising from two different ways of viewing man. Human life is in one aspect receptive; in another, active. It may be regarded as dependent upon nature for its maintenance, or as a creative power whose function is not merely to receive what nature supplies, but to re-shape nature's materials and create a new spiritual world. Receptivity and activity are inseparable, and form together the harmonious rhythm of life. But there has ever been a tendency to emphasise one or other of these aspects. The question has constantly arisen, Which is the more important for life--what we receive or what we create? Accordingly two contrasted conceptions of life have appeared--a naturalistic and an idealistic. Under the first we understand those theories which place man in the realm of sense and explain life by material conditions; under the second we group such systems as give to life an independent creative power.

I NATURALISTIC TENDENCY

1. Naturalism has usually taken three forms, an idyllic or poetic, a philosophic, and a scientific, of which Rousseau, Feuerbach, and Haeckel may be chosen as representatives.

(1) According to Rousseau, man is really a part of nature, and only as he conforms to her laws and finds his satisfaction in what she gives can he be truly happy. Nature is the mother of us all, and only as we allow her spirit to pervade and nourish our being do we really live. The watchword, 'back to nature' may be said to have given the first impulse to the later call of the 'simple life,' which has arisen as a protest against the luxury, ostentation, and artificiality of modern times.

(2) The philosophical form of naturalism, as expounded by Feuerbach, inveighs against an idealistic interpretation of life. The author of *The Essence of Christianity* started as a disciple of Hegel, but soon reversed the Hegelian principle, and pronounced the spiritual world to be a fiction of the mind. Man belongs essentially to the earth, and is governed by his senses. Self-interest is his only motive, and egoism his sole law of life. It was only what might be expected, that the ultimate consequences of this philosophy of the senses should be drawn by a disciple of Feuerbach, Max Stirner,[1] in whose work, *The Individual and His Property*, the virtues of egoism are extolled, and contempt is poured upon all disinterestedness and altruism.

(3) The latest form of naturalism is the scientific or monistic, as represented by Haeckel. It may be described as scientific in so far as its author professes to deduce the moral life from biological principles. In the chapter[2] devoted to Ethics in his work, *The Riddle of the Universe*, his pronouncements upon morality are not scientifically derived, but simply dogmatically assumed. The underlying principle of monism is that the universe is a unity in which no distinction exists between the material and the spiritual. In this world as we know it there reigns only one kind of law, the invariable law of nature. The so-called spiritual life of man is not an independent realm having its own rights and aims; it belongs wholly to nature. The moral world is a province of the physical, and the key to all the departments of reality is to be found in science alone. The doctrine of evolution is brought into the service of monism, and the attempt is made to prove that in the very process of biological development human thought, moral sentiment, and social instincts have been evolved. With a curious sacrifice of consistency, Haeckel does not agree with Feuerbach in exalting egoism to the place of supremacy in the moral life. He recognises two kinds of duty--duty to self and duty to society. The social sense once created is permanent, and rises to ever-fresh developments. But benevolence, like every other obligation, is, according to evolutionary monism, a product evolved from the battle of existence. Traced to its source, it has its spring in the physical organism, and is but an enlargement of the ego.[3] The monistic naturalism of Haeckel offers no high ideal to life. Its Ethics is but a glorified egoism. Its dictates never rise above the impulses derived from nature. But not religion only with its kingdom of God, nor morality only with its imperatives, nor art with its power of idealising the world of nature, but even science itself, with its claim to unify and organise facts, proves that man stands apart from, and is higher than, the material world. The very existence of such activities in the invisible realm renders vain every attempt to reduce the spiritual to the natural, and to make truth, goodness and beauty mere outgrowths of nature.

2. On its ethical side naturalism is closely associated with the theory of life which bears the name of utilitarianism--the theory which regards pleasure or profit as the aim of man. In its most independent form Hedonism can hardly be said to exist now as a reasoned theory. Carried out to its extreme consequences it reduces man to a mere animal. Hence a type of reflective egoism has taken the place of animal gratification, and the idea of ulterior benefit has succeeded to that of immediate pleasure. The names associated with this theory of morals are those of Hobbes,

Bentham, and the two Mills. Hobbes, who preaches undiluted egoism,[4] may be regarded as the father of utilitarianism. But the title was first applied to the school of Bentham.[5] Bentham's watchword was 'utility' expressed in his famous formula--'The greatest happiness of the greatest number.' While renouncing the abstract ideal of equality, he yet asserted the equal claim of every individual to happiness. In its distribution 'each is to count for one, and no one for more than one.' Hence Bentham insisted upon an exact quantitative calculation of the consequences of our actions as the only sufficient guide to conduct. The end is the production of the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain.

J. S. Mill modified considerably the principle of utility by introducing the doctrine of the qualitative difference in pleasures.[6] While Bentham assumed self-interest as the only motive of conduct, Mill affirmed the possibility of altruism in the motive as well as in the end or criterion of right actions.[7] Thus the idea of utility was extended to embrace higher moral ends. But the antithesis between the 'self' and the 'other' was not overcome. To introduce the notion of sympathy, as Adam Smith and others did, is to beg the question. Try as you will, you cannot deduce benevolence from selfishness. The question for the utilitarian must always arise, 'How far ought I to follow my natural desires, and how far my altruistic?' There must be a constant conflict, and he can only be at peace with himself by striking a balance. The utilitarian must be a legalist. The principle of self-sacrifice does not spring from his inner being. Truth, love, sacrifice--all that gives to man his true worth as a being standing in vital relation to God--are only artificial adaptations based on convenience and general advantage.

3. Evolutionary ethics, as expounded by Spencer and others, though employing utilitarian principles, affords an ampler and more plausible account of life than early Hedonism.[8] The evolutionists have enriched the idea of happiness by quietly slipping in many ends which really belong to the idea of the 'good.' As the term 'gravitation' was the magic word of the eighteenth century, so the word 'evolution' is the talisman of the present age. It must be admitted that it is a sublime and fruitful idea. It explains much in nature and history which the old static notion failed to account for. It has a great deal to teach us even in the spiritual sphere. But when applied to life as a whole, and when it is assumed to be the sole explanation of moral action, it is apt to rob the will of its initiative and reduce all moral achievements to merely natural factors in an unfolding drama of life. The soul itself, with all its manifestations and experiences, is treated simply as the resultant and harmonious effect of adaptation to environment. Man is regarded as the highest animal, the most richly specialised organism--the last of a long series in the development of life, the outstanding feature of which is the acquired power of complete adjustment to the world, of which it is a part. Strictly speaking, there is no room for a personal God in this mechanical theory of the universe. The world becomes inevitably 'the Be all and the End all.' Hence, as might be expected, while evolutionary Ethics claims to cover the whole range of this present life, it does not pretend to extend into the regions of the hereafter. It is concerned only with what it conceives to be the highest earthly good--the material and social well-being of mankind. But no theory of life can be pronounced satisfactory which explains man in terms of this earth alone. The 'Great Unknown' which Mr. Spencer posits[9] as the ultimate source of all power, is a force to be reckoned with; and, known or unknown, is the mightiest factor in all life's experiences. Man's spiritual nature in its whole range cannot be treated as of no account. 'The powers of the world to come' have an essential bearing upon human conduct in this world. They shape our thoughts and determine our

ideals. Hence any view of life which excludes from consideration the spiritual side of man, and limits his horizon by the things of this earth must of necessity be inadequate and unsatisfactory.

4. Closely connected with, and, indeed, arising out of, the evolutionary theory, another type of thought, prevalent to-day, falls to be noted--_the socialistic tendency_. It is now universally recognised that the individual cannot be treated as an isolated being, but only in relation to society of which he is a part. The emphasis is laid upon the solidarity of mankind, and man is explained by such social facts as heredity and environment. Marx and Engels, the pioneers of the socialistic movement, accepted in the fullest sense the scientific doctrine of evolution. So far from being a mere Utopian dream, Marx contends that Socialism is the inevitable outcome of the movement of modern society. The aim of the agitation is to bring men to a clear consciousness of a process which is going forward in all countries where the modern industrial methods prevail. Democracy must come to itself and assume its rights. The keynote of the past has been the exploitation of man by man in the three forms of slavery, serfdom, and wage-labour. The keynote of the future must be the exploitation of the earth by man _associated to man_. The practical aim of Socialism is that industry is to be carried on by associated labourers jointly owning the means of production. Here, again, the all-pervading ideal is--the general good of society--the happiness of the greatest number. The reduction of all aims to a common level, the equalising of social conditions, the direction and control of all private interests and personal endeavours, are to be means to one end--the material good of the community. Socialism is not, however, confined to an agitation for material welfare. The industrial aspect of it is only a phase of a larger movement. On its ethical side it is the outcome of a strong aspiration after a higher life.[10] The world is awakening to the fact that the majority of the human family has been virtually excluded from all participation in man's inheritance of knowledge and culture. The labouring classes have been from time immemorial sunk in drudgery and ignorance, bearing the burden of society without sharing in its happiness. It is contended that every man ought to have an opportunity of making the most of his life and obtaining full freedom for the development of body and mind. The aim to secure justice for the many, to protect the weak against the strong, to mitigate the fierceness of competition, to bring about a better understanding between capital and labour, and to gain for all a more elevated and expansive existence, is not merely consistent with, but indispensable to, a true Christian conception of life. But the question which naturally arises is, how this reformation is to be brought about. Never before have so many revolutionary schemes been proposed, and so many social panaceas for a better world set forth. It is, indeed, a hopeful sign of the times that the age of unconcern is gone and the temper of cautious inaction has yielded to scientific diagnosis and courageous treatment. It must not be forgotten, however, that the exclusively utilitarian position tends to lower the moral ideal, and that the exaggerated emphasis upon the social aspect of life fails to do justice to the independence of the individual. The tendency of modern political thought is to increase the control of government, and to regard all departments of activity as branches of the state, to be held and worked for the general good of the community. Thus there is a danger that the individual may gradually lose all initiative, and life be impoverished under a coercive mechanical system.

Socialism in its extreme form might easily become a new kind of tyranny. By the establishment of collectivism, by making the state the sole owner of all wealth, the sole employer of labour, and the controller of science and art, as well as of education and religion, there is a danger of crushing the

spiritual side of man, and giving to all life and endeavour a merely naturalistic character and content.

5. It was inevitable that an exaggerated insistence upon the importance of society should provoke an equally one-sided emphasis upon the worth of the individual, and that as a protest against the demands of Socialism there should arise a form of subjectivism which aims at complete self-affirmation.

(1) This tendency has received the name of aesthetic-individualism. As a conception of life it may be regarded as intermediate between naturalism and idealism. While rooted in a materialistic view of life, it is moulded in the hands of its best advocates by spiritual aspirations. Its standpoint may be characterised as a theory of existence which seeks the highest value of life in the realm of the beautiful, and which therefore endeavours to promote the supreme good of the individual through devotion to art. Not only does the cultivation of art tend in itself to elevate life by concentrating the soul upon all that is fairest and noblest in the world, but the best means of enriching and ennobling life is to regard life itself as a work of art. This view of existence, it is claimed, widens the scope of experience, and leads us into ampler worlds of interest and enjoyment. It aims at giving to personality a rounded completeness, and bringing the manifold powers and passions of man into harmonious unity. As a theory of life it is not new. Already Plato, and still more Aristotle, maintained that a true man must seek his highest satisfaction not in the possession of external things, but in the most complete manifestation of his faculties. Individual aestheticism largely animated the Romantic movement of Germany at the beginning of last century. But probably the best illustration of it is to be found in Goethe and Schiller; while in our country Matthew Arnold has given it a powerful and persuasive exposition. It was the aim of Goethe to mould his life into a work of art, and all his activities and poetic aspirations were subordinated to this end. The beautiful harmonious life is the true life, the well-rounded whole from which must be banished everything narrow, vulgar, and distasteful, and in which everything fair and noble must find expression. 'Each individual,' says Schiller, 'is at once fitted and destined for a pure ideal manhood.' And the attainment of this ideal requires from us the most zealous self-culture and a concentration of effort upon our own peculiar gifts.[11] A new form of aestheticism has lately appeared which pretends to combine morality and culture. 'The New Ethic,'[12] as it is called, protests against the sombreness of religious traditions and the rigidity of moral restrictions, and assigns to art the function of emancipating man and idealising life. But what this movement really offers under its new catchword is simply a subtler form of epicureanism, a finer self-indulgence. It is the expression of a desire to be free from all restraint, to close one's eyes to the 'majesty of human suffering,' allowing one's thoughts to dwell only upon the agreeable and gay in life. It regards man as simply the sum-total of his natural inclinations, and conceives duty to be nothing else than the endeavour to bring these into equilibrium. That the aesthetic culture of life is a legitimate element in Christian morality can hardly be denied by any one who has pondered the meaning in all its breadth of the natural simplicity and spiritual beauty of the manifestation of the Son of Man. The beautiful, the good, and the true are intimately connected, and constitute together all that is conceivably highest in life. Christian Ethics ought to include everything that is gracious and fair; and any theory of life that has no room for joy and beauty, for laughter and song, for appreciation of artistic or poetic expression, is surely deficient. But it is one thing to acknowledge these things; it is another to make them the whole of existence. We live in a

world in which much else besides beauty and joy exists, and it is not by shirking contact with the unlovely phases of experience, but by resolutely accepting the ministry of sorrow they impose, that we attain to our highest selves. The narrow Puritanism of a past age may need the corrective of the broader Humanism of to-day, but not less must the Ethic of self-culture be reinforced by the Ethic of self-sacrifice. We may not cultivate the beauty of life at the cost of duty, nor forget that it is often only through the immolation of self that the self can be realised.

(2) While the Romantic movement, of which Goethe was the most illustrious representative, did much to enlarge life and ennoble the whole expanse of being, its extreme subjectivism and aristocratic exclusiveness found ultimate expression (a) in the pessimism of Schopenhauer, and the arrogance of Nietzsche. The alliance between art and morality was dissolved. The imagination scorned all fetters and, in its craving for novelty and contempt of convention, became the organ of individual caprice and licence. In Nietzsche--that strange erratic genius--at once artist, philosopher, and rhapsodist--this philosophy of life found brilliant if bizarre utterance. If Schopenhauer reduces existence to nothing, and finds in oblivion and extinction its solution, (b) Nietzsche seeks rather to magnify life by striking the note of a proud and defiant optimism. He claims for the individual limitless rights; and, repudiating all moral ties, asserts the complete sovereignty of the self-sufficing ego. With a deep-rooted hatred of the prevailing tendencies of civilisation, he combines a vehement desire for a richer and unrestrained development of human power. He would not only revalue all moral values, but reverse all ideas of right and wrong. He would soar 'beyond good and evil,' declaring that the prevailing judgments of mankind are pernicious prejudices which have too long tyrannised over the world. He acknowledges himself to be not a moralist, but an 'immoralist,' and he bids us break in pieces the ancient tables of the Decalogue. Christianity is the most debasing form of slave-morality. It has made a merit of weakness and servility, and given the name of virtue to such imbecilities as meekness and self-sacrifice. He calls upon the individual to exalt himself. The man of the future is to be the man of self-mastery and virile force, 'the Superman,' who is to crush under his heel the cringing herd of weaklings who have hitherto possessed the world. The earth is for the strong, the capable, the few. A mighty race, self-assertive, full of vitality and will, is the goal of humanity. The vital significance of Nietzsche's radicalism lies less in its positive achievement than in its stimulating effect. Though his account of Christianity is a caricature, his strong invective has done much to correct the sentimental rose-water view of the Christian faith which has been current in some pietistic circles. The Superman, with all its vagueness, is a noble, inspiring ideal. The problem of the race is to produce a higher manhood, to realise which there is need for sacrifice and courage. Nietzsche is the spiritual father and forerunner of the Eugenics. The Superman is not born, he is bred. Our passions must be our servants. Obedience and fidelity, self-discipline and courage are the virtues upon which he insists. 'Be master of life....' 'I call you to a new nobility. Ye shall become the procreators and sowers of the future.'

While there is much that is suggestive in Nietzsche's scathing criticisms, and many passages of striking beauty in his books, he is stronger in his denials than his affirmations, and it is the negative side that his followers have fastened upon and developed. Sudermann, the novelist, has carried his philosophy of egoism to its extreme. This writer, in a work entitled *Sodom's End*, affirms that there is nothing holy and nothing evil. There is no such thing as duty or love. Only nerves exist. The 'Superman' becomes a monster. Such teaching can scarcely be taken seriously. It conveys no

helpful message. It is the perversion of life's ideal. As a passing phase of thought it is interesting, but it solves no problems; it advances no truths. It resembles a whirlwind which helps to clear the air and drive away superfluous leaves, but it does little to quicken or expand new seeds of life.

II IDEALISTIC TENDENCY

1. Modern Idealism was inaugurated by Kant. Kant's significance for thought lies in his twofold demand for a new basis of knowledge and morality. He conceived that both are possible, and that both are interdependent, and have but one solution. The solution, however, could only be achieved by a radical change of method, and by the introduction of new standards of value. Kant's theory of morals was an attempt to reconcile the two opposing ethical principles which were current in the eighteenth century. On the one side, the Realists treated man simply as a natural being, and accordingly demanded a pursuance of his natural impulses. On the other side, the Dogmatists conceived that conduct must be governed by divine sanctions. Both theories agreed in regarding happiness as the end of life; the one the happiness of sensuous enjoyment; the other, that of divine favour. Both set an end outside of man himself as the basis of their ethical doctrine. Kant was dissatisfied with this explanation of the moral life. The question, therefore, which arises is, Whence comes the idea of duty which is an undeniable fact of our experience? If it came merely from without, it could never speak to us with absolute authority, nor claim unquestioning obedience. That which comes from without depends for its justification upon some consequence external to our action, and must be based, indeed, upon some excitement of reward or pain. But that would destroy it as a moral good; since nothing can be morally good that is not pursued for its own sake. Kant, therefore, seeks to show that the law of the moral life must originate within us, must spring from an inherent principle of our own rational nature. Hence the distinctive feature of Kant's moral theory is the enunciation of the 'Categorical Imperative'--the supreme inner demand of reason. From this principle of autonomy there arise at once the notions of man's freedom and the law's universality. Self-determination is the presupposition of all morality. But what is true for one is true for all. Each man is a member of a rational order, and possesses the inalienable independence and the moral dignity of being an end in himself. Hence the formula of all duty is, 'Act from a maxim at all times fit to be a universal law.'

It is the merit of Kant that he has given clear expression to the majesty of the moral law. No thinker has more strongly asserted man's spiritual nature or done more to free the ideal of duty from all individual narrowness and selfish interest. But Kant's principle of duty labours under the defect, that while it determines the form, it tells us nothing of the content of duty. We learn from him the grandeur of the moral law, but not its essence or motive-power. He does not clearly explain what it is in the inner nature of man that gives to obligation its universal validity or even its dominating force. As a recent writer truly says, 'In order that morality may be possible at all, its law must be realised in me, but while the way in which it is realised is mine, the content is not mine; otherwise the whole conception of obligation is destroyed.'^[13] If the soul's function is purely formal how can we attain to a self-contained life? Moreover, if the freedom which Kant assigns to man is really to achieve a higher ideal and bring forth a new world, must there not be some spiritual power or energy, some dynamic force, which, while it is within man, is also without, and independent of, him? 'Duty for duty's sake' lacks lifting power, and is the essence of legalism. Love, after all, is the fulfilling of the law.

2. To overcome the Kantian abstraction, and give content to the formal law of reason was the aim of the idealistic writers who succeeded him. Fichte conceived of morality as action--self-consciousness realising itself in a world of deeds. Hegel started with the Idea as the source of all reality, and developed the conception of Personality attaining self-realisation through the growing consciousness of the world and of God. Personality involves capacity. The law of life, therefore, is, 'Be a person and respect others as persons.' [14] Man only comes to himself as he becomes conscious that his life is rooted in a larger self. Morality is just the gradual unfolding of an eternal purpose whose whole is the perfection of humanity. It has been objected that the idea of life as an evolutionary process, which finds its most imposing embodiment in the system of Hegel, if consistently carried out, destroys all personal motive and self-determining activity, and reduces the history of the world to a soulless mechanism. Hegel himself was aware of this objection, and the whole aim of his philosophy was to show that personality has no meaning if it be not the growing consciousness of the infinite. The more recent exponents of his teaching have endeavoured to prove that the individual, so far from being suppressed, is really expressed in the process, that, indeed, while the universal life underlies, unifies, and directs the particular phases of existence, the individual in realising himself is at the same time determining and evolving the larger spiritual world--a world already implicitly present in his earliest consciousness and first strivings. The absolute is indeed within us from the very beginning, but we have to work it out. Hence life is achieved through conflict. The universe is not a place for pleasure or apathy. It is a place for soul-making. No rest is to be found by an indolent withdrawal from the world of reality. 'In one way or another, in labour, in learning, and in religion, every man has his pilgrimage to make, his self to remould and to acquire, his world and surroundings to transform.... It is in this adventure, and not apart from it, that we find and maintain the personality which we suppose ourselves to possess ab initio.' [15] The soul is a world in itself; but it is not, and must not be treated as, an isolated personality impervious to the mind of others. At each stage of its evolution it is the focus and expression of a larger world. A man does not value himself as a detached subject, but as the inheritor of gifts which are focused in him. Man, in short, is a trustee for the world; and suffering and privation are among his opportunities. The question for each is, How much can he make of them? Something above us there must be to make us do and dare and hope, and the important thing is not one's separate destiny, but the completeness of experience and one's contribution to it. [16]

3. It was inevitable that there should arise a reaction against the extreme Intellectualism of Hegel and his school, and that a conception of existence which lays the emphasis upon the claims of practical life should grow in favour. The pursuit of knowledge tended to become merely a means of promoting human well-being. The first definite attempt to formulate a specific theory of knowledge with this practical aim in view takes the form of what is known as 'Pragmatism.' The modern use of this term is chiefly connected with the name of the late Professor James, to whose brilliant writings we are largely indebted for the elucidation of its meaning. 'Pragmatism,' says James, 'represents the empiricist attitude both in a more radical and less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed.' [17] It agrees with utilitarianism in explaining practical aspects, and with positivism in disdaining useless abstractions. It claims to be a method rather than a system of philosophy. And its method consists in bringing the pursuit of knowledge into close relationship with life. Nothing is to be regarded as true which cannot be justified by its value for man. The hypothesis which on the whole works best, which most aptly fits the circumstances of a particular case, is true. The

emphasis is laid not on absolute principles, but on consequences. We must not consider things as they are in themselves, but in their reference to the good of mankind. It is useless, for example, to speculate about the existence of God. If the hypothesis of a deity works satisfactorily, if the best results follow for the moral well-being of humanity by believing in a God, then the hypothesis may be taken as true. It is true at least for us. Truth, according to Pragmatism, has no independent existence. It is wholly subjective, relative, instrumental. Its only test is its utility, its workableness. This view of truth, though supported by much ingenuity and brilliance, would seem to contradict the very idea of truth, and to be subversive of all moral values. If truth has no independent validity, if it is not something to be sought for itself, irrespective of the inclinations and interests of man, then its pursuit can bring no real enrichment to our spiritual being. It remains something alien and external, a mere arbitrary appendix of the self. It is not the essence and standard of human life. If its sole test is what is advantageous or pleasant it sinks into a merely utilitarian opinion or selfish bias. 'Truth,' says Eucken, 'can only exist as an end in itself. Instrumental truth is no truth at all.' [18]

According to this theory, moreover, truth is apt to be broken up into a number of separate fragments without correlation or integrating unity. There will be as many hypotheses as there are individual interests. The truth that seems to work best for one man or one age may not be the truth that serves another. In the collision of opinions who is to arbitrate? If it be the institutions and customs of to-day, the present state of morals, that is to be the measure of what is good, then we seem to be committed to a condition of stagnancy, and involved in the quest of a doubtful gain. As might be expected, Professor James's view of truth determines his view of the world. It is pluralistic, not monistic; melioristic, not optimistic. It is characteristic of him that when he discusses the question, Is life worth living? his answer practically is, 'Yes, if you believe it is.' Pragmatism is put forward as the mediator between two opposite tendencies, those of 'tender-mindedness' and 'tough-mindedness.' 'The tendency to rest in the Absolute is the characteristic mark of the tender-minded; the radically tough-minded, on the other hand, needs no religion at all.' [19] There is something to be said for both of these views, James thinks, and a compromise will probably best meet the case. Hence, against these two ways of accepting the universe, he maintains the pragmatic faith which is at once theistic, pluralistic, and melioristic. He accepts a personal power as a workable theory of the universe. But God need not be infinite or all-inclusive, for 'all that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our common selves.' [20] Such a conception of God, even on James's own admission, is akin to polytheism. And such polytheism implies a pluralistic view of the universe. The invisible order, in which we hope to realise our larger life, is a world which does not grow integrally in accordance with the preconceived plan of a single architect, 'but piecemeal by the contributions of its several parts.' [21] We make the world to our will, and 'add our fiat to the fiat of the creator.' With regard to the supreme question of human destiny Professor James's view is what he calls 'melioristic.' There is a striving for better things, but what the ultimate outcome will be, no one can say. For the world is still in the making. Life is a risk. It has many possibilities. Good and evil are intermingled, and will continue so to be. It is a pluralistic world just because the will of man is free, and predetermination is excluded. If good was assured as the final goal of ill, and there was no sense of venture, no possibility of loss or failure, then life would lack interest, and moral effort would be shorn of reality and incentive. In Professor James's philosophy of life there is much that is original and stimulating, and it draws attention to facts of experience and modes of thought which we were in danger of overlooking. It has

compelled us to consider the psychological bases of personality, and to lay more stress upon the power of the will and individual choice in the determining of character and destiny. It is pre-eminently a philosophy of action, and it emphasises an aspect of life which intellectualism was prone to neglect--the function of personal endeavour and initiative in the making of the world. It postulates the reality of a living God who invites our co-operation, and it encourages our belief in a higher spiritual order which it is within our power to achieve.

Pragmatism has hitherto made headway chiefly in America and Britain, but on its activist side it is akin to a new philosophical movement which has appeared in France and Germany. The name generally given to this tendency is 'Activism' or 'Vitalism'--a title chosen probably in order to emphasise the self-activity of the personal consciousness directed towards a world which it at once conquers and creates. The authors of this latest movement are the Frenchman, Henri Bergson, and the German, Rudolf Eucken. Differing widely in their methods and even in their conclusions, they agree in making a direct attack both upon the realism and the intellectualism of the past, and in their conviction that the world is not a 'strung along universe,' as the late Professor James puts it, but a world that is being made by the creative power and personal freedom of man. While Eucken has for many years occupied a position of commanding influence in the realm of thought, Bergson has only recently come into notice. The publication of his striking work, *Creative Evolution*, marks an epoch in speculation, and is awakening the interest of the philosophical world.[22]

4. With his passion for symmetry and completeness Bergson has evolved a whole theory of the universe, resorting, strange to say, to a form of reasoning that implies the validity of logic, the instrument of the intellect which he never wearies of impugning. Without entering upon his merely metaphysical speculations, we fix upon his theory of consciousness--the relation of life to the material world--as involving certain ethical consequences bearing upon our subject. The idea of freedom is the corner-stone of Bergson's system, and his whole philosophy is a powerful vindication of the independence and self-determination of the human will. Life is free, spontaneous, creative and incalculable; determined neither by natural law nor logical sequence. It can break through all causation and assert its own right. It is not, indeed, unrelated to matter, since it has to find its exercise in a material world. Matter plays at once, as he himself says, the rôle of obstacle and stimulus.[23] But it is not the world of things which legislates for man; it is man who legislates for it. Bergson's object is to vindicate the autonomy of consciousness, and his entire philosophy is a protest against every claim of determinism to dominate life. By introducing the creative will before all development, he displaces mechanical force, and makes the whole evolution of life dependent upon the 'vital impulse' which pushes forward against all obstacles to ever higher and higher efficiency. Similarly, by drawing a distinction between intellect and intuition, he shows that the latter is the truly creative power in man which penetrates to the heart of reality and shapes its own world. Intellect and instinct have been developed along divergent lines. The intellect has merely a practical function. It is related to the needs of action.[24] It is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools.[25] It deals with solids and geometrical figures, and its instrument is logic. But according to Bergson it has an inherent incapacity to deal with life.[26] When we contrast the rigidity and superficiality of intellect with the fluidity, sympathy and intimacy of intuition, we see at once wherein lies the true creative power of man. Development, when carried too exclusively along the lines of intellect, means loss of

will-power; and we have seen how, not individuals alone, but entire nations, may be crushed and destroyed by a too rigid devotion to mechanical and stereotyped methods of thought. Only life is adequate to deal with life. Let us give free expression to the intuitive and sympathetic force within us, 'feel the wild pulsation of life,' if we would conquer the world and come to our own. 'The spectacle,' says Bergson, 'of life from the very beginning down to man suggests to us the image of a current of consciousness which flows down into matter as into a tunnel, most of whose endeavours to advance... are stopped by a rock that is too hard, but which, in one direction at least, prove successful, and break out into the light once more.' [27] But there life does not stop.

'All tended to mankind, But in completed man begins anew A tendency to God.' [28] This creative consciousness still pushes on, giving to matter its own life, and drawing from matter its nutriment and strength. The effort is painful, but in making it we feel that it is precious, more precious perhaps than the particular work it results in, because through it we have been making ourselves, 'raising ourselves above ourselves.' And in this there is the true joy of life--the joy which every creator feels--the joy of achievement and triumph. Thus not only is the self being created, but the world is being made--original and incalculable--not according to a preconceived plan or logical sequence, but by the free spontaneous will of man. The soul is the creative force--the real productive agent of novelty in the world. The strange thing is that the soul creates not the world only, but itself. Whence comes this mystic power? What is the origin of the soul? Bergson does not say. But in one passage he suggests that possibly the world of matter and consciousness have the same origin--the principle of life which is the great prius of all that is and is to be. But Bergson's 'élan vital,' though more satisfactory than the first cause of the naturalist, or the 'great unknown' of the evolutionist, or even than some forms of the absolute, is itself admittedly outside the pale of reason--inexplicable, indefinable, and incalculable. The new 'vitalism' unfolds a living self-evolving universe, a restless, unfinished and never-to-be-finished development--the scope and goal of which cannot be foreseen or explained. An infinite number of possibilities open out; which the soul will follow no one can tell; why it follows this direction rather than that, no one can see. There seems to be no room here for teleology or purposiveness; and though Bergson has not yet worked out the theological and ethical implications of his theory, as far as we can at present say the personality and imminence of a Divine Being are excluded. Though Bergson never refers to Hegel by name, he seems to be specially concerned in refuting the philosophy of the Absolute, according to which the world is conceived as the evolution of the infinite mind. If 'tout est donné,' says Bergson, if all is given beforehand, 'why do over again what has already been completed, thus reducing life and endeavour to a mere sham.' But even allowing the force of that objection, the idea of a 'world in the making,' though it appeals to the popular mind, is not quite free from ambiguity. In one sense it states a platitude--a truth, indeed, which is not excluded from an absolute or teleological conception of life. But if it is implied that the world, because it is in process of production, may violate reason and take some capricious form, the idea is absurdly false, so long as we are what we are, and the human mind is what it is. The real must always be the rational. All enterprise and effort are based on the faith that we belong to a rational world. Though we cannot predict what form the world will ultimately take, we can at least be sure that it can assume no character which will contradict the nature of intelligence. Even in the making of a world, if life has any moral worth and meaning at all, there must be rational purpose. There are creation and initiative in man assuredly, but they must not be interpreted as activities which deviate into paths of grotesque and arbitrary fancy. Our actions and ideas must issue from our world. Even a

poem or work of art must make its appeal to the universal mind; any other kind of originality would wholly lack human interest and sever all creation and life from their root in human nature. But at least we must acknowledge that Bergson has done to the world of thought the great service of liberating us from the bonds of matter and the thralldom of a fatalistic necessity. It is his merit that he has lifted from man the burden of a hard determinism, and vindicated the freedom, choice, and initiative of the human spirit. If he has no distinctly Christian message, he has at least disclosed for the soul the possibility of new beginnings, and has shown that there is room in the spiritual life, as the basis of all upward striving, for change of heart and conversion of life.

5. In the philosophy of Eucken there is much that is in harmony with that of Bergson; but there are also important differences. Common to both is a reaction against formalism and intellectualism. Neither claims that we can gain more than 'the knowledge of a direction' in which the solution of the problem may be sought. It is not a 'given' or finished world with which we have to do. 'The triumph of life is expressed by creation,' says Eucken, 'I mean the creation of self by self.' 'We live in the conviction,' he says again, 'that the possibilities of the universe have not yet been played out,[29] but that our spiritual life still finds itself battling in mid-flood with much of the world's work still before us.' While Bergson confines himself rigidly to the metaphysical side of thought, Eucken is chiefly interested in the ethical and religious aspects of life's problem. Moreover, while there is an absence of a distinctly teleological aim in Bergson, the purpose and ideal of life are prominent elements in Eucken. Notwithstanding his antagonism to intellectualism, the influence of Hegel is evident in the absolutist tendency of his teaching. Life for Eucken is fundamentally spiritual. Self-consciousness is the unifying principle. Personality is the keynote of his philosophy. But we are not personalities to begin with: we have the potentiality to become such by our own effort. He bids us therefore forget ourselves, and strive for our highest ideal--the realisation of spiritual personality. The more man 'loses his life' in the pursuit of the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty the more surely will he 'save it.' He realises himself as a personality, who becomes conscious of his unity with the universal spiritual life.

Hence there are two fundamental principles underlying Eucken's philosophy which give to it its distinguishing character. The first is the metaphysical conception of _a realm of Spirit_--an independent spiritual Reality, not the product of the natural man, but communicating itself to him as he strives for, and responds to, it. This spiritual reality underlies and transcends the outward world. It may be regarded as an absolute or universal life--the deeper reality of which all visible things are the expression. The second cardinal principle is the _doctrine of Activism_. Life is action. Human duty lies in a world of strife. We have to contend for a spiritual life-content. Here Eucken has much in common with Fichte.[30] But while Fichte starts with self-analysis, and loses sight of error, care, and sin, Eucken starts with actual conflict, and ever retains a keen sense of these hampering elements. The evil of the world is not to be solved simply by looking down upon the world from some superior optimistic standpoint, and pronouncing it very good. The only way to solve it is the practical one, to leave the negative standing, and press on to the deeper affirmative--the positive truth, that beneath the world of nature there exists a deeper reality of spirit, of which we become participators by the freedom and activity of our lives. We are here to acquire a new spiritual world, but it is a world in which the past is taken up and transfigured. Against naturalism, which acquiesces in the present order of the universe, and against mere intellectualism, which simply investigates it, Eucken never wearies of protesting. He demands,

first, a fundamental cleavage in the inmost being of man, and a deliverance from the natural view of things; and he contends, secondly, for a spiritual awakening and an energetic endeavour to realise our spiritual resources. Not by thought but by action is the problem of life to be solved. Hence his philosophy is not a mere theory about life, but is itself a factor in the great work of spiritual redemption which gives to life its meaning and aim. That which makes Eucken's positive idealism specially valuable is his application of it to religion. Religion has been in all ages the mighty uplifting power in human life. It stands for a negation of the finite and fleeting, and an affirmation of the spiritual and the eternal. This is specially true of the Christian religion. Christianity is the supreme type of religion because it best answers the question, 'What can religion do for life?' But the old forms of its manifestation do not satisfy us to-day. Christianity of the present fails to win conviction principally for three reasons: (1) because it does not distinguish the eternal substance of religion from its temporary forms; (2) because it professes to be the final expression of all truth, thus closing the door against progress of thought and life; and (3) while emphasising man's redemption from evil, it forgets the elevation of his nature towards good. There is a tendency to depreciate human nature, and to overlook the joyousness of life. What is needed, therefore, is the expression of Christianity in a new form--a reconstruction which shall emphasise the positiveness, activity, and joy of Christian morality.[31]

While every one must feel the sublimity and inspiration in this conception of a spiritual world, which it is the task of life to realise, most people will be also conscious of a certain vagueness and elusiveness in its presentation. We are constrained to ask what is this independent spiritual life? Is it a personal God, or is it only an impersonal spirit, which pervades and interpenetrates the universe? The elusive obscurity of the position and function which Eucken assigns to his central conception of the *Geistes-Leben* must strike every reader. Even more than Hegel, Eucken seems to deal with an abstraction. The spiritual life, we are told, 'grows,' 'divides,' 'advances'--but it appears to be as much a 'bloodless category' as the Hegelian 'idea,' having no connection with any living subject. God, the Spirit, may exist, indeed Eucken says He does, but there is nowhere any indication of how the spiritual life follows from, or is the creation of, the Divine Spirit. Our author speaks with so great appreciation of Christianity that it seems an ungracious thing to find fault with his interpretation of it. Yet with so much that is positive and suggestive, there are also some grave omissions. In a work that professes to deal with the Christian faith--*The Truth of Religion*--and which indeed presents a powerful vindication of historical Christianity, we miss any philosophical interpretation of the nature and power of prayer, adoration, or worship, or any account, indeed, of the intimacies of the soul which belong to the very essence of the Christian faith. While he insists upon the possibility, nay, the necessity, of a new beginning, he fails to reveal the power by which the great decision is made. While he affirms with much enthusiasm and frankness the need of personal decision and surrender, he has nothing to say of the divine authority and power which creates our choice and wins our obedience. Nowhere does he show that the creative redemptive force comes not from man's side, but ultimately from the side of God. And finally, his teaching with regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding its tender sympathy and fine discrimination, does less than justice to the uniqueness and historical significance of the Son of Man. With profound appreciation and rare beauty of language he depicts the life of Jesus. 'Seldom,' says a recent writer, 'has the perfect Man been limned with so persuasive a combination of strenuous thought and gracious word.' [32] 'He who makes merely a normal man of Jesus,' he says, 'can never do justice to His greatness.' [33] Yet while he protests

rightly against emptying our Lord's life of all real growth and temptation, and the claim of practical omniscience for His humanity (conceptions of Christ's Person surely nowhere entertained by first-class theologians), he leaves us in no manner of doubt that he does not attach a divine worth to Jesus, nor regard Him in the scriptural sense as the Supreme revelation and incarnation of God. And hence, while the peerless position of Jesus as teacher and religious genius is frankly acknowledged, and His purity, power, and permanence are extolled--the mediatorial and redemptive implicates of His personality are overlooked. But when all is said, no one can study the spiritual philosophy of Eucken without realising that he is in contact with a mind which has a sublime and inspiring message for our age. Probably more than any modern thinker, Eucken reveals in his works deep affinities with the central spirit of Christianity. And perhaps his influence may be all the greater because he maintains an attitude of independence towards dogmatic and organised Christianity. Professor Eucken does not attempt to satisfy us with a facile optimism. Life is a conflict, a task, an adventure. And he who would engage in it must make the break between the higher and the lower nature. For Eucken, as for Dante, there must be 'the penitence, the tears, and the plunge into the river of Lethe before the new transcendent love begins.' There is no evasion of the complexities of life. He has a profound perception of the contradictions of experience and the seeming paradoxes of religion. For him true liberty is only possible through the 'given,' through God's provenience and grace: genuine self-realisation is only achievable through a continuous self-dedication to, and incorporation within, the great realm of spirits; and the Immanence within our lives of the Transcendent.[34] In styling the tendencies which we have thus briefly reviewed non-Christian, we have had no intention of disparagement. No earnest effort to discover truth, though it may be inadequate and partial, is ever wholly false. In the light of these theories we are able to see more clearly the relation between the good and the useful, and to acknowledge that, just as in nature the laws of economy and beauty have many intimate correspondences, so in the spiritual realm the good, the beautiful, and the true may be harmonised in a higher category of the spirit. We shall see that the Christian ideal is not so much antagonistic to, as inclusive of, all that is best in the teaching of science and philosophy. The task therefore now before us is to interpret these general conceptions of the highest good in the light of Christian Revelation--to define the chief end of life according to Christianity.

[1] Kasper Schmidt, *_Der Einzige und sein Eigentum_*.

[2] Haeckel, *_op. cit._*, chap. xix.

[3] Haeckel, *_op. cit._*, chap. xix. p. 140.

[4] Hobbes' *_Leviathan_*, chap. vi.

[5] Cf. Pringle-Pattison, *_Philos. Radicals_*, and J. Seth's *_Eng. Philosophers_*, p. 240.

[6] *_Utilitarianism_*, chap. ii.

[7] *idem*, chap. iii.

[8] Cf. Spencer, *_Data of Ethics_*, p. 275; also *_Social Statics_*. In the former work an attempt is made to exhibit the biological significance of pleasure and the relation between egoism and altruism.

[9] See *_First Principles_*, p. 166 ff.

- [10] See Kirkup, *An Inquiry into Socialism*, p. 19.
- [11] See Lütgert, *„Natur und Geist Gottes“*, for striking chapter on Goethe's *Ethik*, p. 121 f.
- [12] Cf. Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 401 f.
- [13] Macmillan, *The Crowning Phase of the Critical Philosophy*, p. 28.
- [14] Hegel, *Phil. of Right*, p. 45.
- [15] Bosanquet, *The Principles of Individuality and Value*.
- [16] Bosanquet, *The Principles of Individuality and Value*.
- [17] *Pragmatism*, p. 51.
- [18] *Main Currents of Thought*, p. 78.
- [19] *Pragmatism*, p. 278 f.; also *Varieties of Relig. Experience*, p. 525 f.
- [20] *idem*, p. 299.
- [21] *idem*, p. 290.
- [22] The writer regrets that the work of the Italian, Benedetto Croce, *„Philosophy of the Practical, Economic and Ethic“* (Part II. of *„Philosophy of the Spirit“*), came to his knowledge too late to permit a consideration of its ethical teaching in this volume. Croce is a thinker of great originality, of whom we are likely to hear much in the future, and whose philosophy will have to be reckoned with. Though independent of others, his view of life has affinities with that of Hegel. He maintains the doctrine of development of opposites, but avoids Hegel's insistence upon the concept of nature as a mode of reality opposed to the spirit. Spirit is reality, the whole reality, and therefore the universal. It has two activities, theoretic and practical. With the theoretic man understands the universe; with the practical he changes it. The Will is the man, and freedom is finding himself in the Whole.
- [23] *„Hibbert Journal“*, Apr50:1912.
- [24] *„Evol. Creat.“*, p. 161.
- [25] *idem*, p. 146.
- [26] *idem*, p. 165.
- [27] *„Hibbert Journal“*.
- [28] Browning.
- [29] *„Die Geistigen Strömungen der Gegenwart“*, p. 10.
- [30] Cf. *„Problem of Life“*.
- [31] Cf. *„Life's Basis and Life's Ideal“*.
- [32] Hermann, *„Bergson und Eucken“*, p. 103.

[33] _The Problem of Life_, p. 152.

[34] Cf. von Hügel, _Hibbert Journal_, Apri50:1912.

Christian Ideal

CHAPTER VIII THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL The highest good is not uniformly described in the New Testament, and modern ethical teachers have not always been in agreement as to the chief end of life. While some have found in the teaching of Jesus the idea of social redemption alone, and have seen in Christ nothing more than a political reformer, others have contended that the Gospel is solely a message of personal salvation. An impartial study shows that both views are one-sided. On the one hand, no conception of the life of Jesus can be more misleading than that which represents Him as a political revolutionist. But, on the other hand, it would be a distinct narrowing of His teaching to assume that it was confined to the aspirations of the individual soul. His care was indeed primarily for the person. His emphasis was put upon the worth of the individual. And it is not too much to say that the uniqueness of Jesus' teaching lay in the discovery of the value of the soul. There was in His ministry a new appreciation of the possibilities of neglected lives, and a hitherto unknown yearning to share their confidence. It would be a mistake, however, to represent Christ's regard for the individual as excluding all consideration of social relations. The kingdom of God, as we shall see, had a social and corporate meaning for our Lord. And if the qualifications for its entrance were personal, its duties were social. The universalism of Jesus' teaching implied that the soul had a value not for itself alone, but also for others. The assertion, therefore, that the individual has a value cannot mean that he has a value in isolation. Rather his value can only be realised in the life of the community to which he truly belongs. The effort to help others is the truest way to reveal the hidden worth of one's own life; and he who withholds his sympathy from the needy has proved himself unworthy of the kingdom.

While the writers of the New Testament vary in their mode of presenting the ultimate goal of man, they are at one in regarding it as an exalted form of life. What they all seek to commend is a condition of being involving a gradual assimilation to, and communion with, God. The distinctive gift of the Gospel is the gift of life. 'I am the Life,' says Christ. And the apostle's confession is in harmony with his Master's claim--'For me to live is Christ.' Salvation is nothing else than the restoration, preservation, and exaltation of life.

Corresponding, therefore, to the three great conceptions of Life in the New Testament, and especially in the teaching of Jesus--'Eternal Life,' 'the kingdom of God,' and the perfection of the divine Fatherhood, 'Perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect'--there are three aspects, individual, social, and divine, in which we may view the Christian ideal.

I

Self-realisation is not, indeed, a scriptural word. But rightly understood it is a true element in the conception of life, and may, we think, be legitimately drawn from the ethical teaching of the New Testament.[1] Though the free full development of the individual personality as we conceive it in modern times does not receive explicit statement,[2] still one cannot doubt, that before every man our Lord does present the vision of a possible and perfect self. Christianity does not destroy 'the will to live,' but only the will to live at all costs. Even mediaeval piety only inculcated

self-mortification as a stage towards a higher self-affirmation. Christ nowhere condemns the inherent desire for a complete life. The end, indeed, which each man should place before himself is self-mastery and freedom from the world;[3] but it is a mastery and freedom which are to be gained not by asceticism but by conquest. Christ would awaken in every man the consciousness of the priceless worth of his soul, and would have him realise in his own person God's idea of manhood. The ideal of self-realisation includes three distinct elements:

1. Life as intensity of being.--'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'[4] 'More life and fuller' is the passion of every soul that has caught the vision and heard the call of Jesus. The supreme good consists not in suppressed vitality, but in power and freedom. Life in Christ is a full, rich existence. The doctrine of quietism and indifference to joy has no place in the ethic of Jesus. Life is manifested in inwardness of character, and not in pomp of circumstance. It consists not in what a man has, but in what he is.[5] The beatitudes, as the primary qualifications for the kingdom of God, emphasise the fundamental principle of the subordination of the material to the spiritual, and the contrast between inward and outward good.[6] Self-mastery is to extend to the inner life of man--to dominate the thoughts and words, and the very heart from which they issue. A divided life is impossible. The severest discipline, even renunciation, may be needful to secure that singleness of heart and strenuousness of aim which are for Jesus the very essence of life. 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'[7] In harmony with this saying is the opposition in the Johannine teaching between 'the world' and 'eternal life.'[8] The quality of life indeed depends not upon anything contingent or accidental, but upon an intense inward realisation of blessedness in Christ in comparison with which even the privations and sufferings of this world are but as a shadow.[9] At the same time life is not a mere negation, not simply an escape from evil. It is a positive good, the enrichment and intensifying of the whole being by the indwelling of a new spiritual power. 'For me to live is Christ,' says St. Paul. 'This is life eternal,' says St. John, 'that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.'[10]

2. Life as Expansion of Personality.--By its inherent power it grows outwards as well as inwards. The New Testament conception of life is existence in its fullest expression and fruitfulness. The ideal as presented by Christ is no anaemic state of reverie or ascetic withdrawal from human interest. It is by the elevation and consecration of the natural life, and not by its suppression, that the 'good' is to be realised. The natural life is to be transformed, and the very body presented unto God as a living sacrifice.[11] So far from Christianity being opposed to the aim of the individual to find himself in a world of larger interests, it is only in the active and progressive realisation of such a life that blessedness consists. Herein is disclosed, however, the defect of the modern ideal of culture which has been associated with the name of Goethe. In Christ's ideal self-sufficiency has no place. While rightly interpreted the 'good' of life includes everything that enriches existence and contributes to the efficiency and completeness of manhood, mere self-culture and artistic expression are apt to become perverted forms of egoism, if not subordinated to the spirit of service which alone can give to the human faculties their true function and exercise. Hence life finds its real utterance not in the isolated development of the self, but in the fullness of personal relationships. Only in response to the needs of others can a man realise his own life. In answer to the young ruler who asked a question 'concerning that which is good,' Christ replied, 'If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments'; and the particular duties He mentioned were those of the

second table of the Decalogue.[11] The abundance of life which Christ offers consists in the mutual offices of love and the interchange of service. Thus self-realisation is attained only through self-surrender.[13] The self-centred life is a barren life. Not by withholding our seed but by flinging it forth freely upon the broad waters of humanity do we attain to that rich fruition which is 'life indeed.'

3. Life as Eternal Good.--Whatever may be the accurate signification of the word 'eternal,' the words 'eternal life,' regarded as the ideal of man, can mean nothing else than life at its highest, the fulfilment of all that personality has within it the potency of becoming. In one sense there is no finality in life. 'It seethes with the morrow for us more and more.' But in another sense, to say that the moral life is never attained is only a half truth. It is always being attained because it is always present as an active reality evolving its own content. In Christ we have 'eternal life' now. It is not a thing of quantity but of quality, and is therefore timeless.

'We live in deeds not years, in thoughts not breaths, In feelings, not in figures on a dial.'[14] He who has entered into fellowship with God has within him now the essence of 'life eternal.' But the conception of life derived from, and sustained by, God involves the idea of immortality. 'No work begun shall ever pause for death.'[15] To live in God is to live as long as God. The spiritual man pursues his way through conflict and achievement towards a higher and yet a higher goal, ever manifesting, yet ever seeking, the infinite that dwells in him. All knowledge and quest and endeavour, nay existence itself, would be a mockery if man had 'no forever.' Scripture corroborates the yearnings of the heart and represents life as a growing good which is to attain to ever higher reaches and fuller realisations in the world to come. It is the unextinguishable faith of man that the future must crown the present. No human effort goes to waste, no gift is delusive; but every gift and every effort has its proper place as a stage in the endless process.[16] 'There shall never be lost one good! What was shall live as before.'[17]

II The foregoing discussion leads naturally to the second aspect of the highest Good, the Ideal in its social or corporate form--the kingdom of God. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as an individual. As biologically man is only a member of a larger organism, so ethically he can only realise himself in a life of brotherhood and service. It is only within the kingdom of God and by recognition of its social relations that the individual can attain to his own blessedness. Viewed in the light of the mutual relation of its members the kingdom is a brotherhood in which none is ignored and all have common privileges and responsibilities; viewed in the light of its highest good it is the entire perfection of the whole--a hierarchy of interests subordinated to, and unified by, the sovereignty of the good in the person of God.[18]

1. By reason of its comprehensiveness the doctrine of the kingdom has been regarded by many as the most general conception of the ideal of Jesus. 'In its unique and unapproachable grandeur it dwarfs all the lesser heights to which the prophetic hopes had risen, and remains to this day the transcendent and commanding ideal of the possible exaltation of our humanity.'[19] The principles implicitly contained in the teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom have become the common possessions of mankind, and are moulding the thoughts and institutions of the civilised world. Kant's theory of a kingdom of ends, Comte's idea of Humanity, and the modern conceptions of scientific and historical evolution are corroborative of the teaching of the New Testament. Within its conception men have found room for the modern ideas of social and economic order, and

under its inspiration are striving for a fuller realisation of the aspirations and hopes of humanity.[20]

Though frequently upon His lips the phrase did not originate with Jesus. Already the Baptist had employed it as the note of his preaching, and even before the Baptist it had a long history in the annals of the Jewish people. Indeed the entire story of the Hebrews is coloured by this conception, and in the days of their decline it is the idea of the restoration of their nation as the true kingdom of God that dominates their hopes. When earthly institutions did not fulfil their promise, and nothing could be expected by natural means, hope became concentrated upon supernatural power. Thus before Jesus appeared there had grown up a mass of apocalyptic literature, the object of which was to encourage the national expectation of a sudden and supernatural coming of the kingdom of heaven. Men of themselves could do nothing to hasten its advent. They could only wait patiently till the set time was accomplished, and God stretched forth His mighty hand.[21] A new school of German interpretation has recently arisen, the aim of which is to prove that Jesus was largely, if not wholly, influenced by the current apocalyptic notions of His time. Jesus believed, it is said, in common with the popular sentiment of the day, that the end of the world was at hand, and that at the close of the present dispensation there would come suddenly and miraculously a new order into which would be gathered the elect of God. Johannes Weiss, the most pronounced advocate of this view, maintains that Jesus' teaching is entirely eschatological. The kingdom is supramundane and still to come. Jesus did not inaugurate it; He only predicted its advent. Consequently there is no Ethics, strictly so called, in His preaching; there is only an Ethic of renunciation and watchfulness[22]--an Interimsethik. The whole problem resolves itself into two crucial questions: (1) Did Jesus expect a gradual coming of the kingdom, or did He conceive of it as breaking in suddenly by the immediate act of God? and (2) Did Jesus regard the kingdom as purely future, or as already begun? In answer to the first question, while there are undoubtedly numerous and explicit sayings, too much neglected in the past and not to be wholly explained by mere orientalism, suggesting a sudden and miraculous coming, these must be taken in connection with the many other passages implying a gradual process--passages of deep ethical import which seem to colour our Lord's entire view of life and its purposes. And in answer to the second question, while there are not a few utterances which certainly point to a future consummation, these are not inconsistent with the immediate inauguration and gradual development of the kingdom. A full discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this volume.[23] There are, however, two objections which may be taken to the apocalyptic interpretation of Christ's teaching as a whole. (1) As presented by its most pronounced champions, this view seems to empty the person and teaching of Jesus of their originality and universality. It tends to reduce the Son of Man to the level of a Jewish rhapsodist, whose whole function was to encourage His countrymen to look away from the present scene of duty to some future state of felicity, which had no connection with the world of reality, and no bearing upon their present character. It would be surely a caricature to interpret the religion of the New Testament from this standpoint alone to the exclusion of those directly ethical and spiritual principles in which its originality chiefly appeared, and on which its permanence depends.[24] As Bousset[25] points out, not renunciation but joy in life is the characteristic thing in Jesus' outlook. He does not preach a gloomy asceticism, but proclaims a new righteousness and a new type of duty. He recognises the worth of the present life, and teaches that the world's goods are not in themselves bad. He came as a living man into a dead world, and by inculcating a living idea of God and proclaiming the divine Fatherhood gave a new direction and inner elevation to the expectations of His age, showing the true design of God's

revelation and the real meaning of the prophetic utterances of the past. To interpret the kingdom wholly from an eschatological point of view would involve a failure to apprehend the spiritual greatness of the personality with which we are dealing.[26] (2) This view virtually makes Christ a false prophet. For, as a matter of fact, the sudden and catastrophic coming of the kingdom as predicted by the Hebrew apocalypics did not take place. On the contrary the kingdom of God came not as the Jews expected in a sudden descent from the clouds, but in the slow and progressive domination of God over the souls and social relationships of mankind. In view of the whole spirit of Jesus, His conception of God, and His relation to human life, as well as the attitude of St. Paul to the Parousia, it is critically unsound to deny that Jesus believed in the presence of the kingdom in a real sense during His lifetime.[27]

2. If this conception of the kingdom of God be correct we may now proceed to regard it under three aspects, Present, Progressive, and Future--as a _Gift_ immediately bestowed by Jesus, as a _Task_ to be worked out by man in the history of the world, and as a _Hope_ to be consummated by God in the future.

(1) _The Kingdom as a Present Reality_--After what has been already said it will not be necessary to dwell upon this aspect. It might be supported by direct sayings of our Lord.[28] But the whole tenor and atmosphere of the Gospels, the uniqueness of Christ's personality, His claim to heal disease and forgive sin, as well as the conditions of entrance, imply clearly that in Jesus' own view the kingdom was an actual fact inaugurated by Him and obtaining its meaning and power from His own person and influence. Obviously He regarded Himself as the bearer of a new message of life, and the originator of a new reign of righteousness and love which was to have immediate application. Christ came to make God real to men upon the earth, and to win their allegiance to Him at once. No one can fail to recognise the lofty idealism of the Son of Man. He carries with Him everywhere a vision of the perfect life as it exists in the mind of God, and as it will be realised when these earthly scenes have passed away; yet it would be truer to say that His interests were in 'first things' rather than in 'last things,' and would be more justly designated Protology than Eschatology.[29] His mission, so far from having an iconoclastic aim, was really to 'make all things new.' He was concerned with the initiation of a new religion, therefore with a movement towards a regeneration of society which would be virtually a reign of God in the hearts of men. 'The kingdom of God is within you.' Not in some spot remote from the world, some beautiful land beyond the skies, but in the hearts and homes, in the daily pursuits and common relationships of life must God rule. The beatitudes, while they undoubtedly refer to a future when a fuller realisation of them will be enjoyed, have a present reference as well. They make the promise of the kingdom a present reality dependent upon the inner state of the recipients. Not in change of environment but in change of heart does the kingdom consist. The lowly and the pure in heart, the merciful and the meek, the seekers after righteousness and the lovers of peace are, in virtue of their disposition and aspiration, already members.

(2) The kingdom as a _gradual development_--The inward gift prescribes the outward task. It is a power commanding the hearts of men and requiring for its realisation their response. It might be argued that this call to moral effort presented to the first Christians was not a summons to transform the present world, but to prepare themselves for the destiny that awaited them in the coming age.[30] It is true that watchfulness, patience, and readiness are among the great commands of the New Testament.[31] But admitting the importance of these requirements, they

do not militate against the view that Christians were to work for the betterment of the world. Christ did not look upon the world as hopeless and beyond all power of reclaiming; nor did He regard His own or His disciples' ministry within it as without real and positive effects. While His contemporaries were expecting some mighty intervention that would suddenly bring the kingdom ready-made from heaven, He saw it growing up silently and secretly among men. He took his illustrations from organic life. Its progress was to be like the seed hidden in the earth, and growing day and night by its own inherent germinating force. The object of the parables of the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, was to show that the crude catastrophic conception of the coming of the kingdom must give place to the deeper and worthier idea of growth--an idea in harmony with the entire economy of God's working in the world of nature. In the parable of the fruit-bearing earth Jesus shows His faith in the growth of the good, and hence in the adaptation of the truth to the human soul. In the parables of the leaven, the light, and salt Jesus illustrates the gradual power of truth to pervade, illumine, and purify the life of humanity. His method of bringing about this good is the contagion of the good life. His motive is the sense of the need of men. And His goal is the establishment of the kingdom of love--a kingdom in which all the problems of ambition, wealth, and the relationships of the family, of the industrial sphere, and of the state, are to be transfigured and spiritualised.[32]

It is surely no illegitimate application of the mind of Christ if we see in His teaching concerning the kingdom a great social ideal to be realised by the personal activities and mutual services of its citizens. It finds its field and opportunity in the realm of human society, and is a good to be secured in the larger life of humanity. This ideal, though only dimly perceived by the early Church, has become gradually operative in the world, and has been creative of all the great liberating movements in history. It lay behind Dante's vision of a spiritual monarchy, and has been the inspiring motive of those who, in obedience to Christ, have wrought for the uplifting of the hapless and the down-trodden. It has been the soul of all mighty reformations, and is the source of that conception of a new social order which has begun to mean so much for our generation.

Loyalty to the highest and love for the lowest--love to God and man--these are the marks of the men of all ages who have sought to interpret the mind of Christ. Mutual service is the law of the kingdom. Every man has a worth for Christ, therefore reverence for the personality of man, and the endeavour to procure for each full opportunity of making the most of his life, are at once the aim and goal of the new spiritual society of which Christ laid the foundations in His own life and ministry. Everything that a man is and has, talents and possessions of every kind, are to be used as instruments for the promotion of the kingdom of God.

'For life, with all it yields of joy and woe, And hope and fear... Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love.'

(3) But though the reign of God has begun, it has yet to be consummated.--There is not wanting in the New Testament an element of futurity and expectancy not inconsistent with, but rather complementary to, the notion of gradual development. The eschatological teaching of Jesus has its place along with the ethical, and may be regarded not as annulling, but rather reinforcing the moral ideals which He proclaimed.[33] There is nothing pessimistic in Christ's outlook. His teaching concerning the last things, while inculcating solemnity and earnestness of life as become those to whom has been entrusted a high destiny, and who know not at what hour they may be

called to give an account of their stewardship,[34] bids men look forward with certainty and hope to a glorious consummation of the kingdom. Though many of our Lord's sayings with regard to His second coming are couched in figurative language, we cannot believe that He intended to teach that the kingdom itself was to be brought about in a spectacular or material way. He bids His disciples take heed lest they be deceived by a visible Christ, or led away by merely outward signs.[35] His coming is to be as 'the lightning which cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west'[36]--an emblem not so much of suddenness as of illuminating and convincing, and especially, of progressive force. Not in a visible reign or personal return of the Son of Man does the consummation of the kingdom consist, but in the complete spiritual sovereignty of Christ over the hearts and minds of men. When the same love which He Himself manifested in His life becomes the feature of His disciples; when His spirit of service and sacrifice pervades the world, and the brotherhood of man and the federation of nations everywhere prevail; then, indeed, shall the sign of the Son of Man appear in the heavens, and then shall the tribes of the earth see Him coming in the clouds with power and glory.[37]

Jesus does not hesitate to say that there will be a final judgment and an ingathering of the elect from all quarters of the earth.[38] There will be, as the parable of the Ten Virgins suggests, a division and a shut door.[39] But punishment will be automatic. Sin will bring its own consequences. Those only will be excluded at the last who even now are excluding themselves. For Christ is already here, and is judging the world every day. By the common actions of their present life men are being tried; and that which will determine their final relation to Christ will not be their mere perception of His bodily presence, but their moral and spiritual likeness to Him.

Amidst the imperfections of the present men have ever looked forward to some glorious consummation, and have lived and worked in the faith of it. 'To the prophets of Israel it was the new age of righteousness; to the Greek thinkers the world of pure intelligible forms; to Augustine and Dante the holy theocratic state; to the practical thought of our own time the renovated social order. Each successive age will frame its own vision of the great fulfilment; but all the different ideals can find their place in the message of the kingdom which was proclaimed by Jesus.'[40]

There is thus opened to our vision a splendid conception of the future of humanity. It stands for all that is highest in our expectations because it is already expressive of all that is best in our present achievements and endeavours. The final hope of mankind requires for its fulfilment a progressive moral discipline. Only as Christ's twofold command--love to God and love to man--is made the all-pervasive rule of men's lives will the goal of a universally perfected humanity be attained.

III The chief good may be regarded finally in its divine aspect--as the endeavour after God-likeness. In this third form of the ideal the two others--the personal and the social--are harmonised and completed. To realise the perfect life as it is revealed in the character and will of God is the supreme aim of man, and it embraces all that is conceivably highest for the individual and for humanity as a whole. This aspiration finds its most explicit expression in the sublime word of Christ--'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.'[41] This commandment, unlike so many generalisations of duty, is no cold abstraction. It is pervaded with the warmth of personality and the inspiration of love. In the idea of Fatherhood both a standard and motive are implied. Because God is our Father it is at once natural and possible for us to be like Him. He who would imitate another must have already within him something of that other. As there is a

community of nature which makes it possible for the child to grow into the likeness of its parent, so there is a kinship in man with God to which our Lord here appeals.

1. Among the ethical qualities of divine perfection set forth in scripture for man's imitation Holiness stands preeminent. God, the perfect being, is the type of holiness, and men are holy in proportion as their lives are Godlike. This conception of holiness is fundamental in the Old Testament. It is summed up in a command almost identical with that of our Lord: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'[42] Holiness, as Christianity understands it, is the name for the undimmed lustre of God's ethical perfection. God is 'the Holy one'--the alone 'good' in the absolute sense.[43]

If God's character consists in 'Holiness,' then that quality determines the moral end of man. But holiness, as the most comprehensive name for the divine moral perfection--the pure white light of God's Being--breaks up into the separate rays which we designate the special moral attributes. These have been grouped under 'Righteousness' (truth, faithfulness, justice, zeal, etc.), and 'Love' (goodness, pity, mercy, etc.), though they are really but expressions of one individual life.[44]

2. In the New Testament Righteousness is almost equivalent to holiness. It is the attribute of God which determines the nature of His kingdom and the condition of man's entrance into it. As comprising obedience to the will of God and the fulfilment of the moral law, it is the basal and central conception of the Christian ideal.[45] It is the keynote of the Pauline Epistles. Life has a supreme sacredness for Paul because the righteousness of God is its end. While righteousness is the distinctive note of the Pauline conception, it is also fundamental in the Ethics of Jesus. It is the ruling thought in the Sermon on the Mount. To be righteous for Jesus simply means to be right and true--to be as one ought to be. But human standards are insufficient. A man must order his life by the divine standard. Jesus is as emphatic as any Old Testament prophet in insisting upon the need of absolute righteousness. That, for all who would share in the kingdom of the good, is to be their ideal--the object of their hunger and thirst. It is a 'good' which is essential to the very satisfaction and blessedness of the soul.[46] It is the supreme desire of the man who would be at peace with God. It involves poverty of spirit, for only those who are emptied of self are conscious of their need. They who, in humility and meekness, acknowledge their sins, are in the way of holiness and are already partakers of the divine nature.

Christ's teaching in regard to righteousness has both a negative and a positive aspect. It was inevitable that He should begin with a criticism of the morality inculcated by the leaders of His day. The characteristic feature of Pharisaism was, as Christ shows, its externalism. If a man fulfilled the outward requirements of the law he was regarded as holy, by himself and others, whatever might be the state of his heart towards God. This outwardness tended to create certain vices of character. Foremost amongst these were (1) Vanity or Ostentation. To appear well in the opinion of others was the aim of pharisaic conduct. Along with ostentation appears (2) Self-complacency. Flattery leads to self-esteem. He who loves the praise of man naturally begins to praise himself. As a result of self-esteem arises (3) Censoriousness, since he who thinks well of himself is apt to think ill of others. As a system Pharisaism was wanton hypocrisy--a character of seeming righteousness, but too often of real viciousness. But Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the law.[47] His aim was to proclaim the true principles of righteousness in contrast to the current notions of it. This He proceeds to do by issuing the law in its ideal and perfected form.[48] Hence Jesus unfolds its positive content by bringing into prominence the

virtues of the godly character as opposed to the pharisaic vices. Modesty and humility are set over against ostentation and self-righteousness.[49] Single-minded sincerity is commended in opposition to hypocrisy.[50] The vice of censoriousness is met by the duty of self-judgment rather than the judgment of others.[51] The two positive features of the new law of righteousness as expounded by Jesus are-- inwardness and spontaneity. The righteousness of the Gospel, so far from being laxer or easier of fulfilment, was actually to exceed that of the Pharisees:[52] (a) in depth and inwardness. It is not enough not to kill or steal or commit adultery. These commandments may be outwardly kept yet inwardly broken. Something more radical is expected of the man who has set before him the doing of God's will, a righteousness not of appearance but of reality. (b) In freedom and spontaneity. It is to have its spring in the heart. It is to be a righteousness not of servile obedience, but of willing devotion. The aim of life is no longer the painful effort of the bondsman who strives to perform a distasteful task, but the gladsome endeavour of the son who knows and does, because he loves, his father's will. In the Ethics of the Christian life there is no such thing as mere duty; for a man never fulfils his duty till he has done more than is legally required of him. 'Whosoever shall compel you to go with him one mile, go with him twain.'[53] The 'nicely calculated less or more' is alien to the spirit of him who would do God's will. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and love knows nothing of limits.

3. Thus the holiness of God is manifested not in righteousness only, but in the attribute of Love. The human mind can attain to no higher conception of the divine character than that which the word 'love' suggests. The thought is the creation of Christianity. It was the special contribution of one of the innermost circle of Jesus' disciples to give utterance to the new vision of the divine nature which Christ had disclosed--'God is love.'[54] In our Lord's teaching the centre of gravity is entirely changed. The Jewish idea of God is enriched with a fuller content. He is still the Holy One, but the sublimity of His righteousness, though fully recognised, is softened by the gentler radiance of love.[55] Jehovah the Sovereign is revealed as God the Father. Divine righteousness is not simply justice, but goodness manifested in far-reaching activities of mercy and pity and benevolence. A new note is struck in the Ethics of Jesus. A new relationship is established between God and man--a personal filial relationship which entirely alters man's conception of life. To be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, to be, and embody in life all that love means, that is the sublime aim which Jesus in His own person and teaching sets before the world. As God's love is universal, and His care and compassion world-wide, so, says Christ, not by retaliation or even by the performance of strict justice, but in loving your enemies, in returning good for evil and extending your acts of helpfulness and charity to those 'who know not, care not, think not, what they do,' shall ye become the children of your Father, and realise something of that divine pattern of every man which has been shown him on the holy mount.

If the view presented in this chapter of the ethical ideal of Christianity be correct, then the doctrine of an Interims-ethik advocated by modern eschatologists must be pronounced unsatisfactory as a complete account of the teaching of Jesus.[56] The three features which stand out most clearly in the Ethics of Christ are, Absoluteness, Inwardness, and Universality. It is an ideal for man as man, for all time, and for all men. The personality of God represents the highest form of existence we know; and the love of God is the sublimest attribute we can conceive. But because God is our Father there is a kinship between the divine and the human; and no higher or grander vision of life is thinkable than to be like God--to share that which is most distinctive of the divine

Fatherhood--His love of all mankind. Hence Godlikeness involves Brotherhood.[57] In the ideal of love--high as God, broad as the world--the other aspects of the chief good, the individual and the social, are harmonised. In Christian Ethics, the problem of philosophy how to unite the one and the many, egoism and altruism, has been practically solved. The individual realises his life only as he finds himself in others; and this he can only do as he finds himself in God. The first and last word of all morality and religion is summed up in Christ's twofold law of love: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'[58]

[1] Cf. Troeltsch, *Die Sociallehren d. Christl. Kirchen*, vol. i. p. 37, where the idea of self-worth and self-consecration is worked out.

[2] Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 76.

[3] Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, pp. 76 f.

[4] John 10:10.

[5] Luke 12:15; Luke 12:16.

[6] Matthew 5:1-48.

[7] Matthew 6:24.

[8] 1 John 2:15.

[9] Luke 10:21; Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 8:35; John 3:15; John 10:28, John 17:2.

[10] John 17:3.

[11] Romans 12:1.

[12] Matthew 19:17.

[13] Luke 17:33; John 12:25.

[14] Bailey, *Festus*.

[15] Browning.

[16] Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, p. 354.

[17] Abt Vogler.

[18] Cf. Balch, *Introd. to the Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 150.

[19] Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 97.

[20] Balch, *Introd. to the Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 150.

[21] See Apocalypses of Baruch, Esdras, Enoch, and Pss. of Solomon, and also Daniel and Ezekiel. Cf. E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, for Apoc. literature.

[22] J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*. Cf. also Wernle, *Die Anfänge unsrer Religion*, who is not so pronounced. Bousset rejects this view, and Titius, in his *N. T. Doctrine of*

Blessedness_, regards the kingdom of God as a present good. See also Moffatt, _The Theology of the Gospels_.

[23] Cf. Dobschütz, _The Eschatology of the Gospels_, also Schweitzer, _op. cit._, and Sanday, _The Life of Christ in Recent Research_, E. Scott, _The Kingdom of God and the Messiah_, and Moffatt, _op. cit._ [24] Cf. Barbour, _A Philos. Study of Chr. Ethics_, p. 184.

[25] 'Jesu predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judenthum.'

[26] Cairns, _Christianity in the Mod. World_, p. 173. See Schweitzer, _The Quest of the Historical Jesus_, for advocates and opponents of this view, pp. 222 ff. Cf. also Troeltsch, _op. cit._, vol. i. p. 35.

[27] Cf. Moffatt, _op. cit._ [28] Luke 4:21; Luke 17:21; Matthew 12:28; Matthew 11:2-8; Matthew 11:20; Luke 16:16. Cf. also Matthew 13:16-17.

[29] Our Lord never uses the word 'final' or 'last' of anything concerning the kingdom. Only in the fourth Gospel do we find the phrase 'the last day.' See art., _Contemporary Review_, Sept. 1912.

[30] The view of Weiss.

[31] Luke 12:19; Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13; 2 Timothy 2:12.

[32] King, _The Ethics of Jesus_, p. 143.

[33] Mark 13:7-31 has been called the 'little Apocalypse' and the hypothesis has been thrown out that a number of verses (fifteen in all) form a document by themselves, 'a fly leaf put into circulation before the fall of Jerusalem, and really incorporated by the Evangelist himself. See Sanday, art., _Hibbert Journal_, Oct. 1911, and _Life of Christ in Recent Research_.

[34] Matthew 24:42.

[35] Matthew 24:23.

[36] Matthew 24:27.

[37] Matthew 24:30.

[38] Matthew 24:31.

[39] Matt. xxv.

[40] E. F. Scott, _The Kingdom and the Messiah_, p. 256.

[41] Matthew 5:48.

[42] Leviticus 4:11, Leviticus 19:2.

[43] Mark 10:18.

[44] Cf. Orr, _Sin as a Problem of To-day_, chap. iii.

[45] Cf. Jacoby, *Neu-testamentliche Ethik*, p. 1.

[46] Matthew 5:3 f.

[47] Matthew 5:17.

[48] Matthew 5:18.

[49] Matthew 6:1-6.

[50] Matthew 6:16-18.

[51] Matthew 7:1-5.

[52] Matthew 5:20.

[53] Matthew 5:41.

[54] 1 John 4:8; 1 John 4:16.

[55] John 17:11; Hebrews 10:31; Revelation 15:4.

[56] Cf. E. Digges La Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*, pp. 150 ff.

[57] 1 John 4:21.

[58] Matthew 22:37.

Standard and Motive

CHAPTER IX THE STANDARD AND MOTIVE OF THE NEW LIFE In every system of Ethics the three ideas of End, Norm, and Motive are inseparable. Christian Ethics is unique in this respect that it presents not merely a code of morals, but an ideal of good embodied in a person who is at once the pattern and inspiration of the new life. In this chapter we propose to consider these two elements of the good.

Christ as Example.--The value of 'concrete examples' has been frequently recognised in non-Christian systems. In the 'philosopher king' of Plato, the 'expert' of Aristotle, and the 'wise man' of the Stoics we have the imaginary embodiment of the ideal. A similar tendency is apparent in modern theories. Comte invests the abstract idea of 'Humanity' with certain personal perfections for which he claims homage. But what other systems have conceived in an imaginative form only, Christianity has realised in an actual person. The example of Christ is not a separate source of authority independent of His teaching, but rather its witness and illustration. Word and deed in Jesus are in full agreement. He was what He taught, and every truth He uttered flowed directly from His inner nature. He is the prototype and expression of the 'good' as it exists in the mind of God, as well as the perfect representative and standard of it in human life. In Him is manifested for all time what is meant by the good.

1. If Christ is the normative standard of life it is extremely important to obtain a true perception of Him as He dwelt among men. But too often have theology and art presented a Christ embellished with fantastic colours or obscured by abstract speculations. Recently, however, there has been a revival of interest in the actual life of Jesus. Men are turning wistfully to the life of the Master for guidance in practical matters, and it is beginning to dawn upon the world that the highest ideals of manhood were present in the Carpenter of Nazareth. We must therefore go back to the Gospels if we would know what manner of man Jesus was. The difficulty of presenting the Man Christ Jesus as the eternal example to the world must have been almost insurmountable; and we are at once struck with two remarkable features of the synoptics' portrayal of Him. (1) The writers make no attempt to produce a work of art. They never dream that they are drawing a model for all men to copy. There is no effort to touch up or tone down the portrait. They simply reflect what they see without admixture of colours of their own. Hence the paradox of His personality--the intense humanness and yet the mystery of godliness ever and anon shining through the commonest incidents of His life. (2) Even more remarkable than the absence of subjectivity on the part of the evangelists is the unconsciousness of Jesus that He is being portrayed as an example. We do not receive the impression that the Son of Man was consciously living for the edification of the world. His mental attitude is not that of an actor playing a part, but of a true and genuine man living his own life and fulfilling his own purpose. There is no seeming or display. Goodness to be effectual as an example must be unconscious goodness. We are impressed everywhere with the perfect naturalness and spontaneity of all that Christ did and uttered.[1] The character of Jesus has been variously interpreted, and it is one of the evidences of His moral greatness that each age has emphasised some new aspect of His {148} personality. In a nature so rich and complex it is

difficult to fix upon a single category from which may be deduced the manifold attributes of His character. Two conceptions of Jesus have generally prevailed down the centuries. One view interprets His character in terms of asceticism; the other in terms of aestheticism.[2] Some regard Him as the representative of Hebrew sorrow and sacrifice; others see in Him the type of Hellenic joy and geniality. There are passages in Scripture confirmatory of both impressions. On the one hand, there is a whole series of virtues of the passive order which are utterly alien to the Greek ideal; and, on the other hand, there is equally prominent a tone of tranquil gladness, of broad sympathy with, and keen appreciation of, the beautiful in nature and life which contrasts with the spirit of Hebrew abnegation. But, after all, neither of these traits reveals the secret of Jesus. Joy and sorrow are but incidents in life. They have only moral value as the vehicles of a profounder spiritual purpose. To help every man to realise the fullness and perfection of his being as a child of God is the aim of His life and ministry, and everything that furthers this end is gratefully recognised by Him as a good. He neither courts nor shuns pain. Neither joy nor sorrow is for Him an end in itself. Both are but incidents upon the way of holiness and love which He had chosen to travel.

2. Everywhere there was manifest in the life and teaching of Jesus a note of _self-mastery and authority_ which impressed His contemporaries and goes far to explain and unify the various features of His personality and influence. It is remarkable to notice how often the word 'power' is applied to Jesus in the New Testament.[3] Whether we regard His attitude to God, or His relation to others, it is this note of quiet strength, of vital moral force which arrests our attention. It will be sufficient to mention in passing three directions in which this quality of power is manifest.

(1) It is revealed in the consciousness of a _divine mission_. He goes steadily forward with the calmness of one who knows himself and his work. He has no fear or hesitancy. Courage, earnestness, and singleness of purpose mark His career. He is conscious that His task has been given Him by God, and that He is the chosen instrument of His Father's will. Life has a greatness and worth for Him because it may be made the manifestation and vehicle of the divine purpose.

(2) His power is revealed again in the _realisation of Holiness_. Holiness is to be differentiated, on the one hand, from innocence; and, on the other, from sinlessness. Innocence is untried goodness; sinlessness is negative goodness; holiness is achieved and victorious goodness. It was not mere absence of sin that distinguished Jesus. His was a purity won by temptation, an obedience perfected through suffering, a peace and harmony of soul attained not by self-suppression, but by the consecration of His unfolding life to the will of God.

(3) His power is manifested once more in His _Sympathy with man_. His purity was pervasive. It flowed forth in acts of love. He went about doing good, invading the world of darkness and sorrow with light and joy. It is the wealth of His interests and the variety of His sympathy which give to the ministry of the Son of Man its impressiveness and charm. With gladness as with grief, with the playfulness of childhood and the earnestness of maturity, with the innocent festivities and the graver pursuits of His fellow-men, with the cares of the rich and the trials of the poor, He disclosed the most intimate and tender feeling. His parables show that He had an open and observant eye for all the life around Him. To every appeal He responded with an insight and delicacy of consideration which betokened that He Himself had sounded the depths of human experience and knew what was in man. Humour, irony, and pathos in turn are revealed in His human intercourse. But while Jesus delighted to give of Himself freely He knew also how to withhold Himself. There

can be no true sympathy without restraint. The passive virtues--meekness, patience, forbearance--which appear in the life of Christ are 'not the signs of mere self-mortification, they are the signs of power in reserve. They are the marks of one who can afford to wait, who expects to suffer; and that not because he is simply meek and lowly, but because he is also strong and calm.'[4] The New Testament depicts Jesus as made in the likeness of men, whose life, though unique in some of its aspects, was in its general conditions normal, passing through the ordinary stages of growth, and participating in the common experiences of mankind. He had to submit to the same laws and limitations of the universe as we have. There was the same call, in His case as in ours, to obedience and endurance. There was the same demand for moral decision. Temptation, suffering, and toil, which mean so much for man in the discipline of character, were factors also in the spiritual development of Christ. Trust, prayer, thanksgiving were exercised by the Son of Man as by others; confession alone had no place in His life.

3. The question has been seriously asked, Can the example and teaching of Jesus be really adopted in modern life as the pattern and rule of conduct? Is there not something strangely impracticable in His Ethics; and, however admirably suited to meet the needs of His own time, utterly inapplicable to the complex conditions of society to-day? On the one hand, Tolstoy would have us follow the example of Jesus to the letter, and rigidly practise the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, even to the extent of refusing to resist wrong and possess property, and of holding aloof from all culture and enterprise, and the interests of life generally. On the other hand, philosophers like Paulsen and Bradley, perceiving the utter impracticableness of Tolstoy's contentions, yet at the same time recognising his attitude as the only consistent one if the imitation of Christ is to have vogue at all, are convinced that the earthly life of Jesus is not the model of our {161} age, and that to attempt to carry out His precepts consistently would be not only impossible but injurious to all the higher interests of humanity.[5] But this conclusion is based, it seems to us, upon a two-fold misapprehension. It is founded upon an inadequate interpretation of the life and teaching of Christ; and also upon a wholly mechanical understanding of the meaning and value of example.

(1) What was Christ's ideal of the Christian life? Was it that of the monk or the citizen?--the recluse who meditates apart on his own salvation, or the worker who enters the world and contributes to the betterment of mankind? Is the kingdom of God a realm apart and separate from all the other domains of activity? Or has Christianity, according to its essence, room within it for an application of its truth to the complex relations and manifold interests of modern life? Both views have found expression in the history of the Church. But there can be little doubt as to which is the true interpretation of the mind of Jesus.[6]

(2) But, again, what is meant by the 'imitation of Christ' has been also misconceived. Imitation is not a literal mechanical copying. To make the character of another your model does not mean that you are to become his mimic or echo. In asking us to follow Him, Christ does not desire to suppress our individuality, but to enrich and ennoble it. When He says, on the occasion of the feet-washing of His disciples, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you,'[7] obviously it was not the outward literal performance, but the spirit of humility and service embodied in the act which He desired His disciples to emulate. From another soul we receive incentives rather than rules. No teacher or master, says Emerson, can realise for us what is good.[8] Within our own souls alone can the decision be made. We cannot hope to interpret the

character of another until there be within our own breasts the same moral spirit from which we believe his conduct to proceed. The very nature of goodness forbids slavish reproduction. Hence there is a certain sense in which the paradox of Kant is true, that 'imitation finds no place at all in morality.' [9] The question, 'What would Jesus do?' as a test of conduct covers a quite inadequate conception of the intimate and vital relations Christ bears to our humanity. 'It is not to copy after Christ,' says a modern writer, 'but to receive His spirit and make it effective--which is the moral task of the Christian.' [10] Christ is indeed our example, but He is more. And unless He were more He could not be so much. We could not strive to be like Him if He were not already within us, the Principle and Spirit of our life, the higher and diviner self of every man.

What is meant, then, by saying that Christ is the ideal character or norm of life is that He represents to us human nature in its typical or ideal form. As we behold His perfection we feel that this is what we were made for, this is the true end of our being. Every one may, in short, see in Him the fulfilment of the divine idea and purpose of man--the conception and end of himself. [11]

II

The Christian Motive.--Rightly regarded Christ is not only the model of the new life, but its motive as well. All the great appeals of the Gospel--every persuasion and plea by which God seeks to awaken a responsive love in the hearts of men--are centred in, and find expression through, the Person and Passion of Christ.

1. The question of motive is a primary one in Ethics. If, therefore, we ask, What is the deepest spring of action, what is the incentive and motive power for the Christian? The answer is: (1) the love of God, a love which finds its highest expression in Forgiveness. Of all motives the most powerful is the sense of being pardoned. Even when it is only one human being who forgives another, nothing strikes so deep into the human heart or evokes penitence so tender and unreserved, or brings a joy so pure and lasting. It not only restores the old relation which wrong had dissolved; it gives the offender a sense of loyalty unknown before. He is now bound not by law but by honour, and it would be a disloyalty worse than the original offence if he wounded such love again. Thus it is that God becomes the object of reverence and affection, not because He imposes laws upon us but because He pardons and redeems. The consciousness of forgiveness is far more potent in producing goodness than the consciousness of law. This psychological fact lay at the root of Christ's ministry, and was the secret of His hope for man. This, too, is the key to all that is paradoxical, and, at the same time, to all that is most characteristic in St Paul's Gospel. What the Law could not do, forgiveness achieves. It creates the new heart, and with it the new holiness. 'It is not anything statutory which makes saints out of sinful men; it is the forgiveness which comes through the passion of Jesus.' [12]

(2) Next to the motive of forgiveness, and indeed arising from it, is the new consciousness of the Fatherhood of God, and the corresponding idea of sonship. This was a motive to which Jesus habitually appealed. He invariably sought not only to create in men confidence in God by revealing His fatherly providence, but also to lift them out of their apathy and thralldom by kindling in their souls a sense of their worth and liberty as sons of God. The same thought is prominent also in the epistles both of St. Paul and St. John. As children of God we are no longer menials and hirelings who do their work merely for pay, and without intelligent interest, but sons who share our Father's possessions and co-operate with Him in His purposes. [13]

(3) Closely connected with the idea of Sonship is that of life as a Divine Vocation. Life is a trust, and as the children of God we are called to serve Him with all we have and are. The sense of the vocation and stewardship of life acts as a motive: (a) in giving dignity and stability to character, saving us, on the one hand, from fatalism, and on the other from fanaticism, and affording definiteness of purpose to all our endeavours; and (b) in promoting sincerity and fidelity in our life-work. Thoroughness will permeate every department of our conduct, since whatsoever we do in word or deed we do as unto God. All duty is felt to be one, and as love to God becomes its motive the smallest as well as the greatest act is invested with infinite worth. 'All service ranks the same with God.'

(4) Another motive, prominent in the Pauline Epistles, but present also in the eschatological passages of the Synoptics, ought to be mentioned, though it does not now act upon Christians in the same form--the Shortness and Uncertainty of life. Our Lord enjoins men to work while it is day for the night cometh; and in view of the suddenness and unexpectedness of the coming of the Son of Man He exhorts to watchfulness and preparedness. A similar thought forms the background of the apostle's conception of life. His entire view of duty as well as his estimate of earthly things are tinged with the idea that 'the time is short,' and that 'the Lord is at hand.' Christians are exhorted, therefore, to sit lightly to all worldly considerations. Our true citizenship is in heaven. But neither the apostle nor his Master ever urges this fact as a reason for apathy or indifference. Life may be brief, but it is not worthless. The thought of life's brevity must not act as an opiate, but rather as a stimulant. If our existence here is short, then there is all the greater necessity that its days should be nobly filled, and its transient opportunities seized and turned into occasions of strenuous service.

(5) To the considerations just mentioned must be added a cognate truth which has coloured the whole Christian view of life, and has been a most powerful factor in shaping Christian conduct--the idea of Immortality. It is not quite correct to say that we owe this doctrine to Christianity alone. Long before the Christian era it was recognised in Egypt, Greece, and the Orient generally. But it was entertained more as a surmise than a conviction. And among the Greeks it was little more than the shadowy speculation of philosophers. Plato, in his Phaedo, puts into the mouth of Socrates utterances of great beauty and far-reaching import; yet, notwithstanding their sublimity, they scarcely attain to more than a 'perhaps.' Even in Hebrew literature, as we have seen, while isolated instances of a larger hope are not wanting, there is no confident or general belief in an after-life. But what was only guessed at by the ancients was declared as a fact by Christ, and preached as a sublime and comforting truth by the apostles; and it is not too much to say that survival after death is at once the most distinctive doctrine of Christianity and the most precious hope of Christendom. The whole moral temperature of the world, says Jean Paul Richter, has been raised immeasurably by the fact that Christ by His Gospel has brought life and immortality to light. This idea, which has found expression, not only in all the creeds of Christendom, but also in the higher literature and poetry of modern times, has given a new motive to action, has founded a new type of heroism, and nerved common men and women to the discharge of tasks from which nature recoils. The assurance that death does not end existence, but that 'man has forever,' has not only exalted and transfigured the common virtues of humanity; but, held in conjunction with the belief in the divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood, given to life itself a new solemnity and pathos.[14]

2. But if these are the things which actuate men in their service of God and man, can it be legitimately said that the Christian motive is pure and disinterested? It is {166} somewhat remarkable that two opposite charges have been brought against Christian Ethics.[15] In one quarter the reproach has been made that Christianity suppresses every natural desire for happiness, and inculcates a life of severe renunciation. And with equally strong insistence there are others who find fault with it because of its hedonism, because it rests morality upon an appeal to selfish interests alone.

(1) The first charge is sufficiently met, we think, by our view of the Christian ideal. We have seen that it is a full rich life which Christ reveals and commends. The kingdom of God finds its realisation, not in a withdrawal from human interests, but in a larger and fuller participation in all that makes for the highest good of humanity. It is a caricature of Christ's whole outlook upon existence to represent Him as teaching that this life is an outlying waste, forsaken of God and unblessed, and that the world is so hopelessly bad that it must be wholly renounced. On the contrary, it is for Him one of the provinces of the divine kingdom, and the most trivial of our occupations and the most transient of our joys and sorrows find their place in the divine order. It is not necessary to endorse Renan's idyllic picture of the Galilean ministry to believe that for Jesus all life, its ordinary engagements and activities, had a worth for the discipline and perfecting of character, and were capable of being consecrated to the highest ends. There are, indeed, not a few passages in which the call to self-denial is emphasised. But neither Christ nor His apostles represent pain and want as in themselves efficacious or meritorious. Renunciation is inculcated not for its own sake, but always as a means to fuller realisation. Jesus, indeed, transcends the common antithesis of life. For Him it is not a question as to whether asceticism or non-asceticism is best. Life is for use. It is at once a trust and a privilege. It may seem to some that He chose 'the primrose path,' but if he did so it was not due to an easy-going good-nature. We dare not forget the terrible issues He faced without flinching. As Professor Sanday has finely said, 'If we are to draw a lesson in this respect from our Lord's life, it certainly would not be that "He who lets his feelings run In soft luxurious flow, Shrinks when hard service must be done, And faints at every woe."

It would be rather that the brightest and tenderest human life must have a stern background, must carry with it the possibility of infinite sacrifice, of bearing the cross and the crown of thorns.'[16]

(2) The second charge, the charge of hedonism, though seemingly opposed to the first, comes into line with it in so far as it is alleged that Christianity, while inculcating renunciation in this world, does so for the sake of happiness in the next. It is contended that in regard to purity of motive the Ethics of Christianity falls below the Ethics of philosophy.[17] This statement, so often repeated, requires some examination.

3. While it may be acknowledged that unselfishness and disinterestedness are the criterion of moral sublimity, it must be noted at the outset that considerable confusion of thought exists as to the meaning of motive. Even in those moral systems in which virtue is represented as wholly disinterested, the motive may be said to reside in the object itself. The maxim, 'Virtue for virtue's sake,' really implies what may be called the 'interest of achievement.' If virtue has any meaning it must be regarded as a 'good' which is desirable. Perseverance in the pursuit of any good implies the hope of success; in other words, of the reward which lies in the attainment of the object desired. The reward sought may not be foreign to the nature of virtue itself, but none the less, the

idea of reward is present, and, in a sense, is the incentive to all virtuous endeavour. This is, indeed, implied by a no less rigorous moralist than Kant. For as he himself teaches, the question, 'What should I do?' leads inevitably to the further question, 'What may I hope?'[18] The end striven after cannot be a matter of indifference, if virtue is to have moral value at all. It must be a real and desirable end--an end which fulfils the purpose of a man as a moral being.

(1) But though Kant insists with rigorous logic that reverence for the majesty of the moral law must be the only motive of duty, and that all motives springing from personal desire or hope of happiness must be severely excluded, it is curious to find that in the second part of his *Critique of Practical Reason* he proceeds, with a strange inconsistency, to make room for the other idea, viz., that virtue is not without its reward, and is indeed united in the end with happiness. Felicity and holiness shall be ultimately one, he says; and, at the last, virtue shall be seen 'to be worthy of happiness,' and happiness shall be the crown of goodness.[19] Thus those philosophers, of whom Kant is typical, who contend for the purity of the moral motive and the disinterested loyalty to the good, bring in, at the end, the notion of happiness, which, as a concomitant or consequence of virtue, cannot fail to be also an active incentive.

(2) When we turn to Christian Ethics we find that here, not less than in philosophical Ethics, the motive lies in the object itself. The end and the motive are really one, and the highest good is to be sought for itself and not for the sake of some ulterior gain. It is true, indeed, that Christianity has not always been presented in its purest form; too often have prudence, fear, other-worldliness been set forth as inducements to goodness, as if the Gospel cared nothing for the disposition of a man, and was concerned only with his ultimate happiness. Even a moralist so acute as Paley bases morality upon no higher ground than enlightened self-interest. But the most superficial reader of the Gospels must see at a glance the wide variance between such a view and that of Christ. Nothing could be further from the spirit of Jesus than to estimate the excellence of an action by the magnitude or the utility of its effects rather than the intrinsic good of its motive. Otherwise He would not have ranked the widow's mite above the gifts of vanity, nor esteemed the tribute of the penitent, not so much for the costliness of her offering, as for the sincerity of affection it revealed. Christ looked upon the heart alone, and the worth of an action lay essentially for Him in its inner quality. Sin resided not merely in the overt act, but even more in the secret desire. A man may be outwardly blameless, and yet not really good. He who remains sober or honest simply because of the worldly advantages attaching to such conduct may obtain a certificate of respectability from society; but, judged by the standard of Christ, he is not truly a moral man. In an age which is too prone to make outward propriety the gauge of goodness, it cannot be sufficiently insisted upon that the Ethic of Christianity is an Ethic of the inner motive and intention, and that, in this respect, it does not fall a whit behind the demand of the most rigid system of disinterested morality.

(a) It must, however, be freely admitted that our Lord frequently employs the sanctions both of rewards and penalties. In the time of Christ the idea of reward, so prominent in the Old Testament, still held an important place in Jewish religion, being specially connected with the Messianic Hope and the coming of the kingdom. It was not unnatural, therefore, that Jesus, trained in Hebrew religious modes of thought and expression, should frequently employ the existing conceptions as vehicles of His own teaching; but, at the same time, purifying them of their more materialistic associations and giving to them a richer spiritual content. While the kingdom of God is spoken of

as a gift, and promised, indeed, as a reward, the word 'reward' in this connection is not used in the ordinary sense, but 'is rather conceived as belonging to the same order of spiritual experience as the state of heart and mind which ensures its bestowal.'[20] Though Jesus does not hesitate to point His disciples to the blessings of heaven which they will receive in the future, these are represented for the most part not as material benefits, but as the intensification and enrichment of life itself.[21]

It was usually the difficulties rather than the advantages of discipleship upon which Jesus first laid stress. He would not that any one should come to Him on false pretences, or without fully counting the cost.[22] Even when He Himself called His original disciples, it was of service and not of recompense He spoke. 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'[23] The privilege consisted not in outward éclat, but in the participation of the Master's own purpose and work. Still, all service carries with it its own reward, and no one can share the mission of Christ without also partaking of that satisfaction and joy which are inseparable from the highest forms of spiritual ministry.[24]

There is, however, one passage recorded by all the Synoptists which seems at first sight to point more definitely to a reward of a distinctly material character, and to one that was to be enjoyed not merely in the future, but even in this present life. When Peter somewhat boastfully spoke of the sacrifice which he and his brethren had made for the Gospel's sake, and asked, 'What shall we have therefor?' Jesus replied, 'Verily, I say unto you, that no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake and the Gospel's sake, but shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.'[25] Now, while this is a promise of wide sweep and large generosity, it is neither so arbitrary nor material as it seems. First, the words, 'with persecutions,' indicate that suffering is not only the very condition of the promise, but indeed an essential part of the reward--an element which would of itself be a true test of the sincerity of the sacrifice. But, second, even the promise, 'An hundredfold now in this time,' is obviously not intended to be taken in a literal sense, but rather as suggesting that the gain, while apparently of the same nature as the sacrifice, will have a larger spiritual import. For, just as Jesus Himself looked upon all who shared His own devotion as His mother and brethren; so, in the deepest sense, when a man leaves father and mother, renouncing home and family ties for the sake of bringing his fellow-men to God, he seems to be emptying his life of all affectionate relationships, but in reality he is entering into a wider brotherhood; and, in virtue of his ministry of love, is being knit in bonds stronger than those of earthly kinship, with a great and increasing community of souls which owe to him their lives.[26] The promise is no arbitrary gift or bribe capriciously bestowed; it is the natural fruition of moral endeavour. For there is nothing so productive as sacrifice. What the man who yields himself to the service of Christ actually gives is life; and what he gets back, increased an hundredfold, is just life again, his own life, repeated and reflected in the men and women whom he has won to Christ. In some of His parables Christ employs the analogy of the work-engagement, in which labour and payment seem to correspond. But the legal element has a very subordinate place in the simile. Jesus lifts the whole relationship into a higher region of thought, and transforms the idea of wages into that of a gift of love far transcending the legal claim which can be made by the worker. He who has the bondsman's mind, and works only for the hireling's pay, will only get what he works for. But he who serves from love finds in the service itself that which must always be its truest recompense--the increased power of

service, the capacity of larger devotion[27]--'The wages of going on.'[28] In his latest volume Deissmann has pointed out that we can only do justice to the utterances of the New Testament regarding work and wages by examining them in situ, amidst their natural surroundings. Jesus and St. Paul spoke with distinct reference to the life and habits of the common people of their day. 'If you elevate such utterances to the level of the Kantian moral philosophy, and reproach primitive Christianity with teaching for the sake of reward, you not only misunderstand the words, but tear them up by the roots.'... 'The sordid ignoble suggestions so liable to arise in the lower classes are altogether absent from the sayings of Jesus and His apostles, as shown by the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and the analogous reliance of St. Paul solely upon grace.'[29] The same inner relation subsists between Sin and Penalty. But here, again, the award of punishment is not arbitrary, but the natural consequence of disobedience to the law of the spiritual life. He who seeks to save his life shall lose it. He who makes this world his all shall receive as his reward only what this world can give. He who buries his talent shall, by the natural law of disuse, forfeit it. Not to believe in Christ is to miss eternal life. To refuse Him who is the Light of the world is to remain in darkness.

(6) An examination of the Pauline epistles yields a similar conclusion. St. Paul does not disdain to employ the sanctions of hope and fear. 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord' he persuades men, and 'because of the promises' he urges the Corinthians 'to cleanse themselves and perfect holiness.' But in Paul's case, as in that of our Lord, the charge of hedonism is meaningless. For not only does the conception hold a most subordinate place in his teaching, but the idea loses the sense of merit, and is transmuted into that of a free gift. And in general, in all the passages where the hope of the future is introduced, the idea of reward is merged in the yearning for a fuller life, which the Christian, who has once tasted of its joy here, may well expect in richer measure hereafter.[30]

Enough has been said to clear Christianity of the charge of hedonism. So far from Christian Ethics falling below Philosophical Ethics in regard to purity of motive, it really surpasses it in the sublimity of its sanctions. The Kantian idea of virtue tends to empty the obligation of all moral content. Goodness, as the philosopher himself came to see, cannot be represented as a mere impersonal abstraction. Virtue has no meaning except in relation to its ultimate end. And life in union with a personal God, in whose image we have been made, is the end and purpose of man's being. Noble as it may be to live morally without the thought of God, the man who so strives to live does not attain to such a high conception of life as he who lives with God for his object. Motives advance with aims, and the higher the ideal the nobler the incentive. Fear of future punishment and the desire for future happiness may prove effective aids to the will at certain stages of moral development, but ultimately the love of God and the beauty of holiness make every other motive superfluous. Indeed, the reward of the Christian life is such as can only appeal to one who has come to identify himself with the divine will. The Christian man is always entering upon his reward. His joy is his Master's joy. He has no other interest. His reward, both here and hereafter, is not some external payment, something separable from himself; it is wholly conditioned by what he is, and is simply his own growth of character, his increasing power of being good and doing good. And if it be still asked, What is the great inducement? What is it that makes the life of the Christian worth living? The answer can only be--The hope of becoming what Christ has set before man as desirable, of growing up to the stature of perfect manhood, of attaining to the likeness of Jesus Christ Himself. But so far from this being a selfish aim, not to seek one's life in God--to be

indifferent to all the inherent blessings and joys involved--would be not the mark of pure disinterestedness, but the evidence, rather, of a lack of appreciation of what life really means. The soul that has caught the vision of God and been thrilled with the grace of the Son of Man cannot but yield itself to the best it knows.

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, *‘The Phil. of the Ch. Religion’*, pp. 358 ff.

[2] Peabody, *‘Christ and the Christian Character’*, p. 44.

[3] Peabody, *‘op. cit.’*, pp. 53 f.

[4] Peabody, *‘op. cit.’*, p. 68.

[5] See Paulsen, *System der Ethik*, pp. 56 ff.; also Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 847.

[6] Cf. Ehrhardt, *Der Grundcharacter d. Ethik. Jesu*, p. 110. 'The ascetic element in the ethics of Jesus is its transient, the service of God its permanent element.' Cf. also Strauss, *‘Leben Jesu’*, who speaks of 'the Hellenic quality' in Jesus; also Keim, *Jesus of Nazareth*, and Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 34 ff.

[7] John 13:15.

[8] *Conduct of Life*.

[9] *Metaphysics of Ethics*, sect. ii.

[10] Schultz, *Grundriss d. evang. Ethik*, p. 5.

[11] Cf. *Ecce Homo*, chap. x.

[12] This thought has been beautifully worked out by Prof. Denney in *British Weekly*, Jan. 13, 1912.

[13] Luke xv.

[14] Cf. Knight, *The Christian Ethic*, p. 36.

[15] See Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 190.

[16] 'Apocalyptic Element in the Gospels,' *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1911.

[17] The question of rewards has been fully discussed by Jacoby, *Neutestamentliche Ethik*, pp. 41 ff.; also Barbour, *op. cit.*, pp. 226 ff.

[18] Cf. *Kritik d. prakt. Vernunft*, p. 143.

[19] Kant, *idem*.

[20] Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

[21] Matthew 5:12; Matthew 19:21; Matthew 25:34; Luke 6:23; Luke 18:22; Mark 10:21.

[22] Mark 8:19; Luke 9:57.

[23] Mark 1:17; Mark 2:14.

[24] Luke 22:29 f.

[25] Mark 10:28-31; cf. Matthew 19:27-30.

[26] This thought is finely elaborated by Barbour.

[27] Matthew 25:21; Luke 19:17.

[28] Tennyson, *Wages*.

[29] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 316 ff.

[30] See also Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Corinthians 3:14; Romans 5:2-5; Romans 6:23, Romans 8:16.

Dynamic of New Life

CHAPTER X THE DYNAMIC OF THE NEW LIFE In the dynamic power of the new life we reach the central and distinguishing feature of Christian Ethics. The uniqueness of Christianity consists in its mode of dealing with a problem which all non-Christian systems have tended to ignore--the problem of translating the ideal into life. The Gospel not only sets before men the highest good, but it imparts the secret of realising it. The ideals of the ancients were but visions of perfection. They had no objective reality. Beautiful as these old-time visions of 'Good' were, they lacked impelling force, the power to change dreams into realities. They were helpless in the face of the great fact of sin. They could suggest no remedy for moral disease.

Christianity is not a philosophical dream nor the imagination of a few visionaries. It claims to be a new creative force, a power communicated and received, to be worked out and realised in the actual life and character of common men and women. In this chapter we have to consider the means whereby man is brought into a new spiritual relation with God, and enabled to live the new life as it has been revealed in Christ. This reconciliation implies a twofold movement--a redemptive action on God's part, and an appropriating and determinative response on the part of man.

I THE DIVINE POWER The urgent problem of the New Testament writers was, How can man achieve that good which has been embodied in the life and example of Jesus Christ? A full answer to this question would lead us into the realm of dogmatic theology. And therefore, without entering upon details, it may be said at once that the originality of the Gospel lies in this, that it not only reveals the good in a concrete and living form, but discloses the power which makes the good possible in the hitherto unattempted derivation of the new life from a new birth under the influence of the spirit of God. The power to achieve the moral life does not lie in the natural man. No readjustment of circumstances, nor spread of knowledge, is of itself equal to the task of creating that entirely new phenomenon--the Christian character. There must be a cause proportionate to the effect. 'Nothing availeth,' says Paul, 'but a new creature.' This new condition owes its origin to God. It is a life communicated by an act of divine creative activity. But while this regenerative energy is represented generally as the work of God's spirit, it is more particularly set forth as operating through Christ who is the power of God unto salvation.

There are three great facts in Christ's life with which the New Testament connects the redemptive work of God.

1. The Incarnation--In Christ God shares man's nature, and thus makes possible a union of the divine and human. On its divine side the incarnation is the complete revelation of God in human life, and on the human side it is the supreme expression of the spiritual meaning of human nature itself. Christ saves not by a special act of atonement alone, but emphatically by manifesting in Himself the union of God and man. In view of the fact of the world's sin, the Incarnation, as the revelation of the divine life, includes a gracious purpose. It involves the sacrifice of God, which theologians designate by the theory of Kenosis. The Advent was not only the consummation of the religious history of the race; it was also the inauguration of a new era. The Son of Man initiated

a new type of humanity, to be realised in increasing fullness as men entered into the meaning of the great revelation. 'He recapitulated in Himself the long unfolding of mankind.'[1] Hence in the very fact of the word becoming flesh atonement is involved. In Christ God is revealed in the reality of His love and the persistence of His search for man, while man is disclosed in the greatness of his vision and vocation.

2. The Death of Christ.--Although already implied in the life, the atonement culminates in the death of Christ. Even by being made in the likeness of men Jesus did not escape from, but willingly took up, the burdens of humanity and bore them as the Son of Man. But His passion upon the cross, as the supreme instance of suffering borne for others, at once illuminated and completed all that He suffered and achieved as man's representative. It is this aspect of Christ's redemptive work upon which St. Paul delights to dwell. And though naturally not so prominent in our Lord's own teaching, yet even there the significance of the Redeemer's death is foreshadowed, and in more than one passage explicitly stated.[2] Here we are in the region of dogmatics, and we are not called upon to formulate a doctrine of the atonement. All that we have to do with is the ethical fact that between man and the new life there lies the actuality of sin, the real source of man's failure to achieve righteousness, and the stumbling-block which must be removed before reconciliation with God the Father can be effected. The act, at once divine and human, which alone meets the case is represented in Scripture as the Sacrifice of Christ. In reference to the efficacy of the sacrifice upon the cross Bishop Butler says: 'How and in what particular way it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain; but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it.'[3] Though, indeed, the fact is independent of any theory, the truth for which the cross stands must be brought by us into some kind of intelligible relation with our view of the world, otherwise it is a piece of magic lying outside of our experience, and having no ethical value for life. At the same time no doctrine has suffered more from shallow theorisings, and particularly by the employment of mechanical, legal, and commercial analogies, than the doctrine of the atonement. The very essence of the religious life is incompatible with the idea of an external transference of goodness from one being to another. Man can be reconciled to God only by an absolute surrender of himself to God. To assimilate this spiritual act to a commercial or legal transaction is to destroy the very idea of the moral life. No explanation, however, can be considered satisfactory which does not safeguard two ideas of a deeply ethical nature--the voluntariness and the vicariousness of Christ's sacrifice. We must be careful to do justice, on the one hand, to the eternal relations in which Christ stands to God; and on the other, to the intimate association with man into which Jesus has entered. It is the task of theology to bring together the various passages of Scripture, and exhibit their systematic connection and relative value for a doctrine of soteriology. For Ethics the one significant fact to be recognised is that in a human life was fulfilled perfect obedience, even as far as death, a perfect obedience that completely met and fully satisfied the demand of the very highest, the divine ideal.

3. The Resurrection of Christ.--If the Incarnation naturally issues in the sacrifice unto death, that again is crowned and sealed by Christ's risen life. The Resurrection is the vindication and completion of the Redeemer's work. He who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection. It was the certainty that He had risen that gave to His death, in the apostles' eyes, its sacrificial value. This was the ground of St. Paul's conviction that the old order had passed away, and that a new order had been established. 'If

Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins.' In virtue of His ascended life Christ becomes the indwelling presence and living power within the regenerate man. It is in no external way that the Redeemer exerts His influence. He is the principle of life working within the soul. The key to the new state is to be found in the mystical union of the Christian with the risen Lord. The twofold act of death and resurrection has its analogy in the experience of every redeemed man. Within the secret sanctuary of the human soul that has passed from death to life, the history of the Redeemer is re-enacted. In the several passages which refer to this subject the idea is that the changed life is based upon an ethical dying and rising again with Christ.[4] The Christ within the heart is the vital principle and dynamic energy by which the believer lives and triumphs over every obstacle--the world, sin, sorrow, and death itself. 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'[5] All that makes life, 'life indeed'--an exalted, harmonious, and joyous existence--is derived from union with the living Lord, who has come to be what He is for man by the earthly experiences through which He has passed. Thus by His Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection He is at once the source and goal, the spring and ideal of the new life.

'Yea, thro' life, death, sorrow, and through sinning, He shall suffice me for He hath sufficed; Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning; Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.'[6]

Theology may seek to analyse the personality of Christ into its elements--the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But after all it is one and indivisible. It is the whole fact of Christ, and not any particular experience taken in its isolation, which is the power of God unto salvation. The question still remains after all our analysis, What was it that gave to these events in the history of Jesus their creative and transforming power? And the answer can only be--Because Christ was what He was. It was the unique character of the Being of whom these were but the manifestations which wrought the spell. What bound the New Testament Christians to the cross was that their Master hung there. They saw in that life lived among men, and in that sacrifice upon Calvary, the perfect consummation of the ideal manhood that lived within their own hearts, and of the love, new upon the earth, which made it possible. The cross stood for the symbol of a truth that pierced to the inner core of their souls. 'He bore our sins.' And thus down the centuries, in their hour of shame, and grief, and death, men have lifted their eyes to the Man of Sorrows, and have found in His life and sacrifice, apart from all theories of atonement, their peace and triumph. It is this note of absolute surrender towards God and of perfect love for man which, because it answers to a deep yearning of the human heart, has given to the mystery of the Incarnation and the Cross its lifting and renewing power,

II THE HUMAN RESPONSE

Possession of power involves the obligation to use it. The force is given; it has to be appropriated. The spirit of Christ is not offered in order to free a man from the duties of the moral life. Man is not simply the recipient of divine energy. He has to make it his own and to work it out by his self-determinative activity. Nevertheless the relation of the divine spirit to the human personality is a subject of great perplexity, involving the psychological problem of the connection of the divine and the human in life generally. If in the last resort God is the ultimate source of all life, the absolute Being, who 'Can rejoice in naught Save only in Himself and what Himself hath wrought'; that truth must be held in harmony with the facts of divine immanence and human experience. The divine spirit holds within His grasp all reality, and by His self-communicating activity makes the

world of nature and of life possible. But that being granted, how are we to conceive the relation of that Spirit to man with his distinct individuality, with his sense of working out a future and a fate in which the Absolute may indeed be fulfilling its purpose, but which are none the less man's own achievement? That is the crux of the problem. The outstanding fact which bears upon this problem is the general character of our experience, the growth of which is not the mere laying of additional material upon a passive subject by an external power, but is a true development, a process in which the subject is himself operative in the unfolding of his own potentialities. Without dwelling further upon this question it may be well to bear in mind two points: (1) The growth of experience is a gradual entrance into conscious possession of what we implicitly are and potentially have from the beginning. Duty, for example, is not something alien from a man, something superimposed by a power not himself. It lies implicit in his nature as his ideal and vocation. The moral life is the life in which a man comes to 'know himself,' to apprehend himself as he truly is. (2) In this development of experience we ourselves are active and self-organising. We are really making ourselves, and are conscious, that even while we are the instruments of a higher power, we are working out our own individuality, exercising our own freedom and determination.[7] The teaching of the New Testament is in full accord with this position. If, on the one hand, St. Paul states that every moral impulse is due to the inspiration of God, no less emphatic is he in ascribing to man himself full freedom of action. 'The ethical sense of responsibility,' says Johannes Weiss,[8] 'the energy for struggle, and the discipline of the will were not paralysed nor absorbed in Paul's case by his consciousness of redemption and his profound spiritual experiences.' Scripture lends no support to the idea which some forms of Augustinian theology assume, that the divine spirit is an irresistible force acting from without upon man and superseding his exertions. It acts as an immanent moral power, not compelling or crushing the will, but quickening and inspiring its efforts.

If we inquire what constitutes the subjective or human element in the making of the new life, we find that the New Testament emphasises three main factors--Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. These are complementary, and together constitute what is commonly called 'conversion.'

1. Repentance is a turning away in sorrow and contrition from a life of sin, a breaking off from evil because a better standard has been accepted. Our Lord began His ministry with a call to repentance. The first four beatitudes set forth its elements; while the parable of the prodigal illustrates its nature.

Ethical writers distinguish between a negative and a positive aspect of repentance. On its negative side it is regarded as the emotion of sorrow excited by reflection upon sin. But sorrow, though accompanying repentance, must not be identified with it. Mere regret, either in the form of bitterness over one's folly, or chagrin on account of discovery, may be but a weak sentiment which exerts little or no influence upon a man's subsequent conduct. Even remorse following the commission of wickedness may only deepen into a paralysing despair which works death rather than repentance unto life.

(1) On its positive side repentance implies action as well as feeling, and involves a determination of will to quit the past and start on a new life. A man repents not merely when he grieves over his misdeed, but when he confesses it and seeks to make what amendment he can. This positive outlook upon the future, rather than the passive brooding over the past, is happily expressed in the New Testament term metanoia, change of mind, and is enforced in the Baptist's counsel, 'Bring

forth fruits meet for repentance.'[9] The change of mind here indicated is practically equivalent to what is variously called in the New Testament 'Conversion,'[10] 'Renewal,'[11] 'Regeneration,'[12]--words suggestive of the completeness of the change.

(2) The variety of terms employed to describe conversion would seem to imply that the Scriptures recognise a diversity of mode. All do not enter the kingdom of God by the same way; and the New Testament offers examples varying from the sudden conversion of a Saul to the almost imperceptible transformation of a Nathaniel and a Timothy. In modern life something of the same variety of Christian experience is manifest. While what is called 'sudden conversion' cannot reasonably be denied,[13] as little can those cases be ignored in which the truth seems to pervade the mind gradually and almost unconsciously--cases of steady spiritual growth from childhood upwards, in which the believer is unaware of any break in the continuity of his inner history, his days appearing to be 'bound each to each by natural piety.'

(3) The question arises, Which is the normal experience? The matter has been put somewhat bluntly by the late Professor James,[14] as to whether the 'twice-born' or the 'once-born' present the natural type of Christian experience. Is it true, he asks, that the experience of St. Paul, which has so long dominated Christian teaching, is really the higher or even the healthier mode of approaching religion? Does not the example of Jesus offer a simpler and more natural ideal? The moral experience of the Son of Man was not a revolution but an evolution. His own religion was not that of the twice-born, and all that He asked of His disciples was the childlike mind.[15] Paul, the man of cities, feels a kindred turbulence within himself. Jesus, the interpreter of nature, feels the steady persuasiveness of the sunshine of God, and grows from childhood in stature, wisdom, and favour with God and man. It is contended by some that the whole Pauline conception of sin is a nightmare, and rests upon ideas of God and man which are unworthy and untrue. 'As a matter of fact,' says Sir Oliver Lodge, 'the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing.'[16] This amounts to a claim for the superiority of the first of the two types of religious consciousness, the type which James describes as 'sky-blue souls whose affinities are with flowers and birds and all enchanting innocencies than with dark human passions;... in whom religious gladness, being in possession from the outset, needs no deliverance from any antecedent burden.'[17] The second type is marked by a consciousness, similar to St. Paul's, of the divided self. It starts from radical pessimism. It only attains to religious peace through great tribulation. It is the religion of the 'sick soul' as contrasted with that of 'healthy-mindedness.' But, morbid as it may appear, to be disturbed by past sin, it is really the 'twice-born' who have sounded the depths of the human heart, and have been the greatest religious leaders. And so far from the sense of the need of repentance being the sign of a diseased mind, the decreasing consciousness of sin in our day may only prove the shallowness of the modern mind. What men need of religion is power. And there is a danger of people to-day losing a sense of the dynamic force of the older Gospel.[18] But whether Paul's case is abnormal or the reverse, it is surely a false inference that, because Christ grew up without the need of conversion, His life affords in this respect a pattern to sinful men. It is just His perfect union with God which differentiates Him entirely from ordinary men; and that which may be necessary for sinful creatures is unthinkable in His case. What He was we are to become. But before we can follow Him, there is for us, because of sin, a preliminary step--a breaking with our evil past. And, in all His teaching our Lord clearly recognises this. His first call is a call to

repentance. It is indeed the childlike mind He requires; but He significantly says that 'except _ye turn_ and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.'[19] The decision of will demanded of Jesus, while it may not {174} necessarily involve a catastrophe of life or convulsion of nature, must be none the less a deliberate and decisive turning from evil to good. By what road a man must travel before he enters the kingdom, through what convulsion of spirit he must pass, so frequently dwelt upon by St. Paul and illustrated by his own life, Christ does not say. In the Fourth Gospel there is one reported saying describing a process of spiritual agony, like that of physical child-birth, indicative that the change must be radical, and that at some point of experience the great decision must be made, a decision which is likely to involve deep travail of soul.

There are many ways in which a man may become a Christian. Some men have to undergo, like Paul, fierce inward conflict. Others glide quietly, almost imperceptibly, into richer and ampler regions of life. But when or how the transition is made, whether the renewal be sudden or gradual, it is the same victory in all cases that must be won, the victory of the spirit over the flesh, the 'putting off of the old man' and the 'putting on of the new.' Life cannot be always a compromise. Sooner or later it must become an alternative. He who has seen the higher self can be no longer content with the lower. The acts of contrition, confession, and decision--essential and successive steps in repentance--are the immediate effects of the vision of Christ. Though repentance is indeed a human activity, here, as always, the earlier impulse comes from the divine side. He who truly repents is already in the grip of Christ. 'We love Him because He first loved us.'

2. _Faith_.--If repentance looks back and forsakes the old, faith looks forward and accepts the new. Even in repentance there is already an element of faith, for a man cannot turn away from his evil past without having some sense of contrast between the actual and the possible, some vision of the better life which he feels to be desirable.

(1) While there is no more characteristic word in the New Testament than faith, there is none which is used in a greater variety of senses, or whose import it is more difficult to determine. It must not be forgotten at the outset that though it is usually regarded as a theological term, it is a purely human act, and represents an element in ordinary life without which the world could not hold together for a single day. We constantly live by faith, and in our common intercourse with our fellows we daily exercise this function. We have an irresistible conviction that we live in a rational world in which effect answers to cause. Faith, it has been said, is the capital of all reasoning. Break down this principle, and logic itself would be bankrupt. Those who have denied the intelligibility of the universe have not been able to dispense with the very organ by which their argument is conducted. Hence faith in its religious sense is of the same kind as faith in common life. It is distinguishable only by its _special object and its _moral intensity.

(2) The habitual relationship between Christ and His disciples was one of mutual confidence. While Jesus evidently trusts them, they regard Him as their Master on whose word they wholly rely. Ever invested with a deep mystery and awe, He is always for His disciples the embodiment of all that is highest and holiest, the supreme object of reverence, the ultimate source of authority. Peter but expresses the mind of the company when he says, 'To whom can we go but unto Thee, Thou hast the words of eternal life.' Nor was it only the disciples who manifested this personal trust. Many others, the Syrophenician woman, the Roman Centurion, Zacchaeus, Bartimaeus, also

evinced it. It was, indeed, to this element in the human heart that Jesus invariably appealed; and while He was quick to detect its presence, He was equally sensitive to its absence. Even among the twelve, when, in the face of some new emergency, there was evidence of mistrust, He exclaimed, 'O ye of little faith.' And when, beyond His own immediate circle, He met with suspicion and unbelief, it caused Him surprise and pain.[20] From these and other incidents it is obvious that faith for Jesus had a variety of meanings and degrees.

(a) Sometimes it meant simply _trust in divine providence_; as when He bids His disciples take no thought for their lives, because He who feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies cares for them. (b) It meant again _belief in His own divine power_; as when He assures the recipients of His healing virtue that their faith hath made them whole. (c) It is regarded by Jesus as _a condition of forgiveness and salvation_. Thus to the woman who had sinned He said, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' and to the man who was sick of the palsy, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.'[21] The essential and vital mark in all Christ's references is the personal appropriation of the good which He Himself had brought to man. In His various modes of activity--in His discourses, His works of healing and forgiveness--it is not too much to say that Jesus regarded Himself as the embodiment of God's message to the world; and to welcome His word with confidence and joy, and unhesitatingly act upon it, was faith. Hence it did not mean merely the mental acceptance of some abstract truth, but, before all else, personal and intimate devotion to Himself. It seems the more necessary to emphasise this point since Harnack has affirmed 'that, while Christ was the special object of faith for Paul and the other apostles, He did not enter as an element into His own preaching, and did not solicit faith towards Himself.'[22] It is indeed true that Jesus frequently associated Himself with His Father, whose immediate representative He claims to be. But no one can doubt that He also asserts authority and power on His own account, and solicits faith on His own behalf. Nor does He take pains, even when challenged, to explain that He was but the agent of another. On the contrary, as we have seen, He acts in His own right, and pronounces the blessings of healing and forgiveness in His own name. Even when the word 'Faith' is not mentioned the whole attitude and spirit of Jesus impels us to the same conclusion. There was an air of independence and authority about Him which filled His disciples and others, not merely with confidence, but with wonder and awe. His repeated word is, 'I say unto you.' And there is a class of sayings which clearly indicate the supreme significance which He attached to His own personality as an object of faith. Foremost among these is the great invitation, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'

(3) If we turn to the epistles, and especially to the Pauline, we are struck by the apparently changed meaning of faith. It has become more complex and technical. It is no longer simply the receptive relation of the soul towards Christ; it is also a justifying principle. Faith not only unites the believer to Christ, it also translates him into a new sphere and creates for him a new environment. The past is cancelled. All things have become new. The man of faith has passed out of the dominion of law into the kingdom of Grace. The Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith has received in the history of the Church a twofold interpretation. On the one hand, it has been maintained that the sole significance of faith is that it gives to the believer power, by God's supernatural aid, to realise a goodness of which he is naturally incapable. On the other hand, it is held that the peculiarity of faith is that, though he himself is a sinner deserving condemnation, it affords to the believer an assurance of the favour with which a loving Father regards him, not on

account of his own attainments, but in virtue of the perfect obedience of the Son of God with whom each is united by faith. The former is the more distinctively Roman view; the latter that of the Reformed Church. While the Catholic form of the doctrine gives to 'works' a place not less important than faith in justification, the Protestant exalts 'faith' to the position of priority as more in harmony with the mystery of the atoning sacrifice of Christ as expounded by St. Paul. Faith justifies, because it is for the Christian the vision of an ideal. What we admire in another is already implicitly within us. We already possess the righteousness we believe in. The moral beauty of Christ is ours inasmuch as we are linked to Him by faith, and have accepted as our true self all that He is and has achieved. Hence faith is not merely the sight of the ideal in Christ. It is the energy of the soul as well, by which the believer strives to realise that which he admires. According to the teaching of Scripture faith has thus a threefold value. It is a receptive attitude, a justifying principle, and an energising power. It is that by which the believer accepts and appropriates the gift of Life offered by God in Christ.

3. Obedience.--Faith contains the power of a new obedience. But faith worketh by love. The soul's surrender to Christ is the crowning phase of man's response. The obedience of love is the natural sequel of repentance and faith, the completing act of consecration. As God gives Himself in Christ to man, so man yields in Christ to God all he is and all he has.

Without enlarging upon the nature of this final act of self-surrender, three points of ethical value ought not to be overlooked.

(1) Obedience is an activity of the soul by which the believer appropriates the life of God. Life is not merely a gift, it is a task, an achievement. We are not simply passive recipients of the Good, but free and determinative agents who react upon what is given, taking it up into our life and working it into the texture of our character. The obedience of love is the practical side of faith. While God imparts the energy of the Spirit, we apply it and by strenuous endeavour and unceasing effort mould our souls and make our world.

(2) It is a consecration of the whole personality. All the powers of man are engaged in soul-making. Religion is not a detached region of experience, a province separate from the incidents and occupations of ordinary existence. Obedience must cover the whole of life, and demands the exercise and devotion of every gift. Not only is every thought to be brought into subjection to the mind of Christ, but every passion and desire, every activity and power of body and mind are to be consecrated to God and transformed into instruments of service. 'Our wills are ours to make them thine.' But the will is not a separate faculty; it is the whole man. And the obedience of the will is nothing less than the response of our entire manhood to the will of God.

(3) Finally, obedience is a growing power of assimilation to Christ. We grow in the Christian life according to the measure of our faith and the exercise of our love. The spiritual world is potentially ours at the beginning of the Christian life, but it has to be worked out in daily experience. Like every other form of existence spiritual life is a growth which only attains to strength and fruition through continual conflict and achievement. The soul is not a finished product. In patience it is to be acquired.[23] By trial and temptation, by toil and expenditure, through all the hardships and hazards of daily life its value is determined and its destiny shaped. And according to the measure in which we use these experiences, and transmute them by obedience to the will of God into means of good, do we grow in Christian character and approximate to the full stature of the perfect

Man. To this self-determining activity Eucken has given the name of 'Activism.' 'The basis of a true life,' says this writer, 'must be continually won anew.'^[24] Activism acquires ethical character inasmuch as it involves the taking up of the spiritual world into our own volition and being. Only by this ceaseless endeavour do we advance to fresh attainments of the moral life, and are enabled to assimilate the divine as revealed to us in Christ. Nor is it merely the individual self that is thus enriched and developed by obedience to the will of God. By personal fidelity to the highest we are aiding the moral development of mankind, and are furthering the advancement of all that is good and true in the world. Not only are we making our own character, but we are helping to build up the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Repentance, Faith, and Obedience are thus the human factors of the new life. They are the moral counterparts of Grace. God gives and man appropriates. By repentance we turn from sin and self to the true home of our soul in the Fatherhood of God. By faith we behold in Christ the vision of the ideal self. By obedience and the daily surrender of ourselves to the divine will we transform the vision into the reality. They are all manifestations of love, the responsive notes of the human heart to the appeal of divine love.

[1] Irenaeus, *_Contra Haereses_*, 3:18:1.

[2] Matthew 20:28; John 11:51; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:8; Mark 14:9.

[3] *_The Analogy_*, part II. chap. v.

[4] 2 Corinthians 5:14 f.; Romans 6:1-23; Ephesians 3:16; Ephesians 3:17; Ephesians 3:5-8.

[5] Galatians 2:20.

[6] Meyers, *_Saint Paul_*.

[7] See Blewett, *_The Christian View of the World_*, pp. 88 ff., where this subject is suggestively treated.

[8] *_Christ and Paul_*.

[9] Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8.

[10] Acts 26:20.

[11] Romans 12:12; Titus 3:5.

[12] 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15.

[13] See Begbie, *_Broken Earthenware_*.

[14] *_Varieties of Relig. Experience_*.

[15] Mark 10:15.

[16] *_Man and the Universe_*, p. 220.

[17] *_Varieties of Religious Experience_*, p. 80.

[18] Cf. *_Foundations: a Statement of Religious Belief by seven Oxford men_*, Essay VI., pp. 274 f.

[19] Matthew 18:3.

[20] Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:5.

[21] Cf. Stalker, *„The Ethic of Jesus“*, p. 179.

[22] *„Das Wesen des Christenthums“*, p. 91, quoted by Stalker, *idem*, p. 176.

[23] Luke 21:19.

[24] *„Life's Basis and life's Ideal“*, p. 255.

Virtues and Virtue

Virtues and Virtue CHAPTER XI VIRTUES AND VIRTUE So far we have gained some conception of the Christian ideal as the highest moral good, and have learned also how the Christian character is brought into being. We now enter upon a new section--the last stage of our inquiry--and have to consider the 'new man'--his virtues, duties, and relationships. The business lying immediately before us in this chapter is to consider the accepted standards in which the Christian good is exhibited--the virtues recognised by the Christian consciousness.

What, then, are the particular forms or manifestations of character which result from the Christian interpretation of life? When we think of man as living in relation to his fellows, and engaging in the common activities of the world, what are the special traits of character which distinguish the Christian? These questions suggest one of the most important, and at the same time one of the most difficult, tasks of Christian Ethics--the classification of the virtues. The difficulty arises in the first instance from the ambiguity attaching to the term 'virtue.' It is often loosely used to signify a meritorious act--as in the phrase, 'making a virtue of a necessity.' It is frequently employed generally for a moral quality or excellency of character, and in this respect is contrasted with vice. Finally, virtues are sometimes identified with duties. Thus we speak of the virtue of veracity. But obviously we may also refer to the duty of veracity. The word *aretê*; signifies 'force,' and was originally used as a property of bodies, plants, or animals. At first it had no ethical import. In Attic usage it came to signify aptness or fitness of manhood for public life. And this signification has shaped the future meaning of its Latin equivalent--*virtus* (from *vis*, strength, and not from *vir*, a man).

Plato gave to the term a certain ethical value in connection with his moral view of the social life, so that Ethics came to be designated the doctrine of virtues. In general, however, both by the Greek and Roman moralists, and particularly the Stoics, the word *virtus* retained something of the sense of force or capacity--a quality prized in the citizen. The English word is a direct transcript of the Latin. The German noun, *Tugend* (from *taugen*, to fit) means capability, and is related to worth, honour, manliness. The word *aretê* does not frequently occur in the New Testament.[1] In the few passages in which it appears it is associated with praiseworthiness. In one passage[2] it has a more distinctly ethical signification--'add to your faith virtue'--where the idea is that of practical worth or manhood.

Virtue may be defined as the acquired power or capacity for moral action. From the Christian point of view virtue is the complement, or rather the outcome, of grace. Hence virtues are graces. In the Christian sense a man is not virtuous when he has first appropriated by faith the new principle of life. He has within him, indeed, the promise and potency of all forms of goodness, but not until he has consciously brought his personal impulses and faculties into the service of Christ can he be called truly virtuous. Hence the Christian character is only progressively realised. On the divine side virtue is a gift. On the human side it is an activity. Our Lord's figure of the vine and the branches represents the relation in which Christian character stands to Christ. In like manner St.

Paul regards the manifestations of the Christian life as the fruit of the Spirit--the inevitable and natural outgrowth of the divine seed of life implanted in the heart. Hence arises the importance of cultivating the inner life of the spirit which is the root of all moral excellency. On the other hand it must be remembered that Christian morality is not of a different sort from natural morality, and the Christian virtues are not merely supernatural qualities added on, but simply human virtues coloured and transfigured by grace and raised to a higher value. The power to act morally, the capacity to bring all our faculties into the service of the spiritual life, is the ground of Christian virtue just as it is of every natural excellence. From this it follows that the distinction sometimes made between natural goodness and Christian goodness is unsound. A virtue is not a superlative act of merit, implying an excess of excellence beyond the requirements of duty. From the Christian standpoint there are no works of supererogation, and there is no room in the Christian life for excess or margin. As every duty is a bounden duty, so every possible excellence is demanded of the Christian. Virtues prescribe duties; ideals become laws; and the measure is, 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.' The Stoic maxim, 'Nothing in excess,' is inadequate in reference to moral excellence, and Aristotle's doctrine of the 'Mean' can hardly be applied without considerable distortion of facts. The only virtue which with truth can be described as a form of moderation is Temperance. It has been objected that by his doctrine of the 'Mean' Aristotle 'obliterates the awful and absolute difference between right and wrong.' If we substitute, as Kant suggested, 'law' for 'mean,' some of the ambiguity is obviated. Still, after all extenuation is made it may be questioned whether any term implying quantity is a fit expression for a moral attribute.[3] At the same time the virtues must not be regarded as mere abstractions. Moral qualities cannot be isolated from the circumstances in which they are exercised. Virtue is character in touch with life, and it is only in contact with actual events that its quality can be determined. Actions are not simply good or bad in themselves. They must always be valued both by their inner motives and intended ends. Courage or veracity, for example, may be exercised from different causes and for the most various ends, and occasionally even for those of an immoral nature.[4] For these and similar reasons some modern ethical writers have regarded the classification of the virtues as unsatisfactory, involving arbitrary and illogical distinctions in value; and some have even discarded the use of the word 'virtue' altogether, and substituted the word 'character' as the subject of ethical study. But inasmuch as character must manifest itself in certain forms, and approximate at least to certain norms or ideals of conduct, it may not be altogether superfluous to consider in their relation and unity those moral qualities (whether we call them virtues, graces, or norms of excellence) which the Christian aims at reproducing in his life.

We shall consider therefore, first, the natural elements of virtue as they have been disclosed to us by classical teachers. Next, we shall compare these with the Christian conception of life, showing how Christianity has given to them a new meaning and value. And finally, we shall endeavour to reveal the unifying principle of the virtues by showing that when transformed by the Christian spirit they are the expressions or implicates of a single spiritual disposition or totality of character.

I

The Natural Basis of the Virtues.--At a certain stage of reflection there arises an effort not merely to designate, but to co-ordinate the virtues. For it is soon discovered that all the various aspects of the good have a unity, and that the idea of virtue as one and conscious is equivalent to the idea of the good-will or of purity of heart. Thus it was seen by the followers of Socrates that the

virtues are but different expressions of one principle, and that the ultimate good of character can only be realised by the actual pursuit of it in the recognised virtues. We do not sufficiently reflect, says Green, how great was the service which Greek philosophy rendered to mankind. From Plato and Aristotle comes the connected scheme of virtues and duties within which the educated conscience of Christendom still moves when it is impartially reflecting on what ought to be done.[5] Religious teachers may have extended the scope of our obligations, and strengthened the motives which actuate men in the performance of duty, but 'the articulated scheme of what the virtues and duties are, in their difference and their unity, remains for us now in its main outlines what the Greek philosophers left it.'[6]

Among ancient moralists four virtues, Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, Justice were constantly grouped. They were already traditional in Plato's time, but he adopts them as fundamental. Aristotle retained Plato's list, but developed from it some minor excellences.

Virtue, according to Plato, was the health or harmony of the soul; hence the principle of classification was determined by the fitness of the soul for its proper task, which was conceived as the attainment of the good or the morally beautiful. As man has three functions or aspects, a cognitive, active, and appetitive, so there are three corresponding virtues. His function of knowing determines the primal virtue of Wisdom; his active power constitutes the virtue of Courage; while his appetitive nature calls for the virtue of Temperance or Self-control. These three virtues have reference to the individual's personal life. But inasmuch as a man is a part of a social organism, and has relations to others beyond himself, justice was conceived by Plato as the social virtue, the virtue which regulated and harmonised all the others. For the Stoics these four virtues embraced the whole life according to nature. It may be noticed that Plato and Aristotle did not profess to have created the virtues. Wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice were, as they believed, radical principles of the moral nature; and all they professed to do was to awaken men to the consciousness of their natural capacities. If a man was to attain to fitness of life, then these were the fundamental and essential lines on which his rational life must develop. In every conceivable world these are the basal elements of goodness. Related as they are to fundamental functions of personality, they cannot be less or more. They stand for the irreducible principles of conduct, to omit any one of which is to present a maimed or only partial character. In every rational conception of life they must remain the essential and desirable objects of pursuit. It was not wonderful, therefore, when we remember the influence of Greek thought upon early Christianity, that the four classical virtues should pass over into Christian Ethics. But the Church, recognising that these virtues had reference to man's life in relation to himself and his fellow-men in this world alone, added to these the three Pauline Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, as expressive of the divine element in man, his relation to God and the spiritual world. The first four were called natural, the last three supernatural: or the 'Cardinal' (_cardo_, a hinge) and the 'Theological' virtues. They make in all seven, the mystic perfect number, and over against these, to complete the symmetry of life, were placed the seven deadly sins.

II

Their Christian Transformation.--But now if we compare the cardinal virtues with the conception of goodness revealed in Scripture, we are at once conscious of a contrast. We seem to move in a new atmosphere, and to be confronted with a view of life in which entirely different values hold.

1. While in the New Testament many virtues are commended, no complete description occurs in any single passage. The beatitudes may be regarded as our Lord's catalogue of the typical qualities of life, and a development of virtuous life might be worked out from the Sermon on the Mount. Beginning with poverty of spirit, humility, and meekness, and rising up out of the individual struggle of the inner man, we attain to mercifulness and peaceableness--the spirit which bears the poverty of others, and seeks to make others meek and gentle. Next the desire for righteousness finds expression in a readiness to endure persecution, to support the burden of duty in the midst of worldly conflict; and finally in the highest stage the light of virtue shines through the clouds of struggle and breaks forth spontaneously, irradiating all who come into contact with it, and constituting man the servant of humanity, the light of the world.[7] Or we might turn to the apostle Paul, who regards the virtues as the fruit of the Spirit, describing them in general as 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, gentleness, humility.'[8] A rich cluster is also mentioned as 'the fruit of light'--goodness, righteousness, truth. A further enumeration is given in Colossians where the apostle commends compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and forgiveness.[9] And once more there is the often-quoted series in the Epistle to the Philippians, 'Whatsoever things are true, reverent, just, chaste, lovely, and kindly spoken of.'[10] Nor must we forget the characteristics of love presented in the apostle's 'Hymn of Charity.'[11] To these descriptions of St. Paul there ought to be added the remarkable passage in which St. Peter unfolds the process of the moral life from its seed to the perfect flower.[12] Though the authorship of this passage has been disputed, that fact does not make the representation less trustworthy and typical as an exhibition of early Christian morality. According to this picture, just as in St. Paul's view, the whole moral life has its root in faith, and character is nothing else than the working out of the initial energy of the soul into virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity--all that makes life worthy and excellent. Character is not built like a house, by the addition of stone to stone. It is evolved as a plant from a seed. Given faith, there will ultimately emerge all the successive qualities of true goodness--knowledge, temperance, patience--the personal virtues, rising upwards to godliness or the love of God, and widening out to brotherhood, and thence to charity or a love of mankind--a charity which embraces the whole world, even those who are not Christian: the enemy, the outcast, and the alien.

These descriptions are not formal or systematic, but are characterised by a remarkable similarity in spirit and tone. They all reflect the mind of Christ, and put the emphasis where Jesus Himself invariably laid it--on love. But the point to which we desire to draw attention is the contrast between the classical and the Christian type of virtue. The difference is commonly expressed by saying that the pagan virtues were of a bold masculine order, whereas the Christian excellences are of an amiable and passive nature.

Yet if we carefully examine the lists as given in Scripture, we shall see that this is hardly a just distinction. Certainly Christianity brings to the front some virtues of a gentle type which are apparently wanting in the Platonic catalogue. But, on the other hand, the pagan virtues are not excluded from the New Testament. They have an acknowledged place in Christian morality. Fortitude and temperance, not to speak of wisdom and justice, are recognised as essential qualities of the Christian character. Christianity did not come into the world as the negative of all that was previously noble in human nature; on the contrary, it took over everything that was good and true, and gave to it a legitimate place. Whatsoever things, says the apostle, are true and just

and fair, if there be any virtue or praise in them, think of these things.

Courage is not disparaged by Christianity. In writing to Timothy Paul gives to this virtue its original significance. He only raises it to a higher level, and gives to it a nobler end--the determination not to be ashamed of bearing testimony, and the readiness to suffer hardship for the Gospel's sake. And though the apostle does not expressly commend courage in its active form in any other passage, we may gather from the whole tenor of his life that bravery, fortitude, endurance, occupied a high place in his esteem. While he made no parade of his sufferings his life was a continual warfare for the Gospel. The courage of a man is none the less real because it is evinced not on the battlefield, but in the conflict of righteousness. He who devotes himself unnoticed and unrewarded, at the risk of his life and at the sacrifice of every pleasure, to the service of the sick and the debased, possesses courage the same in principle as that of the 'brave man' described by Aristotle. Life is a battle, and there are other objects for which a man must contend than those peculiar to a military calling. In all circumstances of his existence the Christian must quit himself as a man, and without courage no one can fulfil in any tolerable degree the duties of his station. In like manner temperance or self-control is a truly Christian virtue, and it finds repeated mention in Scripture. When, however, we compare the conception of temperance as formulated by Aristotle with the demand of self-denial which the enlightened Christian conscience makes upon itself we are struck with a difference both in the motive and the scope of the principle. Temperance as Aristotle conceived it was a virtue exhibited only in dealing with the animal passions. And the reason why this indulgence ought to be checked was that the lusts of the flesh unfitted a man for his discharge of the civic duties. But, in view of the Greek idea that evil resides in the physical constitution of man, the logical deduction would be the total suppression of the animal passions altogether. But from the Christian standpoint the physical instincts are not an evil to be crushed, but rather a legitimate element in man which is to be disciplined and brought into the service of the spiritual life. Temperance covers the whole range of moral activity. It means the practical mastery of self, and includes the proper control and employment of hand and eye, tongue and temper, tastes and affections, so that they may become effective instruments of righteousness. The practice of asceticism for its own sake, or abstinence dictated merely by fear of some painful result of indulgence, we do not now regard as a virtue. The true form of self-denial we deem to be only rendered when we forbid ourselves the enjoyment of certain legitimate inclinations for the sake of some higher interest. Thus the scope of the virtue of temperance has been greatly enlarged, and we present to ourselves objects of moral loyalty, for the sake of which we are ready to abandon our desires in a far greater variety of forms than ever occurred to the Greek. An indulgence, for example, which a man might legitimately allow himself, he forgoes in consideration of the claims of his family, or fellow-workmen, or for the good of mankind at large, in a way that the ancient world could not understand. Christian temperance, while the same in principle with the ancient virtue, penetrates life more deeply, and is fraught with a richer and more positive content than was contemplated by the Greek demand. And the same may be said of the virtues of Wisdom and Justice. Wisdom is a New Testament grace, but mere calculating prudence or worldly self-regard finds no place in the Christian scheme of life. We are enjoined, indeed, to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves in our relations with men; but what we are urged to cultivate is a mind for the right interpretation of the things of God, that spiritual insight which discerns the things of the Spirit; and, while recognising life as a divinely given trust, seeks to obtain a wise understanding of our duties toward God and man.

While the other virtues are to a certain extent self-regarding, Justice is eminently social. At the very lowest it means 'equal consideration' for all, treating, as Kant would say, every man as an 'end,' and not as a means. Morally no man may disregard the claims of others. It is said, indeed, that we must be 'just before we are generous.' But a full and perfect conception of Justice involves generosity. There is no such thing as bare justice. Righteousness, which is the New Testament equivalent, demands more than negative goodness, and in Christian Ethics passes over into Charity, which finds and fulfils itself in others. Love here and always is the fulfilling of the law, and mercy, benevolence, kindness are the implicates of true justice.

2. It is thus evident that the cardinal virtues are essential elements of Christian character. Christianity, in taking over the moral conceptions of the ancient world, gave to them a new value and range by directing them to new objects and enthusing them with new motives. It has been truly said that the religion of Jesus so profoundly modified the character of the moral ideals of the past that they became largely new creations. The old moral currency was still kept in circulation, but it was gradually minted anew.[13] Fortitude is still the cool and steady behaviour of a man in the presence of danger; but its range is widened by the inclusion of perils of the soul as well as the body. Temperance is still the control of the physical passions; but it is also the right placing of new affections, and the consecration of our impulses to nobler ends. Justice is still the suppression of conflict with the rights of others; but the source of it lies in giving to God the love which is His due, and finding in the objects of His thought the subjects also of our care. Wisdom is still the practical sense which chooses the proper course of action; but it is no longer a selfish calculation of advantage, but the wisdom of men who are seeking for themselves and others not merely temporal good, but a kingdom which is not of this world. The real reason, then, why Christianity seems by contrast to accentuate the gentler graces is not simply as a protest against the spirit of militarism and the worship of physical power, so prevalent in the ancient world--not merely that they were neglected--but because they and they alone, rightly considered, are of the very essence of that perfection of character which God has revealed to man in Christ. What Christianity has done is not to give pre-eminence to one class over another, but _to make human character complete_. Ancient civilisation was one-sided in its moral development. The pagan conceptions of virtue were merely materialistic, temporal, and self-regarding. Christ showed that without the spirit of love even such excellences as courage, temperance, and justice did not attain to their true meaning or yield their full implication. Paul, as we have seen, did not disparage heroism, but he thought that it was exhibited as much, if not more, in patience and forgiveness as in self-assertion and retaliation. What Christianity really revealed was a new type of manliness, a fresh application of temperance, a fuller development of justice. It showed the might of meekness, the power of gentleness, the heroism of sacrifice.

3. It is thus misleading to say that Christian Ethics differs from ancient morality in the prominence it gives to what have been called 'the passive virtues.' Poverty of spirit, humility, meekness, mercifulness, and peaceableness are indeed the marks of Christ's teaching. But as Christ conceived them they were not passive qualities, but intensely active energies of the soul. It has been well remarked that[14] there was a poverty of spirit in the creed of the cynic centuries before Christianity. There was a meekness in the doctrine of the Stoic long before the advent of Jesus. But these tenets were very far from being anticipations of Christ's morality. Cynic poverty of spirit was but the poor-spiritedness of apathy. Stoic meekness was merely the indifference of oblivion.

But the humility and lowliness of heart, the mercifulness and peace-seeking which Christ inculcated were essentially powers of self-restraint, not negative but positive attitudes to life. The motive was not apathy but love. These qualities were based not on the idea that life was so poor and undesirable that it was not worthy of consideration, but upon the conviction that it was so grand and noble, something so far beyond either pleasure or pain, as to demand the devotion of the entire self--the mastery and consecration of all a man's powers in the fulfilment and service of its divine end.

Hence what Christianity did was not so much to institute one type of character for another as to exhibit for the first time the complete conception of what human life should be--a new creature, in whom, as in its great Exemplar, strength and tenderness, courage and meekness, justice and mercy were alike combined. For, as St. Paul said, in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are as one. And in this character, as the same apostle finely shows, faith, hope, and charity have the primary place, not as special virtues which have been added on, but as the spiritual disposition which penetrates the entire personality and qualifies its every thought and act.

III

The Unification of the Virtues--While it is desirable, then, to exhibit the virtues in detail, it is even more important to trace back the virtues to virtue itself. A man's duties are diverse, as diverse as the various occasions and circumstances of life, and they can only come into being with the various institutions of his time, Church and State, home and country, commerce and culture. But the performance of these may be slowly building up in him a consistent personality. It is in character that the unity of the moral life is most clearly expressed. There must be therefore a unity of character underlying the multiplicity of characteristics, one single and commanding principle at work in the formation of life of which every possible virtue is the expression.

1. A unity of this kind is supplied by man's relation to God. Religion cannot be separated from conduct. If it were true, as Epicurus said, that the gods take no concern in human affairs, then not religion only, but morality itself would be in danger. As men's conceptions of God are purified and deepened, they tend to exhibit the varied contents of morality in their connection with a diviner order. It is, then, the thought of man's relation to God which gives coherence to the moral life, and brings all its diverse manifestations into unity.

If we examine the Christian consciousness as presented in the New Testament, we find three words of frequent occurrence repeatedly grouped together, which may be regarded as the essential marks of Christian character in relation to God--Faith, Hope, and Love. So characteristic are these of the new life that they have been called the theological virtues, because, as Thomas Aquinas says, 'They have God for their object: they bring us into true relation to God, and they are imparted to us by God alone.' [15]

2. These graces, however, cannot be separated. A man does not exercise at one time faith, and at another time hope or love. They are all of a piece. They are but different manifestations of one virtue. Of these love is the greatest, because it is that without which faith and hope could not exist. Love is of the very essence of the Christian life. It is its secret and sign. No other term is so expressive of the spirit of Christ. It is the first and last word of apostolic Christianity. Love may be called the discovery of the Gospel. It was practically unknown in the ancient world. Eros, the

sensuous instinct and *_philia_*, the bond of friendship, did exist, but *_agapê_* in its spiritual sense is the creation of Christ. In Christian Ethics love is primal and central. Here we have got down to the bedrock of virtue. It is not simply one virtue among many. It is the quality in which all the virtues have their setting and unity. From a Christian point of view every excellence of character springs directly from love and is the manifestation of it. It is, as St. Paul says, 'the bond of perfectness.' The several virtues of the Christian life are but facets of this one gem.[16]

Love, according to the apostle, is indispensable to character. Without it Faith is an empty profession; Knowledge, a mere parade of learning; Courage, a boastful confidence; Self-denial, a useless asceticism. Love is the fruitful source of all else that is beautiful and noble in life. It not only embraces but produces all the other graces. It creates fortitude; it begets wisdom; it prompts self-restraint and temperance; it tempers justice. It manifests itself in humility, meekness, and forgiveness:

'As every hue is light, So every grace is love.'

Love is, however, closely associated with faith and hope. Faith, as we have seen, is theologically the formative and appropriating power by which man makes his own the spirit of Christ. But ethically it is a form of love. The Christian character is formed by faith, but it lives and works by love. A believing act is essentially a loving act. It is a giving of personal confidence. It implies an outgoing of the self towards another--which is the very nature of love. Hope, again, is but a particular form of faith which looks forward to the consummation of the good. The man of hope knows in whom he believes, and he anticipates the fulfilment of his longings. Hope is essentially an element of love. Like faith it is a form of idealism. It believes in, and looks forward to, a better world because it knows that love is at the heart of the universe. As faith is the special counteragent against materialism in the present, so hope is the special corrective of pessimism in regard to the future. Love supplies both with vision. Christian hope, because based on faith and prompted by love, is no easy-going complacency which simply accepts the actual as the best of all possible worlds. The Christian is a man of hope because in spite of life's sufferings he never loses faith in the ideal which love has revealed to him. 'Tribulation,' says St. Paul, 'worketh patience, and patience probation, and probation hope.' Hope has its social aspect as well as its personal; like faith it is one of the mighty levers of society. Men of hope are the saviours of the world. In days of persecution and doubt it is their courage which rallies the wavering hosts and gives others heart for the struggle. Every Christian is an optimist not with the reckless assurance that calls evil good, but with the rational faith, begotten of experience, that good is yet to be the final goal of ill. 'Thy kingdom come' is the prayer of faith and hope, and the missionary enterprise is rooted in the confidence begotten of love, that He who has given to man His world-wide commission will give also the continual presence and power of His Spirit for its fulfilment.

3. Faith, hope, and charity are at once the root and fruit of all the virtues. They are the attributes of the man whom Christ has redeemed. The Christian has a threefold outlook. He looks upwards, outwards, and inwards. His horizon is bounded by neither space nor time. He embraces all men in his regard, because he believes that every man has infinite worth in God's eyes. The old barriers of country and caste, which separated men in the ancient world, are broken down by faith in God and hope for man which the love of Christ inspires. Faith, hope, and love have been called the theological virtues. But if they are to be called virtues at all, it must be in a sense very different

from what the ancients understood by virtue. These apostolic graces are not elements of the natural man, but states which come into being through a changed moral character. They connect man with God, and with a new spiritual order in which his life has come to find its place and purpose. They were impossible for a Greek, and had no place in ancient Ethics. They are related to the new ideal which the Gospel has revealed, and obtain their value as elements of character from the fact that they have their object in the distinctive truth of Christianity--fellowship with God through Christ.

These graces are not outward adornments or optional accomplishments. They are the essential conditions of the Christian man. They constitute his inmost and necessary character. They do not, however, supersede or render superfluous the other virtues. On the contrary they transmute and transfigure them, giving to them at once their coherence and value.

[1] Php_4:8; 1 Peter 2:9.

[2] 2 Peter 1:5.

[3] Cf. Sir Alex. Grant, Aristotle's Ethics.

[4] Cf. Wundt, Ethik, p. 147.

[5] Green, Proleg. to Ethics, section 249.

[6] *idem*.

[7] Matthew 5:1-16.

[8] Galatians 5:22-3.

[9] Colossians 3:12; Colossians 3:13.

[10] Php_4:8.

[11] 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

[12] 2 Peter 1:5.

[13] Strong, Christian Ethics.

[14] Mathieson, Landmarks of Christian Morality.

[15] Summa, I. ii.

[16] An interesting parallel might be drawn between the Pauline conception of Love as the supreme passion of the soul and lord of the emotions, and the Platonic view of Justice as the intimate spirit of order alike in the individual and the state, expressing itself in, and harmoniously binding together, the virtues of Temperance, Courage, and Wisdom.

Realm of Duty

CHAPTER XII THE REALM OF DUTY We have now to see how the virtues issue in their corresponding duties and cover the whole field of life.

Virtues and duties cannot be strictly distinguished. As Paulsen remarks, 'They are but different modes of presenting the same subject-matter.'^[1] Virtues are permanent traits of character; duties are particular acts which seek to realise virtues. The word 'duty,' borrowed from Stoic philosophy, inadequately describes, both on the side of its obligation and its joy, the service which the Christian is pledged to offer to Christ. For the Christian the two moments of pleasure and duty are united in the higher synthesis of love. In this chapter we shall consider, first, some aspects of Christian obligation; and, second, the particular duties which arise therefrom in relation to the self, others, and God.

I

ASPECTS OF DUTY

1. Duty and Vocation.--'While duty stands for a universal element there is a personal element in moral requirement which may be called vocation.'^[2] As soon as the youth enters upon the larger world he has to make choice of a profession or life-work. Different principles may guide him in his selection. First of all, the circumstances of life will help to decide the individual's career. Our calling and duties arise immediately out of our station. Already by parental influence and the action of home-environment character is being shaped, and tastes and purposes are created which will largely determine the future. Next to condition and station, individual capacity and disposition ought to be taken into account. No good work can be accomplished in uncongenial employment. A man must have not only fitness for his task, but also a love for it. Proper ambition may also be a determining factor. We have a right to make the most of ourselves, and to strive for that position in which our gifts shall have fullest scope. But the ultimate decision must be made in the light of conscience. Self-interest should not be our sole motive in the choice of a vocation. It is not enough to ask what is most attractive, what line of life will ensure the greatest material gain or worldly honour? Rather should we ask, Where shall I be safest from moral danger, and, above all, in what position of life, open to me, can I do the most good? It is not enough to know that a certain mode of livelihood is permitted by law; I must decide whether it is permitted to me as a Christian. For, after all, underlying, and giving purpose and direction to, our earthly vocation is the deeper calling of God into His kingdom. These cannot, indeed, be separated. We cannot divide our life into two sections, a sacred and a secular. Nor must we restrict the idea of vocation to definite spheres of work. Even those who are precluded by affliction from the activities of the world are still God's servants, and may find in suffering itself their divinely appointed mission. There is a divinity which shapes our ends, and in every life-calling there is something sacred. 'Saints,' says George Eliot, 'choose not their tasks, they choose but to do them well.' But the decisions of life do not cease with the choice of a calling. At every moment of our career fresh difficulties arise, and new opportunities open up which demand careful thought. Our first obligation is to meet faithfully the claims of our

station. But in the complexity of life we are being constantly brought into wider relations with our fellow-men, which either modify the old, or create entirely new situations. While the rule is to do the duty that lies nearest us, to obey the call of God at each moment, it needs no little wisdom to discern one's immediate duty, and to know what the will of God actually is.

2. Conflict of Duties.--In the sphere of duty itself a three-fold distinction, having the imprimatur of the Romish Church, has been made by some moralists: (1) the problem of colliding interests; (2) 'counsels of perfection'; and (3) indifferent acts or 'Adiaphora,' actions which, being neither commanded nor forbidden, fall outwith the domain of Christian obligation. It will not be necessary to discuss at length these questions. The Gospel lends no support to such distinctions, and as Schleiermacher points out they ought to have no place in Protestant Ethics.[3]

(1) With regard to the 'conflict of duties,' when the collision is really, as it often is, a struggle between inclination and duty, the question answers itself. There are, of course, cases in which perplexity must occur to an honest man. But the difficulty cannot be decided by drawing up a list of axiomatic precepts to fit all conceivable cases. In the dilemma, for example, between self-preservation and self-sacrifice which may present itself in some tragic experience of life, a host of considerations relative to the individual's history and relationships enter in to modify the situation, and the course to be taken can be finally determined by a man's own conscience alone. Ultimately there can be no collision of duties as such. Once a man recognises a certain mode of conduct to be right for him there is really no choice. In judgment he may err; passion or desire may obscure the issue; but once he has determined what he ought to do there is no alternative, 'er kann nicht anders.'

(2) Again, it is a complete misapprehension of the nature of duty to distinguish between the irreducible minimum and acts of supererogatory goodness which outrun duty. Goodness is one, and admits of no degrees. All duty is absolute. An overplus is unthinkable, since no man can do more than his duty. A Christian can only do what he recognises as his obligation, and this he ought to fulfil at every moment and with all his might. Love, which is the Christian's only law, knows no limit. Even when we have done our utmost we are still unprofitable servants.

(3) Finally, the question as to whether there are any acts which are indifferent, permissible, but neither enjoined nor forbidden, must also be answered in the negative. If the Christian can do no more than his duty, because in every single action he seeks to fulfil the whole will of God, it is clear that there can be no moment of life that can be thought of not determined by the divine will. There is no part of life that is colourless. There must be no dropped stitches in the texture of the Christian character.

It is most frequently in the domain of amusement that the notion of the 'Permissible' is applied. It has been contended that as recreation really lies outwith the Christian sphere, it may be allowed to Christian people as a concession to human weakness.[4] But can this position be vindicated? Relaxation is as much a need of man as work, and must, equally with it, be brought within the scope of Christian conduct. We have no business to engage in any activity, whether involving pleasure or pain, that we cannot justify to our conscience. Are not the joys of life, and even its amusements, among God's gifts designed for the enriching of character? And may not they, too, be consecrated to the glory of God? We are to use the world while not abusing it, for all things are ours if we are Christ's. Over every department of life the law of Christ is sovereign, and the

ultimate principle applicable to all problems of duty is, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all to the glory of God.'

3. Rights and Duties.--The foregoing question as to the scope of duty leads naturally to the consideration of the relation of duties and rights. It is usual to distinguish between legal and moral rights; but at bottom they are one. The rights which I legally claim for myself I am morally bound to grant to others. A right is expressed in the form of a permission; a duty, of an imperative. I may or may not demand my legal rights; morally, I must perform my duties. But, on the other hand, a right may be secured by legal compulsion; a duty, as a moral obligation, can never be enforced by external power: it needs our own assent.[5]

Strictly speaking rights and duties are correlative. Every right carries with it an obligation; not merely in the objective sense that when one man has a right other men are under the obligation to respect it, but also in the subjective sense that when a man has a right he is bound to use it for the general good. It is sometimes said, 'A man may do what he likes with his own.' Legally that may be true, but morally he is under obligation to employ it for the general good just as strictly as if it were another's. A man's rights are not merely decorations or ends in themselves. They are opportunities, instruments, trusts. And when any man has them, it means that he is placed on a vantage-ground from which, secure of oppression or interference, he may begin to do his duty.[6] But this moral aspect of right is often lost sight of. People are so enamoured of what they call their rights that they forget that the real value of every right depends upon the use to which they put it. A man's freedom does not consist in having rights, but in fulfilling them. 'After all,' says Mazzini, 'the greatest right a man can possess or recognise--the greatest gift of all--is simply the privilege and obligation to do his duty.'[7] This is the only Christian doctrine of rights. It underlies our Lord's teaching in the parable of the Talents. We only have what we use.

(1) Much has been written of the 'Natural rights of Man.'[8] This was the claim of a school of political philosophy of which Paine was the most rigorous exponent. The contentions of Paine were met as vigorously by the negations of Bentham and Burke. And if it be supposed that the individual is born into the world with certain ready-made possessions, fixed and unalterable, the claim is untenable. Such an artificial account of man ignores entirely the evolution of moral nature, and denies the possibility of development in man's conception of law and duty. 'It is,' as Wundt says, 'to derive all the moral postulates that have been produced in our minds by previous moral development from moral life as it actually exists.'[9]

(2) But while the 'natural rights of man' cannot be theoretically vindicated, they may still be regarded as ends or ideals to be striven after. 'Justifiable or unjustifiable in theory, they may still remain a convenient form in which to couch the ultimatum of determined men.'[10] They give expression, at least, to a conviction which has grown more clear and articulate with the advance of thought--the conviction of the dignity and worth of the individual. This thought was the keynote of the Reformation. The Enlightenment, with its appeal to reason, as alike in all men, gave support to the idea of equality. Descartes claimed it as the philosophical basis of man's nature. Rousseau and Montesquieu were among its most valiant champions. Kant made it the point of departure for the enforcement of human right and duty. Fichte but elaborated Kant's view when he contended for 'the equality of everything which bears the human visage.'[11] And Hegel has summed up the conception in what he calls 'the mandate of right'--'Be a person, and respect others as

persons.'[12] Poets sometimes see what others miss. And in our country, at least, it is to Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, and still more, perhaps, to Burns, that we are indebted for the insistence upon the native worth of man. But if this claim has only gradually attained to articulate expression, and is only now being made the basis of social reconstruction, it must not be forgotten that it is essentially a Christian truth. In Harnack's language, 'Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light, and what He did no one can any more undo.'[13]

When, however, the attempt is made to analyse this ultimate principle of manhood, opinions differ as to its constituents, and a long list of 'rights' claimed by different political thinkers might be made. The famous 'Declaration of Rights'[14] included Life, Liberty, Property, Security, and 'Resistance of Oppression.' To these some have added 'Manhood Suffrage,' 'Free Access to the Soil,' and a common distribution of the benefits of life and means of production. This is a large programme, and certainly no community as yet has recognised all its items without qualification. Obviously they are not all of the same quality, nor are they of independent validity; and at best they but roughly describe certain factors, considered by various agitators as desirable, of an ideal social order.

(3) We are on safer ground, and for Christian Ethics, at least, more in consonance with ultimate Christian values, when we describe the primary realities of human nature in terms of the revelation of life as given by the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ. The three great verities upon which He constantly insisted were, man's value for himself, his value for his fellow-men, and his value for God. These correspond generally to the three great ethical ideas of life--Personality, Freedom, and Divine Kinship. But although the sense of independence, liberty and divine fellowship is the first aspect of a being who has come to the consciousness of himself, it is incomplete in itself. Man plants himself upon his individuality in order that he may set out from thence to take possession, by means of knowledge, action, and service, of his larger world. Man's rights are but possibilities which must be transmuted by him into achievements.

'This is the honour,--that no thing I know, Feel, or conceive, but I can make my own Somehow, by use of hand or head or heart.'[15]

Rights involve obligations. The right of personality carries with it the duty of treating life, one's own and that of others, as sacred. The right of freedom implies the use of one's liberty for the good of the society of which each is a member. And finally, the sense of divine kinship involves the obligation of making the most of one's life, of realising through and for God all that God intends in the gift of life. In these three values lies the Christian doctrine of man.[16] Because of their fullness of implication they open out to our vision the goal of humanity--the principle and purpose of the whole process of human evolution--the perfection of man. Given these three Christian truths--the Sacredness of Personality, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Fatherhood of God--and all that is essential in the claim of the 'Natural Rights of Man' is implicitly contained. The one thing needful is that men become alive to their privileges and go forward to 'possess their possessions.'

II

SPHERES OF DUTY

We are thus led to a division, natural if not wholly logical, of duties which spring from these rights--duties towards self, others, and God. Though, indeed, self-love implies love of others, and all duty is duty to God, still it may be permissible to frame a scheme of duties according as one or

other element is prominent in each case.

1. Duties in Relation to Self.--It is obvious that without (1) respect for self there can be no respect for others. I am a part of the moral whole, and an element in the kingdom of God. I cannot make myself of no account. Our Lord's commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' makes a rightly conceived self-love the measure of love to one's neighbour. Self-respect involves (2) self-preservation, the care of health, the culture of body and mind. Not only is it our duty to see that the efficiency and fitness of the bodily organism is fully maintained, but we must also guard it against everything that would defile and disfigure it, or render it an instrument of sin. Christianity requires the strictest personal purity, purity of thought and feeling as well as of deed. It demands, therefore, constant vigilance, self-control, temperance, and even self-denial, so that the body may be, not, as the ancients thought, the prison-house of the soul, but the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christianity is, however, opposed to asceticism. Though Jesus denied Himself to the uttermost in obedience to the voice of God, there is in His presentation of life a complete absence of those austerities which in the history of the Church have been so often regarded as marks of superior sanctity.[17] It is unnecessary here to dwell upon athletics and sport which now so largely occupy the attention of the youth of our land. Physical exercise is necessary to the maintenance of bodily fitness, yet it may easily become an all-absorbing pursuit, and instead of being merely a means to an end, may usurp the place in life which belongs to higher things.

(3) Self-maintenance involves also the duty of self-development, and that not merely of our physical, but also of our mental life. If the body has its place and function in the growth of Christian character, still more has the mind its ethical importance. Our Maker can have no delight in ignorance. He desires that we should present not a fragmentary but complete manhood. Specialisation, though a necessity of the age, is fraught with peril to the individual. The exigencies of labour require men to concentrate their energies on their own immediate tasks; but each must seek to be not merely a craftsman, but a man. Other sides of our nature require to be cultivated besides those which bring us into contact with the ways and means of existence. Indeed, it is only by the possession of a well-trained mind that the fullest capacity, even for special pursuits, can be obtained. It has become a commonplace to say that every man should have equality of opportunity to earn a livelihood. But equality of opportunity for education, as something which ought to be within the reach of every youth in the land, is not so frequently insisted upon. Beyond the claims of daily occupation every one should have a chance, and, indeed, an inducement, to cultivate his mental and spiritual nature. Hence what is called 'culture,' the all-round development of the human faculties, is an essential condition of moral excellence. For, as Goethe has said, the object of education ought to be rather the formation of tastes than simply the communication of knowledge. But most important of all the self-regarding aims of life is the obligation of Self-discipline, and the use of every means of moral culture which the world supplies. It is through the complex conditions of earthly existence that the character of the individual is developed. It will only be possible to indicate briefly some of the aids to the culture of the moral life. Among these may be mentioned: (a) The Providential Experiences of life. The world itself, as a sphere of Work, Temptation, and Suffering, is a school of character. The affections and cares of the home, the duties and tasks incident to one's calling, the claims of one's fellow-men, the trials and temptations of one's lot--these are the universal and common elements in man's moral education. Not to escape from the world's activities and conflicts, but to turn them into conditions of self-mastery, is

the duty of each. Men do work, but work makes men. The shopkeeper is not merely selling wares; the artisan or mechanic is not simply engaged in his handicraft; the mason and builder are not only erecting a house; each is, in and through his toil, making his own soul. And so, too, suffering and temptation are the tools which God commits to His creatures for the shaping of their own lives. Saints and sinners are made out of the same material. By what Bosanquet has finely called 'the miracle of will' the raw stuff of life is taken up and woven into the texture of the soul. (b) The so-called _secular opportunities of culture_. Innumerable sources of self-enrichment are available. Everything may be made a vehicle of moral education. Knowledge generally, and especially the ministry of nature, the influence of art, and the study of literature, are potent factors in the discipline and development of Christian character. To these must be added (c) _The special religious aids and means of grace_. From an ethical point of view the Church is a school of character. It 'guards and keeps alive the characteristic Christian ideas, and thereby exhibits and promotes the Christian ideal of life.' [18] Its fellowship, worship, and ordinances; its opportunities of brotherly service and missionary activity, as well as the more private spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation--all are means of discipline and gifts committed to the stewardship of individuals in order that they may realise the greatness of life's possibilities, and attain through union with God to the fullness of their stature in Christ. But while the truth that the soul has an inalienable worth is repeatedly affirmed, the New Testament touches but lightly upon the duties of self-regard. To be occupied constantly with the thought of one's self is a symptom of morbid egoism rather than of healthy personality. The avidity of self-improvement and even zeal for religion may become a refined form of selfishness. We must be willing at times to renounce our personal comfort, to restrain our zest for intellectual and aesthetic enjoyment, to be content to be less cultured and scholarly, less complete as men, and ready to part with something of our own immediate good that others may be ministered to. Hence the chief reason probably why the Scriptures do not enlarge upon the duties of self-culture is, that according to the spirit of the Gospel the true realisation of self is achieved through self-sacrifice. Only as a man loses his life does he find it. To hoard [Transcriber's note: hoard?] one's possessions is to waste them. Growth is the condition of life. But in all growth there is reciprocity of expenditure and assimilation, of giving and receiving. Self-realisation is only gained through self-surrender. Not, therefore, by anxiously standing guard over one's soul, but by dedicating it freely to the good of others does one achieve one's true self.

2. _Duties in Relation to Others_.--We belong to others, and others belong to us. They and we are alike parts of a larger whole.

(1) While this is recognised in Scripture, and all men are declared to be brothers in virtue of their common humanity, Christianity traces the brotherhood of man to a deeper source. The relation of the individual to Christ is the true ground of love to others. In Christ all distinctions which in other respects separate men are dissolved. Beneath the meanest garb and coarsest features, in spite even of the defacement of sin, we may detect the vast possibilities of the soul for whom Christ has died. The law of love is presented by Jesus as the highest of all the commandments, and the duty to others is summed up generally in what is known as the golden rule. Of the chief manifestations of brotherly love mention must be made (a) of the comprehensive duty of _Justice_. The ground upon which justice rests is the principle that each individual is an end in himself. Hence it is the duty of each to respect the rights of his neighbours, negatively refraining from injury and positively rendering that which our fellow-men have a right to claim. Religion makes a man more sensitive to

the claims of humanity. Mutual respect requires a constant effort on the part of all to secure for each the fullest freedom to be himself. Christianity interprets justice to mean emancipation from every condition which crushes or degrades a man. It seeks to create a social conscience, and to arouse in each a sense of responsibility for the good of all. At the same time social justice must not be identified with charity. Charity has done much to relieve distress, and it will always form an indispensable element in the Christian's duty towards his less fortunate brethren; but something more radical than almsgiving is required if the conditions of life are to be appreciably bettered. Justice is a demand not for bread alone; it is a claim of humanity to life, and all that life ought to mean. Christianity affirms the spirit of human brotherhood--a brotherhood in which every child will have a chance to grow to a noble manhood, and every man and woman will have opportunity and encouragement to live a free, wholesome, and useful life. That is the Christian ideal, and to help towards its realisation is the duty laid upon every citizen of the commonwealth. The problems of poverty, housing, unemployment, intemperance, and all questions of fair wages, legitimate profits, and just prices, fall under the regulative principle of social justice. The law is, 'Render to all their dues.' The love which worketh no ill to his neighbour will also withhold no good.[19]

(b) Truthfulness--Justice is not confined to acts, but extends to speech and even to thought. We owe to others veracity. Even when the motive is good, there can be no greater social disservice than to fail in truthfulness. Falsehood, either in the form of hypocrisy or equivocation, and even of unsound workmanship, is not only unjust to others; it is unjust to ourselves, and a wrong to the deeper self--the new man in Christ.[20] Is deception under all circumstances morally wrong? Moralists have been divided on this question. The instance of war is frequently referred to, in which it is contended that ruse and subterfuge are permissible forms of strategy.[21] There are, however, many distressing cases of conscience, in which the duties of affection and veracity seemingly conflict. It must be remembered that no command can be carried out to its extreme, or obeyed literally. Truth is not always conveyed by verbal accuracy. There may be higher interests at stake which might be prejudiced, and indeed unfairly represented by a merely literal statement. The individual conscience must decide in each case. We are to speak the truth in love. Courage and kindness are to commingle. But when all is said it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the last analysis lack of truth argues a deficient trust in the ultimate veracities of the universe, and rests upon a practical unbelief in the divine providence which can make 'all things work together for good to them that love God.'

(c) Connected with truthfulness, and also a form of justice, is the duty enjoined by St. Paul of forming just judgments of our fellow-men. If we would avoid petty fault-finding and high-minded contempt, we must dismiss all prejudice and passion. The two qualities requisite for proper judgment are knowledge and sympathy. Goethe has a fine couplet to the effect that 'it is safe in every case to appeal to the man who knows.'[22] But to understanding must be added appreciative consideration. We must endeavour to put ourselves in the position of our brother. Without a finely blended knowledge and sympathy we grow intolerant and impatient. Fairness is the rarest of moral qualities. He who would estimate another truly must have what St. Paul calls 'spiritual discernment'--the 'even-balanced soul' of one 'who saw life steadily and who saw it whole.'

(2) Brotherly Love evinces itself further in Service, which takes the three forms of Compassion, Beneficence or practical kindness, and Example.

(a) Compassion or sympathy is a readiness to enter into the experiences of others. As Christians nothing that concerns our brother can be a matter of indifference to us. As members of the same spiritual community we are participators in each other's joys and sorrows, 'weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice.' It is no mere natural instinct, but one which grows out of the Christian consciousness of organic union with Christ. 'When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.' [23] We fulfil the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens.

(6) Practical Beneficence is the natural outcome of sympathy. Feelings pass into deeds. Those redeemed by the love of Christ become the agents of His love, gladly dispensing to others what they themselves have received. The ministry of love, whatever shape it may take, must, in the last resort, be a giving of self. No one can do a kindness who does not put something of himself into it. No true service can be done that does not cost us more than money. In modern society it is inevitable that personality should largely find its expression and exercise in material possessions. Without entering here upon the question of the institution of private property, it is enough to say that the possession of material goods may be morally defended on the twofold ground, that it ensures the security of existence, and is an essential condition of the development of individual and national resources. The process of acquisition is a moralising influence, since it incites the individual to work, and tends to create and foster among men interchange of service. Property, says Hegel, is the embodiment and instrument of the will. [24] But in a civilised community there must be obviously restrictions to the acquisition and use of wealth. Unbridled appropriation and irresponsible abuse are alike a peril to society. The State has therefore the right of interference and control in regard to all possessions. Even on the lowest ground of expediency the very idea of property involves on the part of all the principle of co-operation and reciprocity--the obligation of contributing to the general weal. It would, however, be most undesirable that the government should undertake everything for the general good of man that is now left to spontaneous effort and liberality. But from the standpoint of Christian Ethics possessions of all kinds are subject to the law of stewardship. [25] Every gift is bestowed by God for the purpose of social service. No man can call the things which he possesses--endowments, wealth, power--his own. He is simply a trustee of life itself. No one may be an idler or parasite, and society has a just claim upon the activity of every man. The forms of such service are various; but the Christian spirit will inspire a sense of 'the ultimate unity of all pursuits that contribute to the good of man.' [26] The ministry of love extends over the whole realm of existence, and varies with every phase of need. Physical necessities are to be met in the spirit of charity. St. Paul pleads repeatedly the cause of the poor, and commends the grace of liberality. Giving is to be cheerful and without stint. But there are needs which material aid cannot meet--desolation, anxiety, grief--to which the loving heart alone can find ways of ministering. And beyond all physical and moral need is the need of the soul; and it lies as a debt upon those who themselves have experienced the grace of Christ to seek the renewal and spiritual enrichment of their brethren.

(c) There is one special form of practical kindness towards others which a follower of Christ will often be called upon to exercise--the spirit of forbearance and forgiveness. The Christian is to speak evil of no man, but to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men; living peaceably with all men, avoiding everything provocative of strife; even 'forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you so also do ye.'

(3) Finally, we may serve others by Example, by letting the light of life so shine before men that they seeing our good works shall glorify God our Father. This duty, however, as Fichte points out, 'has often been viewed very incorrectly, as if we could be obliged to do this or that, which otherwise we would not have needed to do, for the sake of a good example.' [27] That which I am commanded to do I must do for its own sake without regard to its effect upon others. Esteem can be neither outwardly compelled nor artistically produced; it manifests itself voluntarily and spontaneously. A modern novelist [28] ironically exposes this form of altruism by putting into the mouth of one of her characters the remark, 'I always make a point of going to church in order to show a good example to the domestics.' At the same time no one can withhold one's influence; and while the supreme motive must be, not to make a display, but to please God, he who is faithful to his station and its duties cannot fail to affect his fellow-men for good. The most effective example is given unconsciously, as the rose exhales its sweetest perfume without effort, or the light sheds its radiance simply by being what it is.

3. Duties in Relation to God.--Here morality runs up into religion, and indeed since all duties are in their last analysis duties toward God, Kant and other moralists have objected to the admission into Ethics of a special class of religious obligations. It has been well remarked that the genuine Christian cannot be known by particular professions or practices, but only by the heavenly spirit of his life. [29] Hence religious duty cannot be formulated in a number of precise rules. Love to God finds expression not in mechanical obedience, but in the spontaneous outflow of the heart. The special duties to the Divine Being may be briefly described under the main heads of Recognition, Obedience, and Worship.

(1) Recognition.--The acknowledgment of God rests upon knowledge. Without some comprehension of what God is there can be no intelligent allegiance to Him. We cannot, indeed, by logical reasoning demonstrate the existence of the Deity any more than we can demonstrate our own being. But He has not left Himself without a witness, and He speaks to man with many voices. The material creation is the primary word of God. The beauty, and still more the sublimity, of nature are a revelation through matter of something beyond itself, a message of the spiritual, bearing 'authentic tidings of invisible things.' But nature is symbolic. It is a prophecy rather than an immediate revelation. Still it warrants the expectation of a yet fuller manifestation. That fuller utterance we have in man himself. There, spirit reveals itself to spirit; and in the two primary intuitions of man--self-consciousness and the sense of moral obligation--the presence of God is disclosed. But, higher still, the long historic evolution has culminated in a yet clearer manifestation of the Deity. In Christ, the God-Man, the mystery underlying and brooding over the world is unveiled, and to the eye of faith is revealed the Fatherhood of God. The first duty, therefore, we owe to God is that of recognition, the acknowledgment of His presence in the world. To feel that He is everywhere, sustaining and vitalising all things; to recognise His will in all the affairs of our daily life, is at once the duty and blessedness of man.

(2) Obedience follows acknowledgment. It is partly passive and partly active.

(a) As passive, it takes the form of habitual trust or acquiescence, the submissive acceptance of trials which are ultimately, we believe, not really evils, because ordained by God and overruled for good. [30] This spirit of obedience can be maintained by constant vigilance alone. [31] While connected with the anticipated coming of the Son of Man, the obligation had a more general

application, and may be regarded as the duty of all in the face of the unknown and unexpected in life. We are therefore to watch for any intimation of the divine will, and commit ourselves trustfully to the absolute disposal of Him in whose hands are the issues of our lives.

(b) But obedience has also an active side. Faithfulness is the complement of faith. The believer must exercise fidelity, and go forward with energy and purpose to the tasks committed to him. As stewards of Christ we are to occupy till He come, employing every talent entrusted to us in His service. Work may be worship, and we can glorify God in our daily tasks. No finer tribute can a man give than simply himself.

(3) Worship.--The special duties of worship belong to the religious rather than the ethical side of life, and do not demand here more than a passing reference. The essence of religion lies in the subordination of the finite self to the infinite; and worship is the conscious outgoing of the man in his weakness and imperfection to his Maker, and it attains its fullest exercise in (a) reverence, humility, and devotion. The feeling of dependence and sense of need, together with the consciousness of utter demerit and inability which man realises as he gazes upon the majesty and grace of God, awaken the (b) instinct of prayer. 'It is the sublime significance of prayer,' says Wuttke, 'that it brings into prominence man's great and high destiny, that it heightens his consciousness of his true moral nature in relation to God; and as morality depends on our relation to God, prayer is the very life-blood of morality.' [32] The steadfast aspiration of the soul to God, whose will is our law and whose blessing is granted to whatsoever is done in His name, is the habitual temper of the Christian life. But prayer must also be particular, definite, and expectant. By a law of our nature, and apart from all supernatural intervention, prayer exercises a reflex influence of a very beneficial character upon the mind of the worshippers. But he who offers his petitions expecting nothing more will not even attain this. 'If prayers,' says Mr. Lecky, 'were offered up solely with a view to this benefit, they would be absolutely sterile and would speedily cease.' [33] The purely subjective view of prayer as consisting solely in 'beneficent self-suggestion' empties the term of significance. Even Frederick Meyers, who lays so much stress upon the importance of self-suggestion in other aspects of experience, admits that prayer is something more than a subjective phenomenon. 'It is not only a calling up of one's own private resources; it must derive its ultimate efficacy from the increased flow from the infinite life into the life of the suppliant.' [34]

(c) Prayer attains its highest expression in Thanksgiving and Joy. Gratitude is the responsive feeling which wells up in the heart of those who have experienced the goodness of God, and recognise Him as the great Benefactor. Christians are to abound in thankfulness. We live in a world where everything speaks to us of divine love. Praise is the complement of prayer. The grateful heart sees life transfigured. It discovers everywhere tokens of grace and hope, 'Making the springs of time and sense Sweet with eternal good.'

Peace, trust, joy, hope are the ultimate notes of the Christian life. 'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks.' Thanksgiving, says St. Bernard, 'is the return of the heart to God in perpetual benediction.' In the kingdom of love duty is swallowed up in joy. Life is nothing but the growing realisation of God. With God man's life begins, and to Him turns back at last in the wrapt contemplation of His perfect being. In fellowship with God man finds in the end both himself and his brother.

'What is left for us, save, in growth Of soul, to rise up, far past both, From the gift looking to the Giver, From the cistern to the river, And from the finite to the Infinity And from man's dust to God's divinity?'[35]

'God,' says Green, 'is a Being with whom we are in principle one, in the sense that He is all which the human spirit is capable of becoming.'[36] In the worship of God, man dies to the temporal interests and narrow ends of the exclusive self, and lives in an ever-expanding life in the life of others, manifesting more and more that spiritual principle which is the life of God, who lives and loves in all things.[37]

[1] Paulsen, *Ethics*, bk. III. chap. i. Cf. also Wundt, *Ethik*, p. 148. But see also W. Wallace, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 325, on their confusion.

[2] Mackintosh, *Chr. ethics*, p. 114.

[3] Cf. Haering, *Ethics of Chr. Life*, p. 230.

[4] This seems to be the position of Herrmann; see *Ethik*.

[5] Cf. Eucken, *Life's Basis*, p. 185.

[6] Maccunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 40.

[7] *Duties of Man*, chap. i.

[8] See discussion by late W. Wallace in *Lectures and Essays*, pp. 213 ff.

[9] *Ethik*, p. 190.

[10] Maccunn, *op. cit.*; p. 42.

[11] Cf. Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 348.

[12] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 45.

[13] *Das Wesen des Christenthums*; cf. also *Ecce Homo*, p. 345.

[14] Adopted in Massachusetts in 1773:--'All men have equal rights to life, liberty, and property.'

[15] Browning, *_Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau_*.

[16] Cf. Wheeler Robinson, *_The Christian Doctrine of Man_*, pp. 281 f.

[17] Matthew 11:18; Luke 7:33.

[18] Ottley, *_Ideas and Ideals_*.

[19] Romans 13:7-10.

[20] Colossians 3:9; Colossians 3:10.

[21] See Lecky, *_Map of Life_*.

[22] *_Vor dem Wissenden sich stellen, sicher ist's in allen Fallen_*.

[23] 1 Corinthians 12:26.

- [24] Phil. of Right, pp. 48 ff.; see also Wundt, Ethik, pp. 175 f.
- [25] Cf. Ottley, idem, p. 271.
- [26] Green, Proleg., p. 173, quoted by Ottley.
- [27] Science of Ethics (trans.), p. 337.
- [28] Miss Fowler, Concerning Isabel Carnaby.
- [29] Drummond, Via, Veritas, Vita, p. 227.
- [30] Matthew 8:25 f., Matthew 10:26; Luke 8:23 f.
- [31] Matthew 25:1 f.; Mark 24:42; Luke 12:36 f.
- [32] Chr. Ethics (trans.), vol. ii. p. 221.
- [33] Hist. of Europ. Morals, vol. i. p. 36.
- [34] Human Personality, vol. ii. p. 313.
- [35] Browning, Christmas Eve.
- [36] Proleg., p. 198.
- [37] Cf. Jones, Browning as Philosophical and Religious Teacher, p. 367.

Social Institutions

CHAPTER XIII SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS In last chapter we dealt with the rights and duties of the individual as they are conditioned by his relation to himself, others, and to God. In this chapter it remains to speak more particularly of the organised institutions of society in which the moral life is manifested, and by means of which character is moulded. These are the Family, the State, and the Church. These three types of society, though distinguishable, are closely allied. At first, indeed, they were identical. Human society had its origin, most probably, in a primitive condition in which domestic, political, and religious ends were one. Even in modern life Family, State, and Church do not stand for separate interests. So far from their aims colliding they are mutually helpful. An individual may be a member of all three at one time. From a Christian point of view each is a divine institution invested with a sacred worth and a holy function, and ordained of God for the advancement of His kingdom.

I

The Family is the fountain-head of all the other social groups, 'the cell of the social organism.' Man enters the world not as an isolated being, but by descent and generation. In the family each is cradled and nurtured, and by the domestic environment character is developed. The family has a profound value for the nation. Citizenship rests on the sanctity of the home. When the fire on the hearth is quenched, the vigour of a people dies.

1. Investigations of great interest and value have been pursued in recent years regarding the origin and evolution of the family. However far back the natural history of the race is carried, it seems scarcely possible to resist the conclusion that some form of family relationship is coeval with human life. Widely as social arrangements differ in detail among savage peoples, arbitrary promiscuity can nowhere be detected. Certain laws of domestication have been invariably found to exist, based upon definite social and moral restrictions universally acknowledged and rigidly enforced. Two primitive conditions are present wherever man is found--the tribe and the family. If the family is never present without the tribe, the tribe is never discovered without 'those intra-tribal distinctions and sexual regulations which lie at the bottom of the institution of the family.' [1] Westermarck indeed says that 'the evidence we possess tends to show that among our earliest human ancestors the family and not the tribe formed the nucleus of every social group, and in many cases was itself perhaps the only social group. The tie that kept together husband and wife, parents and children, was, if not the only, at least the principal factor in the earliest forms of man's social life.' [2] If the family had been an artificial convention called into being by human will and ingenuity, it might conceivably be destroyed by the same factors. But whatever arguments may be adduced for the abolition of marriage and family life to-day, the appeal to primitive history is not one of them. On the contrary the earliest forms of society show that the family is no invention, that it has existed as long as man himself, and that all social evolution has been a struggle for the preservation of its most valuable features. [3]

2. If, even in early times, and especially among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, the family was an important factor in national development, it has been infinitely more so since the advent of Christianity. Christ did not create this relationship. He found it in existence when He came to the earth. But He invested it with a new ethical value. He laid upon it His consecrating touch, and made it the vehicle of all that is most tender and true in human affection, so that among Christian people to-day no word is fraught with such hallowed associations as the word 'home.' This He did both by example and teaching. As a member of a human family Himself, He participated in its experiences and duties. He spent His early years in the home of Nazareth, and was subject unto His parents. He manifested His glory at a marriage feast. By the grave of Lazarus He mingled His tears with those of the sorrowing sisters of Bethany. He had a tender regard for little children, and when mothers brought their infants to Him He welcomed them with gracious encouragement, and, taking the little ones in His arms, blessed them, thus consecrating for all time both childhood and motherhood. Throughout His life there are indications of His deep reverence and affection for her who was His mother, and with His latest breath he confided her to the care of His beloved disciple.

There are passages indeed which seem to indicate a depreciation of family relationships.[4] The most important of these are the sayings which deal with the home connections of those whom He called to special discipleship.[5] Not only are father and mother to be loved less than He, but even in comparison with Himself are to be hated.[6] Among the sacrifices His servants must be ready to make is the surrender of the home.[7] But these references ought to be taken in conjunction with, and read in the light of, His more general attitude to the claims of kindred. It was not His indifference to, but His profound regard for, home ties that drew from Him these words. He knew that affection may narrow as well as widen the heart, and that our tenderest intimacies may bring our most dangerous temptations. There are moments in the history of the heart when the lesser claim must yield to the greater. For the Son of Man Himself, there were interests higher even than those of the family. Some men, perhaps even most, are able to fulfil their vocation without a surrender of the joys of kinship. But others are called to a wider sphere and a harder task. For the sake of the larger brotherhood of man, Jesus found it necessary to renounce the intimacies of home. What it cost Him to do so we, who cannot fathom the depth of His love, know not. Even such an abandonment did He demand of His first disciples. And for the follower of Christ still there must be the same willingness to make the complete sacrifice of everything, even of home and kindred, if they stand in the way of devotion to the kingdom of God.[8]

(1) Our Lord's direct statements regarding the nature of the family leave us in no doubt as to the high place it holds in His conception of life. Marriage, upon which the family rests, is, according to Jesus, the divinely ordained life-union of a man and woman. In His quotation from Genesis He makes reference to that mysterious attraction, deeply founded in the very nature of man, by which members of the opposite sex are drawn to each other. But while acknowledging the sensuous element in marriage, He lifts it up into the spiritual realm and transmutes it into a symbol of soul-communion. Our Lord does not derive the sanction of wedded life from Mosaic legislation. Still less does He permit it as a concession to human frailty. It has its ground in creation itself, and while therefore it is the most natural of earthly relationships it is of God's making. To the true ideal of marriage there are several features which our Lord regards as indispensable. (a) It must be monogamous, the fusion of two distinct personalities. 'They two shall be one flesh.' Mutual self-impartation demands that the union should be an exclusive one. (b) It is a union of equality.

Neither personality is to be suppressed. The wedded are partners who share one another's inmost thoughts and most cherished purposes. But this claim of equality does not exclude but rather include the different functions which, by reason of sex and constitution, each is enabled to exercise. 'Woman is not undeveloped man but diverse.' And it is in diversity that true unity consists. Both will best realise their personality in seeking the perfection of one another. (c) It is a _permanent_ union, indissoluble till the parting of death. The only exception which Christ acknowledges is that form of infidelity which _ipso facto_ has already ruptured the sacred bond.[9] According to Jesus marriage is clearly intended by God to involve sacred and permanent obligations, a covenant with God, as well as with one another, which dare not be set aside at the dictate of a whim or passion. The positive principle underlying this declaration against divorce is the spirit of universal love that forbids that the wife should be treated, as was the case among the dissolute of our Lord's time, as a chattel or slave. Nothing could be more abhorrent to Christian sentiment than the modern doctrine of 'leasehold marriage' advocated by some.[10] It has been ingeniously suggested that the record of marital unrest and divorce in America, shameful as it is, may not be in many cases altogether an evil. The very demand to annul a union in which reverence and affection have been forfeited may spring from a growing desire to realise the true ideal of marriage.[11] (d) Finally, it is a _spiritual_ union. It is something more than a legal contract, or even an ecclesiastical ordinance. The State must indeed safeguard the civil rights of the parties to the compact, and the Church's ceremony ought to be sought as the expression of divine blessing and approval. But of themselves these do not constitute the inner tie which makes the twain one, and binds them together amid all the chances and changes of this earthly life.[12] In the teaching of both Christ and the apostles marriage is presented as a high vocation, ordained by God for the enrichment of character, and invested with a holy symbolism. According to St. Paul it is the emblem of the mystic union of Christ and His Church, and is overshadowed by the presence of God, who is the archetype of those sacred ideas which we associate with the name of fatherhood.

(2) Though marriage is the most personal of all forms of social intercourse, there are many varied and intricate interests involved which require _legal recognition_ and adjustment. Questions as to the legitimacy of offspring, the inheritance of property, the status and rights of the contracting parties, come within the domain of law. The State punishes bigamy, and forbids marriage within certain degrees of consanguinity. Many contend that the State should go further, and prevent all unions which endanger the physical vigour and efficiency of the coming generation. It is undoubtedly true that the government has a right to protect its people against actions which tend to the deterioration of the race. To permit those to marry who are suffering from certain maladies of mind or body is to commit a grave crime against society. But care must be taken lest we unduly interfere with the deeper spiritual sympathies and affections upon which a true union is founded. In agitating for State control in the mating of the physically fit, the champions of eugenics are apt to exaggerate the materialistic side of marriage, and overlook those qualities of heart and mind which are not less important for the well-being of the race. In the discipline of humanity weakness and suffering are assets which the world could ill afford to lose.[13]

(3) In modern times the institution of marriage is menaced by two opposite forces; on the one hand, by a revolutionary type of socialism, and on the other, by the reactionary influence of self-interested individualism. (a) It is contended by some advanced socialists that among the poor

and the toiling home life is practically non-existent; indeed, under present industrial conditions, impossible. Marriage and separate family life are insuperable barriers, it is said, to corporate unity and social progress. It is but fair to add that this extreme view is now largely repudiated by the most enlightened advocates of a new social order, who are contending, they tell us, not for the abolition, but for the betterment, of domestic conditions.[14] (b) The stability of social life is being threatened even more seriously by a self-centred individualism. Marriage is considered as a merely temporary arrangement which may be terminated at will. It is contended that divorce should be granted on the easiest terms, and the most trifling reasons are seriously put forward as legitimate grounds for the annulling of the holiest of vows. Without discussing these disintegrating influences, it is enough to say that the trend of history is against any radical tampering with the institution of marriage, and any attempt to disparage the sanctity of the home or belittle domestic obligations would be to poison at its springs the moral life of man.

3. The duties of the various members of the family are explicitly, if briefly, stated in the apostolic epistles. They are valid for all times and conditions. Though they may be easily elaborated they cannot well be improved. All home obligations are to be fulfilled in and unto the Lord. The fear of God is to inspire the nurture of children, and to sanctify the lowliest services of the household. Authority is to be blended with affection. (1) Parents are not to provoke their children by harsh and despotic rule, nor yet to spoil them by soft indulgence. Children are to render obedience, and, when able, to contribute to the support of their parents.[15] Masters are to treat their servants with equity and respect. Servants are exhorted to show fidelity. In short all the relationships of the household are to be hallowed by the spirit of Christian love.

Many questions relative to the family arise, over which we may not linger. One might speak of the effect of industrial conditions upon domestic life, the employment of women and children in factories, the evil of sweating, the problem of our city slums, and, generally, of the need of improved environment in order that our labouring classes may have a chance of a healthier and purer home existence. Legislation can do much. But even law is ineffective to achieve the highest ends if it is not backed by the public conscience. The final solution of the problem of the family rests not in conditions but in character, not in environment but in education, in the kind of men we are rearing.

(2) This century has been called the woman's century. And certainly there is an obvious trend to-day towards acknowledgment, in all departments of life, of women's equality with men. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to what that equality should mean; and there seems to be a danger in some quarters of overlooking the essential difference of the sexes. No people can achieve what it ought while its wives and mothers are degraded or denied their rights. For her own sake, as well as for the weal of the race, whatever is needful to enable woman to attain to her noblest womanhood must be unhesitatingly granted.[16]

(3) But this is even more the children's era. A new sense of reverence for the child is one of the most promising notes of our age, and the problems arising out of the care and education of the young have created the new sciences of pedagogy and child-psychology. Regard for child-life owes its inspiration directly to the teaching of Christ. The child in the simplicity of its nature and innocence of its dependence is, according to the Master, the perfect pattern of those who seek after God. It is true that in the art of antiquity child-life was frequently represented. But as

Burckhardt says it was the drollery and playfulness, even the quarrelsomeness and stealth, and above all the lusty health and animal vigour of young life that was depicted. Ancient art did not behold in the child the prophecy of a new and purer world. Moreover, it was aesthetic feeling and not real sympathy with childhood which animated this movement. As time went on the teaching of Christ on this subject was strangely neglected, and the history of the treatment of the young is a tragic tale of neglect and suffering. Only now are we recovering the lost message of Jesus in regard to the child, and we are beginning to realise that infancy and youth have their rights, and demand of the world both care and affection. Ours sons and daughters are the nation's assets. Yet it is a parent's question even more than the State's. In a deeper sense than we imagine children are the creation of their parents. It is the effect of soul upon soul, the mother's touch and look, the father's words and ways, that kindle into flame the dull material of humanity, and begin that second birth which should be the anxiety and glory of parenthood. But if the parent makes the child, scarcely less true is it that the child makes the parent. In the give and take of home life a new world is created. When a father really looks into his child's eye he is not as he was before.[17] Indispensable as is the State's education of the young, there is an important part which the community cannot undertake, and there is a danger in curbing individuality by a stereotyped method of instruction. 'All social enactments,' says Harnack, 'have a tendency to circumscribe the activities of the individual. If we unduly fetter the free play of individual effort we break the mainspring of progress and enterprise, and create a state of social immobility which is the antecedent of national decay.'[18] Youth ought to be taught self-reliance and strenuousness of will; and this is a work which can only be done in the home by the firm yet kindly influence of the parents. But there is another aspect of the home problem not less pressing. The want of training in working-class families is largely answerable for the waifs and strays with which our cities team. Even in middle-class households there are indications of a lack not only of discipline, but of that kindly sympathy and affectionate counsel on the part of parents, and of reverence and frankness in the children; with the result that the young people, missing the attachment and interest which the home should supply, seek their satisfaction outside the domestic circle, often with the most disastrous results. The problem of the family is thus the problem of nurturing the very seeds of the moral life. Within the precincts of the nation's homes the future of the commonwealth is being determined.

II

1. The State is the supreme controller of social relationships. As distinguished from the family and the Church, it is the realm of organised force working for social ends. Its purpose is to secure the conditions of life essential to order and progress, and it can fulfil its function only as it is endowed with power to enforce its authority. The interference of the State with the liberty of the individual has created a reaction in two opposite quarters towards complete abrogation of all State compulsion. On the one side Tolstoy pleads for the removal of force, because it violates the principle of love and subverts the teaching of Jesus--'Resist not evil.' Militant anarchism as the other extreme demands the abrogation of authority, because it believes that restraint hinders progress and happiness, and that if governmental force were abolished individuals would be best able to take care of themselves. The aim of anarchism is to destroy force by force; the aim of Tolstoy is to allow force to do its worst. Such a spirit of non-resistance would mean the overthrow of all security, and the reversion to wild lawlessness. It is an utter travesty of Christ's teaching.

Extremes meet. Violence and servility join hands. Anarchism and Tolstoyism reveal the total bankruptcy of unrestricted individualism. The social order for which the State stands is not so much an interference with the freedom of the subject as the condition under which alone individual liberty can be preserved. The view, however, that the State is an artificial relationship into which men voluntarily enter in order to limit their selfish instincts and to secure their mutual advantages--the theory of the 'social contract'--has been discarded in modern times as a fiction of the imagination. It is not of his own choice that the individual becomes a member of society. He is born into it. Man is not a whole in himself. He is only complete in his fellows. As he serves others he serves himself. But men are not the unconscious functions of a mechanical system. They are free, living personalities, united by a sense of human obligation and kindredship. The State is more than a physical organism. It is a community of moral aims and ideals. Even law, which is the soul of the State, is itself the embodiment of a moral principle; and the commonwealth stands for a great ethical idea, to the fulfilment of which all its citizens are called upon to contribute.

2. The reciprocal duties of the State and its citizens receive comparatively little prominence in the New Testament. But they are never treated with disparagement or contempt. During our Lord's earthly life the supreme power belonged to the Roman Empire. Though Jesus had to suffer much at the hands of those in authority, His habitual attitude was one of respect. He lived in obedience to the government of the country, and acknowledged the right of Caesar to legislate and levy taxes in his own province. While giving all deference to the State officials before whom He was brought, He did not hesitate to remind them of the ideal of truth and justice of which they were the chosen representatives.[19] St. Paul's teaching is in harmony with his Master's, and is indeed an expansion of it.[20] 'The powers that be are ordained of God. Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute.' Beyond, however, enjoining the necessity of work as a means of independence, and recommending that each should remain in the sphere in which he has been placed, and perform conscientiously the duties of his calling, we find little direct reference in the Epistles to the matter of citizenship. But as has been truly said 'the citizen has but to stand in his station, and perform its duties, in order to fulfil the demands of citizenship.'[21] St. Paul's insistence therefore upon the personal fidelity of every man to the duties of his sphere goes far to recognise that spirit of reciprocal service which is the fundamental idea of the commonwealth.

3. Of the two extreme views as to the meaning of the State between which the verdict of history has wavered--that of Augustine, who regarded the State as the result of man's sinful condition and as the direct antithesis of the kingdom of God; and that of Hegel, who saw in it the highest ethical form of society, the realisation of the moral ideal--the view of St. Paul may be said to have approximated more nearly to the latter. Writing to the Christians at Rome Paul does not suggest that it was merely for prudence' sake that they should give to the Imperial Power unquestioning obedience. He appeals to the loftiest motives. All authority is of God in its origin and ultimate purpose. What does it matter to him whether Nero be a devil or a saint? He is the prince upon the throne. He is the symbol of divine authority, 'the minister of God to thee for good.' As a Christian Paul looks beyond the temporal world-power as actually existing. Whatever particular form it may assume, he sees in the State and its rulers only the expression of God's will. Rome is His agent, oppressive, and, it may be, unjust, but still the channel through which for the moment the Almighty works for the furtherance of His purposes.[22] The conception of the State as thus formulated involves a twofold obligation--of the State towards its citizens, and of its citizens towards the State.

(1) As the embodiment of public right the State owes protection to its subjects, guarding individual privileges and prohibiting such actions as interfere with the general good. Its functions, however, are not confined to restrictive measures. Its duty is not only to protect the rights of the individual, but to create and maintain such conditions of life as are essential to the development of personality. In its own interests it is bound to foster the growth of character, and to promote culture and social well-being. In modern times we look to the State not only to protect life and property, but to secure for each individual and for all classes of men that basis of material well-being on which alone life in its truest sense can be built up. The government must therefore strike some kind of balance between the extremes of individualism and socialism. While the old theory of *_laissez-faire_*, which would permit every man to follow his own individual bent without regard to the interests of others, has been generally repudiated, there is still a class of politicians who ridicule the 'night watchman' idea of the State as Lassalle calls it. 'Let there be as little State as possible,' exclaims Nietzsche. According to such thinkers the State has only negative functions. The best government is that which governs least, and allows the utmost scope to untrammelled individual enterprise. But if there is a tendency on the part of some to return to the individualistic principle, the 'paternal' idea as espoused by others is being carried to the verge of socialism. The function of the State is stretched almost to breaking point when it is conceived as the 'guardian angel' who accompanies and guards with perpetual oversight the whole life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. Many of the more cautious writers[23] of the day are exposing the dangers which lurk in the bureaucratic system of government. This tendency is apt to crush individual enterprise, and cause men to place entire reliance upon external aid and centralised power. It is indeed difficult to draw a fast line of demarcation between purely individual and social ends. There are obviously primary interests belonging to society as a whole which the State, if it is to be the instrument of the common good, ought to control; certain activities which, if permitted as monopolies, become a menace to the community, and which can be satisfactorily conducted only as departments of the State. National life is a unity, and it can only maintain its integrity as it secures for all its constituents, justice, equity before the law, and freedom of each to be himself. The State ought to protect those who in the competitive struggle of the modern industrial system find themselves at a hopeless disadvantage. It is the duty of the commonwealth to secure for each the opportunity to become what he is capable of being, and to fulfil the functions for which he is best fitted. The State cannot make men moral, but it can interfere with existing conditions so as to make the moral life easier for its citizens. Criminal law cannot create saints, but it can punish evil-doers and counteract the forces of lawlessness which threaten the social order. It cannot legislate within the domain of motive, but it can encourage self-restraint and thrift, honesty and temperance. It cannot actually intermeddle with the sanctity of the home, or assume the rôle of paternal authority, but it can insist upon the fulfilment of the conditions of decency and propriety; it can condemn insanitary dwellings, suppress traffic in vice, supervise unhealthy trades, protect the life and health of workmen, and, generally, devise means for the culture and the advancement, intellectually and morally, of the people. The State in some degree embodies the public conscience, and as such it has the prerogative of awakening and stimulating the consciences of individuals. As a divine institution it is one of the channels through which God makes His will known to man. Law has an ethical import, and the State which is founded upon just and beneficent laws moulds the customs and forms the characters of its citizens.

(2) But if the State is to fulfil its ideal function it must rely upon the general co-operation of its citizens. The measure of its success or failure will depend upon the extent to which an enlightened sense of moral obligation prevails in the community. Men must rise above their own immediate interests and realise their corporate being. Government makes its will dominant through the voice of the people. It cannot legislate beyond the sympathies of its constituents. As the individuals are, so the commonwealth will be. Civil duties vary according to the qualifications and opportunities of individuals. But certain general obligations rest upon all.

(a) It is the duty of all to take an interest in public affairs. What concerns us collectively is the concern of each. Everything that touches the public good should be made a matter of intelligent and watchful interest by all. (b) It is the duty of all to conform to the laws of the country. It is possible that a particular enactment may conflict with the dictates of conscience, and it may be necessary to protest against what seems to be an injustice. No rule can be laid down for exceptional cases. Generally it will be best to submit to the wrong, while at the same time using all legitimate means to secure the repeal of the obnoxious law. And if they will revolt, martyrs must not complain nor be unready to submit to the penalties involved. (c) It is the further duty of all to take some personal part in the government--if not by active service, at least by the conscientious recording of one's vote. Christians must not leave the direction of the nation's affairs to non-Christians. The spirit of Christ forbids moral indifference to anything human. All are not fitted for, or called upon to take, public office; but it is incumbent upon every man to maintain an intelligent public spirit, and to exercise all the duties of good citizenship. It has been truly said that they who give most to the State get most from the State. It is the men who play their part as active citizens working for the nation's cause who enrich their own lives and reap the harvest of a full existence. Not by withdrawal from social service, but in untiring labour for their country's weal, shall men win for themselves and their brethren the fruits of liberty and peace. For nations as for men emancipation may come with a stroke, but freedom can be earned only by strenuous and united toil.

(3) Already these ideals have begun to take shape. The most significant feature of modern times is the growing spirit of democracy. Men of all classes are awakening to their rights, and are accepting their share in the task of social reconstruction. 'We know how the masses,' says Eucken, 'are determined to form a mere dependent body of the so-called higher classes no longer, but to take the problem of life independently into their own hands.'^[24] But while the modern democratic movement is not without its hopeful aspects, it is fraught also with grave perils. It is well that the people should awake to their obligations, and realise the meaning of life, especially in its social implications. But there is a danger that culture may not advance with emancipation, and while the masses demand their rights they may not at the same time discern their duties. For rights involve duties, and emancipation, as we have seen, is not liberty. The appeal of the socialistic party is to the equality of all who bear human features. It sounds plausible. But there never has been, nor never can be, such equality. Nature and experience alike reveal a pronounced and insuperable inequality among men. The law of diversity strikes deep down into the very origin and constitution of mankind. The equality proclaimed by the French Revolutionists is now regarded as an idle dream. Not equality of nature but equity before the law, justice for all, the opportunity for every man to realise himself and make the most of the life and the gifts which God has given him--that is the only claim which can be truly made. 'The only idea,' says Eucken, 'which can give

to equality any meaning is the conviction that humanity has spiritual relations, that each individual has a value for himself and for the whole because he is a part of a larger spiritual world.' Hence if democracy is truly to come to its own and fulfil its high vocation, the Pauline figure of the reciprocal influence of the body and its members must be proclaimed anew as the ideal of the body politic--a unity fulfilling itself in difference--an organic life in which the unit finds its place of security-and-service in the whole, and the whole lives in and acts through the individual parts.

If we are to awaken to the high vocation of the Christian state, to realise the possibilities of our membership one with another, a new feeling of manhood and of national brotherhood, a new pride in the community of life, must take possession of our hearts. We need, as one has said, a baptism of religious feeling in our corporate consciousness, a new sense that we are serving God in serving our fellows, which will hallow and hearten the crusade for health and social happiness, and give to every citizen a sense of spiritual service.

III

Unlike the family and State the _Church_ is the creation of Jesus Christ. It is the witness of His Presence in the world. In its ideal form it is world-wide. The Redemption for which it stands is a good for all men. Though in practice many do not acknowledge its blessing, the Church regards no man beyond its pale of grace. It is set in the midst of the world as the symbol and pledge of God's universal love.

1. The _Relation of Church and State_ is a difficult question with a long history, and involving much controversy. Whatever view may be held as to their legal connection, their interests can never be regarded as inimical. The Church cannot be indifferent to the action of the State, nor can the State ignore the work of the Church. But since their spheres are not identical nor their aims entirely similar, the trend of modern opinion seems to indicate that, while working in harmony, it is more satisfactory that they should pursue independent paths. There are spiritual ends committed to the Church by its Head over which the civil power has no jurisdiction. On the other hand there are temporal concerns with which ecclesiastical courts have neither the vocation nor the qualifications to deal. Still, the Church, as the organ of Christian thought and activity, has responsibilities with regard to civil matters. While religion is the chief agent in the regeneration of man, religion itself is dependent upon all social means, and the Church must regard with sympathy every effort made by the community for moral improvement. The main function of the Church in this connection is to keep before its members a high ideal of social life, to create a spirit of fidelity in every sphere of activity, and, particularly, to educate men for the tasks of citizenship. The State, on the other hand, as the instrument of civic life, has obligations towards the Church. Its duty is hardly exhausted by observing an attitude of non-interference. In its own interests it is bound, not merely to protect, but encourage the Church in the fulfilment of its immediate aims. Parliament, however, must concede to ecclesiastical bodies complete liberty to govern themselves. The Church, as the institution of Christ, claims full autonomy; and the State goes beyond its province when it imposes hampering restrictions which interfere with the exercise of its authority and discipline within its own sphere.

2. As a religious institution the Church exists for three main purposes: (1) the _Worship_ of God and the Edification of its members; (2) the _Witness_ of Christ to Mankind; (3) the _Evangelisation_ of the World.

(1) The first of these objects has already been dealt with when treating of the duties to God. It is only needful to add here that the Church is more than a centre of worship; it is the home of kindred souls knit together by a common devotion to Christ. It is the school of character which seeks the mutual edification of its members 'by provoking one another to love and to good works.' Hence among Protestants the duty of Church Discipline is acknowledged, which deals with such sins or lapses from rectitude as constitute 'offences' or 'scandals,' and tend to bring into disrepute the Christian name and profession. In the Roman Church, the Confessional, through which moral error is avowed, with its system of penances, has in view the same object--viz., to reprove, correct, and reclaim those who have lapsed into sin--thus seeking to fulfil Christ's ideal 'to despair of no man.'

(2) But the Church is also a rallying place of service. Both in its corporate capacity, and through the lives of its individual members, the Church seeks to bear constant witness to the mind of Christ. It proclaims His living example. It reiterates His will and embodies His judgment, approving of what is good, condemning what is evil, and ever more confronting the world with the high ideal of the divine Life and Word. Not all who bear the name of Christ are consistent witnesses. But still the aim of the Church is to harmonise the profession and practice of its members, and generally to spiritualise secular life by the education of public opinion. Before, however, Christians can hope to make a profound impression upon the outside world, it is not unnatural to expect that they should exhibit a spirit of concord, among themselves, seeking to heal the unhappy schisms by which the Church is rent. But while our separations are deplorable--and we ought not to cease our endeavour for the reunion of Christendom--we must not forget that there may be harmony of spirit even amid diversity of operation, and that where there is true brotherly sympathy between Christians, there already is essential unity.[25]

(3) The special work of the Church to which it is constrained by the express terms of its Master's commission, is to preach the Gospel to every creature and to bring all men into obedience to Christ. A distinction is commonly made between Home and Foreign Missions. While the distinction is useful, it is scarcely valid. The work of the Church at home and abroad is one. The claims of the ignorant and hapless of our own land do not exempt us from responsibilities to the heathen world. The Lord's Prayer for the coming of the Kingdom requires of Christian men that they shall consecrate their gifts along every line of effort to the fulfilment of the divine will upon the earth.

3. While all sections of the Church are convinced that an honest application of the principles of Jesus to the practical affairs of life would speedily transform society, there is considerable diversity of opinion as to the proper attitude of Christianity to social problems. The outward reconstruction of social order was not, it must be admitted, the primary aim of Jesus: it was rather the spiritual regeneration of the individual. But such could only become a reality as it transformed the entire fabric of life. (1) Christ's teaching could not but affect the organisation of industry as well as every other section of the social structure. Though Jesus has many warnings as to the perils of riches, there is no depreciation of wealth (in its truest sense). It is true He refuses to interfere in a dispute between two brothers as to worldly property, and repudiates generally the office of arbiter. It is true also that He warns His disciples against covetousness, and lays down the principle that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' But these sayings, so far from implying disapproval of earthly possessions, imply rather that property and trading are the indispensable basis upon which the outward fabric of the social order is built. Christ does not counsel withdrawal from the activities of the world. He honours work. He recognises the legitimacy

of trading. Many of His parables would have no meaning if His attitude to the industrial system of His day had been one of uncompromising hostility. He has no grudge against riches in themselves. In the parable of the talents it is the comparatively poor man who is censured while the rich is commended. To sum up what Jesus thought about wealth is not easy. Many have thought that He condemned the holding of property altogether. But such a conclusion cannot be drawn from His teaching. Possessions, both outward and inward, are rather to be brought to the test of His judgment. His influence would rather bring property and commerce under the control of righteousness and brotherhood. His ideal of life is to be attained through learning the right use of wealth rather than through the abolition of it. Wealth can be used for the kingdom of God, and it is a necessary instrument in the Church's work. It may be consecrated like every other gift to the service of Christ. But there are mighty forces enlisted against its best usefulness, and only through the fullness of Christian grace can its good work be done. What Jesus does condemn however is the predatory instinct, that greed of gain which embodies itself everywhere in the spirit of plunder, exploitation, and the impulse to gambling. He can have nothing but condemnation for that great wave of money-love which has swept over Christendom in our time, affecting all classes. It has fostered self-indulgence, stimulated depraved appetites, corrupted business and politics, oppressed the poor, materialised our ideals, and weakened religious influences. 'From this craze of the love of money the voice of Jesus calls the people back to the sane life in Ethics and religion in which He is leader.' [26] What then ought to be the attitude of the Church to the industrial questions of our day? While some contend that the social question is really a religious question, and that the Church is untrue to its mission when it holds itself aloof from the economical problems which are agitating men's minds, others view with suspicion, if not with hostility, the deflection of religion from its traditional path of worship, and deem it a mistake for the Church to interfere in industrial movements. A recent writer [27] narrates that in his boyhood he actually heard an old minister of the Church of Scotland declare in the General Assembly, 'We are not here to make the world better: we have only to pass through it on the way to glory.' 'No grosser travesty,' adds the author, 'was ever uttered. We are here to make the world better. We have a commission to stamp out evil and to prevent men from falling into it. If this is not Christian work, what is?' At the same time a portion of the clergy have gone to the opposite extreme, identifying the kingdom of God with social propaganda, and thus losing sight of its spiritual and eternal, as well as its personal, significance. There has been moreover a tendency on the part of some to associate themselves with a political party, and to claim for the Church the office of judge and arbitrator in industrial strife. But surely it is one thing to degrade the Church to the level of a secular society, and another, by witness and by effort, to make the law of Christ dominant over all the relationships of life. Men are impatiently asking, 'Has the Church no message to the new demands of the age? Are Christians to stand apart from the coming battle, and preach only the great salvation to individual souls? That the Christian minister must never cease to do; but the Gospel, if it is to meet the needs of men, must be read in the light of history and experience, and interpreted by the signs of the times.

(2) The ground idea of Jesus' teaching was, as Troeltsch has pointed out, [28] the declaration of the kingdom of God. Everything indeed is relative to union with God, but in God man's earthly life is involved. Two notes were therefore struck by Jesus, a note of individualism and a note of universalism--love to God and love to man. These notes do not really conflict, but they became the two opposite voices of the Church, and gave rise to different ethical tendencies. The first religious

communities consisted of the poor and the enslaved. It never occurred to them that they had civic rights: all they desired was freedom to worship Christ. Not how to transform the social world, but how to maintain their own religious faith without molestation in the world of unbelief and evil was their problem.

(3) In the early Catholic Church the spirit of individualism ruled. With the Reformation a new type of life was developed, and a new attitude to the social world was established. But while Lutheranism sought to exercise its influence upon social life through state regulation, Calvinism was more individualistic, and sought rather to enforce its teaching by means of the personal life. The attitude of the various sects--Baptists, Pietists, Puritans--has been largely individualistic, and instead of endeavouring to rectify the abuses of industrial life they have been disposed rather to suffer the ills of this evil world, finding in faith alone their compensation and solace. In modern times the tendency of the Church, Romanist and Protestant alike, has been toward social regeneration; and a form of Christian Socialism has even appeared which however lacks unity of principle and uniformity of action. The mediaeval idea of a Holy Roman Empire, in which all nations and classes were to be consolidated, is now admitted to be a dream incapable of realisation, partly because the idea itself is illusory, but principally because the hold of the Papacy upon the people has been weakened. The agitation, 'Los von Rom' on the one hand, and the 'Modernist' movement on the other, have tended to dissipate the unity and energy of Catholicism. Nevertheless the Church, which is really the society of Christian people, is coming to see that it cannot close its eyes to questions which concern the daily life of man, nor hold aloof from efforts which are working for the social betterment of the world. To bring in the kingdom of God is the Church's work, and it is becoming increasingly evident that the kingdom, if it is to come in any real and living sense, must come where Jesus Himself founded it--upon the plane of this present life.

There are two considerations which make this work on the part of the Church at once imperative and hopeful. The first is that the Church is specially called upon by the command and example of its Founder to range itself on the side of the weak and helpless. It is commanded to bring the principles of brotherly love to bear upon the conditions of life which press most heavily upon the handicapped. It is called on in the spirit of its Master to rebuke the greed of gain and the callous selfishness which uses the toil, and even the degradation of others, for its own personal enjoyment. The Church only fulfils its function when it is not only the consoler of the suffering but also the champion of the oppressed. And the other consideration is that in virtue of its nature and charter the Church is enabled to appeal to motives which the State cannot supply. It brings all social obligation under the comprehensive law of love. It exalts the principle of brotherhood. It lifts up the sacrifice of Christ, and seeks to make it potent over the hearts of men. It preaches the doctrine of humanity, and strives to win a response in all who are willing to acknowledge their common kinship and equality before God. It appeals to masters and servants, to employers and labourers, to rich and poor, and bids them remember that they are sharers alike of the Divine Mercy, pensioners together upon their Heavenly Father's love.

4. Whatever shape the obligation of the Church may take in regard to the social problems of the homeland, the duty of Christianity to the larger world of Humanity admits of no question. The ethical significance of the missionary movement of last century has been pronounced by Wundt,[29] the distinguished historian of morals, as the mightiest factor in modern civilisation. Speaking of humanity in its highest sense as having been brought into the world by Christianity, he

mentions as its first manifestation the care of the sick, and then adds, 'the second great expression of Christian humanity is the establishment of missions.' It is unnecessary to dwell upon this modern form of unselfish enthusiasm. It has its roots in the simple necessity, on the part of the morally awakened, of sharing their best with other people. 'Man grows with the greatness of his purposes,' and no greater ideal task has ever presented itself to the imagination of man than this mighty attempt to conquer the world for Christ, and give to his brother men throughout the earth that which has raised and enriched himself.[30]

'The two great forming agencies in the world's history,' says a prominent political economist, 'have been the religious and the economic.' [31] On the one hand the economic is required as the basis of civilisation, but on the other the supreme factor is religion. The commercial impulse, carried on independently of any higher motive than self-interest, has however not infrequently reacted favourably on the moral life of the race. Mutual understanding, the sense of a common humanity, the virtues of honesty, fairness, and confidence upon which all legitimate commerce is founded, have paved the way in no small degree for the message of brotherhood and mercy. The present hour is the Church's opportunity. Already the world has been opened up, the nations of the earth are awakening to the greatness of life's possibilities. The danger is that the Oriental peoples should become satisfied with the mere externals of civilisation, and miss that which will assure their complete emancipation. Christianity was born in the East, though it has become the inheritance of the West. It is adapted by its genius to all men. And undoubtedly the West has no better boon to confer on the East than that on which its own life and hope are founded--the religion of Jesus Christ. If we do not give that, we are unfaithful to our Master's call; we falsify our own history, and wholly miss the purpose for which we have been entrusted with divine enlightenment and power.

[1] Lofthouse, *_Ethics of the Family_*, p. 77.

[2] *_Hist. of Human Marriage_*, p. 538.

[3] The literature on this subject is enormous. See specially works of Westermarck, M'Lennan, Frazer, Hobhouse, Andrew Lang, and Ihering.

[4] See chap. vii. in Garvie's *_Studies in Inner Life of Jesus_*.

[5] Matthew 8:21; Matthew 8:22; Luke 9:59-62.

[6] Luke 14:26; Matthew 10:37.

[7] Mark 10:29; Mark 10:30.

[8] Matthew 19:12.

[9] Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:3-10; Mark 10:11; Mark 10:12.

[10] See Forsyth, *_Marriage: its Ethics and Religion_*.

[11] King, *_Ethics of Jesus_*, p. 69.

[12] Stalker, *_Ethics of Jesus_*, p. 336.

[13] Though Nietzsche does not use the word he may be regarded as the father of modern eugenics.

[14] Cf. Ramsay MacDonald, *Socialism*.

[15] Mark 7:9-13.

[16] Cf. King, *The Moral and Religious Challenge of our Times*, pp. 42 f.

[17] Cf. W. Wallace, *Lects. and Addresses*, p. 114.

[18] *Aus Leben und Wissenschaft*.

[19] Matthew 12:18-22; John 18:23; John 19:10 f.

[20] Romans 13:1-14.

[21] Sir H. Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 123.

[22] Some sentences are here borrowed from author's *Ethics of St. Paul*.

[23] *E.g.* Eucken, Kindermann, Mallock, and earlier H. Spencer.

[24] *Life's Ideal and Life's Basis*.

[25] Ephesians 4:3.

[26] Clarke, *Ideal of Jesus*, p. 258.

[27] Watson, *Social Advance*.

[28] *Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, a recent work on social ethics of great erudition and importance.

[29] *Ethik*, vol. ii.

[30] King, *The Moral and Religious Challenge of our Times*, pp. 44 and 346.

[31] Marshall, *Principles of Economics*.

Permanence of Christian Ethics

CHAPTER XIV CONCLUSION--THE PERMANENCE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS In bringing to a close our study of Christian Ethics, we repeat that the three dominant notes of the Christian Ideal are--Absoluteness, Inwardness, and Universality. The Gospel claims to be supreme in life and morals. The uniqueness and originality of the Ethics of Christianity are to be sought, however, not so much in the range of its practical application as in the unfolding of an ideal which is at once the power and pattern of the new life. That ideal is Christ in whom the perfect life is disclosed, and through whom the power for its realisation is communicated. Life is a force, and character a growth arising in and expanding from a hidden seed. Hence in Christian Ethics apathy and passivity, and even asceticism and quietism, which occupy an important place in the moral systems of Buddha and Neo-Platonism, in mediaeval Catholicism and the teaching of Tolstoy, play only a subsidiary part, and are but preparatory stages towards the realisation of a fuller life. On the contrary all is life, energy, and unceasing endeavour. 'I am come that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly.'

There is no finality in Christian Ethics. It is not a mechanical and completed code. The Ethic of the New Testament, just because it has its spring in the living Christ, is an inexhaustible fountain of life. 'True Christianity,' says Edward Caird, 'is not something which was published in Palestine, and which has been handed down by a dead tradition ever since; it is a living and growing spirit, and learns the lessons of history, and is ever manifesting new powers and leading on to new truths.' The teaching of Jesus is not merely temporary or local. It is an utter perversion of the Gospels to make the eschatology present in them the master-key to their meaning, or to derive the ethical ideal from the utterances which anticipate an abrupt and immediate end. Jesus spoke indeed the language of His time and race, and often clothed His spiritual purpose in the form of national expectation. But to base His moral maxims on an 'Interim-Ethic' adapted to a transitory world is to 'distort the perspective of His teaching, and to rob it of its unity and insight.' On the contrary, the Ethics of Jesus are everywhere characterised by adaptability, universality, and permanence, and in His attitude to the great problems of life there is a serenity and sympathy which has nothing in common with the nervous and excited expectation of sudden catastrophe. In like manner it is a misinterpretation of the teaching of Jesus to represent asceticism as the last word of Christian Ethics. Renunciation and unworldliness are undoubtedly frequently commended in the New Testament, but they are urged not as ends in themselves but as means to a fuller self-realisation. Such was not the habitual temper and tone of Jesus in His relations to the world, nor was the ultimate purpose of His mission to create a type of manhood whose perfection lay in withdrawal from the interests and obligations of life. 'To single out a teaching of non-resistance as the core of the Gospels, to retreat from social obligations in the name of one who gladly shared them and was called a friend of wine-bibbers and publicans--all this, however heroic it may be, is not only an impracticable discipleship but a historical perversion. It mistakes the occasionalism of the Gospels for universalism.' [1]

Finally, there are many details of modern social well-being with which the New Testament does not deal, questions of present-day ethics and economics which cannot be decided by a direct reference to chapter and verse, either of the Gospels or Epistles. The problems of life shift with the shifting years, but the nature of life remains unchanged, and responds to the life and the spirit of Him who was, and remains down the ages, the Light of men. The individual virtues of humility, purity of heart, and self-sacrifice are not evanescent, but are now and always the pillars of Christian Ethics; while the great principles of human solidarity, of brotherhood and equality in Christ, of freedom, of love, and service; the New Testament teachings concerning the family, the State, and the kingdom of God; our Lord's precepts with regard to the sacredness of the body and the soul, the duty of work, the stewardship of wealth, and the accountability to God for life with its variety of gifts and tasks--contain the germ and potency of all personal and social transformation and renewal.

[1] Prof. Peabody, Harvard Theological Review, May 1913.

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Outlines in Moral Science

Outlines of Moral Science

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PREFACE. THE work now offered to the public is the last which proceeded from the lamented author's hand. In the days which immediately preceded his peaceful departure out of the present life, and while his powers were free from all clouds and weakness, he spoke of these papers as nearly prepared for the press, and consigned them with that intention to two of his sons. With a trifling exception, the whole had been carefully transcribed by the hand of filial duty from his own character, which, more from declining eyesight than any manual debility, had lost its former boldness and clearness, and had become difficult. In giving his commands respecting the printing, he empowered his representatives to use a discretion as to lesser points in the form, which has been found to be almost entirely needless. The ministers of Christ who in this and other countries remember the instructions of Dr. Alexander, will be best able to judge of this production. They will recognise in it the doctrines and arguments which characterized the author's theological method, and will doubtless prize it as a comprehensive syllabus, even while they miss that copiousness, vivacity, and warmth, which added efficacy to his oral teachings. The subject of Ethical Philosophy may be said to have engaged the mind of the author for at least threescore years. The earliest vestiges of his boyish studies show proofs of this, in connection with the metaphysical inquiries

which afterwards became his favourite employment of mind. Though in after years he was almost daily adding to his knowledge of ethical literature, with an avidity which was unabated to the last, and which sought to be satisfied with the most recondite disquisitions in the ancient tongues no less than our own, he nevertheless appears to have arrived at definite conclusions very early, and to have maintained them with little change. It was not the habit of his mind, as is well known, to accumulate authorities, to load his discourses with learned citation, or even to break the continuity of his analytical discourse by unnecessary sallies against opponents. Amidst a life of perpetual reading, of which he held the spoils in his memory with singular exactness and tenacity, he persevered in seeking and presenting truth with the minimum of quoted aid. This quality of his thinking will be all the rather obvious in a treatise like the present, which, as an epitome of extended results, necessarily leaves out a thousand particulars of the process and all the lighter play of illustration.

During the period of nearly forty years, in which he was theological professor, the author had an exercise, for the most part weekly, in Mental and Moral Science; as a transition from college work and a recapitulation of juvenile studies. The lectures thus delivered were the basis of the succinct manual now made public. All its parts were thrown into a shape suitable for the printing, except the closing chapters on the Being and Attributes of God, and the duties resulting from the relation of the Creator and creature.

These portions not having been copied remain in autograph, and may be regarded as the last written speculations of one who employed his pen almost every day for more than half a century. If the articulation of this important member with the body of the discourse seem less obvious than might be desired, it will become sufficiently clear to such as reflect on the great earnestness with which, in the former part, the author maintains the intuitive perceptions of conscience as independent of every doctrine of theology, even the greatest. A casual inspection will be enough to show any reader that this is a book of elements; laying down principles, clearing the statement of fundamental questions, and marking limits around the science. It does not descend therefore to the more usual and far easier work of gathering, naming, and tabling the human duties. This labour he did not undervalue; indeed it was part of his course of instructions; and his unfinished manuscripts contain large contributions towards a separate work in this kind, embracing even all the range of duties which are properly Christian and even ecclesiastical. But the treatise now presented was intended to lay foundations and elucidate principles; in other words it is upon the Philosophy of Morals. At the same time, however, that the topics here discussed are some of the most puzzling which have exercised human acuteness, patience and abstraction, from the days of the Greek authors till our own, they are such as cannot be set aside or turned over to others as matter for authority; for the very reason that they concern the springs of daily action, are presented every hour in the household, and meet us in the very babblings of the nursery. And notwithstanding the tenuity of the objects brought under review, and the delicate thread of inquiry along which the analysis must often feel its way, the writer seems to derive an advantage from his unusual simplicity and transparency of language, which might betray a superficial reader into the opinion that the train of argument is not original or profound. In none of the author's works is this quality more apparent than in that which follows.

One of the reasons which impelled Dr. Alexander, at a stage of life which was encumbered with cares and infirmities, to address himself to this toilsome composition, was the desire to furnish a

Manual for the young men of America, in our colleges, theological seminaries, and other schools. He was repeatedly besought to supply such a volume, and never wavered in his persuasion that it was necessary; especially when he saw with pain to what an extent the place of a class-book was occupied by the great but dangerous work of Archdeacon Paley. In common with other sound ethical inquiries he recognised the value of President Wayland's labours, and the eloquence and richness of Dr. Chalmers's striking but fragmentary contributions. Yet he thought he saw room for a brief hand-book level to the capacity of all; and he had a natural and pardonable desire common to all original thinkers, to give vent to his own opinions in his own order. In regard to the ethical system here expounded, the work may safely be left to speak for itself. It is positive and didactic rather than controversial, yet there is scarcely a chapter which, however tranquil and subdued in its tone, will not awaken opposition in some quarter or other. The polemic aspect of the treatise is, however, apparent only in cases where to avoid the naming of opponents would have been an affectation no less than a breach of trust. No one, whatever his private dissent may be, will justly complain that his opinions have been treated with unfairness or rigour. The connection of ethics with theology is such that no one can treat of the nature of virtue, of the will, of motives, and the like, without at least indicating his tendencies in regard to the great dividing questions of revelation; which only increases the necessity for giving the right direction to juvenile studies; unless we would receive to the professional curriculum minds already pre-occupied with ethical tenets subversive of great truths in law, politics and theology. Those who have watched the progress of modern speculation will not fail to apprehend the drift of this observation. Yet the way in which even these somewhat delicate parts of moral science are here set forth, is such as never to awaken suspicion of any sinister intention, or to betray any irregular passage into a neighbouring but separate science. Even those discussions which, at a first view, might seem to belong rather to natural theology, were deliberately assigned to their place after long experience in teaching, as pertaining to the limits where the two fields osculate if they do not cut, and with a clear pre-eminence given to the ethical side of the truths common to both. The labours of the author were arrested by his last illness, when the work here published was complete indeed as has been said, but not ready for the press in the sense of being revised and corrected. It is this which has made these prefatory pages necessary; an introduction from the author's hand would have precluded all such attempts as weak and impertinent. As he gave the work in charge with his dying lips, after having no doubt offered it to God in many of his solicitous and elevated thoughts during the preparation, so it is now humbly dedicated to Him, without whose blessing, no human effort, even in the best cause, is other than worthless.

New York, Aug. 1, 1852.

MORAL SCIENCE.

Conscience, or the Moral Faculty

CHAPTER I.

CONSCIENCE, OR THE MORAL FACULTY. As all men, when reason is developed, have a faculty by which they can discern a difference between objects of sight which are beautiful and those which are All men discern moral qualities deformed, so all men possess the power of discerning a difference between actions, as to their moral quality. The judgment thus formed is immediate, and has no relation to the usefulness or injuriousness to human happiness, of the objects contemplated.

Whatever difference of opinion may exist respecting the origin of this faculty, it is universally admitted that men, in all True in all ages ages and countries, have judged some actions to be good and deserving of approbation, while they have judged others to be bad, and of ill desert. In all languages, we find words expressive of the ideas of moral excellence, and moral evil. In the laws and penalties established in all ages throughout the Agreement of mankind world, it is evidently implied that some actions ought to be done, and others avoided. In cases of flagrant injustice or ingratitude, all men, of every country and of every age, agree in their judgment of their moral evil. There is, in regard to such actions, no more difference in the judgment of men, than respecting the colour of grass, or the taste of honey. If any man does not perceive grass to be green, or honey to be sweet, we do not thence conclude that men's bodily senses are not similarly constituted, but that the organs of the individual who does not see and taste as other men do, are defective or depraved by disease.

Case proposed must be simple. To determine whether all men have one original moral faculty, the case proposed for their moral judgment should be simply good or evil. For a complex act, in which there is something good and something evil, or rather where there must be an accurate weighing of motives in order to ascertain the quality of the action, is not a proper test as to the existence of a uniformity of moral judgment in men. Therefore, the historical fact adduced by Dr. Paley, [1] from the history of Valerius Maximus, is not at all suited to his purpose; Case of Toranius irrelative. because the case is very complex, and one on which it is difficult to determine at first view, what the true moral character of the action is. The facts, as related by him, are as follows: The father of Caius Toranius had been proscribed by the Triumvirate. Caius Toranius-coming over to the interests of that party-discovered his father's place of concealment to the officers who were in pursuit of him, and gave them, withal, a description of his person by which they might distinguish him. The old man, more anxious for the safety and fortunes of his son than for the little that might remain of his own life, began immediately to inquire of the officers whether his son were well, and whether he had done his duty to the satisfaction of the generals. 'That son (replied one of the officers), so dear to thy affections, has betrayed thee to us; by his information thou art apprehended, and diest.' With this, the officer struck a poniard to his heart, and the unhappy parent fell, affected not so much by his fate, as by the means to which he owed it." Now, the question is, if this story were related to the wild boy caught some years ago in the woods of

Hanover, or to a savage without experience and without instruction, cut off in his infancy from all intercourse with his species, and consequently under no possible influence of example, authority, education, sympathy, or habit, whether or not such a one would feel upon the relation any degree of that sentiment of disapprobation of Toranius's conduct which we feel.

Why it affords no criterion. In our judgment, such a case would afford no criterion by which to determine whether men possess constitutionally a moral sense. For, in the first place, the trial would be no better than if the question were proposed to a child two years old, in whose mind the moral faculty is not yet developed. A human being, arrived at adult age without instruction or communication with others, would be-as it relates to the mind-in a state differing very little from that of infancy. It is not held that the moral sense will be exercised without the usual means by which human faculties are developed. If an organical defect in the brain should prevent the intellectual faculties from coming into exercise, the unhappy individual thus deprived of reason would prove nothing in regard to the operations of reason where it is developed. So, also, if a human being were brought up from early infancy in a dark dungeon, and if no information were communicated to him, the mental faculties would not be developed, and it would be absurd to have recourse to such a one to ascertain what faculties belong to the human mind. The same remark will apply to the case of the wild boy, referred to by Dr. Paley; and also, though in an inferior degree, to savages of the most degraded class.

What is meant by an original, universal faculty. Let it then be fairly understood what it is which is asserted in regard to conscience, as an original, universal faculty. It is What is meant by that every human mind, when its faculties have been developed, and have arrived at some degree of maturity, discerns a quality in certain actions which is termed moral; that is, it intuitively perceives that some actions are right and some wrong.

Paley's instance complex. Another objection to the historical fact adduced by Dr. Paley, is, that it presents to the mind, not a case of simple, unmixed good or evil, but a complex case, in which-before a judgment can be formed of the action of the son-it must be decided whether a man ought to be governed by a regard to the welfare of a parent, or to the public good. If the son believed that the party in pursuit of his father was promoting the public good, he might feel that he ought to be governed by this rather than by filial affection. Here, then, we have presented a complex and difficult case in morals, about which men would be very apt to differ; and we are to determine whether all men-even those totally uneducated-would view it in the same light. A proper case supposed. To render the case a suitable one to be a test of the question under consideration, it should be supposed that the father was acting in conformity with the strictest principles of rectitude; that his life was sought by wicked men, aiming not at the good of the commonwealth but its destruction; and that the son, in betraying the place of his concealment, was actuated by mercenary motives, or by unjust and unnatural dislike to a good parent. If a case like this were presented to a thousand persons from as many different parts of the world, there would be but one judgment and one feeling, all would judge the conduct of the son to be blamable. Different degrees of moral disapprobation would be felt by those whose moral faculty was in a cultivated state; but there would be no difference in the opinion entertained of his conduct. All would feel disapprobation, accompanied by a desire for the punishment of the offender. It is found that savages appear to have but an obscure exercise of conscience, but in proportion as their minds are cultivated, this faculty becomes more manifest, and operates more forcibly.

[1] In the chapter of his Moral Philosophy, under the head “The Moral Sense.”

Moral Faculty, Original and Universal

CHAPTER II. THE MORAL FACULTY, ORIGINAL AND UNIVERSAL.

Moral ideas otherwise unattainable. IF conscience were not an original faculty, enabling us to form a conception of moral qualities, man could never acquire such an idea by any other means. The opinion, therefore, that moral feelings are merely the effect of instruction and education, is erroneous. For every class of simple ideas there must be an appropriate faculty, without which these ideas can never be acquired. In regard to the bodily senses, this is too evident to be called in question. Without the organ of vision, the simple idea of light and colours could never be communicated by any instructions; without the organ of hearing, no idea of sound can be conveyed; and so of the other senses. And it is equally true of that knowledge which is acquired by what some have called the internal senses. If there were in man no such faculty as taste, by which beauty is perceived, no idea of the beautiful could possibly be communicated. A horse has no perception of the beauty of a scene which perhaps enchants his rider, even though the animal sees all the objects with equal distinctness. So it is in regard to moral qualities. There must be an original faculty to give us the simple idea which we have of morality; otherwise the idea of virtue or vice could never have entered the human mind, and the feelings of moral obligation, of which all men are conscious, would never have been felt. The utilitarian objection. I am aware that those who advocate the utilitarian scheme, resolve all our ideas of morality and moral obligation into the mere principles of benefit or injury, apprehended to be connected with each action. Dr. Paley informs us, that the subject continued to be involved in impenetrable mystery, until he took this view of it.

It is deemed useless to argue this point; it cannot be decided by reasoning. The appeal must be made to the consciousness of every man.

Appeal to consciousness. If any one persists in declaring that he sees no evil in any action but as it is evidently detrimental to human happiness, nothing can be said in the way of argument to alter convictions derived from his own consciousness. All that is proper to be said is, that the mind of such a person is differently constituted from that of most men; or rather that an impartial examination of this subject has not been made. It is recommended to such persons carefully to scrutinize the exercises of their own minds; they will perceive that the idea of virtue or moral good is entirely distinct from that of mere utility. There is, indeed, a connection between these two things which is very intimate, and this seems to have misled many in their judgments. Virtuous conduct leads to happiness, and is always beneficial; yet our idea of its moral character is not derived from this consideration, but from the nature of the action itself.

Moral Faculty Being Supposed Uniform Dictates

CHAPTER III. A MORAL FACULTY BEING SUPPOSED, WHETHER ITS DICTATES ARE UNIFORM?

Objection from alleged disagreement. ONE of the strongest objections which has been brought against the doctrine laid down is, that among men of different countries, and of entirely different education, there is no agreement in their judgments respecting the morality or immorality of the same actions. Whereas, it is alleged, that if such a faculty were originally a part of man's constitution, there would as certainly be uniformity, as in the perception of objects by the external senses. Now, if the dictates of conscience in men of different ages and countries do so much differ, does it not show that the moral feelings of men are just what education makes them? And what is gained by maintaining the existence of a moral faculty, as part of man's original constitution?

Moral differences perceived by all. It will, I think, be admitted, that in all countries and conditions in which men have been found, there exists a perception of a difference in the moral character of actions; that is, some things are accounted wrong, which ought not to be done, and some right, which ought to be done.

Total disagreement not pretended. Again, it has never been pretended as being a matter of fact, that between men of different countries there is a total difference in the opinions entertained respecting what is right and what is wrong. A few cases only of difference are alleged, in which this discrepance is observed; but in regard to those actions which are reckoned good or evil, there is a general agreement. As to those in which there seems to be a fundamental difference, an explanation will be given hereafter. No nation, or tribe, or class of mankind has ever held that it is a virtuous and proper thing to do injury to men, or that there is no more harm in taking away life than in preserving it. It has never been held that ingratitude-though everywhere common in practice-is a commendable thing; or that deceit and fraud are as praiseworthy as honesty and fair dealing.

Proof from common estimate of character. There is in every country a difference made in the estimation of the character of men, derived from the course of their conduct. Some men are reckoned good in the public estimation, while others are considered wicked; the former obtain esteem, the latter are despised. That course of conduct which secures a good reputation, does not in any country consist of actions which we consider wicked, but of actions which in all countries are considered praiseworthy; and men have never obtained a bad character by a course of good behaviour.

Practice does not prove absence of moral judgment. It is also important to observe, that the conduct of a people is not a fair test of the internal state of the mind, as it relates to morals. We know that individuals often pursue a course of conduct, which in their serious moments they condemn. Yet the power of temptation, and the habit of indulgence are such, that notwithstanding the convictions of conscience, they continue in a course of evil-doing. It would be a very

inconclusive inference to determine from their habitual conduct, that they acted in accordance with the dictates of conscience. And what is true of individuals, may be true of nations and tribes. Those customs which they have received from their forefathers, may not meet with the approbation of their moral sense, and yet such is the force of an established custom, that they go on in the way in which they were brought up.

Error is in the application. But a more satisfactory explanation of those facts, in which men seem conscientiously to go contrary to the fundamental principles of morals, is, that the principle on which they act is correct, but through ignorance or error they make an erroneous application of it.

Infanticide. When parents murder their own female children-a thing very customary in China-it is on the principle that they will be subject to more misery than happiness in the world; and therefore it is doing them a favour. Here, the general principle is correct-that parents should consult the best interests of their offspring-but the mistake is in the application. The same may be said of the practice of exposing aged parents, when they become incapable of enjoying the world.

Heathen enormities. As to those acts of cruelty which the Pagans perform in their religious services, (the wife committing herself to the flames with the body of her deceased husband; children voluntarily thrown into the Ganges, or persons devoting their own lives by falling under the car of Juggernaut,) they are performed on the principle that what God requires, or what pleases him, or what will secure happiness for ourselves or friends, should be done. It is true that the will of God should be obeyed, whatever sacrifice he may require; their error is in thinking that such sacrifices are required by Him.

How Far all Men are Agreed in Moral Judgments

CHAPTER IV.

HOW FAR ALL MEN ARE AGREED IN THEIR MORAL JUDGMENTS.

First Truths in Morals. As the subject of morals is very extensive, and particular cases may be complicated, and as men are not only ignorant, but prejudiced by the errors received in their education, it is no more wonderful that they should adopt different opinions on these subjects than on other matters. That, however, which is true in regard to every department of human knowledge, is doubtless true in regard to the science of morals. There are certain self-evident truths, which are intuitively perceived by every one who has the exercise of reason, as soon as they are presented to the mind. In regard to these fundamental truths, there has never been any difference of opinion. It is not meant that all men distinctly think of these primary truths in morals; for many are too inattentive, or so much occupied with sensible objects, that they can scarcely be said ever to reflect on the subject of moral duty. But let an act of manifest injustice be performed before their eyes, and among a thousand spectators there will be but one opinion, and but one feeling. If a strong man, for example, violently takes away the property of one weaker than himself, and for no other reason than because he covets it, all men will condemn the act. So, if any one who has received from another great benefits, not only refuses to make any grateful return, but on the contrary, returns evil for good, all men will agree in judging his conduct to be wrong. All intuitively discern that for a ruler to punish the innocent and spare the guilty, is morally wrong. It is not true, in fact, that there is no agreement among men as to the fundamental principles of morals. Their judgments on these points are as uniform as on the axioms of mathematics; as in their agreement that the starry firmament is grand and beautiful; yea, as uniform as concerning the greenness of the grass, or the varied colours of the rainbow.

Locke. Mr. Locke, in his zeal to disprove the existence of innate truths, attempts to render uncertain some of these first truths of morals.

Intuitive judgments. When we go beyond these first principles, we may expect to find men falling into grievous error respecting moral duty; and this often appears in their application of general principles to particular cases. Most men either reason not at all, or reason badly, and draw from sound principles incorrect conclusions. For the most part, they receive implicitly what they have been taught; or they are governed in their opinions by the common sentiment; or they adopt as true what is most for their interest, or most agreeable to their feelings. And as men are often under the influence of feelings or passions which produce perturbation of mind, and so bias the judgment, it is easy to see how errors of judgment respecting moral conduct, in many cases, may spring up. And yet it is true, that there are primary truths in morals, in which all men agree, so soon as they are presented to the mind. As in other cases, by pursuing a course of sophistical reasonings, conclusions may be arrived at which are contradictory to these first principles, and this will produce perplexity; or even a kind of speculative assent may be yielded to such conclusions of ratiocination; but whenever it is necessary to form a practical judgment, the belief of intuitive truths

must prevail. Our assent in these cases is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. Berkeley. Bishop Berkeley thought he had demonstrated that there was no external world; and many others thought there was no flaw in his reasoning: but all these speculative skeptics were, nevertheless, practical believers in the real existence of external objects. Atheistical and infidel philosophers have often endeavoured to prove that there is no intrinsic difference between right and wrong, and some of them probably persuaded themselves that this opinion was true; but these very men, when an act of great injustice towards themselves or friends was committed, could not but feel that it was morally evil; and when they saw an act of disinterested benevolence performed, they could not but approve it as morally good.

Is Conscience same as Understanding?

CHAPTER V.

WHETHER CONSCIENCE IS THE SAME AS THE UNDERSTANDING, OR A FACULTY DIFFERENT FROM AND INDEPENDENT OF IT.

State of the question. SOME have maintained that our moral feelings and judgments are the exercise of a peculiar sense, and that the perceptions and feelings of this sense cannot be referred to the understanding. Such as maintain this theory suppose, also, that the dictates of conscience are infallibly correct, if the mind is in a proper state.

Truths premised. Others have maintained that the dictates of conscience are the judgments of the understanding, in regard to moral duty, and that, of course, an error in the judgment of the understanding must affect the decisions or dictates of conscience. To clear this subject, if possible, from all obscurity and perplexity, I would make the following remarks: The act complex. 1st. The exercise of the moral faculty, or conscience, is not simply an intellectual act; it is complex, including two things—a judgment and an emotion, or feeling of a peculiar kind. As judgment, it is intellectual. 2d. All judgments of the mind, whatever be the subject of them, appertain to the understanding. This comprehensive faculty includes all intellectual acts, whether relating to external objects, mathematical relations, natural beauty and sublimity, or moral duty. So far, therefore, as conscience is a judgment respecting any moral subject, so far it is an exercise of the understanding. We have not one faculty by which we discern physical truths, another by which we judge of mathematical theorems, and another for matters of taste; but all these are the one and the same understanding, exercised on different objects. Accordingly, when moral qualities are the objects of our contemplation, it is not a different faculty from the reason or understanding which thinks and judges, but the same, exercised on other subjects; and the only difference is in the object. Our conclusion therefore is, that so far as conscience is an intellectual act or judgment of the mind, so far it belongs to the understanding.

3d. More than intellectual acts in conscience. But as more is included under the name conscience than a mere intellectual act or judgment, and as this judgment is attended with a peculiar feeling, called moral, and easily distinguished from all other emotions; and as mere emotion or feeling can with no propriety be referred to the reason, therefore conscience is, so far as this is concerned, different from the understanding.

4th. Harmony of mental operations as to morals. If the moral judgments of the mind were from a faculty distinct from the understanding, and often differing from it, the harmony of the mental operations would be destroyed. While reason led to one conclusion, conscience might dictate the contrary. And upon this theory, conscience must always be correct, unless the faculty be morbid.

How far conscience is of reason. All experience and history show that men may act under the influence of an erroneous conscience. The dictates of conscience are always in conformity with the practical judgments of reason. When these are erroneous, conscience is erroneous. The

conclusion therefore is that conscience is not a distinct faculty from reason, so far as it consists in a judgment of the quality of moral acts. Reason or understanding is the genus; the judgments of conscience are the species. Reason has relation to all intelligible subjects; the moral faculty is conversant about moral qualities alone.

Moral Obligation

CHAPTER VII.

MORAL OBLIGATION.

Obligation. MUCH has been written to explain the true ground of moral obligation. But the subject has been rather darkened and perplexed than elucidated, by these comments. It is always so when men undertake to explain that which is so clear that it needs no explanation.

Included in every idea of morality. Every idea of morality includes in it that of moral obligation. A moral act is one which ought to be performed; an immoral act, is one which ought not to be performed. As soon as we get the conception of a moral act, we receive with it the idea of moral obligation. It would be a contradiction to say that any act was moral, and yet that there was no obligation to perform it. What a moral act is. One of the best definitions which can be given of a moral act, is that it is an act which we are bound to perform, and of an immoral act, that it is one which ought not to be done. The more clearly we see any thing to be moral, the more sensibly we feel ourselves under a moral obligation to perform it. This being a matter of common intuition, and universal experience, all that is necessary to convince us of its truth, is to bring it distinctly before our minds. There is therefore no need to look any further for the grounds and reasons of moral obligation, than to the morality of the act itself, as this idea is involved in every conception of morality.

Why we are obliged to do right-not to be asked. The following citation from Dr. Price's work on Morals, is in accordance with the view just given: "From the account given of obligation, it appears how absurd it is to inquire, what obliges us to practise virtue? as if obligation were no part of the idea of virtue, but something adventitious and foreign to it: that is, as if what was our duty might not be our duty; as if it might not be true, that what is fit to do, we ought to do, and that what we ought to do, we are obliged to do. To ask why we are obliged to practise virtue, to abstain from what is wicked, or perform what is just, is the very same as to ask why we are obliged to do what we are obliged to do. It is not possible to avoid wondering at those who have so unaccountably embarrassed themselves, on a subject that one would think was attended with so little difficulty: and who, because they cannot find any thing in virtue and duty themselves, which can induce and oblige us to pay a regard to them-fly to self-love, and maintain that from hence alone are derived all inducement and obligation." Answer of Archdeacon Paley. Dr. Paley commences his second book on Moral Philosophy, by an inquiry into the nature of moral obligation. He asks, "Why am I obliged to keep my word?" and mentions several answers which would be given by different persons, and which he says all coincide. But he goes on to say that all the answers leave the matter short; for the inquirer may turn round upon his teacher with a second question, "Why am I obliged to do what is right, to act agreeably to the fitness of things, to conform to reason, nature or truth, to promote the public good, or to do the will of God?"

Insufficient. All this, it appears to us, is fitted to mystify as plain a subject as ever engaged the thoughts of a rational mind, and is designed to remove the true ground of moral obligation, and reduce all such obligation to the single principle of self-love, or the tendency of an act to promote individual happiness. The inquiry unreasonable. Suppose then, after Dr. Paley had made all obligation to rest on the ground that the performance of a good act promotes our eternal happiness, the inquirer should again ask, "Why am I bound to perform that which will promote my happiness?" The question, indeed, would be unreasonable, because all men are agreed that happiness is a good; but is it not equally unreasonable, when an action is seen to be virtuous, or morally right, to ask "Why am I obliged to do it?" The moment we see a thing to be morally right, the sense of obligation is complete, and all further inquiring for reasons why I am obliged to do right is as absurd as would be inquiring for reasons why I should pursue happiness.

Intuitive certainty is ultimate. Where we have intuitive certainty of any thing it is foolish to seek for other reasons. If there is any thing clear in the view of a rational mind, it is this: that virtue should be practised, that what is right should be done. But still further to perplex this plain subject, Dr. Paley has undertaken to inform us what is meant by obligation. "A man," says he, "is said to be obliged when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the will of another."

Paley's definition. This is, indeed, a very extraordinary definition. The motive, he says, must be violent; but what should hinder that a motive not violent should create an obligation according to its force? The main error of this definition is that it confounds moral obligation with other motives of an entirely different kind. The obligation of which he speaks, is created by the will or command of another. The law of a tyrant requiring his subjects to do what is evidently wrong cannot create a moral obligation. A rational being may be urged by the threats of a tyrant, on the universal principle of self-love, and this force may, by an abuse of terms, be called an obligation; but according to the common usage of the language, when a man is said to be under obligation to perform an act, we mean that he is morally bound. But whether the operation of any violent motive, resulting from the will of another, may be said to oblige a man or not, the main inquiry is, what is the ground of moral obligation? The difference between a moral obligation and other motives which may oblige should be kept in view.

Paley's account of obligation. He then returns to the question, "Why am I obliged to keep my word?" and applies the preceding definition of the nature of obligation, and gives the following answer: "Because I am urged to do so by a violent motive (namely, the expectation of being after this life rewarded if I do, or punished if I do not), resulting from the command of another (namely, of God)." He goes on to say, "When I first turned my attention to moral speculations, an air of mystery seemed to hang over the whole subject, which arose, I believe, from hence; that I supposed with many authors whom I had consulted that to be obliged to do a thing, was different from being induced to do it; and that the obligation to practise virtue, and to do what is justice, is quite another thing and of another kind from the obligation which a soldier is under to obey his officer, or a servant his master, or any of the ordinary obligations of human life."

Erroneous. We cannot but be of the opinion that Dr. Paley has here made a radical mistake, which it is exceedingly important to consider, since, unhappily for sound morals, his system is so much employed in the instruction of youth. The theory of morals, of which the above principle is a part, is no other than this: that the only difference between virtue and vice, consists in their tendency,

respectively, to promote or hinder the happiness of the individual; Paley's scheme of morals. so that if a man could persuade himself that no evil would arise to him from telling a lie, he would be under no obligation to speak the truth. It is a scheme of morals which obliterates all intrinsic difference between virtue and vice, and makes the one preferable to the other on no other account than its tendency to promote individual happiness in the future world.

Difficulties of the hypothesis. If a man does not believe in a future world, he can, according to this theory, feel no obligation to keep his word. We believe, on the contrary, that moral obligation is felt by the atheist, and that he cannot divest himself of it. When men are tempted by some strong motive to deviate from the truth, and yet are enabled to resist the temptation, there is in most cases no distinct consideration of any future good to be gained by it, but the man feels himself under an obligation to do that which is in itself right. The conflict is not between a greater and a less happiness, but between the prospect of happiness and moral obligation. On this subject, the appeal must be to the common judgment of men. And we are persuaded that this confounding of moral obligation with motives of another kind, is a radical defect in Dr. Paley's system, which-lying at the foundation-vitiates the whole, and has already been the cause of great evil to society.

True doctrine stated. The true doctrine is, that virtue and vice are distinct and opposite, and that when we know any act to be right, we are bound-aside from all considerations of self-interest-to perform it. The opposite doctrine. Dr. Paley maintains that "we can be obliged to nothing, unless we are to lose or gain something by it, for nothing else can be a 'violent motive' to us. And as we should not be obliged to obey the laws or the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other depended on our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practise virtue, or to obey the command of God."

Virtue thus made mercenary. According to this view, unless a man is persuaded that he shall gain something by keeping his word, he is under no obligation to do it. Even if God should clearly make known his will, and lay upon him his command, he is under no obligation to obey, unless certain that he shall receive benefit by so doing. This is, indeed, to make virtue a mercenary thing, and reduce all motives to a level. And as self-love, or the desire of happiness, is the only rational motive, and all men possess this in a sufficient degree of strength, the only conceivable difference between the good and the bad, consists in the superior sagacity which the one has above the other to discern what will most contribute to happiness. And if what we call vice or sin could be made to contribute to happiness, then it would change its nature and become virtue.

Paley's definition obscure. The definition of obligation, given by Dr. Paley, upon his own principles, is unnecessarily encumbered with what adds nothing to its import. Why should the "violent motive" result from the command of another? The command of another ought to have no influence, except as obedience or disobedience will be attended with loss or gain. It would, therefore, have been more simple and intelligible to say at once, what is certainly implied, that the only motive which can oblige us to be virtuous, is the expectation of the happiness to be derived from such conduct in the future world. The honestum and the utile. Cicero, in his work "De Finibus," says that those men who confounded the honestum with the utile, deserved to be banished from society. The result of the whole scheme is, that there is no such thing as moral excellence, abstractly considered; that the only good in the universe is happiness; and that other things, among which virtue is included, are good only as related to this end. If this is true, the moral attributes of God have no intrinsic

excellence; they are all merged in his infinite felicity. Surely this view is not suited to increase our reverence for the Supreme Being.

Appeal to primary ideas. But every man who carefully examines into his own primary ideas of morality, will find that he has a sense of right and wrong, independent of all considerations of personal happiness, or its loss. This distinction is too deeply engraven on the mind to be erased by any process of reasoning.

Moral Obligation

CHAPTER VIII. THE SUPREMACY OF CONSCIENCE

Conscience must be obeyed. THAT the dictates of conscience should be obeyed, is one of the most evident perceptions of the human mind. No matter how much might be gained by going contrary to conscience, every honest mind has the same judgment, that duty should be done. If it is plain that a certain act-such as confessing the truth of the gospel-is a duty, and we are convinced that no. thing but suffering will ensue from performing it; yet the judgment of the impartial mind is, that no prospect of pain or loss can ever justify us in denying the truth, or in doing any thing else that we know to be wrong. On this point, there is no room for reasoning. The judgment that conscience should be obeyed, is intuitive: all men must acknowledge it, unless they belie the clear convictions of their own reason.

Admitted maxim. That conscience should be obeyed, that duty should be performed at every risk, are maxims which must receive the assent of all who are capable of understanding them. On the subject of the supremacy of conscience, the following quotation from Dr. Chalmers, is very much to our purpose:

Chalmers. "In every human heart there is a faculty-not, it may be, having the actual power, but having the just and rightful pretension to act as judge and master over the whole of human conduct. Other propensities may have too much sway, but the moral propensity-if I may so term it-never can; for, to have the presiding sway in all our concerns, is just that which properly and legitimately belongs to it. A man under anger, may be too strongly prompted to deeds of retaliation, or under sensuality may be too strongly prompted to indulgence, or under avarice, be too closely addicted to the pursuit of wealth, or even under friendship be too strongly inclined to partiality; but he never can, under conscience, be too strongly inclined to be as he ought, and to do as he ought. We may say of a watch, that its main-spring is too powerful, but we would never say that a regulator was too powerful."..... "And neither do we urge the proposition that conscience has in every instance the actual direction of human affairs, for this were in the face of all experience. It is not that every man obeys her dictates, but that every man feels that he Ought to obey them. These dictates are often, in life and practice, disregarded; so that conscience is not the sovereign de facto. Conscience is sovereign.Still there is a voice within the hearts of all which asserts that conscience is the sovereign de jure: that to her belongs the command rightfully, even though she do not possess it actually.".... "All that we affirm is, that if conscience prevail over the other principles, then every man is led, by the very make and mechanism of his internal economy, to feel, that it is as it ought to be; or if these others prevail over conscience, that it is not as it ought to be.".... "When stating the supremacy of conscience, in the sense that we have explained it, we but state what all men feel; and our only argument in proof of the assertion is-our only argument can be, an appeal to the experience of all men."

Inward verdict. These sentiments will find a response in every honest mind. However often we disobey the voice of this monitor, we always have the feeling of self-condemnation accompanying

our disobedience.

Is Obeying Conscience always right?

CHAPTER IX.

WHETHER WE ALWAYS DO RIGHT BY OBEYING THE DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE?

Difficulty of the problem. THIS is one of the most perplexing questions in the science of morals. Many are of opinion that all that is necessary to render an action good is that the agent act agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience. This may be considered a vulgar opinion, usually taken up without much consideration. But there is an opinion, near akin to this, which has been advocated by some of the greatest men of the age; namely, that men are not responsible for their opinions or belief. It is thought that the adoption of this as a maxim is the only effectual method of putting an end to the bitter animosities and controversies among the advocates of different creeds.

Source of error. It is not wonderful that they who make the moral sense, in a sort, infallible, and the ultimate standard of right and wrong, should hold that men cannot go astray if they will honestly listen to the voice of conscience, and obey her dictates.

Error of understanding may affect moral judgments. But as we have shown that conscience is the judgment of the mind respecting duty, and as no man's knowledge is perfect or infallible, it follows, therefore, that so far as there is error in the understanding in relation to matters of duty, just so far the conscience will be misguided. The question at issue, therefore, is whether an action, wrong in itself, can be considered as a good and virtuous action if the agent believes that it is right. Otherwise truth would be needless. If the affirmative were true, then the discovery of truth would be of no value, for obviously upon this principle error is just as good as truth. But as soon would we believe that darkness is as good as light to direct us in the way which we wish to travel. Again, this theory supposes that a man is under no law but his own opinion, or the dictates of conscience; Opinion would be law that, therefore, which is a sin in one man may be a duty to another in precisely the same external circumstances and relations; which would be to confound all moral distinctions. This theory would go to sanction every form of religion, however corrupt and superstitious; False religion would be right and to make the vilest immoralities virtuous; for there can be no doubt that the votaries of idolatry, in their most cruel and abominable rites, follow the dictates of an erring conscience. When the heathen sacrifice to demons, and when the victim is a human being, or even a first-born son, there is nothing wrong, for all these acts of worship are performed in obedience to conscience. Every species of persecution and the Inquisition itself may be justified on this principle. Instead, therefore, of putting an end to all animosity, it would bring back, in all their horrors, the days of persecution for conscience' sake. On this subject, again, our appeal must be to the unbiassed judgment of mankind; and we think the verdict will be, that error which might have been avoided, and ignorance, which is not invincible, do not excuse. Avoidable and unavoidable. The knowledge necessary to duty is within the reach of every man, were he disposed sincerely to seek after it. But it is a truth which is of importance on this subject, that one false step leads to another; and though a man who has adopted fundamental error, labours under a kind of necessity to do wrong, yet this does not excuse him, because he ought to have exercised

more diligence and impartiality in seeking for the truth, and is justly liable to all the evil consequences resulting from this neglect.

Duty of correcting errors. Suppose a man to have been educated in a wrong system of religion and morals; he is responsible, because, when arrived at the years of maturity, he should have brought the opinions received by education under an honest examination. The more difficult it is to divest ourselves of prejudices thus imbibed, as it were, with the mother's milk, the more necessary is it that, under the influence of a sincere love of truth, we should, with impartiality, diligence, and resolution, endeavour to do so. It is no proof that such a course is not the solemn duty of man, that few ever perform it. The prevalence of error in the world, is very much owing to the neglect of this duty. This neglect arises from culpable indolence, from a desire to remain in agreement with the multitude or with our parents and teachers, from aversion to the truth and an unwillingness to deny ourselves, and incur the inconvenience and persecution which an avowal of the truth would bring upon us.. But none of these reasons will justify us in adhering to opinions which are detrimental to ourselves and others, or contrary to our moral obligations. It is true, if a man's conscience dictates a certain action, he is morally bound to obey; but if that action is in itself wrong, he commits sin in performing it, nevertheless. He who is under fundamental error, is in a sad dilemma. Do what he will, he sins. If he disobey conscience, he knowingly sins; doing what he believes to be wrong; and a man never can be justified for doing what he believes to be wrong, even though it should turn out to be right. And if he obey conscience, performing an act which is in itself wrong, he sins; because he complies not with the law under which he is placed. It may be asked, "How can a man be responsible in such circumstances, when he is under a necessity of doing wrong?" The seat of responsibility in such a case. We are responsible for suffering ourselves to be brought into such a state; we are responsible for our ignorance of the truth. Hence we see how important the duty of seeking after truth with untiring diligence, and honest impartiality. The same necessity is found to arise from forming bad habits, and cherishing evil passions. The heart in which envy to another has been indulged until it has become habitual, cannot exercise kind and brotherly affections to that person; but this is no excuse. The fault may be traced far back, but guilt is attached to every act of envy, however inveterate the habit. If this were not so, the greater the sinner, the less his responsibility.

Objection, that belief is involuntary. The objection to making a man responsible for his opinions, is, that his belief does not depend upon his will, but results necessarily from the evidence existing before the mind, at any moment. This is true; but we may turn our minds away from the evidence which would have produced a conviction of the truth. And this is not all; there may be such a state of mind, that evidence of a certain kind cannot be perceived. Depravity produces blindness of mind, in regard to the beauty and excellency of moral objects. But every man ought to be free from such a state or temper of mind, as produces distorted or erroneous views. Surely, moral depravity cannot be an excuse for erroneous opinions. All actions proceed from certain principles; if, therefore, the action is wrong, because of the corrupt principle, the burden of culpability must be rolled back upon the principle, or state of the soul, which sends forth evil acts, as a poisoned fountain sends forth deleterious streams.

Metaphysical reasoning, however, rather perplexes and obscures than elucidates such points. Let us hold fast by the plain principles of common sense, and appeal to the common judgment of mankind; Avoidable ignorance does not excuse. and the decision will be, that ignorance or error

which might have been avoided, never excuses from blame. The same is true of all evil habits and inveterate passions, which have been voluntarily or heedlessly contracted. The whole course of a moral agent must be taken together; his moral acts are complicated, and intimately connected. They form a web, in which one thread is connected with another, and one serves to give strength to another. If we honestly consult our conscience, we feel guilty when we have done wrong, even though we did it ignorantly; because we ought not to have been in ignorance.

What constitutes a right action. Two things, therefore, are necessary, in order to determine that an action is right: first, that the state of mind of the agent be such as it ought to be; and secondly, that the action be in conformity with the law under which we are placed; for the very idea of morality supposes us to be under a moral law.

Duty not fulfilled by obeying erroneous conscience. While, then, we cannot do better than obey conscience; yet if conscience is erroneous, we do not fulfil our duty by such obedience, but may commit grievous sin. For, following the dictates of conscience, is only one circumstance essential to a good action. When we do wrong while obeying the dictates of conscience, the error does not consist in that obedience, but in not following the right rule, with which rule the accountable moral agent should be acquainted.

Is there a Law to judge morals?

CHAPTER X.

WHETHER THERE IS IN THE MIND A LAW OR RULE, BY WHICH MAN JUDGES OF THE MORALITY OF PARTICULAR ACTIONS?

Mental rules are objects of consciousness. IF such a rule existed in the mind prior to the observation of particular acts of a moral nature, we should be conscious of it: no thing of the nature of a law or rule can have existence in the mind, without the knowledge of the mind itself. The actual process of the mind in moral judgments. There seems to be a common mistake as to the process of the mind in regard to general principles. It seems to be thought that in order to judge whether an action be right or wrong, there must be something like a general rule or law, which the mind applies, as the workman does his rule, to ascertain whether the quality of the action be good or bad. But as we are conscious of no such process as the application of a general rule, there seems to be no evidence whatever of its existence. The real process of the mind is very simple. When a moral action is viewed, if its nature is simple and palpable, the mind intuitively perceives its quality, and is conscious of no other mental process. Suppose a man, created as Adam was, in the full possession of his rational faculties: until some occasion offered, to elicit its exercise, he would not be conscious of any moral faculty or feeling. But suppose an act of flagrant injustice to be perpetrated before him, he would at once have his moral faculty brought into exercise. He would see that the action had in it a moral turpitude, that it ought not to have been done, and that the agent deserved to be punished. So long as this was the only moral act observed or thought of, there would be in the mind nothing but the judgment, with the accompanying feeling that such an act, and of course every other act of the same kind, was evil. As such an observer would, however, soon observe a multitude of acts, of different kinds, which were judged to be good or bad, a general rule or law would be obtained, by degrees, out of these particulars. The process of the mind, in all cases, is from particulars to generals, and the tendency in the mind to put into classes those things which resemble each other, exists also in regard to moral actions. After observing a great number of acts, of different kinds, all of which are morally good or evil, these particulars are classified, and form a general rule or law; and when a new act is observed, it is referred to its proper class. But how can we know an action to be good or bad, without a rule with which to compare it, in the first instance? The answer is, that it is as easy to conceive of a faculty by which we can at once perceive the moral character of an act, as of the power of judging of the rectitude of a general rule.

Whether the moral faculty has the rule in itself. There is a sense in which it may be said, that reason, or the moral faculty having the power of discerning the moral quality of actions, has the rule in itself. If this is all that is intended by a general rule of right and wrong in the mind, there can be no objection to it. This is saying no more than that the mind has a faculty by which it judges intuitively of many moral acts, as soon as they are observed. The idea may be thus illustrated: here is a straight line, as soon as I see it, I perceive it to be straight; there is a crooked line, which

at once I perceive to be crooked. There is no need of a rule in the mind, by the application of which I know that the one is straight, and the other crooked. The quality of the lines is seen at once. So of many moral actions, the moment the mind apprehends them, their moral character is perceived. A case stated. Here are some boys going to school. I observe one, who is large and strong, forcibly taking from another, who is small and weak, some fruit which the latter has with much pains gathered for a sick mother. I need no general rule to guide my judgment. I need only to know the real circumstances of the action. That a large and strong boy should by force take away from one weaker than himself, property to which he has no right, and to which the other has a right, is so evidently immoral, that every mind sees the evil at once.

General law of morals from particular acts. The general law or rule of morals is therefore made up by the observation and classification of particular acts; just as the general law of gravity is formed by observation of particular facts.

Analogy of other generalizations. All our knowledge relates originally to particular cases; and general ideas and general rules and laws, are formed by a process of the mind, which may be called generalization or classification.

Moral Feeling with Moral Judgment

CHAPTER XI. THE MORAL FEELING WHICH ACCOMPANIES EVERY MORAL JUDGMENT.

Feelings of approbation and disapprobation. WHETHER our judgments and feelings are distinct and separate mental exercises, or whether what we call feeling or emotion is only an idea of a more vivid kind, is a question which we need not discuss, as the decision of it is not necessary to our purpose. All men make a distinction between acts which are purely intellectual, and those exercises of mind called emotions; and no practical error can arise from observing this distinction-whether philosophically correct or not. In every case where a moral object or relation comes before the mind, there is a feeling of approbation or disapprobation, according to the moral character of the object, of which we are immediately conscious. This approbation or disapprobation will not be equal in all cases, but exceedingly different in degree. While some moral actions elicit, when perceived, a very slight degree of approbation or disapprobation, others excite strong emotion; the disapproval arising to indignation, and the approval to admiration. The idea of merit. In every instance where a good act is observed, there is a feeling of esteem for the agent, as well as approbation of the act. A disposition, too, is felt to bestow some reward on the person who performs a good action. If we see a man, at the imminent risk of his own life, plunge into the sea to save a stranger who has fallen overboard, we approve the action, and feel that he deserves a reward. We therefore call it a meritorious action; for the simple idea of merit is that which deserves a reward. The vindictory feeling. On the other hand, when we are witnesses of a wicked act of an enormous kind, as, for example, a man murdering a good parent or a kind benefactor, without any provocation, but instigated by avarice or resentment-we feel instantaneously a degree of disapprobation which may properly be called indignation. This feeling would be accompanied by a strong desire that condign punishment should be inflicted on the wicked perpetrator of such a deed. If there were no other means of executing justice, we should feel disposed to aid in punishing the culprit; and the idea of such a person escaping without punishment, is painful to the impartial mind, and revolting to the moral feelings.

Degrees in moral emotions. These moral emotions are, however, of very different degrees of intensity in different persons, and in the same person at different periods of his life. Persons who have been long accustomed to see atrocious crimes committed, lose in time their moral sensibility, and become accustomed to scenes of blood and robbery. In proportion as the minds of men are enlightened by the truth, and their hearts upright, will be the sensibility of the moral faculty. But by committing sin, as well as by observing it, the moral sensibilities are blunted. This want of right feeling in the conscience is what is called a "seared conscience," which expression is borrowed from the effect produced on any part of a living body, by the repeated application of a heated iron. The result is, that, by degrees, the skin thickens, and the sensibility of the seared part is lost, or rendered obtuse.

Emotion in regard to acts as our own. Besides this feeling of approbation or disapprobation of moral acts, good or evil, there is a peculiar emotion, in relation to moral acts, according to their

nature, when performed by ourselves. In this case, the emotion is much more vivid than when we contemplate the same action as performed by another. When a person is conscious of having performed a truly good action, and from the proper motives, he experiences an emotion of pleasure, of a very peculiar and exalted nature. For this emotion, we have no distinctive name; it may be called the pleasure of a good or approving conscience. It must not be confounded with self-complacency, or a proud opinion of our own worth, which may also arise from the performance of a meritorious action. The feeling of which mention has been made, is a simple emotion arising in the mind, from the principles of the human constitution, upon the performance of a good action. One reason why it has not been more noticed is, that it has no distinctive name. The emotion experienced on the performance of a wicked action is well known to every one. It has a distinctive appellation-remorse. It is a feeling distinguishable from all others, and more intolerable than any other species of pain. When violent, it often drives the unhappy subject of it to the most desperate acts. It is like a scorpion, stinging the soul in its tenderest part. No language can exaggerate the misery of a soul abandoned to the torture of this feeling. And though in time it may seem to be allayed by forgetfulness of the crime, yet when any circumstance or association brings the evil action distinctly before the conscience, the torment is renewed. Thus, acts of iniquity committed in heedless gayety, often produce sensible remorse in the time of solitude and reflection; and the sins of youth embitter old age. This feeling often accompanies the sinner to his times of decline, and is the pain which most annoys him on his bed of death. As the feeling accompanies the guilty unto the last moment of their earthly existence, there is much reason to think that it will cause the bitterest anguish of a future state.

Belief in God, Operation of Conscience

CHAPTER XII.

BELIEF IN GOD, AS CONNECTED WITH THE OPERATION OF CONSCIENCE. The question stated. THE question is, whether an atheist is completely divested of the feeling of moral obligation. To those who suppose that speculative atheism is impossible, this question will appear irrelevant; for it would be useless to inquire what would be the effect of a state of mind which never can exist. The atheist perceives right and wrong. As, however, the evidences of the actual existence of atheism are as strong as those of most other fundamental errors; and as the doctrine of certain ideas being impressed on the mind in its creation (on which the opinion that men could not become atheists was founded), is now generally exploded, it may be here taken as admitted that there are atheists in the world, The question proposed is therefore a proper subject for consideration. Bishop Warburton in his "Divine Legation of Moses," seems to adopt the opinion, that a belief in the being of God, is requisite to the exercise of conscience, or the sense of moral obligation. But his reasonings on the subject are by no means satisfactory. If we may refer to the experience of the atheist himself, he will assure us, that he perceives the difference between right and wrong, as plainly as others, and that he is conscious of being under a moral obligation to pursue a virtuous course. This, however, they consider an instinctive or constitutional principle, which should be obeyed, just as our appetites and other natural propensities should be obeyed.

Intuitive perceptions not dependent on other knowledge. If there are intuitive perceptions of moral relations, when actions of a certain kind are presented to the view of the rational mind, then it is certain that conscience may and will operate, whatever may be the opinions of the person on other subjects. No one, when he contemplates an act of flagrant injustice, is conscious of a reference to the existence of a moral Governor, prior to his moral judgment of the quality of the action. The perception of its moral evil is as immediate as that of the colour of the sky, or the grass. Objection and answer. But how can a man feel a moral obligation, unless he admits that there is a superior to whom he is bound? how can he feel himself under a law, unless there is a law-giver? The answer is, that this part of the human constitution furnishes a conclusive argument in favour of the being of God. We have a law written within us, and from the sense of obligation to obey this law, we cannot escape. The great Creator has not left himself without a witness, in the breast of every man. It is possible that a man may be so abandoned as to believe in lies, and that he may come to disbelieve in the God that made and supports him. But he cannot obliterate the law written on his heart; he cannot divest himself of the conviction that certain actions are morally wrong; nor can he prevent the stings of remorse, when he commits sins of an enormous kind Men may, indeed, spin out refined metaphysical theories, and come to the conclusion that there is no difference between virtue and vice, and that these distinctions are the result of education. But let some one commit a flagrant act of injustice toward themselves, and their practical judgment will give the lie to their theoretical opinion.

Moral distinctions cannot be reasoned away. As those speculatists who argue that there is no external world, will avoid running against a post, or into the fire, as carefully as other men; so they who endeavour to reason themselves into the belief that virtue and vice are mere notions, generated by education, cannot, nevertheless, avoid perceiving that some actions are base, unjust, or ungrateful, and consequently to be disapproved of, whether committed by themselves or others.

Conscience cannot be destroyed. The inferences from what has been said are, that by no arts or course of conduct can men so eradicate the moral faculty, that there shall no longer be any sense of right and wrong. And again, it is evident that, although the belief of the existence of God is not necessary to the operation of conscience, yet from the existence of this faculty the existence of God may be inferred.

Dictates of conscience modified by belief in God. And finally, that although the atheist cannot destroy the moral faculty, yet the firmer the belief of God's existence, and the clearer the knowledge of his attributes, the more distinct and forcible will be the dictates of conscience. More over, while the blindness of atheism continues there will of course be no perception of the moral duties which arise out of our relation to the great Creator; and thus the largest and most important class of moral actions will be out of view. And this is true, to a great degree in regard to the practical atheist, who forgets God habitually; he feels very little sense of obligation to worship and serve him.

Moral Agency, What's Necessary?

CHAPTER XIII.

MORAL AGENCY, AND WHAT IS NECESSARY TO IT. The question to be determined by experience. AS actions of moral agents are the proper and only objects of moral approbation or disapprobation, it becomes necessary to institute an inquiry into the nature of moral agency; or into what are the constituents of a moral agent. The decision of this question must depend entirely on experience, and can never be determined by reasoning on abstract principles. The process is simply this: we contemplate a great variety of acts, which by the moral faculty we judge to possess a moral character. We next examine the circumstances in which those acts were performed, and we conclude those things which are found in all of them, to be necessary to moral agency. Or, to render the examination more simple, we may suppose some one condition of the action to be absent, and then another, and then viewing the action as thus changed in its circumstances, we may bring it before the mind, and if the moral quality of the act appear unchanged, we conclude that that which has been removed from it is no essential circumstance in moral agency. But if the change in the circumstances of the action, leads all men to take an entirely different view of its nature, then we conclude that this circumstance is essential to moral agency. Instance touching moral agency. To illustrate this principle, let us suppose the following case: If we see a man suddenly, without any apparent provocation, raise his hand and strike another, believing that it was freely done, by a man *compos mentis*, we feel a strong disapprobation of the act, as immoral and deserving punishment. But if on inquiry it is ascertained that the person who committed the assault was utterly destitute of reason, we may blame his keepers or friends who left him at liberty, but we no longer feel any moral disapprobation of the act. For it is the intuitive judgment of all persons, that a man destitute of reason is not a moral agent, nor accountable for his actions, whatever evil may be produced. We consider such a man as exactly in the same predicament as a wild beast which does an injury. This is the common judgment of men; for in all courts of justice, when a man is arraigned for an assault, if it can be proved that he was a maniac at the time, he is acquitted, and all men approve the judicial decision which exempts him from punishment. Exercise of reason indispensable. Hence it is apparent that the exercise of reason is essential to moral agency. We may bring before our minds a thousand acts, under different circumstances, but all performed by agents without reason, and no man can believe that such actions are of a moral nature, or of good or ill desert. No objection lies, from the case of infants. It may seem to be an objection to this broad assertion that there are some who entertain the opinion that infants are moral agents from their birth, and commit actual sin. But these persons do not suppose that an irrational being can be a moral agent, but they think that infants have an obscure exercise of reason. Their mistake is not in the general principle which has been laid down, but in the fact that infants have reason in exercise.

Another instance. Again, let the case supposed be varied. Let it be that the person committing the assault had the full exercise of reason, but that the stroke was not voluntary, but the effect of a spasmodic, diseased, action of the muscles; or that the hand was moved by another. Every one, at

once, judges that the person giving the stroke, whatever he might be in other matters, was no moral agent in this assault. It was a mere physical operation, and not proceeding from the will, could not be a moral act. Voluntary action necessary. Here we have a second circumstance or characteristic, essential to moral agency, namely, that the action be voluntary. No involuntary action can be of a moral nature.

Liberty and voluntariness. Some distinguish the liberty of the agent from voluntariness, but to us they appear to be the same, or to involve one another. If an act is voluntary, it is free; and if free, it must be voluntary. The highest conceivable degree of liberty in a dependent being, is the power of doing as he wills or pleases. But as this subject has by metaphysical controversy been involved in perplexity, something may be said hereafter, respecting what is called the freedom of the will.

Omission may be culpable. When it is said that the actions of moral agents are the only proper objects of moral approbation or disapprobation, two qualifications of the assertion must be taken into view. The first is, that the omission to act when duty calls, is as much an object of disapprobation as a wicked action. Should we see a number of persons sailing on a river in a boat, and while we surveyed them, should a child near them fall into the river, and no hand be stretched out to rescue it from drowning, we could not help feeling a strong disapprobation of the conduct of the persons who were near enough to render the necessary help. If, however, it should be ascertained that one or more of the persons were fast bound and pinioned, so that they could not possibly stretch out their hands to rescue the child, we should exempt them from all blame: for no man is bound to do what is physically impossible. Blame is referred to the intent. The second qualification of the statement is, that when we disapprove an external act, we always refer the blame to the motive or intention. But if we have evidence that the agent possesses a nature or disposition which will lead him often or uniformly to perpetrate the same act when the occasion shall occur, we not only censure the motive, but extend our moral disapprobation to the disposition or evil nature, lying behind.

Acts under control. If we suppose the case of an agent acted on by a superior power, so that the nature and direction of the act depend not upon the agent himself, but upon the power by which he is governed, we shall consider the immediate agent as not free, and the acts brought forth, as not properly his acts, but those of the governing power. A demoniac or person possessed by an evil spirit who had power to direct his thoughts and govern his actions, would not be an accountable agent.

Divine efficiency in human acts. There are some who maintain that all human actions proceed from God, as their first cause, and that man can act only as he is acted upon. Upon this theory, it does not appear how man can be an accountable moral agent; for though his actions may be voluntary, and performed in the exercise of reason, yet as he does not originate them, they can scarcely be considered his own.

Moral faculty necessary to moral agency. We will now suppose the case of a man possessing reason, freedom, and will, and originating his own actions, but destitute of a moral faculty, or unable to perceive a difference between right and wrong. Can such a person be considered a moral agent? We think not. That being-how much soever of reason he may possess-who has no perception of moral relations, and no feeling of moral obligation, would be incapable of a moral law, or of performing moral acts. But the case is an imaginary one. There are, I believe, none, who

possess reason, and yet are destitute of all moral sense; but though we conceive of the intellect of a dog or an elephant increased to any degree, yet, as being destitute of a moral faculty, we do not regard them as moral agents.

Man a Moral Agent

CHAPTER XIV.

MAN A MORAL AGENT. The question stated. VERY few have entertained the opinion that man is a mere machine, governed by physical influences. It will not be necessary, therefore, to occupy time in refuting an opinion contrary to reason and universal experience.

Fatalism. But there are many who entertain the opinion that man is the creature of necessity; that in the circumstances in which each man is placed, he could not be different from what he is. This theory of fatalism is plausible, because a slight observation of the history of man shows that the moral characters of most men are formed by the education which they receive, and by the sentiments and conduct of those with whom they associate. The theory of circumstances. It has, therefore, been maintained-and the opinion has in our day been industriously propagated-that man is not a free and accountable agent; that he is what he is, by the operation of causes over which he has no control; that no man should be censured or punished for his conduct, since those who censure him, if placed in the same circumstances, would act in the same manner. In short, that no man is responsible for his conduct; because his actions-whether good or bad-are the effect of necessary causes. It is held by the same persons that the only possible method of meliorating the condition of the human race, is to educate them in such a manner as to avoid those prejudices which have hitherto proved inimical to the happiness of men; Socialistic scheme. and to remodel society, rejecting those institutions which are supposed to cause most of the misery which is found in the world. This theory has not only been embraced with confidence, but attempts have been made to carry it out in practice. Societies founded on the principles above stated, have been formed both in Great Britain and America. But thus far the experiment has been attended with small success. Still the advocates of the Social system, as it is called, have not been discouraged. They are instituting new societies upon an improved plan, and the most sanguine hopes are entertained by those concerned in these new associations, that a far better and happier state of society than any hitherto enjoyed, is practicable and will be realized.

Consciousness declares man free. In answer to all arguments brought to prove that man is not a free moral agent, we appeal to the consciousness of every rational being. No arguments, however plausible, are of any force against intuitive first principles. Whether we can or cannot answer arguments against liberty, we know that we are free. In regard to some actions, we feel that we are under a moral obligation to perform them, and in regard to others, that we ought not to perform them, and if we are induced to violate this obligation, we feel that we are to be blamed, and are deserving of punishment. This consciousness not deceptive. Some philosophers have been persuaded by their reasonings that man is not free, but under necessity in all his actions. But as they could not deny that every man is intimately conscious of being free, they have adopted the opinion that man's feeling of liberty is a deceptive feeling, and contrary to fact. A far more reasonable conclusion is that there must be some error in the reasoning from which the conclusion that man is not a free agent, is deduced. When a chain of reasoning brings us to conclusions

repugnant to our intuitive convictions, it is certain that there is a flaw in some link of it, whether we can discover it or not. We are as certain that we are free, as we can be; a revelation from heaven could not render us more so. As in other instances where speculative men have been led to adopt conclusions at variance with self-evident principles, so here, men act, in common life, in conformity with the common notions of mankind. They can by no effort divest themselves of this assent to certain fundamental truths.

Man not under a Fatal Necessity

CHAPTER XV.

MAN NOT UNDER A FATAL NECESSITY.

Arguments of Fatalism. ALTHOUGH our consciousness of freedom ought to satisfy us, whatever reasonings to the contrary may be adduced; yet it may be useful to inquire whether, indeed, there are any arguments of force against the free agency of man. It is certain that one truth cannot be in opposition to any other truth. If, therefore, the deductions of reason and the evident principles of common sense and experience seem to stand in opposition to one another, it must arise from some misapprehension, or abuse of terms. As our understanding is given us to enable us to apprehend truth, no proposition clearly perceived to be true, whether intuitively or by ratiocination, can possibly be opposed to any other truth.

Notion of Liberty and Necessity. It becomes necessary, therefore, in the first place, to have distinct ideas of what is meant by liberty, and what by necessity. Here the reference must be not to metaphysical reasoning, but to the common judgment and clear conviction of all impartial men. It has already been stated that that liberty which is necessary to moral agency, can be nothing else than the liberty of doing what we will, to the extent of our power. It is freedom of action in conformity with our desire and will. When a man is compelled by force to strike another (I mean not by the force of strong motives, but by actual physical force), we say he is not accountable, because not free to do as he willed. When we think of that liberty which is necessary to free agency, and to the performance of a moral act, this is the kind of liberty which we have in our minds. In judging of the moral quality of an act, we never attempt to go further back than the spontaneous inclination of the mind, and never think it necessary to know in what way this disposition was acquired. If the action proceed from will, so far as liberty is concerned it is a moral act. We cannot conceive of any greater or more desirable liberty than this. Dependent creatures, indeed, cannot possess that independent liberty which is the prerogative of the Deity. The creature, notwithstanding his liberty, is still under the government of divine Providence. The necessity which precludes free agency. It is also important that we entertain distinct and accurate ideas of that necessity which is inconsistent with free agency. There is what has been termed moral or philosophical necessity, which is not incompatible with human liberty. This is no other than the certain operation of moral causes, producing moral effects, according to the power which they possess. Such necessity, it has been shown, must belong to God, because he cannot act in opposition to truth, wisdom, and justice. But this does not hinder him from acting freely. So the angels in heaven and glorified saints are so confirmed in holiness that they cannot sin; but still in loving and serving God they act most freely.

Incorrect use of the term necessary. But as in the common use of terms, and according to the common apprehension of men, liberty and necessity are diametrically opposite; when the name necessity is applied to any exercise, the prejudice immediately arises that it cannot be free; especially if there be some points in which it coincides with real necessity. Here, it is probable, we

have the true source of the difficulty and perplexity in which this subject has been involved. The word necessary should never have been applied to any exercises which are spontaneous or voluntary, because all such are free in their very nature. When we apply this term to them, although we may qualify it by calling it a moral or philosophical necessity, still the idea naturally and insensibly arises, that if necessary they cannot be free. It is highly important not to use a term out of its proper signification; especially when such consequences may arise from an ambiguous use. An event may be absolutely certain without being necessary. It was absolutely certain that God, in creating the world, would act most wisely. Certainty not necessity. It is a matter of absolute certainty that the holy angels will continue to love and serve God incessantly; but this certainty is not inconsistent with liberty. If a man possess good principles, and all temptation to do wrong be removed, it is morally certain that, in any given case, he will do right; and if a man be of corrupt principles, and all virtuous considerations be foreign from his thoughts, and strong temptations be presented to his ruling passion, it is certain that he will yield to temptation and commit sin. But in all these cases there is no necessity, because there is no coercion or compulsion. If the mere certainty of an event were inconsistent with freedom, then there could be no such thing as liberty in God or the creatures. As God knows all things most certainly, every thing, in his view, whatever may be its cause, is equally certain; the divine prescience cannot be mistaken. There is no good reason why uncertainty should be considered essential to that liberty which is necessary to moral actions. All causes operate according to their nature and force. The reason why one effect is necessary and another free is not that the one takes place without an adequate cause, or that the same cause may produce different effects; for both these are contrary to common sense. The true reason is that the one is produced against will, or without will, whereas the other is a voluntary act.

Importance of the distinction. Let the distinction between what is certain and what is necessary be fully comprehended and attended to, and a great part of the darkness which, in the view of many, has obscured this subject will be dissipated. Although, then, it should be demonstrated that the will is as certainly governed by motives as the scale of the balance is by weights, yet there can be no legitimate inference from the one to the other, as if that would prove that the will is not free but under a necessity. The difference lies not in the difference of certainty in the two cases, but in the difference in the nature of the causes of that certainty.

Man's Government of Actions & Responsibility

CHAPTER XVI.

MAN'S DIRECTION AND GOVERNMENT OF HIS ACTIONS, AND HIS CONSEQUENT RESPONSIBILITY.

Extremes to be avoided. THERE are two extremes to be avoided here. The first is that which considers man as, in some sense, a passive recipient of influences from without. He is represented as placed in certain circumstances and surrounded by certain objects, in the selection of which he has had no choice; and as he is susceptible of certain impressions which these circumstances and objects are fitted to make upon him, he cannot be considered a free and accountable agent. The power really from within. In opposition to this false hypothesis we assert that the whole force which governs man is within, and proceeds from himself. External objects are in themselves inert. They exert no influence; no power emanates from them. The only power and influence which they can possibly have over any man they derive from the active principles of his nature. We are, indeed, accustomed in popular language to say that external objects excite and inflame the mind; but in philosophical accuracy they are, but the passive objects on which the affections and desires of the mind fasten, and their whole power of moving to action depends upon the strength of the inward affections of the soul. To render this perfectly plain to every mind, it will only be necessary to attend to a few familiar illustrations. No force in outward objects. To a man who is under the influence of hunger or thirst, bread and water are said, when seen, greatly to excite him, so that he is strongly impelled to appropriate these objects to the craving wants of his nature. But every one sees at once that both the bread and the water are merely passive objects on which the appetite fixes the real force which impels to action, is not, therefore the external object, but the inward desire which is in the soul itself. For where no appetite of hunger or thirst exists, the bread and water, however presented and urged upon the sense, produce no effect; there is no motive to action experienced.

Force resides in internal principles. Take another case. A man comes into a room where lies a pile of gold. Avarice urges him to seize the beloved object, and appropriate it to himself. Two desires or motives counteract the tendency of avarice; one is a sense of duty or regard to the dictate of conscience, which he knows ought to be obeyed; the other is a regard to reputation, or the good opinion of men. Between these two antagonistical principles, there must of course be a conflict. If avarice be strong, and the power of conscience and desire of the good opinion of men be comparatively weak, the consequence will be that the man will put forth his hand and take the gold, and at the same time will feel conscious that he is doing wrong. But if conscience be fully awake, and especially if a love of moral excellence and a hatred of iniquity have a place in his mind, this motive alone will be sufficient to induce him to reject at once the thought of appropriating what belongs to another. In this case it is evident that the gold on the table is altogether passive; there is no secret emanation from the inert metal. The whole power of gold to seduce the mind to evil depends on the strength of the principle of avarice within; and in a mind rightly constituted, or

under the influence of good moral dispositions, it could never so prevail as to induce the person to do an unlawful act for the sake of obtaining it.

Externals are only objects. From these cases it is evident that a man is not governed by any influence from without or separate from himself, but that the true spring of his actions lies entirely in his own inclinations and will, external things having no other influence than as they furnish objects suited to his appetites and other desires.

Motives not separate existences. Some writers on the will, in speaking of the governing power of motives, have expressed themselves in a manner which leads to the opinion that the motives by which the will is determined exist without us, or separate from ourselves, whereas those motives which possess an active power and govern our voluntary actions, are within us, and are our own active powers and affections, for which we are as responsible as for any other acts or operations of the mind. Hence it may truly be affirmed that every man possesses a self-determining power by which he regulates and governs his own actions according to his own inclinations.

Self-determining power. The other extreme in regard to this subject is, that the will possesses a self-determining power in itself, independent of all motives, and uninfluenced by any inclination. And it is maintained that such a self-determining power is essential to freedom, and to the existence of an accountable moral agent. If, indeed, this last opinion were correct we should admit the self-determining power of the will, whether we understood its nature or not; for we lay it down as a first principle-from which we can no more depart than from the consciousness of existence-that man is free; and therefore stand ready to embrace whatever is fairly included in the definition of freedom. But it is not yet made evident, or even probable, that such a power exists, or that it is at all necessary to free moral agency, or that the possession of such a power would be valuable or desirable. Not necessary. All that is wanted is to make man the master of his own actions, and this is completely effected by giving him the power to will and act in accordance with his own inclinations. Certainly a man is not the less accountable for his actions because they are in accordance with his desires. Every rational being acts with a view to some end, and his regard or affection for that end is the motive which governs his will and influences his conduct.

Denial of such power does not conflict with liberty. It cannot be justly denied, and is generally admitted, that in most cases the determinations of the will are influenced by strong desires; and when such desires exist, and there are none leading a contrary way, the decisions of the will are in fact determined by the previous state of the mind. Now if the prevalence of these desires in such cases is not found to interfere with free agency, there is no reason to think that the belief that the will is invariably determined by the strongest existing desire will lead to any conclusion unfavourable to liberty. If the self-determining power in question is exerted only in trivial cases where motives to action are weak, or when there is an equipoise of motives, it cannot be a power of any great consequence, since most of our moral acts are performed without its aid.

Instances examined. Let us first take an impartial view of the acts of a man in the exercise of the power which all admit he possesses, and then of this imaginary power which some think essential to moral agency.

First case. In the first case the man exercising his reason, apprehends objects which appear to him, on some account, good and desirable. These objects he desires to obtain, and puts forth

those volitions which produce the actions requisite to the accomplishment of his object.

Second case. In the second case the man feels an inclination leading him with more or less force to a certain object; but he has a power which he can at any time exert to arrest his action in the line of his inclinations, and by exerting this power of willing he can counteract any desire, and act in opposition to it. Or if two desires exist, he can by this power give the prevalence to that which is the weaker. The best way to bring this matter to the test of experience is to suppose a case in which such a power is exerted. Suppose the case of a man in whom, by habit and indulgence, the appetite for intoxicating drink is strong; but he is induced by weighty reasons derived from a sense of duty and a regard to his health, reputation, family, and temporal prosperity, to determine not to expose himself to temptation. An old companion calls and solicits him to go with him to a convivial meeting. His appetite strongly pleads for indulgence, if only for this one time; but conscience remonstrates, and a regard to health, reputation, and the like, operates strongly on the other side. Suppose the influence felt from these two opposite sources to be almost equally balanced; suppose even a perfect equipoise. Such a state of mind, though possible and frequently experienced, can never last long, for the states of the mind change in some respects every moment, and the least difference in the views of the subject would destroy the balance. But now is the time for the exercise of the power which determines without regard to motive. Suppose, while the scales are thus in equipoise, this power to be exerted, and the man determines in favour of self-denial. Why he did thus determine, seems to be a reasonable inquiry; but if this power exists, such a question is entirely irrelative. There was, according to the supposition, no reason or motive which influenced the determination. Here then is a case for our consideration: Is an action prompted by no motive, and performed without a view to any end, an accountable moral act? If this self-determining power exists, it may be exerted in opposition to the highest and best motives, and neither the person himself nor any body else can tell why it was exerted. If a man under the influence of love to his Creator, should be about to engage in the performance of some plain and important duty, the exertion of this power at the most unseasonable time might arrest his action and lead him to a contrary determination. Why would he exert such a power at such a time? That, indeed, is the question. No power to determine against all motives. But if any reason of any kind could be given it would destroy the hypothesis, which is that a man has power to determine in opposition to all existing motives, and where there is a competition can act in conformity with the weakest. Surely such a power is irrational and dangerous in the extreme, and has no tendency to increase that freedom which is requisite to a moral agent.

Objections to Uniform Influence of Motives

CHAPTER XVII.

OBJECTIONS TO THE UNIFORM INFLUENCE OF MOTIVES.

Objection from regret at wrong actions. ONE of the most plausible objections to the uniform influence of motives on the will is, the intimate conviction every man has, when he has done what he regrets, that he could have done otherwise; whereas, upon the hypothesis laid down above, the man could not possibly, with the same motives, have acted differently from what he did. And it is alleged that no man ever would or could repent of his most criminal conduct, were he persuaded that he could not have willed and acted differently from what he did. The true question stated. This objection brings out the true issue in this inquiry. The real question in dispute in regard to the will is, whether, all things external and internal being the same to any voluntary agent, the volitions will be the same. That is, whether a man in the same state of mind and under the influence of the same desires and motives, in kind and degree, will not always will and act in the same way. This we affirm; and the advocates of the self-determining power of the will, deny.

Analysis of the alleged conviction. It is admitted that when a man has done wrong and is convinced of his error, he is deeply conscious that he might and should have acted differently. But when this conviction is analyzed, it is found to be, not that he might have willed and acted differently with the same feelings that influenced him at the moment of doing wrong, but that he might and should have had a different state of feeling, or a more considerate attention to those things which were forgotten, but which if recollected would have prevented him from doing that which he now regrets.

Example. Take a case. A man in an hour of levity, and under the influence of a degree of envy, speaks disrespectfully of a person whose character is worthy of esteem, and to whom he is under special obligation. Upon reflection he is truly sorry for what he said, candidly confesses his fault, and says that were he again placed in similar circumstances, he would not be guilty of the same fault. But suppose he should be asked whether, if the same degree of inattention, and the same envious feeling should again exist which characterized the state of his mind when he spoke unadvisedly, and no considerations should occur which were not then present to his mind, he is of opinion that he would act differently from what he did. Under such a view of the matter, few persons dare profess that they would act differently when placed in precisely the same circumstances. When we feel that we would and could act differently from what we have done in certain specified circumstances, it is always on the supposition that our views and feelings should be different. If the person speaking disrespectfully of a friend is asked what would induce him to act differently, if the thing were to be done again, the natural and reasonable answer is, "I should think of the impropriety of the thing, and should recollect my obligations to the person; and other the like considerations." This shows that men feel accountable, not only for their volitions and actions, but for the views and feelings which precede volition. Indeed if there is one point above all others on which responsibility rests, it is on the motives, that is, the active desires or affections of

the mind from which volition proceeds, and by which it is governed. The murderer could easily abstain from murder, if he would repress his malignant feelings; but with the same spirit of malice and revenge which induced him to shed his brother's blood, and with the same absence of all other views and feelings than those which he had at the time, there is a moral certainty that he would commit the same crime again. Nor has this certainty, that unrestrained malice and revenge would again lead to the perpetration of the same horrid crime, the slightest tendency to alleviate the guilt of the murderer. The true ground of his culpability, lies in his having and indulging such malignant tempers, and in voluntarily turning away his mind from all considerations of piety and humanity, which would restrain him from the cruel act. And here a question might arise respecting a man's desires and affections, and the power which he has over them; but this is not the proper place for a discussion of that point.

Objection from impossibility of choosing between equals. Another objection which has been repeatedly urged, and which by many is considered unanswerable, is, that according to this hypothesis, when two things exactly equal, and viewed to be so, are presented to the choice of a rational being, it would be impossible to choose either. But every man (say the objectors) feels that he has the power, if two loaves of bread or two eggs exactly alike be presented, of choosing between them; and as there exists confessedly no motive for preferring one loaf or one egg to the other, therefore it is possible for the will to determine without a motive.

Answer. To this plausible objection it may be answered, that if the self-determining power of the will, independent of motives, be confined to cases in which there are no motives to turn the balance, it is a power of very little importance, and not worth disputing about. Let it be admitted that in such an equipoise of motives, the mind can determine in favour of either of the objects. But perhaps this will admit of a different solution, and one in accordance with the theory maintained. And let it be remarked, that it is not the similarity of external objects which should here be considered, but the view which the mind takes of them. We know how a fertile imagination may cast a grain into one of the balanced scales, and cause it to preponderate. But further, the state of mind supposed to be produced by objects of equal value, is really felt for a moment. Between two things we hesitate, not being able to come to a decision; but this indecision arises not from a belief that the objects proposed are equal, but from a doubt which is preferable. When we are sure there is no difference, this hesitation is not experienced. The explanation which seems correct, is the following: two guineas are laid before a poor man, and he is told to take which one he pleases. It cannot be necessary that he should think one better than the other. If such a preference were necessary, he would be unable to take either, and his situation would be comparable to the ass of the old Greek sophists, held immovable between two bundles of hay. The difficulty unknown in fact. The difficulty supposed to exist in the case of two equal objects proposed for our choice, is perfectly imaginary: no difficulty or perplexity is ever experienced, when the things presented to our choice are known to be equal. It is only when we apprehend that there may be a difference between the objects offered, that we hesitate. As if a person should offer to our choice two caskets, the contents of which are unknown; we find it difficult to choose, for the very reason that we suspect the one to be more valuable than the other, but are ignorant to which the greatest value attaches. And if we should be informed that one contained jewels of great price and the other nothing but baubles, our hesitancy would be accompanied with solicitude. But when we are certain that the things proposed to our choice are perfectly alike, in all respects, we experience no

difficulty whatever. Suppose it to be first a single guinea which is offered to a needy beggar; he is moved by his feeling of want to take it. If instead of one, two guineas are offered, he experiences no difficulty in choosing, knowing them to be alike. But this furnishes no example of an action produced without a motive. The question is, whether the man shall act or not; and the motive for action is strong, namely, the desire of relief. As he is at liberty to take but one, and there is no difference between them, he seizes that, which from one or more of a thousand slight reasons of nearness or convenience, it happens to him to choose, without any preference properly so called.

Summary View of Liberty

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUMMARY VIEW OF LIBERTY.

Man intuitively certain that he is free. MAN is conscious of liberty, and nothing can add to the certainty which he has that he is a free agent. Objections to self-evident principles, however plausible, should not be regarded; for, in the nature of things, no reasonings can overthrow plain intuitive truths, as no reasonings can be founded on principles more certain. Though we may not be able to understand or explain with precision wherein freedom consists, yet this ignorance of its nature should not disturb our minds. We experience the same difficulty in regard to other truths of this class without any diminution of our assurance. I am conscious that I have life—but what is life? neither I nor any other human being can tell. But do we, because of this ignorance, doubt whether indeed we live? Not in the least. We know that we are free precisely in the same manner that we know that we are living beings, and no plausible reasonings should disturb us in the one case more than in the other. This certainty undisturbed by errors of reasoning. Again, if in attempting to explain what is essential to free agency, we should fall into any mistake, or conclude that some thing does not belong to it, which does, let it not be said that we deny the freedom of man; for while we may err in regard to our conception of its nature, we know that we cannot err in regard to the actual existence of freedom.

Reason for denying some demands. We are willing to attribute to man every kind and degree of liberty which can properly belong to a dependent creature and a rational being; and if we deny what some think essential to free agency, it is because in our view it would be no real privilege to possess such a power, as not being compatible with the laws by which rational creatures are governed.

Postulates. It is admitted that man has power to govern his own volitions, and does govern them, according to his own desire. He has the liberty, within the limits of his power, to act as he pleases; and greater liberty, in our judgment, is inconceivable.

Liberty is not power to act independently of all reasons. To suppose, in addition to this, a power to act independently of all reasons and motives, would be to confer on him a power for the exercise of which he could never be accountable. It would be a faculty which would completely disqualify him from being the subject of moral government. In the nature of things, it would be impossible that a creature possessed of such a power could be so governed that his actions could be directed to any end.

First hypothesis. One hypothesis makes man the master of his own actions, but a creature governed by understanding and choice. He may be misled by false appearances, and influenced by wrong motives, but is always governed by some reasons or motives.

Second hypothesis. On the other hypothesis a man may and does act without any inducement, and without being influenced by any reasons, to do what is contrary to all his inclinations and feeling. I cannot but think that, after all, the abettors of this scheme retain in their minds a certain obscure but lingering persuasion that the free agent feels some reason for acting as he does; and if so, the dispute is at an end, for whatever may be the consideration which induces a man to act in opposition to strong desires, it must be something which is felt by the mind to have force, and to be such a consideration as ought to influence a rational being.

Let us for still further elucidation again suppose a case in which this self-determining power is exerted.

Case supposed for self-determining power. A young man entrusted with the property of his employer, has by undue indulgence in amusements, contracted debts which he is unable to pay. He sees a way by which he can appropriate to his own use some of the money in his hands without the possibility of discovery. His wants are urgent, his reputation is at stake, and he feels himself impelled by a powerful motive to the deed; and there are no motives to draw him in an opposite course but such as are derived from conscience and the fear of God. At the moment when about to perpetrate the felonious act, he pauses and resolves that he will not do it. The question is, has he not power to act thus? Is he not the arbiter of his own acts of will? Are we not all conscious that we possess such a power? There is no dispute about the power, if it only pleases the agent to exercise it. He is as free to abstain from embezzling what belongs to another, as to do it. The only question is, will he do it unless some reason, motive, or moral feeling influence him? If so, then indeed it would be the exemplification of the power in question. But when we examine the case carefully we shall be satisfied that where there is a powerful motive on one side, there must be a preponderating motive on the other to prevent a volition in accordance with the first. Suppose the young man under the temptation mentioned to have his mind free from all moral considerations, and to have no fear of injuring his reputation, what would restrain him? Or, if without any moral influence, or any other consideration, he should abstain, would there be any virtue in the act? To know whether an act is virtuous, we properly ask, why was it done? what was the motive of the agent? But here there is none, and consequently the act can have no moral character. And if we suppose some faint remonstrance of conscience, and some slight fear of discovery, even these would not prevent the act where the contrary motives were urgent. But suppose, now, this young man to have had a religious education, and to have been brought up to regard his reputation, and when the temptation is most powerful and he is in danger of yielding, conscience should utter her voice with power, and dictate imperatively that this is a deed which should not be done; and at the same time, a lively apprehension of disgrace should operate with a combined influence on his mind, would the operation of these motives in preventing the crime be less rational or less virtuous than if he should act without a motive?

Indifference essential to Free Agency

CHAPTER XIX. THE KIND OF INDIFFERENCE WHICH HAS BEEN CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL TO FREE AGENCY.

Acts of choice are free. IN every act of choice or will, it is implied that the person willing might, if he pleased, act in a different way from what he does, for otherwise he would be under a necessity of acting in one way only, and there could be no freedom in such an action. There is no freedom in the pulsations of the heart, for they are not voluntary, but go on whether we will it or not. Liberty of contradiction and of contrariety. In all actions where the will is exercised there must be at least two things which may be done. This liberty was by the ancients distinguished into two kinds, the liberty of contradiction, and the liberty of contrariety. In the first we have the choice of doing or not doing some proposed act. In the second, we have the liberty to do one thing or another, or one thing or several others. In regard to such objects of choice, there was said to be indifference, by which it was not meant that the mind was indifferent at the moment of choice. This would be a contradiction, because indifference towards an object, and the choice of an object, are opposite and irreconcilable states of mind. But the meaning was, that, abstractly from the feelings of the agent, the contrary or different actions were indifferent. It was in the power of the agent, if he were disposed, to do or not do, to do this or that; but it was never understood to imply, that with the inclination in one direction a choice might be made in the opposite direction. A man may do what he pleases, but it is absurd to suppose that he can will to do what it does not please him to do.

Power of contrary choice. The doctrine of a power of contrary choice, as the thing has been now explained, is a reasonable doctrine, and in accordance with all experience, if with the volition you include the motive, if with the choice you take in the desire. Volition cannot contravene prevalent inclination. But to suppose a volition contrary to the prevailing inclination is inconsistent with all experience; and, as has been shown, such a liberty or power would disqualify a man for being an accountable moral agent.

Theory of Abp. King. In the last century an able metaphysical writer, convinced that the common doctrine of the self-determining power of the will could not stand, invented a new hypothesis. His leading idea is, that we do not choose an object because we desire it, but desire it because we choose it. According to this view of Archbishop King, in his work on the "Origin of Evil," there must be a state of absolute indifference prior to an act of choice; for all love or attachment to an object, and all desire of possessing it, are produced by the act of the mind in choosing it. This is a complete inversion in the order of the exercises of the mind. Though recommended by high authority, and ingeniously defended by its author, it seems strange that it should have found any respectable abettors. Adopted by Watts. But Dr. Watts, in his Essay on the "Freedom of the will in God and the creatures," adopts the outlines of the Archbishop's scheme, and defends its principles by many arguments. This led President Edwards, in his celebrated work on the Will, to take particular pains to refute this false theory. Refuted by Edwards. The indifference of which he treats is that which appertains to this scheme. Many, however, have been led, from an

acquaintance with the work of Edwards, to suppose that the doctrine of indifference, as refuted by this great man, is common to all who maintain the opinion of the self-determining power of the will; which is far from being the case.

It is deemed unnecessary to give a refutation of this theory in this place. Those who wish to see this effectually done may consult the several sections of the work of Edwards, to which reference has been made. [2] [2] Edwards's Works, ed. New-York, 1844. Vol. ii. pp. 17-39. Part i., §§ 1-7.

Are men Accountable for their motives?

CHAPTER XX.

WHETHER MEN ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR MOTIVES; OR WHETHER DESIRES AND AFFECTIONS WHICH PRE CEDE VOLITION, HAVE A MORAL CHARACTER.

Maxims which seem conflicting. THERE are two maxims on this point, which we must endeavour to reconcile, as there is an apparent repugnance between them.

1. The motive gives character to the Acts 2:1-47. The act is voluntary. The first is, that every action takes its character from the motive from which it proceeds. The second is, that every moral act is voluntary, and therefore, that desires and feelings which precede volition, cannot be of a moral nature. This difficulty seems to have perplexed the perspicacious mind of Chalmers; Dr. Chalmers for, perceiving that our desires and affections do possess a moral character, he labours, through a number of pages, to prove that, in as far as they are such, they are influenced by the will. The truth, however, is, that many of them are uninfluenced by preceding volition, and the whole reasoning of the learned author is unsatisfactory. The true solution is to be found in the ambiguity of language. When it is asserted that all moral actions are voluntary, the meaning is, either that by actions only external actions are meant, or that under the word voluntary, the affections of the mind which precede volition are included. No act of the body can take place without an action of the will preceding it; so that the maxim is true, as it relates to external acts. But it is also true in relation to mental acts, if we give a certain degree of extension to the word "voluntary," that is, if we use it as synonymous with spontaneous. Our desires are as free and spontaneous as our volitions, and when it is said that every moral act must be voluntary, the word is used in this comprehensive sense. There is no need, therefore, to prove that our affections must have received their complexion from a preceding volition. The judgment of the moral faculty in regard to the moral character of the desires and affections, is as clear and undoubted as of the volitions. Nay, the volitions receive their moral character from the quality of the motives which produce them; so that the very same volition may be good or bad, according to the moral character of the motives by which it is produced. The volition requisite in order to pull a trigger and let off a gun, is the same, let the motive be what it may. It is a determination to perform that specific act, and if it be performed by an insane person, there will be no morality in the volition. If the same volition be put forth by a person acting in his just defence, the volition and ensuing act will be good; but if the volition to shoot a man, arise from malice or avarice, the volition prompting the act will be wicked.

We must go higher than volition. We do not, therefore, trace actions to their true moral source when we ascertain the volition from which they proceed; we must always go one step higher, and ascertain the motives.

Motives must be sought. When an investigation is made into the character of an act of which some one is accused, the main point, which by witnesses the court and jury wish to ascertain, is, from what motives the accused acted. Accordingly as this is determined, so is he judged to be innocent

or guilty. It hence appears, that the true and ultimate source of the morality of actions, is not found in the will, but in the desires and affections. The simple act of volition, namely, a determination to do a certain act, is always the same, whatever be the motive. And to ascertain that an action proceeds from an act of will, only determines that it is the act of a particular agent, but gives us no knowledge respecting the true moral quality of the act. This will be found universally true. Two men are seen giving money to the poor; the acts are the same, and the volitions preceding the acts and prompting them, are the same; and as we cannot see the heart, we naturally judge that both acts are alike good. But if it should be revealed to us, that one of the persons was influenced entirely by a love for the praise of men, and the other, by a sincere regard for the welfare of the poor, we should immediately make a wide difference between the acts, in our moral judgment. We should still be convinced, however, that the volitions leading to the acts were the same, the only difference being in the motives.

Man accountable for his motives. It is clear then that men are more accountable for their motives than for any thing else; and that, primarily, morality consists in the motives; that, is the affections.

Division of Motives: Rational & Animal

CHAPTER XXI. THE DIVISION OF MOTIVES, INTO RATIONAL AND ANIMAL.

Reid's distinction. DR. THOMAS REID, in his work on the Active Powers, endeavours to maintain his doctrine that the will is not always governed by motives, by a reference to a certain distinction. Animal motives act by a blind impulse on the will, without regard to remote consequences. Rational motives operate by the force of reasonable considerations. Dr. Reid asserts that these classes of motives are so widely different, that their influence can never be compared: that what may be the strongest of one class, may be the weakest of the other, and that the mind must determine between them. The difference real. The distinction is no doubt just. There are principles in the human constitution, which act on the will with great force, by a blind impulse. Such are the appetites and passions, and the desire of happiness, and especially the desire to escape pungent pain, at present experienced.

Appetite. The appetite of hunger urges the subject of it to eat, whether it can be done lawfully and consistently with health, or not. This influence is sensibly present, and it requires some strength of purpose to resist it, when the agent is convinced that the act cannot be done with propriety. Here then is the simultaneous operation of an animal and a rational motive; and it is evident that they counteract each other, and that according to the strength of one or the other, the will is determined this way or that way. Whether the two can be compared. It is not true, therefore, that these different kinds of motives cannot be compared as to their effective force. The fact is, they are brought into comparison every day, and every day victories are obtained by one over the other, according to the strength or influence which they respectively possess, at the moment. Hunger impels a man to eat; reason tells him that it will be injurious to health. Here is a fair trial of strength between the force of blind appetite, and a rational regard for health. If the appetite be very strong, it will require a strong resolution to oppose it. In such cases, however, appetite commonly prevails; but not without resistance. In every case of the kind, there is a trial of strength between these different motives. Case of hunger and self-preservation. Suppose food to be placed before a hungry man; if there be no considerations of duty or utility to prevent, he will of course indulge his appetite. But if he should be informed that the food is poisoned, although he be still impelled by his appetite to eat, yet the love of life or fear of death, will be sufficient to induce him to refrain.

Case of hunger and duty. Suppose, again, that the food is the property of another, whose consent to use it cannot be obtained. Here the moral feelings stand in the way of indulgence; and upon the comparative strength of his appetite and of the vigour of his conscience, will depend his determination. So far is it from being true, then, that animal and rational motives cannot be compared, in regard to their influence on the will, that there is nothing in human life more common than the experience of the struggle for mastery between the higher and lower principles of our nature. The determination accords with prevalent desires. When it is said that the mind determines between these contending motives, it is true, but not in the sense intended. It is true that the mind determines, and of course the volition is on one side or the other; but this determination is not

independent of the strength of the contending motives, being always in accordance with the strongest existing desires. The difference of the two. There is this important difference between animal and rational motives, that a sensible impulse of the former as merely felt, is not of a moral nature. The hunger of a man is no more moral than the hunger of a beast. These animal feelings are unavoidable and constitutional. The point at which such feelings begin to partake of a moral quality, is when they require to be governed and directed. It was not wrong for the hungry man when he saw bread before him to desire it. But when he knew it to be the property of another, it would have been wrong to take it; and when he knew that the food would injure him, it became his duty to forbear.

We cannot extinguish the animal feelings by an act of the will; they arise involuntarily, and therefore cannot be in themselves of a moral nature. Yet as man has other principles and powers by which he should be governed, he becomes faulty when he neglects to govern these lower propensities in accordance with the dictates of reason and conscience. But in regard to other desires and affections, they are good or bad in every degree in which they exist. For example, not only are malice and envy sinful when ripened into act, but the smallest conceivable exercise of such feelings is evil; and as they increase in strength, their moral evil increases. It does not require an act of volition, consenting to these feelings, to render them evil; their very essence is evil, and is condemned by the moral sense of mankind.

Concupiscence. A clear understanding of this distinction might have prevented or reconciled an old dispute, viz. whether concupiscence [3] was of the nature of sin, in the first rising of desire, prior to any act of the will.

[3] It may remove ambiguity to say that the word concupiscence is here used not in its popular and modern, but its theological acceptation. The controversy to which allusion is made began early in the schools, and was actively waged at the time of the Reformation. The following references will enable the reader to inquire further: Augustini, Opp. x., ed. Benedict. pp. 387, 1029, 1828, 1881, 1955.-Catechismus Cone. Trident. ed. Lips. 1851, pp. 385, 386.-Chemnitii Examen. ed. Genev., 1641, pp. 88, 89, 90, 94, 95.-Turretini Instt. P. ii. Qu. 21.-Bretschneider, Syst. Entwicklung; 4 ed. 1841, pp. 540, 541.

Morality belongs to Principles and Acts?

CHAPTER XXII.

WHETHER MORALITY BELONGS TO PRINCIPLES AS WELL AS ACTS, OR IS CONFINED TO ACTS ALONE.

Moral principles prior to volition. IT seems to be generally agreed, that in the human soul there exist certain principles from which actions proceed, as streams from a fountain; and that the character of the actions corresponds with that of the principle. Those, however, who maintain that the will possesses a self-determining power, independent of motives, deny the existence of any such principles lying back of the acts of the mind, especially in moral exercises. They hold that the evil of an act arises entirely from the exercise of free will, and that there is no propriety in referring it to any thing previously existing in the mind. They allege that nothing can be of a moral nature but that which is voluntary, and therefore that virtue or vice can be predicated of nothing but actions. They argue, however, that to make virtue and vice consist in the occult qualities of the soul, is to conceive of the essence of the soul as corrupt; and that this would be to make sin a physical quality, existing without any relation to the will. It would be entirely out of place, here, to consider the bearing of this controversy on certain theological points, concerning which polemics have waged an interminable war. We have, at present, nothing to do with any principles or questions but such as may be learned from reason and experience.

Principles argued from effects. In the first place, let it be observed, that we know nothing of the soul but by its acts. We have no consciousness of any thing but acts of different kinds; yet we know as certainly that we have a soul, as that we think and feel. So, also, we are not conscious of the existence of what is called disposition, temper, principle; but we as intuitively believe in the existence of these, as in the existence of the soul itself. If we see one man doing evil whenever he has the temptation, and another as habitually doing good, we cannot help considering that the one is actuated by an evil disposition which dwells in him, and that the other is influenced by a good disposition.

Morality predicable of principles. Whether moral good and evil may with propriety be predicated of these hidden tempers of the mind, must be determined by an appeal to the common judgment of mankind; and this, I think, is manifestly in favour of the affirmative. When a man is observed to manifest wicked, malignant passions as often as occasion serves to elicit them, all men agree that he possesses a malignant temper. The soul of such a man, when his acts of iniquity are finished, cannot be free from every taint, until he again put forth a voluntary act. The doctrine of a uniform series of evil acts, is irreconcilable with the doctrine that all evil consists in self-determined acts, unless the will itself be corrupt, for why should all acts be of one kind, when no cause exists why they should be one thing rather than another? We might suppose such a power would act as frequently one way as another. But if there be any causes without the will, which give a uniform character to its acts, then the will cannot be free. It is determined by something without itself, which is incompatible with the hypothesis.

Moral evil predicable of principles. Again: the fountain must partake of the quality of the streams. If these are uniformly evil, it is fair to conclude that the fountain is polluted. Voluntary wickedness is nothing else but bringing into act what before existed in principle in the soul. If malice in act is sinful, surely malice in principle must be evil.

Crime infer a bad principle. No man can bring himself to believe that the wretch who has perpetrated thousands of base crimes, and stands ready to commit others of the same kind, has no evil inherent in his soul, by which he is distinguished from the most innocent person.

Proof from omission of duty. Another evidence that men do judge something to be sinful besides sinful acts, is that men who palpably omit important duty, are considered equally guilty with those who offend by positive act. That man who neglects to rescue from death a human being, when it is easily in his power to do so, is by all men reckoned guilty of a great crime, though he performs no act of any kind. Suppose a helpless woman or infant to fall overboard from a boat, in which there is a strong man who might afford relief, but makes no attempt to do so. Is there a person in the world who would not view such a neglect as a great sin? Now, on what principle do we censure the person who has committed no act of transgression? Evidently on the ground that he ought to have felt a regard for the life of a fellow-creature. We blame his indifference to the welfare of his neighbour.

Disposition, in what sense voluntary. As to the maxim, that nothing is sinful which is not voluntary, it relates to positive acts, not to dispositions of the mind. But as was explained before in regard to desires and affections, so in regard to dispositions, we say they are in a sense voluntary. They properly belong to the will, taking the word in a large sense. In judging of the morality of voluntary acts, the principle from which they proceed is always included in our view, and comes in for its full share of the blame. Thus Bishop Butler, in his excellent essay on the "Nature of Virtue," says, in speaking of the moral faculty, "It ought to be observed that the object of this faculty is actions, comprehending under that name active or practical principles." This sagacious man saw that it would not do to confine virtue to positive acts, but that principles must come in for their full share of approbation or disapprobation.

Proof from character. The character which a man acquires by a series of acts, is not merely the estimation of a person who has performed such acts, but it is of a person possessing dispositions or principles which gave rise to such acts. Our notion of a bad man is of one who not only has perpetrated wicked acts, but is still disposed to do the same; and we disapprove the principle as much as the acts. The notion that corrupt principles must vitiate the essence of the soul, is without foundation. The soul is the subject of many affections which are not essential to it. Natural affections may be extirpated, and yet the soul remain unchanged. Moral qualities may be entirely changed, without any change in the essence of the soul. The faculties remain, while the moral principles which govern them may be changed from good to bad, or from bad to good. The same faculties which are employed in the performance of virtuous actions, may be occupied as instruments of wickedness. That inherent moral qualities may exist in the soul, has been the belief of all nations, and is the sentiment of every common man whose judgment has not been warped by false philosophy.

Common judgment of mankind. Who can believe that the soul of a cruel murderer, whose heart cherishes habitual hatred and revenge towards his fellow creatures, is, when asleep, or occupied

with indifferent matters, in the same state of purity or exemption from evil, as the soul of the most virtuous man in the world? It cannot be believed. We cannot help thinking, when we see a uniform course of action whether it be good or bad, that there must be corresponding dispositions which lead to such actions. Every effect must have an adequate cause. Let it be granted, for the sake of argument, that the self-determining power is an adequate cause for any single act of any kind; yet it can be no sufficient cause for a series of acts of the same kind. This, however, must be left to the intuitive belief of every man. It is a subject for the judgment of common sense, rather than reason.

Moral Habits

CHAPTER XXIII.

MORAL HABITS.

Habits. HABITS differ from principles, or constitutional desires, in that they are adventitious. Every habit is acquired by repeated acts. The human constitution possesses a wonderful susceptibility of forming habits of every kind. Indeed, we cannot prevent the formation of habits of some kind or other. Still, a man has much in his power as it regards the kind of habits which he forms, and is highly accountable for the exercise of this power. A man's happiness and usefulness depend very much on the character of his habits. Yea, a man's moral character derives its complexion, in a great degree, from his habits. In this place, it is not necessary to go into the philosophy of the formation of habits. Our object is to consider habits and habitual actions as they partake of a moral character, or as they are the object of moral approbation, or disapprobation. If we should remove from the list of moral actions all those which are prompted by habit, we should cut off the larger number of those which men have agreed in judging to be of a moral nature.

Accountability for habits. That there are virtuous habits and vicious habits, will scarcely be denied by any considerate person. A habit of lying, of swearing, of slandering, of cheating, of irreverence, of indolence, of vainglory, with many others, are, alas, too common. There are also virtuous habits, such as of industry, temperance, kindness, veracity, diligence, honesty, & c. To be sure, these virtues commonly flow from principle, but the practice of them is greatly facilitated by correct habits. Two considerations will show that men are properly accountable for those actions which proceed from habit. The first is, that in the formation of his habits, man is voluntary. The acts by which they are formed are free acts, and the agent is responsible for all their consequences. The other consideration is, that habits may be counteracted and even changed by the force of virtuous resolutions and perseverance. Where habit has become inveterate, it may be difficult to oppose or eradicate it; but the strength of moral principle has often been found sufficient to counteract the most confirmed habits. When it is asserted that men long enslaved by evil habits cannot make a change, it is on the ground, that no principle of sufficient power exists in the mind of the agent; but for that deficiency, the man is responsible. Yet a power from without may introduce a new principle potent enough, to overcome evil habits. The importance of possessing good habits, is admitted by all moralists. Aristotle makes the essence of virtue to consist in "practical habits, voluntary in their origin," and agreeable to right reason. Dr. Thomas Reid, in his "Essay on the Active Powers," defines virtue to be "the fixed purpose to act according to a sense of duty," which definition Dugald Stewart modifies, by observing, "It is the fixed purpose to do what is right, which evidently constitutes what we call a virtuous disposition. But it appears to me that virtue, considered as an attribute of character, is more properly defined by the habit which the fixed purpose gradually forms than by the fixed purpose itself." Dr. Paley lays it down as an aphorism, that "mankind act more from habit than reflection." "We are," says he, "for the most part, determined at once, and by an impulse which has the effect and energy of a pre-established habit." To the objection, "If we are

in so great a degree passive under our habits, where is the exercise of virtue, or the guilt of vice?" he answers, "in the forming and contracting of these habits." "And hence," says he, "results a rule of considerable importance, viz, that many things are to be done and abstained from, solely for the sake of habit."

Nature of Virtue

CHAPTER XXIV. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

Various theories. THE theories on this subject have been numerous, and contrary to one another. It is now proposed to mention some of the principal of them. We shall first mention the theory of Mr. Hobbes and his followers, Hobbes. who deny that there is any natural distinction between virtue and vice, and maintain that by nature all actions are indifferent, and that our ideas and feelings on the subject of morality are altogether the effect of education and association. Mr. Hobbes did indeed maintain that men are bound to obey the civil government under which they may happen to live, and to conform to the religion established by law, however contrary to their own private judgment. Law of the land. All moral duty, according to this theory, was resolved into the authority of the law of the land. As no natural moral rule existed, it was held that, except so far as a man was restrained by civil authority, he had a right to do what he pleased; and while he confined himself within these bounds, he need feel no concern about the consequences of his conduct.

Mandeville. Perhaps the most extraordinary system of virtue ever promulgated was that of Mandeville, who maintained that all pretensions to virtue were mere hypocrisy, which men assumed from the love of praise. The defect of the hypothesis. This writer forgot that hypocrisy assumes it as true that that which is counterfeited is an object of esteem and approbation among men. That virtue consists in the mere pursuit of pleasure, or of our own interest, is a system as old as Epicurus, Epicurus. and has had many abettors up to this time. The arguments in favour of this theory are exhibited in their most plausible dress by Nettleton in his "Treatise on Virtue." The Happiness theory considered. But the whole plausibility of the arguments depends on the pre-established connexion between happiness and a virtuous course of life. That true happiness is the natural effect of virtue, falls entirely short of proof that the essence of virtue consists in the tendency of certain actions to the person's true interest; whereas, when we perceive an action to be virtuous, we are conscious that it is not from any view of the connexion of the action with our own happiness that we approve it; but our judgment is immediate, founded on a moral character perceived in the act itself. And in many cases virtue requires us to deny ourselves personal gratification for the sake of others. A man supremely governed by a regard to his own interest, is never esteemed a virtuous man by the impartial judgment of mankind. According to this theory, the only thing censurable in the greatest crimes is, that the guilty person has mistaken the best method of promoting his own happiness. Upon this principle a man is at liberty to pursue his own interest at the expense of the happiness of thousands, and if he is persuaded that any action will tend to his own interest, he is at liberty to do it, whatever may be the consequences to others.

Archdeacon Paley. Dr. Paley adopts the principle that all virtue consists in a regard to our own happiness, taking into view the whole of our existence. His definition is, however, a very complicated one, and deserves to be analyzed.

Paley's definition of virtue. "Virtue," says he, "is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, for the sake of everlasting happiness," according to which definition the good of mankind is the object, the will of God the rule, and everlasting happiness the motive of human virtue. If the question be asked, why we should seek the good of mankind, the answer is, from a regard to our everlasting happiness; and if the question be, why we should make the will of God the rule of our conduct, the answer must be the same; so that really all virtue is resolved into a regard to our own happiness.

Consequent difference between a good and a bad man. Now every man desires to promote his own happiness, and according to Dr. Paley's theory, the only difference between an eminently good man and one of the opposite character is, that the one pursues a wiser course than the other; but they are both actuated by the same motives.

Neglects intrinsic moral differences. This theory loses sight of all intrinsic difference between moral good and evil, and admits the principle that happiness is the only conceivable good, and that any thing is virtuous the tendency of which is to promote our greatest happiness.

Cumberland. A theory the opposite of that which makes a regard to private interest the ground of virtue, is the one which makes all virtue to consist in a regard to the public good. This is the theory of Bishop Cumberland in his work, *De Legibus*, and is not essentially different from the scheme of those who make all virtue to consist in disinterested benevolence. Disinterested benevolence. No doubt, much that deserves the name of virtue consists in good will to others, and in contributing to their welfare; but it is not correct to confine all virtuous actions to the exercise of benevolence. We can conceive of benevolence in a being who has no moral constitution. Something of this kind is observable in brute animals, and atheists may exercise benevolence to their friends. The indiscriminate exercise of benevolence to creatures, without any respect to their moral character, might appear to be an amiable attribute, but it could not properly be called a moral attribute. Regard for one's own welfare. A prudent regard to our own welfare and happiness is undoubtedly a virtue. It has been considered so by the wisest of men, and we know that prudence was one of the four cardinal virtues of the heathen. As the whole is made up of parts, it is evident that if it is a virtue to promote the well-being of the whole, it must be so of each of the parts. The pursuit of our own happiness where it does not infringe on the rights of others, has nothing evil in it, but is approved by every impartial mind. Some who maintain that all virtue consists in benevolence, admit that we may seek our own happiness just as we seek that of our neighbour; but the human constitution is not formed to exercise that abstract impartiality. Abstract impartiality not to be expected. While we are bound to promote the welfare of our neighbour and of strangers, our obligation is still stronger to endeavour to secure our own happiness; and if a friend and a stranger stand in equal need of a benefit which we have it in our power to bestow, it is evidently our duty to consult first the welfare of our friend, other things being equal.

Butler's remarks on the disinterested scheme. What Bishop Butler has said on this subject in his short treatise on "Virtue," is worthy of consideration: "It deserves to be considered whether men are more at liberty, in point of morals, to make themselves miserable without reason, than to make others so; or dissolutely to neglect their own greater good for the sake of a present lesser gratification, than they are to neglect the good of others whom nature has committed to their care. It should seem that a due concern about our own interest or happiness, and a reasonable

endeavour to secure and promote it, is, I think, very much the meaning of the word prudence in our language-it should seem that this is virtue, and the contrary behaviour faulty and blamable; since in the calmest way of reflection, we approve of the first and condemn the other conduct, both in ourselves and others. This approbation and disapprobation are altogether different from mere desires of our own and their happiness, and from sorrow in missing it."

Benevolence not the whole of virtue. Again, "Without inquiring how far and in what sense virtue is resolvable into benevolence, and vice into the want of it, it may be proper to observe that benevolence and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case, in the review of one's own character, or that of others, our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to every thing but the degrees in which benevolence prevailed, and the degrees in which it was wanting. That is, we should neither approve of benevolence to some persons rather than others, nor disapprove injustice and falsehood, upon any other account, than merely as an overbalance of happiness was foreseen likely to be produced by the first, and misery by the second. But now, on the contrary, suppose two men competitors for any thing whatever, which would be of equal advantage to each of them, though nothing indeed would be more impertinent than for a stranger to busy himself to get one of them preferred to the other, yet such endeavour would be virtue, in behalf of a friend or benefactor, abstracted from all consideration of distant consequences; as that examples of gratitude and friendship, would be of general good to the world. Again, suppose one man should by fraud or violence take from another the fruit of his labour, with intent to give it to a third, who, he thought, would have as much pleasure from it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment and his vexation in the loss; suppose that no bad consequences would follow, yet such an action would surely be vicious. Nay further, were treachery, violence and injustice, no otherwise vicious than as foreseen likely to produce an overbalance of misery to society, then, if in any ease, a man could procure to himself as great advantage by an act of injustice as the whole foreseen inconvenience likely to be brought upon others by it would amount to, such a piece of injustice would not be faulty or vicious at all." "The fact then appears to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some rather than others, abstracted from all consideration of which conduct is likely to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery."

Defective definitions of virtue are dangerous. The danger of this theory is not by any means so great as that of the selfish scheme, be cause it comprehends a large part of actions which are truly virtuous. But all definitions of virtue which are not so comprehensive as to embrace the whole of moral excellence, are injurious; not only by leaving out of the catalogue of virtues such actions as properly belong to it, but by leaving men to form wrong conceptions of what is right and wrong, by applying a general rule, which is not correct, to practical cases. When it is received as a maxim that all virtue consists in seeking the happiness of the whole, and when a particular act seems to have that tendency, men are in danger of overlooking those moral distinctions by which our duty should be regulated. This effect has been observed in persons much given to theorize upon the general good as the end to be aimed at in all actions.

Edwards on Virtue. President Edwards has a treatise on Virtue, in which he enters very deeply into speculation on the principles of moral conduct. His definition of virtue has surprised all his admirers: it is, "the love of being as such." When, however, this strange definition comes to be

explained, by himself and his followers, it amounts to the same as that which we have been considering, which makes all virtue to consist in disinterested benevolence.

Hopkins. Dr. Samuel Hopkins, who was his pupil, and well understood his principles, gives this as his definition of virtue, and has it as a radical principle of his whole system. It will not therefore be necessary to make remarks on President Edwards's theory.

Nature of Virtue (Conti)

CHAPTER XXV. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE, CONTINUED. DIFFERENT HYPOTHESES.

Aristotle. ARISTOTLE'S idea of the nature of virtue was that it was a mean between two extremes. Virtue, according to him, consisted in the moderate and just exercise of all the affections and passions; and vice, in defect or excess. It would be easy to show that this definition or description is not complete. It is not sufficiently comprehensive, and includes many things not of a moral nature. But it is unnecessary to dwell on the subject, as the definition is no longer used.

Clarke. Dr. Samuel Clarke, who has a long established character as a profound thinker, attempted to give a theory of virtue, which should be free from exception. He makes virtue to consist in acting according to the fitness of things. Whatever is fit and suitable to be done, taking in all circumstances, is right. But really, this gives us no conception of that peculiarity which renders an action virtuous. It is true, all virtuous actions are fit to be done, and are actions suitable to the circumstances of the agent. But every fit action is not a virtuous action, and the fitness of many actions depends on their moral character. Their fitness, therefore, does not render them virtuous, but their being virtuous is the very thing which renders them fit.

Wollaston. Wollaston, in his "Religion of Nature Delineated," refines upon this system, and makes all virtue to consist in a conformity to truth. A virtuous action is one in accordance with the truth of things; which when it comes to be explained, amounts to much the same as Dr. Clarke's "fitness of things." Both of them include, no doubt, all virtuous actions, as they are all fit, and all in accordance with truth; but these definitions do not lead us to a conception of that quality in actions which is moral. Certainly all virtuous actions must be in accordance with truth and reason, but this is no definition of the nature of virtue; it is only a circuitous method of saying that some actions are virtuous because they have a fitness to produce a good end. This theory supposes the idea of virtue already to exist; for if the end be not good, mere fitness cannot be of the nature of virtue. There are other things which have a fitness to produce certain ends, as well as virtue. It is not mere fitness which renders an action virtuous, but adaptedness to a good end. And unless by truth we understand the same as virtue, it does not appear that a mere conformity to truth gives any conception of a moral quality, and there is as much reality in a vicious action as in one that is virtuous. On this subject Dr. Thomas Brown well observes, "Reason, then, as distinguishing the conformity or unconformity of actions with the fitness of things, or the moral truth or falsehood of actions, is not the principle from which we derive our moral sentiments. These very sentiments, on the contrary, are necessary, before we can feel that moral fitness or moral truth, according to which we are said to estimate actions as right or wrong. All actions, virtuous and vicious, have a tendency or fitness of one sort or other; and every action which the benevolent or malevolent perform, with a view to a certain end, may alike have a fitness for producing that end. There is not an action, then, which may not be in conformity with the fitness of things; and if the feelings of exclusive approbation and disapprobation, that constitute our moral emotions, be not presupposed, in spite of the thousand fitnesses which reason may have shown us, all actions must

be morally indifferent. They are not thus indifferent because the ends to which reason shows certain actions to be suitable, are ends which we have previously felt to be worthy of our moral choice; and we are virtuous in conforming our actions to these ends, not because our actions have a physical relation to the end, as the wheels and pulleys of a machine have to the motion which is to result from them; but because the desire of producing this very end, has a relation, which has been previously felt, to our moral emotion. The moral truth, in like manner, which reason is said to show us, consists in the agreement of our actions with a certain frame of mind which nature has previously distinguished to us as virtuous, without which previous distinction, the actions of the most ferocious tyrant, and of the most generous and intrepid patriot, would be equally true, as alike indicative of the real nature of the oppressor of a nation, and of the assertor and guardian of its rights." The fitness and the truth, then, in every case, presuppose virtue as an object of moral sentiment.

Adam Smith. The system of Dr. Adam Smith, contained in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments," is very plausible, as stated by its ingenious author, and has captivated many minds, by leading them to believe that the origin of our moral feelings is to be found in the principle of sympathy. According to this able writer, we do not feel the approbation or disapprobation, immediately on the contemplation of virtuous or vicious actions. It is necessary first to go through another process, by which we enter into the feelings of the agent, and of those to whom the actions are related, in their consequences, beneficial or injurious. If, on considering all the circumstances in which the agent was placed, we feel a complete sympathy with the feelings by which he was actuated, and with the gratitude or resentment of him who was the object of the action, we approve of the action as right; or disapprove it as wrong, if our sympathies are of the opposite kind. Our sense of the propriety of the action depends on our sympathy with the agent, and our sense of the merit of the agent, on our sympathy with the object of the action. In sympathizing with the gratitude of others, we regard the agent as worthy of reward; in sympathizing with the resentment of others, we regard him as worthy of punishment. When we judge of our own conduct, the foregoing process is in some measure reversed; or rather, by a process still more refined, we imagine others sympathizing with us, and sympathize with their sympathy. We consider how our conduct would appear to an impartial spectator; we approve of it if we feel that he would approve; we disapprove it if we think that he would disapprove. According to Dr. Smith, we are able to form a judgment as to our own conduct, because we have previously judged of the moral conduct of others; that is, have sympathized with the feelings of others. And but for the supposed presence of some impartial spectator, as a mirror to represent us to ourselves, we should as little have known the beauty or deformity of our own moral character, as we should have known the beauty or ugliness of our own features without some mirror to reflect them to our eye. The hypothesis fanciful. That a principle so irregular and capricious as that of sympathy should be made the origin of all our moral distinctions and feelings, is indeed wonderful. One might be tempted to suspect that the gifted author intended to select a subject merely for the display of his ingenuity in framing and defending a plausible hypothesis, and playing on the credulity of his readers.

Untenable. The great error of this hypothesis is one which is common to most others on this subject: it takes for granted the existence of those moral feelings which are supposed to flow from sympathy-yea, their existence previous to that very sympathy in which they are said to originate. When we suppose this previous moral feeling, it is easy to understand how we are led to approve

of actions when we feel sympathy with the agent; but the most complete sympathy of feeling is not sufficient to account for the existence of moral approbation or disapprobation. When there is nothing more than a sympathy of feelings, without the previous moral sentiment, no such exercise as that which Dr. Smith supposes could ever arise; so that the process which he describes as originating our moral sentiments, never could take place, unless there existed previously a moral feeling in the mind. Assumes what is sought to be explained. In contemplating the beauties of nature or art, we may have a complete feeling of sympathy with another person, our feelings may be in the most exact accordance, and yet no moral approbation of his sentiment of the beautiful be experienced. But if mere agreement in our emotions would give rise to moral feeling, it ought to arise vividly in this case, where the emotions may be strong and in perfect accordance. "Why is it," says Dr. Brown, "that we regard emotions which do not harmonize with our own, not merely as unlike to ours, but as morally improper? It must surely be because we regard our emotions which differ from them as proper. And if we regard our own emotions as proper before we can judge the emotions which do not harmonize with them to be improper on that account, what influence can the supposed sympathy and comparison have had in giving birth to that moral sentiment which preceded the comparison? The sympathy, therefore, on which the feeling of propriety is said to depend, assumes the previous belief of that very propriety. Or, if there be no previous belief of the moral suitableness of our own emotions, there can be no reason from the mere dissonance of other emotions with ours to regard these dissonant emotions as morally unsuitable in the circumstances in which they have arisen."

Inadequate and defective. The theory of Dr. Smith not only includes the sympathy which we feel with the agent of an action, but also with the feelings of gratitude or resentment in the object of the action, as it may affect others with benefit or injury. If we feel that in similar circumstances our emotions would sympathize with theirs, we regard the agent in the same light in which they regard him as worthy of regard in one case, and of punishment in the other; that is, as having moral merit or demerit. It is evident that this is an inadequate and defective account of merit and demerit; for it confines these qualities to actions which relate to the welfare of others; but all impartial men judge that actions of a different kind may have merit or demerit. If a man, from a sincere desire of improvement in virtue, is led to deny himself habitually such gratification of his senses and appetites as would interfere with his progress, and to submit to a course of discipline to overcome evil habits, which is both difficult and painful, and yet perseveres in the midst of numerous temptations to relax, until he has obtained a complete victory over himself; who would say that there is nothing in all this to call forth moral approbation? But the actions have no respect to the happiness of others; there is no gratitude or resentment with which the observer can sympathize.

Theory of conformity to the will of God. That theory which considers conformity to the will of God to be virtue, is undoubtedly correct; for that faculty in us which approves of virtuous actions was implanted by Him, and is an induction of his will. As soon as we get the idea of a God we cannot but feel that it is the duty of all creatures to be conformed to his will. But if the question be whether, in judging an action to be virtuous, it is necessary to consider distinctly of its conformity to the will of God, we are of opinion that this conception is not necessary to enable us to perceive that certain actions are morally good and others morally evil. In order to this judgment nothing is required but a knowledge of the circumstances and motives of the action. Even the atheist cannot avoid the conviction that particular actions are praiseworthy, and others deserving blame. Dictates

of conscience strengthened by Theism. But though belief in the existence of God is not necessary to the exercise of the moral faculty, yet this belief adds great force to the dictates of conscience, and enables us to account for the existence of a faculty by which we discern qualities so opposite in the actions of moral agents. Indeed, to know that our conduct should be conformed to the will of God, supposes the existence of a moral faculty, of which this is one of the intuitive judgments. If we had no moral faculty, the obligation to be conformed to the will of God would not be felt. But intuitive moral perceptions have not this basis. It is true, undoubtedly, that it may be inferred from clear data, that ultimately all duty and all virtuous actions may be referred to the will of God as the standard by which they should be tried. Our original intuitive perception of the moral character of certain actions does not, however, take in this idea, but is an immediate judgment of the mind upon observing such actions. Morality is a quality seen in the actions themselves.

Morality is presupposed. If the question be asked, why we should be conformed to the will of God? the answer is, because it is right,-morally right. We must then have a faculty of judging respecting moral obligation before we can know and feel that conformity to the will of God is right.

Nature of Virtue (conti)

CHAPTER XXVI. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE. CONTINUED.

Virtue. VIRTUE is a peculiar quality of certain actions of a moral agent, which quality is perceived by the moral faculty with which every man is endued; and the perception of which is accompanied by an emotion which is distinct from all other emotions, and is called moral. This quality being of a nature perfectly simple, does not admit of being logically defined, any more than the colour of the grass, the taste of honey, the odour of a rose, or the melody of tune.

Vice. As some actions are morally good, which are virtuous; so there are other actions which are morally evil, or vicious. The perception of these, also, is accompanied by a feeling of a moral kind, The judgment immediate but very different from that which accompanies the view of virtuous actions.

Virtue, then, may be said to be that quality in certain actions which is perceived by a rational mind to be good; and vice, or sin, is that which a well-constituted and well-informed mind sees to be evil. The moral faculty necessary. Whatever may be the rule or standard of virtuous actions, the immediate judgment of the moral faculty on contemplating the act is necessary. Without a moral faculty we never could have the least idea of a moral quality, good or bad; therefore all actions must be brought before this faculty, and its judgment is ultimate. We can go no further. While the good or evil of some actions is self-evident, much discrimination and reasoning are requisite to arrive at a clear view of the true moral character of others. But the end of these processes is to bring the true nature of the action in question fairly before the mind, when it is judged by the moral faculty. Those actions, then, which a sound and well-informed mind judges to be morally good, are virtuous, and those which such a mind judges or feels to be evil, are sinful. The moral judgment is peculiar. As has already been explained when treating of conscience, the judgment of the mind respecting moral qualities, is the judgment of the understanding, and differs from other judgments only by the subject under consideration. The mind must possess the faculty of moral perception, of which all the inferior animals are destitute. To see that an action is useful, and will produce happiness to him that performs it, or to others, is one thing; but to perceive that it is morally good, is quite a distinct idea; and virtue and mere utility should never be confounded. It may be thought that this account of virtue makes the moral faculty the only standard of moral excellence. In one sense, this is true. It is impossible for us to judge any action to be virtuous, which does not approve itself when fairly contemplated by our moral sense. To suppose otherwise, would be to think that we had some other faculty by which to judge of moral actions than the moral faculty. Whether infallible. As no judgment of colours can be formed but by the eye, nor of sounds but by the ear, nor of odours and tastes out by the senses of smelling and tasting; so no judgment can be formed on moral subjects, but by the moral faculty. It may be asked, then, whether the judgments of this faculty are infallible, and if so, how it is that we have so many discrepant opinions, respecting the morality of actions. To which it may be answered, that when the mind is in a sound state, and any moral action is presented to it, with all the circumstances which belong to it, the

judgment of this faculty is always correct and uniform in all men. As an eye in a sound state judges infallibly of colours, in which judgment all in precisely the same circumstances will agree in their perceptions; so it is in regard to moral qualities. If in looking at an object, one man has more light than another, or if one occupies a more favourable point of observation, the object will appear differently to the persons thus situated; but this does not argue that their eyes are differently constructed, or that there is any other faculty than the eye, by which the object may be surveyed. So, in regard to moral qualities, when they are presented to different minds with precisely the same evidence, the moral judgment will be the same. Discrepant judgments, whence. The differences observable in the dictates of the consciences of men, may be all traced to some cause which prevents the object from being perceived in its true light; such as ignorance, error, or prejudice. In regard to sin and duty, the ultimate appeal must be to conscience. We may bring considerations of various kinds to bear on the conscience, or to enlighten the mind, so that the moral faculty may be rightly guided; but still our ultimate rule must be the judgments of our own moral faculty.

New relations occasion views of new duties. And here it may be remarked, that conscience will recognise every new relation into which a moral agent enters, and will dictate the obligation to perform the duties obviously arising out of such relations. Or, if such an agent should for a time be ignorant of its relations, and afterwards discover them, it would, upon such discovery, feel an obligation not before experienced. Let us then suppose the case of a child educated in a cave, who, while the intellectual powers were cultivated, and the faculties developed, had never been informed respecting the existence of its parents and the relation it sustains to them. Of course, while in this state of ignorance, there would be no sense of obligation to them; but so soon as the nature of this relation should be clearly made known, the obligation to the obvious duties arising out of this relation, would immediately be felt. Let it be supposed, also, that this human being, until grown to maturity, had never heard of God, and of course possessed no idea of such a being. Duty of a creature as such. While in that state of ignorance, it could have no sense of the obligation to reverence, love and serve its Creator; but as soon as the mind should take in distinctly, the conception of God as the Author of its being, and as possessed of every adorable attribute, the duties arising out of this newly-discovered relation, would be felt to be obligatory. The will of God seen to be obligatory. A just consideration of this relation would lead to the conclusion that, in every thing, the will of such a Being, standing in such a relation to the creature, should be obeyed. Thus the important principle would be learned, that the will of God, so far as made known by reason or revelation, should be the supreme rule of moral conduct. Conscience, henceforth, would act under the influence of this truth. And making the will of God-so far as made known-the supreme and only rule of moral conduct, would not be found at all inconsistent with the obligation to obey the dictates of conscience; for it would now become evident that God, being the author of our minds, had constituted them with this moral faculty, to admonish them of duty, so that the dictates of an enlightened conscience are the clear indications of the law or will of God. It is the law written on the hearts of all men.

Virtue predicable only of objects of moral approbation. Nothing can be considered as partaking of the nature of virtue which does not meet with the approbation of the moral faculty. This will by some be thought a dangerous principle, merely from a misapprehension of its nature. They allege that the will of God is the only perfect and immutable standard of moral rectitude. They allege,

moreover, that to define virtue to be only such actions as the moral faculty in man approves, is to make it a very uncertain and fluctuating thing, depending on the variable and discrepant moral feelings of men.

Answer to objection. This objection confounds two things which should be kept distinct, viz., the quality of an object and the light or medium through which it is viewed. The colour of an object can be perceived only by the eye; but in order to have the object fairly before the eye, there must be light reflected from it, and that light on entering the pupil, must be reflected so as to be conveyed to a focus on the retina. But without an eye it would be useless to descant ever so long or so learnedly on the nature of colours, or the laws by which light is reflected and refracted. In the case of sight, it is evident that all the perception which is experienced, must be by the eye. If the light is insufficient, it must be increased, and if any cause hinders it from being duly refracted, vision will not take place; but still, it is only by the eye that we can have any perception of colours.

Analogy of taste. Perhaps an illustration, drawn from the faculty of taste, may be more appropriate. A beautiful landscape is presented; I am charmed with its beauty. This emotion or feeling of the beautiful depends on the faculty of taste. If that were absent, I might see all the objects as they stand, and perceive nothing of the beautiful. Beauty in the works of nature or art can be perceived only by taste, and the emotion will depend on the perfection of the faculty, provided the object is presented in a favourable light. A person of cultivated taste sees beauties where a rude savage sees none. Thus also in regard to moral acts, or a connected series of moral actions, every idea and feeling of a moral kind must as necessarily be through the moral faculty as colours through the organ of vision. We have no other faculty which takes cognizance of moral qualities. The judgments and emotions which are produced by the contemplation of such actions, are always infallibly correct, when the mind is duly enlightened and the faculty itself in a sound and healthy state. There is no inconsistency between this opinion and that which considers the will of God as the real standard and ultimate rule of moral conduct.

Moral feelings dependent on the dictates of understanding. For, as has been shown, although conscience can act within a narrow sphere without even the knowledge or belief of a God; yet so soon as this knowledge is obtained, and the mind recognises its relation to its Creator, a new field is opened for the operations of conscience. It is soon perceived that the clear dictates of conscience, in cases of self-evident truth, are nothing else than the indication of the law of God written on the heart of every man, as was before taught. We can refer to the will of God as a rule of moral conduct no other way than by the exercise of the moral faculty, by which it is clearly perceived that our Creator and Preserver has a just claim on our obedience, and ought in all things to be obeyed. But if conscience did not thus dictate, all appeals to the will of God, to show what is morally right, would be in vain. The certainty and immutability of our moral standard of rectitude will then be in proportion to the knowledge which the mind possesses of the existence of God and the creature's relation to Him. Instead, therefore, of making our moral feelings mere instinctive emotions, as is done by Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, we make them depend on the clear dictates of the understanding; for, as we have often explained, the judgments of conscience are no other than the understanding judging on moral subjects.

Evil of attempting undue simplification. If that, and that alone is virtue, which is approved by a mind duly enlightened, and in a sound state, then the attempt to reduce all virtuous actions to some one

kind-as to benevolence, for example-is not the way to arrive at the truth. For while benevolent actions generally meet with the approbation of the moral faculty, we can easily conceive of an exercise of benevolence which, instead of being approved, would be viewed as morally indifferent, or merely amiable-as a natural affection, or even as evil. We never ascribe morality to the kind feeling of brutes to one another. The natural affection of parents, called storge by the Greeks, is no more of a moral nature than the same affection in inferior animals. The natural affection of our relatives, our neighbours, and countrymen, is amiable and useful, but not of a moral character. If a judge should feel a strong benevolence toward all criminals, so as to avoid inflicting on them the penalty of the wholesome laws of the country, we should judge it wicked. It might be said that a benevolence which counteracts a greater good, is not virtuous but sinful; yet it is an exercise of benevolence, and serves, on the concession of those who make all virtue to consist in benevolence, to show that all benevolence is not virtue, which is the very thing to be proved. Again, there are acts of moral agents, which have nothing of the nature of benevolence, yet which the moral faculty judges to be morally good. For example, if a man for the sake of moral improvement, denies himself some gratification which would in itself be pleasing to nature, we judge such self-denial to be virtuous.

Prudence a Virtue. A thousand acts of prudence which have regard to our own best interests, without interfering with the interest of others, have always been reckoned virtuous. Indeed, among the ancient sages, prudence was one of the four cardinal virtues. The attempt, therefore, to reduce all virtue to the simple exercise of benevolence, must be unsuccessful. It is so evident that some actions which have our own welfare as their object, are virtuous, that rather than give up their theory that all virtue consists in benevolence, they enlarge the meaning of the word, so as to make it include a due regard to our own welfare. But this is really to acknowledge that all virtue does not consist in benevolence, according to the usual meaning of that word. Any term may be made to stand for the whole of virtue, if you choose to impose an arbitrary meaning upon it. Benevolent affections, however, is a phrase which has as fixed and definite a meaning as any in the language, and by all good writers is used for good will to others. Benevolent affections are, therefore, constantly distinguished from such as are selfish. If, however, any one chooses, contrary to universal usage, to employ the words in a sense so comprehensive as to include self-love, be it so. We will not dispute with such a one, about the meaning of the word, provided he agree that the judicious pursuit of our own improvement and happiness is virtuous.

Actions to be classified. To determine how many different kinds of actions are virtuous, we must pass them in review before the moral faculty, and then classify them; being in the whole process governed by the light of true knowledge, and taking into view all the relations in which the human race, or any portion of it, is placed. Something of this kind we may attempt in the sequel of this work; in which we shall endeavour to survey the moral duties incumbent on men, in their various relations.

Whether Virtue and Vice belong only to actions?

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHETHER VIRTUE AND VICE BELONG ONLY TO ACTIONS.

Moral acts are complex. IT has repeatedly been brought into view that moral qualities are found only in actions of moral agents, and not in all actions, but only in those performed under certain circumstances. But when we consider those actions which are of a moral nature, we find that they are complex, consisting of an external and internal part. At once we can determine that a mere external or corporeal action can possess no morality, except as connected with the internal or mental exercise which produced it, and of which it is the exponent. But here again there are several acts of the mind clearly distinguishable from one another, and it is of importance to determine in which of these the moral quality exists. On this subject there is a diversity of opinion. It seems commonly to be taken for granted, that the act of volition is, so to speak, the responsible act, and this has led to the maxim almost universally current, that "no action is of a moral nature which is not voluntary." Moral acts voluntary. Accordingly, writers of great eminence have entertained the opinion, that to render our desires and affections moral, they must directly or indirectly proceed from volition. But here arises a serious difficulty. Our desires and affections are not subject to our volitions. Desires not subject to volition. We may will with all our energy to love an object now odious, and our will produces no manner of effect; except to show us our inability to change our affections by the force of the will. On the contrary, we find by constant experience that our volitions are influenced uniformly by our prevailing desires. No man ever put forth a volition which was not the effect of some desire, feeling, or inclination. Now, after the most attentive examination of our minds, we find that certain affections which are neither produced by volitions nor terminate in volitions, are, in the judgment of all reflecting men, of a moral nature. Yet desires have moral quality. For example, envy at the prosperity of a neighbour is not the result of any volition, and it may be cherished inwardly without leading to any volition, the will being controlled by other feelings which prevent action; yet all must admit it to be a morally evil disposition. The truth then appears to be, that our affections are properly the subject of moral qualities, good and evil. Whence volition has its quality. Volitions take their character entirely from the internal affections or desires from which they proceed. The volition, viewed abstractly, is always the same, when the external action is the same; but the moral character of the acts, where the volitions are the same, may vary exceedingly. If I will to strike a man with a deadly weapon, the simple volition which precedes and is the immediate cause of the action, is the same whether I give the stroke in self-defence, in execution of the law, or through malice prepense. Indeed, the volition of an insane person to strike a blow is exactly similar to the volition of a sane person striking a similar blow. Hence it is evident that the proper seat of moral qualities is not in the will, considered as distinct from the affections, but in the affections themselves, which give character to the volition as much as to the external action. The true spring of actions. These internal affections or desires are properly the springs of our actions, and our wills are the executive power by which they are carried into effect. They are commonly called motives, and very properly, as they move us to action;

Motives. but I have avoided the use of that word, because it is ambiguous, and has occasioned much misconception on this subject. By motives, many understand reasons or external qualities in the objects of our desires; that which excites or moves our affections. Then when it is asserted that the will is governed by the strongest motives, some understand the meaning to be the strongest reasons, or those qualities in an object best adapted to excite our affections. In this sense the proposition is not true. Whether governed by the strongest reasons. Minds are often in such a state that they are not governed by that reason which in their own view is the strongest; that is, which in their better judgment seems wisest and best. And often our minds are not influenced or governed by those external objects or considerations which in the judgment of impartial reason are most weighty. In what sense will follows the strongest motives. But if by motives be understood the desires themselves, actually in exercise at the time, however produced, then it may be truly said that the will is always determined by the strongest motives, that is, the strongest desires. But even this proposition needs qualification. The strongest single desire does not always govern the man, but the strongest combination of desires, as may be thus exemplified. A man in returning from a journey on a cold day has a strong desire to reach home without delay; but passing a house where he knows he can enjoy a warm fire, and good refreshment, and the company of a friend, though his desire to reach home is stronger than his desire to see his friend, stronger than his desire to enjoy the fire, or his desire for food or drink, yet all these combined prove sufficient to induce him to stop.

Morality of an act from its intention. It is often said that the intention or end for which an action is performed, determines its moral character; and as our desires always point to some object which is the end of the action, this account of the matter coincides with the view already given. As if a man gives money to another, though we see the action, and are sure that it was voluntary, yet that determines nothing respecting the moral character of the action. Before we can judge any thing correctly, we must know the intention with which the act was performed. If it was to pay a just debt, we approve it as a moral act, but of small merit. If it was to supply the wants of a poor suffering family, unable to help themselves, we still approve, but our approbation is much stronger; the act is more meritorious than the former. But if we are informed that the person on whom the benefit was conferred was an enemy who had sought every opportunity to injure him who is now his benefactor, we esteem it the highest degree of Christian virtue. But if it should appear that the money was given to a common drunkard, to enable him to procure intoxicating drink; though the external act and volition are the same, instead of approving the action, we censure it as culpable. And finally, if it should appear that the intention was to hire an assassin to murder an innocent person, and that person a benefactor, our emotion rises to the highest degree, and we reprobate the action as evil in the extreme. In all these cases, the action and the volition producing it, are the same. The only difference is in the end or intention with which it was done. The assertion qualified. The intention will serve to characterize actions very well, but is not comprehensive enough to take in all the exercises of mind which possess a moral character. I feel habitually a kind disposition to my fellow-creatures, but for much of my time I have not the opportunity of performing any particular acts of kindness. All impartial persons will say that this habitual feeling is of a virtuous character; but there is no intention in the case. It is merely a feeling which terminates in no volition or action.

Intention not comprehensive enough. My neighbour, who has been a bad man, undergoes a real change of character, and from being profane and quarrelsome, becomes pious and peaceable. I rejoice in the change. This joy is a virtuous emotion, though it has no intention accompanying it. This will serve to show that making the intention the sole characteristic of morality, is correct in regard to actions, but is not comprehensive enough to take in the whole of morality.

Objection. It may seem that in what has been said, we contravene the maxim, that all moral actions are voluntary, a maxim which has received the sanction of ages, and may be considered an intuitive principle: whereas it is now maintained that there are exercises of mind which do not involve any exercise of will; and that our volitions themselves have nothing of a moral nature but what they derive from the motives from which they proceed. The maxim admitted. The maxim, rightly understood, is no doubt just, and we should never affect the wisdom of being wiser than the common sense of mankind, where we meet with truths in which all men of sober reflection have been agreed. It is safer to take them for granted, as believing that universal consent in such matters furnishes the best evidence of truth. The objection removed. But the explanation is easy. The maxim applies primarily to actions, which must be voluntary to have the character of morality. If the action is not voluntary, it is not properly the action of the person who seems to perform it, for we can act in no other way than by the will.

Ambiguity of term voluntary. But again, the word voluntary as employed in the maxim under consideration, includes more than volition; it comprehends all the spontaneous exercises of the mind; that is, all its affections and emotions. Formerly all these were included under the word will, and we still use language that requires this latitude in the construction of the term. Scholastic acceptation of Will. Thus it would be consonant to the best usage to say that man is perfectly voluntary in loving his friend or hating his enemy; but by this is not meant that these affections are the effect of volition, but only that they are the free spontaneous exercises of the mind. That all virtue consists in volition, is not true-as we have seen; but that all virtuous exercises are spontaneous, is undoubtedly correct. Our moral character radically consists in our feelings and desires. These being the spontaneous actings of certain latent principles or dispositions, this hidden disposition is also judged to be morally evil, because it is productive of such fruit. And of good dispositions we judge in like manner.

Creator in relation to Moral Science

CHAPTER XXVIII. THE AUTHOR OF OUR BEING CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO MORAL SCIENCE

Preceding truths lead to argument for a Supreme Being. IT has already been intimated, that the very existence of conscience seems to indicate, that man has a Superior to whom he is amenable for his conduct. The feeling of moral obligation which accompanies every perception of right and wrong, seems to imply, that man is under law; for what is moral obligation but a moral law? And if we are under a law there must be a lawgiver, a moral governor, who has incorporated the elements of his law into our very constitution. This argument for the existence of God, is solid, and independent of all other arguments; and it goes further than arguments derived from the evidences of design; which abound in the world around us; for these prove no more than that the Author of our being is intelligent, but this argument proves that he is a moral Being, and exercises a moral government over us. The Atheist, when he feels, as he must, remorse for some great crime, can scarcely help believing, that there is a God who is displeased with his wicked conduct, and who will punish him hereafter; for the keen anguish of remorse seems to point to a punishment which is future. Hence it is that when Atheists come into those circumstances which have a tendency to awaken the conscience, they for the time become believers in the existence of God. Atheism practically recanted. Thus in a storm at sea, even the most confirmed Atheist has been found calling upon God, for deliverance; and when death is suddenly presented to them, they often find, that their atheistical theories cannot withstand the power of an awakened conscience. Certainly the existence of an accusing conscience cannot in any way be so well accounted for, as by the supposition that man is the creature of a Being who intended to form him in such a manner, that he should have a control over his actions, and who has left an indelible proof of his authority in the mind of every man.

Argument against Atheism. But omitting to press this argument further at present, let us attend to some of the other evidences of the existence of a God. No one can contend that there is anything absurd in the idea of an eternal, all-powerful, intelligent, First Cause, from whom all things have received their being. No one can doubt that the supposition of the existence of such a Being seems to account for the phenomena of nature; and it is equally certain, that they cannot be rationally accounted for on any other hypothesis.

Teleiologic argument. To deny that in animals and vegetables there are evident marks of design, would be as unreasonable as to deny that any thing exists. Thus the eye was formed to see, the ear to hear, the mouth to masticate our food, the stomach to digest it, the various internal organs to separate the particles suited for nutrition from the mass, and by a wonderful and inexplicable process to convert, or assimilate these particles into the various forms and organs which constitute the human body. For any man to affirm that in all these contrivances and operations, there is no evidence of design, is certainly to contradict the intimate conviction of his own reason. It may on many accounts be expedient and highly profitable, to accumulate arguments from design, as

manifested in the rational, animal, vegetable, and mineral world; A few instances of design sufficient. but for mere argument and demonstration, these details are unnecessary. A man cast away on a desolate shore, would be as certain that some rational beings had been there, if he found one watch, or one quadrant, as if he should see a thousand of such like or other works of art, strewed along the shore. His mind is soon satisfied with the force of this evidence, as observed in a few particulars, and the conviction of the truth, that these things are the effect of a designing cause, is as perfect as it can be, by the contemplation of ever so many instances. It may, I think be taken for granted, and even Atheists will admit, that we cannot conceive of any works, or contrivances, which would more clearly evince design, than those which are found in the human, and other animal bodies. Chance. Though it is said that some ancient Atheists attributed every thing to chance, yet it seems unnecessary to take up much time in combating such a theory. Atheists no longer resort to this very absurd notion. As then design manifest in any effect, leads necessarily to the conclusion, that intelligence exists in the cause; there is no escape from the conclusion, that the cause of the existence of animals and vegetables is a wise and powerful Being, but by one of the following suppositions. 1. That every thing in which design is manifest, has existed from eternity; or, 2. That there are in the material universe, causes possessing power and intelligence to produce these effects, but no one great intelligent person; or, 3. That there has existed from eternity a succession of these organized beings, producing one another in a continued series; so that while the individuals in the series perish, the succession is eternal. The first supposition is too extravagant, we should think, to have any advocates. Indeed, as it relates to the bodies of animals and vegetables, we have a certain demonstration, that their organization has a beginning. 1. Eternity of the universe. And if every thing was from eternity, every thing would be immutable and imperishable; but we see every kind of organized bodies tending quickly to destruction. Our souls also had a beginning, for their gradual increase and development is a matter of daily observation. We have no remembrance of an eternal existence, nor any consciousness of independence, which must be an attendant of an eternal being. We are conscious that we cannot cease to be, nor control our own destiny. Nothing is more certain in the mind of all thinking men, than that we who now live are creatures of yesterday. But it is unnecessary to refute an error which perhaps no one is so unreasonable as to hold.

2. The hypothethesis of evolution. Let us then consider that atheistical, or rather pantheistical scheme, which attributes all the appearances of design in the world to the world itself; that is, to certain causes existing in the world which produce beings of various species, not by creation out of nothing, which they hold to be impossible, but by an evolution or development of principles contained in the world itself. According to this theory the world is God, and all things are parts of this one being.

Denies a personal God. This theory would avoid the name of Atheism, which has ever been odious; but it retains the virus of the poison of Atheism under another name. It admits a cause, or rather multitude of causes, capable of producing these marks of design; but denies that this cause, considered as one or many, is a person. Personality. The question necessary to be determined is, what is necessary to constitute a person? Here we have intelligence in the cause, in the highest conceivable degree. But the structure of the body of man is not mere intelligence; there is an adaptation of means to an end. This supposes the exercise of choice or selection, which is obviously an exercise of will. Every instance of contrivance therefore evinces the exercise of an

intellect and will; and that being in which these two properties are found, we are accustomed to denominate a person. A single cause demanded. It would be difficult to find a better definition of a person. But we need not dispute about the name; when there is manifest evidence of wise contrivance in the effect, there must be an intelligent cause to produce such an effect. Where, we ask, is that cause? Is it in the individual which exhibits these signs of design? That would be to make the same thing cause and effect. Is there then for each individual in which wise contrivance appears a particular cause; or is nature or the world to be considered one general cause, operating in a multitude of ways? To suppose a particular cause for every one of these effects, would be to multiply deities beyond the wildest mythology of the heathen; for these causes being intelligent beings, possessing a wisdom beyond our conception, each is properly considered a separate deity. But even this supposition comes utterly short of furnishing a satisfactory account of the phenomena of the universe; for the admirable contrivances in the natural world consist very often in the adaptation of things which are entirely distinct, to each other, as of the light to the eye, the air to the ear and to the lungs, the food to the stomachs of the various species of animals, & c. The same adaptation is equally obvious in the vegetable world. That cause, therefore, which produced the eye must have produced the light; and the cause of the curiously-contrived apparatus of hearing must have formed the air; and the author of the stomach must have adapted it to various kinds of food, & c. The hypothesis of an infinite number of separate, intelligent causes, will not be maintained. All these effects must be attributed to one cause, and that cause must be infinitely wise and powerful, to give existence to so many wonderful works.

Attributes required in this sole Cause. If, then, there is one cause of all these different species of beings, which could not exist without wise contrivance, that cause must be powerful, intelligent and benevolent; but power, wisdom, and intelligence can exist only in some being, and that being which possesses them must be a person. The Pantheist will allege that these attributes belong to the universe itself, and therefore there is no need to suppose any being to exist separate from, and independent of the world. All these phenomena arising, are only the developments of this one substance, in which the attributes before mentioned have their seat. The Pantheistic reply examined. Before we receive such an opinion, let us inquire what constitutes the universe, as far as our knowledge can extend. We become acquainted with the world without us by our senses. Trusting to the information of these inlets of knowledge, we find that the universe consists, as far as known to the senses, of peculiar objects, combined together in various ways. These material things, though subject to peculiar laws, appear entirely destitute of intelligence. In this, all men agree. The light, the air, the water, the rocks, the earth, the metals, & c., are not capable of thought. Indeed, every material thing with which we are acquainted consists of an infinite number of parts, even when of the same kind, and no otherwise related to each other than that they are situated near to each other; whether they are at all in contact, we do not know. If thought belonged to matter, each of these infinitesimal particles of matter would be a conscious being, and his consciousness be independent of every other particle. By what medium of communication could these particles of matter agree on forming an organized body? But the Pantheist does not believe that matter is endued with thought. His theory is, that in the world there exists not only external substance, but thought or intelligence in the same substance. But as this intelligence must have a subject in which it resides, and of which it is a quality, and as it cannot be an attribute of brute matter, there must exist a substance distinct from matter, of which it is a property. Matter being divisible, inert, and extended, cannot have intelligence as an attribute, which is active, indivisible,

and unextended. Extension, and thought, therefore, cannot be properties of the same substance. If then the cause of the phenomena of nature which indicate design is in the world itself, the world must, besides the gross matter which we see and feel, be possessed of a soul, or spiritual substance, in which this intelligence resides. This would bring us to the old Pagan theory of the Soul of the World. Under the material part, but under this only, there is a spiritual substance, a soul; just as in a man, we can see and feel the body, but we know that within this case, there exists a spiritual substance or soul. This theory, then, admits the existence of a great spirit, possessing the attributes necessary to account for all the appearances of wisdom in the world. It differs from the common theistical doctrine only in this, that it would confine this being to the world; but for this, there could be assigned no valid reason. A being-possessing such power over matter as to mould it into every organized form found in animals, vegetables, and minerals, must have a complete control over matter, and be perfectly acquainted with all its most hidden properties and capabilities, and must be independent of matter, and must exist every where, to carry on the processes of nature. And as we do not know the extent of the material universe, we can set no limits to the presence of this spiritual, intelligent and omnipotent being. The object of Pantheism is to get clear of the idea of a personal God, who gives laws to creatures, and superintends and governs them according to their natures. But the hypothesis, if it could be established, does not answer the purpose for which it was devised. Still, even according to the hypothesis, we must have a personal God, who knows all things and rules over all.

3. Eternal succession. The only other atheistical method of accounting for the phenomena of the world, as indicating the most consummate wisdom, as well as the most omnipotent power, is the hypothesis, that the universe in its present form has existed from eternity, and that all the various species of animals and vegetables now observed have always existed, and have communicated existence to one another in an endless series. And as an eternal series has no beginning, it can have no cause. There is therefore no need of supposing any first cause, from whom every thing has proceeded. As we must suppose some being to exist from eternity, we may as well suppose that the world which we see is that eternal being.

Fortress of Atheism. This has always been the stronghold of atheism, and therefore deserves a more special attention. The only reason, however, which gives an advantage to this theory is, that it carries us back into the unfathomable depths of eternity, where our minds are confounded by the incomprehensibility of the subject. It is also to be regretted that some truly great men, in attempting to refute this theory, have adopted a mode of reasoning which is not satisfactory. This, we think, is true with respect to Bentley, who possessed a gigantic intellect; and, as might have been expected, many are his followers. Dr.; Samuel Clarke has also pursued a course in his reasoning on this point, which, to say the least, is not entirely free from objection. The same may be said of many others, and especially of some who have attempted a mathematical demonstration of the falsehood of an infinite series of living organized beings, including the celebrated Stapher.

Argument against eternal series. It will be an object, therefore, to free the subject as much as possible from intricacy and obscurity, and to present arguments which shall be level to any common capacity accustomed to attend to a train of reasoning. We may certainly assume it as an admitted principle, that every effect must have not only a cause, but an adequate cause. If wise contrivance and evident adaptation of means to an end be found in the effect, to ascribe it to an unintelligent cause, is as unsatisfactory as to assign no cause. An adequate cause still

indispensable. This then being assumed, we would take this position as incontrovertible, that if design manifest in one effect requires an intelligent cause, the same necessity requires the same kind of a cause for any number of similar effects; and the conclusion must be the same, whether the number is finite or infinite. This evident truth has been often and happily illustrated, by supposing a chain suspended before our eyes, but reaching beyond the sphere of our vision. The lowest link requires a support, and so does the second, and there is no less need of support for every successive link as you ascend the chain; and if you suppose as many links beyond your sight, as there are atoms in the universe, still the same necessity of a support is presumed to exist. There must ultimately be a support for all these suspended links. No relief from making series of effects infinite. But suppose some one to allege that the chain is of infinite length, and has no beginning, we immediately begin to experience some confusion of ideas. We attempt to grasp infinity, and finding ourselves baffled in the attempt, we are apt to lose sight of the proper logical conclusion in this case. The necessity of a supporting power has no dependence on the number to be sustained. If one, if one hundred, if one thousand require support, so does any number of links. The conclusion is not in the smallest degree affected by the number, except that the more links, the stronger must be the supporting power; but this has nothing to do with our present argument. The conclusion will be of the same kind, and will as necessarily follow, in the case of effects which have in them the marks of design. The number cannot affect the conclusion. If one such effect cannot exist without an intelligent contriver, an infinite number of great effects cannot. If multiplying one cipher, or zero, by any number in arithmetic, produces nothing, and the same is the result of multiplying a thousand ciphers, the conclusion is inevitable, that an infinite number of ciphers multiplied by any number cannot result in any positive quantity. Indeed, if all the individuals in the supposed infinite series are of the same kind, all are effects, and it is absurd to conceive of an effect without a cause. Cause and effect are correlative and imply each other; and if an effect cannot exist without a cause, much less can an infinite number of effects exist without an adequate cause.

Cause must be existing and operative. My next argument will leave out of view altogether the idea of infinity, which is so apt to confound the mind. It is this. Every effect must not only have a cause, but that cause must be in existence and operation; for it would be absurd to think of a cause operating, when it no longer had an active existence. Let us then take that individual of a series of organized beings which came last into existence. Let it be an animal—a dog or horse. This individual we know came recently into being; when produced there must have been an adequate cause in existence and in operation. What was that cause? The hypothesis confines us to the preceding series of animals of the same species, supposed to have come down in uninterrupted succession from eternity. But whether the series be long or short, finite or infinite, is of no consequence as it relates to our present argument. What we are inquiring after is a cause in existence at the time this curiously organized and animated being came into existence. Now at that time, the individuals of the series had all ceased to exist, except the immediate progenitors. Whatever cause existed, cannot therefore be looked for in them; and if the effect is such as manifestly to be beyond any power and skill which they possessed, the contriving and efficient cause cannot be found in the series. There must be a higher cause. The whole power of the cause must be carried through the series. But lest some persons should have a vague notion that some hidden power might be communicated through the series, although not found in the progenitors of the animal under consideration, I will lay down a principle which is admitted in mechanical powers,

and is equally applicable to all causes. It is this. In all cases where any power is communicated through a series of individuals, the whole power necessary to produce the effect, must not only be communicated to the first, but to every single thing in the series, until it reach the last, which is intended to be affected by the original power. Thus, suppose it to be required to communicate motion to a ball in a plane, by sending an impulse through a hundred balls, the principle known to all mechanics is, that the force necessary to give the desired motion must be communicated to the first, and from the first to the second, and so on, until it reaches the ball intended to be moved. And this principle is equally applicable to all causes which operate through a succession of particulars. If at the commencement of a series, an intelligent cause operated, and then ceased, or stopped short of the last effect, no sign of intelligence could exist in this, which brings us back to the same obvious principle with which we commenced, viz., that when any effect is produced, an adequate cause must exist, and be in operation at the time of its production. The simple inquiry then, is, had the progenitors of this dog, or horse, when the animal came into existence and became animated, the skill necessary to continue the animal frame, with all its curiously contrived parts, and power and skill to give to this individual that constitution of instincts, appetites, and passions suited to its condition in the world, which it possesses. I leave the atheist to answer this question? The same course of reasoning will be equally forcible as applied to fruits and vegetables. Every one of these organized beings furnishes an irrefragable argument for the being of a God; for in any one of these is evidence of the existence of a wisdom and power which certainly do not exist in the several particulars of which the series consists. The Atheistic objection of Hume. The only modern attempt to invalidate the argument for the being of God founded on the appearance of design in the universe, is that of Mr. Hume, which is substantially this, that this argument supposes that we have seen similar works performed, from which, by analogy, we conclude that an intelligent cause is necessary to account for them; as if we find a watch we believe it to have been made by an artist, because we have before observed such works made by skilful men; but in relation to the world, it is a singular work, entirely unique. We have never seen any world produced, and, therefore, the reasoning which would hold in regard to the conclusion that the watch was made by an artist does not apply.

Reply. More importance has been given to this objection, especially by Dr. Chalmers, than it deserves. The objection of Hume is a mere sophism, and can unsettle no mind which understands the nature of the argument in question. According to Mr. Hume's argument we could not infer from any work of art that it had an intelligent author, unless we had seen a work of the very same kind by an artist. Suppose a boy who has never been away from his father's farm, where he has seen nothing superior to ploughs, carts, and harrows, to be conducted to a seaport, and to see a steam-frigate. As he has never seen on the farm any thing formed like this, according to Mr. Hume, he could not infer that this stupendous work was produced by an intelligent cause. To the boy it would be a singular effect, the like of which he had never witnessed, and, therefore, he could infer nothing respecting it. Now every child knows better than this. Any boy of common sense will conclude in a moment that this steam engine must have been the work of a skilful artificer. The world not a singular effect. In order to apply the argument from design, it is not at all necessary that we should have seen an artist engaged in producing its like. All that is necessary is, that there should immediately appear an adaptation of means to produce a certain end; and it matters not as to the argument whether we ever conceived of a similar work, or knew any thing of the artist, the certain appearance of design, or a skilful adaptation of means to an end is always sufficient to

produce the certain conclusion that there has been a designing cause at work. The works of nature are not a singular effect, as far as the argument a posteriori is concerned. The adaptation of means to an end in these is similar to the works of design among men. The difference between a telescope and the eye of an animal is not so great as between a plough and a steam engine. If there was any difference between the inference from seeing a steam-frigate or a complicated spinning engine, which have never been seen before, and another plough or cart, it would be in favour of the contrivance not before witnessed. The argument seems to be a fortiori in this case. And as the whole argument in regard to the works of man is founded simply on observing an adaptation of means to accomplish an end, and not the adaptation to produce some particular end which we had before seen effected by similar means; and as the adaptation of means to an end is as evident in the works of nature as in the works of man, the argument is as conclusive in one case as in the other.

Phenomena of the Universe

CHAPTER XXIX. THE PHENOMENA OF THE UNIVERSE.

Accords with phenomena. LET us now suppose that a Great Intelligent First Cause exists, and has existed from eternity; are not all the appearances of the universe correspondent with the existence of such a being?

Unreasonable to ask more evidence. Again we may demand of an Atheist what other evidences of the existence of God he would require. Let him suggest something, which, in the form of evidence, would be more satisfactory to him, and he will not find it easy to fix on any evidence which is stronger or more suitable than what we already possess.

Atheist challenged to propose any stronger. It may appear strange to some that we challenge the Atheist to demand any clearer or stronger evidence of the existence of a Supreme Being than that which is already before us. But let the attempt be made to conceive of some evidence of this truth which would be more satisfactory, and better adapted to be a standing proof to all nations, and we have mistaken the matter, if the result will not be that the existing evidence is as good as any which they could ask. It will be worth while to spend a little time in considering this point, for if we cannot satisfy the Atheist of the truth of our position, the discussion may be satisfactory to others who have not been accustomed to view the subject in this light.

Visibility of God not requisite. It is true we do not see God, and the reason is, he is a spirit; and a spirit, from the very nature of the case, is invisible. We cannot see the souls of our nearest friends; we know that they exist, not by any direct perception of the intelligent substance, but by the actions which they perform through the instrumentality of the body. If God were not a spirit he could not be an active, intelligent, powerful, and perfect being; but being a spirit he must be invisible. Nothing is visible but material substances, and these only by means of light reflected from them to the eye.

Invisible existences are believed in. It is not forgotten that most Atheists, being materialists, deny that there is any such substance as spirit; but they do not and cannot deny that there is something within us which thinks and feels and wills, and has power to originate bodily motion. Call the substance, of which thought is a property, by what name you please, still it is an invisible substance. Who can pretend to see a thought or a volition? or who would say that he can see the mind, and describe its shape and give its magnitude and dimensions? Let it be supposed then that the cause of all intelligence has a nature resembling this intelligent nature of which we are every moment conscious, but far more excellent, as it must be supposed that every excellence exists in a higher degree in the cause than in the effect. In no way could a spiritual Being be better revealed. Now supposing such an intelligent being to exist, call him spiritual or material, only let him be a being of thought, will, and passion; and that he is necessarily from his nature invisible to eyes of flesh; the question is, how could such a being make himself known to rational minds such as ours. As we cannot by any direct perception look into the mind of another, and as such a being cannot

make himself visible without assuming a gross body, we can conceive of no way by which he can make himself known but by performing some act, or exhibiting to us some work which shall contain the impress of his character. For if he should assume a bodily shape, and thus make himself visible, it would not be the intelligent substance which we perceived, but a body, which was no part of his essence. If an intelligent creature could be so situated in the universe as to have no opportunity of contemplating any work of God, such a creature could never arrive at the knowledge of his existence. But the supposition is impossible; for an intelligent creature could not exist without the consciousness of its own thoughts; and in the mind itself, even if it were cut off from all perception of material things, there is sufficient proof of an efficient, intelligent cause. The impress of the divine attributes is as clearly printed on the soul as on any of the works of God to which man has access. The First Cause known by his works. As the First Cause, if there is one, must be from his nature invisible, the only way by which he can be conceived to make known his existence, is by setting before us some work, in which his wisdom, power, and goodness may be manifested; and by the contemplation of which a rational mind may infer, that a being does exist, to whom these properties belong. If then in the various objects in the world, there is as much evidence of these attributes as we can conceive, and in fact far exceeding our most enlarged conceptions, we have the best proof of the existence of a Great First Cause, which we could have. The simple question then is, could there be exhibited stronger evidences of wisdom than we have in the structure of the body of man, and in the constitution of his mind? Could the various species of animals in the earth, air, and sea, be formed with more consummate wisdom than they are, in relation to the climate in which they live, and the provision made internally and externally for their subsistence, and the propagation of their kind. Examine also the vegetable world. Call in the aid of glasses to inspect the concealed structure of the vessels; contemplate the leaf, the flower, and the mature fruit, and say whether you can conceive of contrivances more exquisite. If any man thinks that animal and vegetable bodies could have been constructed with more wisdom, let him point out in what respects these works of nature are deficient in wisdom. But even if it were possible to conceive of more perfect works, this could not in the least invalidate the argument from them, for the existence of an intelligent cause. If the question were of the degree of perfection in the wisdom exhibited, then the skill manifested in each work would be a proper subject for consideration. An imperfect time-piece proves the existence of an artist as fully as one that is perfect. This manifestation needs no amendment. But there is here no need of this remark, for the Atheist may be defied to conceive of any improvement in any of the works of God, in regard to the adaptation of the means used to the end to be accomplished; and these evidences of the wisdom of God are scattered profusely over the whole universe. We cannot turn our eyes to the heaven or the earth, to objects of great magnitude, or so small that they can be seen only by the microscope, but the same admirable perfection of contrivance is manifest in them all. The internal structure of the gnat is as wonderful as that of the elephant; and: in the manifestation of wisdom in the creation there is a wonderful variety. No two species are exactly alike; and the difference is exactly such as it should be to accomplish the special end in view. The more intricate our examination of the contrivance and evident design in the organization of animal and vegetable bodies, the stronger will be our conviction, and the greater our admiration.

God is clearly manifested. The only question then is, could the evidences of intelligence in the cause, if thus innumerable, be exhibited in a clearer and stronger light than they are; if not, then God could not make known his existence as an intelligent being more clearly than he has done.

The number of instances in which design appears, is far greater than can be examined, and the degree of wisdom in the various contrivances in organized bodies, transcends our conception how, therefore, could we have by new works, greater evidence of an intelligent cause, than we already possess? The evidence need not be as great as possible. But there seems in most minds a lurking suspicion, that the existing evidence is not as convincing as it might have been. Even if this were so, we have no right to complain, when it cannot be denied that we have very strong evidence. God is not obliged to give to his creatures the strongest possible evidence of his own existence. He may choose to leave scope for human industry, and also make the reception of the truth a part of our moral probation; and the pleasure of discovering truth after laborious research, a part of the reward of virtue. No doubt this is the fact in regard to some truths of no small importance. The honest inquirer discovers them, while the proud and prejudiced mind, though more acute, misses them, and embraces in their stead dangerous error. In maintaining, therefore, that the evidence for the being of God is as convincing as it could be to an impartial, rational mind, it is not because such clearness is considered essential; but simply because the fact appears to be as stated. Can stronger proof be proposed? But since many may still suppose that they can imagine much stronger proof than any which exists, let us consider what can be alleged in favour of this opinion.

Supposition of address to the ear. Could not God speak to us in a voice of thunder, and thus make himself known? Undoubtedly he could; and such a voice would doubtless greatly terrify us; but would it be a stronger proof of his wisdom and power than the works of nature which we behold? If this tremendous sound were heard very often, it would at length become familiar, and would cease to produce the same impression as at first. If heard but seldom, it would leave a suspicion that it might have been no more than a disordered imagination. But how could we be sure that the voice proceeded from a being who would not deceive? The mere hearing the noise could give us no certain evidence of the character and veracity of the speaker? A visible glory not convincing. But perhaps it may be thought that a glorious visible appearance would place the matter beyond all possibility of doubt. The majestic appearance of a divine person, would, it may be alleged, satisfy every one. The same objections may be made to this species of evidence, as to the former; how could we know that this visible appearance was that of the Great First Cause? Unnatural appearances prove nothing respecting the character of the person who assumes them; if such apparitions were only occasionally exhibited, we should be prone to doubt of their reality; and if frequent, we should become too much accustomed to them to receive any impression. But whatever impression such appearances might make, considered as evidence of an all-perfect Deity, they would not be comparable to that which we have in the works of nature.

Miracles. But if the Supreme Being exists, why could he not make himself known by working stupendous miracles? Of course, if miracles might be demanded by one, all have the same need; and the same claims and miracles would become so common, that it would be difficult to distinguish them from natural events. And again, miracles require no more power to produce them than is required to produce common events. In many cases they would require no more than a cessation of the power by which natural events are produced. The standing still of the sun, or the stopping of the rotation of the earth, would be nothing else than removing the impulse by which they were originally put in motion. Are effects of power. In a miracle, we only see the effect of divine power. We may infer from this, that there is a Being who can change the laws of nature; and

a miracle taken by itself can prove nothing more. But in the works of nature, we have innumerable proofs of the wisdom and beneficence of the Author of the Universe. And the number, variety, and wisdom of these works are evident to every person of common sense. The proofs of a great intelligent cause are spread out, over the heavens and the earth, the sea, and the air. We are little affected by these objects, because they have ever been before our eyes since our earliest infancy. But as evidences of a Divine existence their force is not diminished by the uniformity of the laws of nature, by which they are continually produced, but greatly increased. The different species of animals and vegetables have successively been reproduced, according to laws that never vary; and this shows that the plan of the Almighty is perfect, and that He can accomplish all his pleasure, and has given uniform laws to every kind of being which his wisdom and power have produced. But add nothing to proof of power. It is not denied that miraculous displays are a decisive proof of a Great First Cause, who is possessed of omnipotence; but what we maintain is, that the evidence of omnipotence is not greater than in the natural effects which are constantly produced before our eyes. And as to the character and attributes of God, they are far more clearly exhibited in the various productions of nature, than they would be by a miraculous interposition. If another sun were placed in the heavens, which is as great a miracle as we can imagine, it would be a proof of mighty power, but not a stronger proof than the existence of the natural sun; and as to the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, there would be no comparison, for in the former case, nothing but the existence of Omnipotence could be inferred from the miracle, for there would be no appearance of wisdom in such a miracle. But in the existence of the natural sun, which gives light, heat, motion, and life to all earthly living things, the wisdom and goodness of the Creator are most illustriously displayed. Who can enumerate the benefits which are derived from the influence of the sun? and the same sun, which communicates so many blessings to our world, dispenses blessings in the same way to other planets.

Result of the argument. If we saw the dead raised in a thousand instances, it would be a decisive evidence of the existence of a Being of almighty power; but the evidence is fully as strong from the formation and vivification of innumerable animal bodies of many species. And no miracle can be conceived, which would furnish stronger evidence of the Divine existence, than the works of creation which are ever before our eyes and our minds. I think, after what has been said, that we cannot wish for more convincing evidence of the existence of a Supreme Being, than we already possess in the works of nature spread out before us; and even if we were shut up in a dark dungeon, we have this convincing evidence in our own persons, in the constitution of both our souls and bodies. The demand of self-evidence. The only thing which can be alleged further is, that this might have been made a self-evident truth as much as our own existence, or the existence of the world without us; and many formerly entertained that opinion that the idea of God is innate, and that a speculative Atheist is a thing impossible. Some very learned and respectable philosophers and theologians have expressly inculcated this opinion in their writings. Now, although we do not believe there are any innate ideas, and although the existence of God can scarcely be said to be self-evident, yet in the proof of it, there is but a single step of reasoning. It is a self-evident truth that every effect must have an adequate cause; and when there is evident design in the effect, the cause must be intelligent. The conclusion is so easily drawn from an intuitive truth, that it is not wonderful that it should be classed among self-evident truths. We can scarcely conceive of the state of that mind which after seriously contemplating the wonderful evidences of design in the human frame, can doubt the existence of an intelligent First Cause, and

an intelligent cause producing effects by a wise adaptation of means to a definite end, and the harmonious operation of thousands of parts in the vital functions must, according to every proper definition of the term, be a person.

Attributes of God. All the arguments by which the being of God is proved, involve the proof of some of his attributes. If the marks of design in creatures prove the existence of a Creator, it is by showing that he must be possessed of wisdom to cause so many wonderful contrivances as we behold in the world. As the operation of any cause is the exertion of power, so the creation of the world is the action of omnipotence. A greater power than that which brings something out of nothing cannot be conceived: this indeed we cannot comprehend, and, therefore, some who admit that the world is the work of God, as far as relates to the organization and moulding of matter, yet cannot be persuaded that omnipotence itself can give existence where there was none before. But if God did not create the matter that is in the world, whence came it? There are but two suppositions; one is, that matter existed from eternity, and is, therefore, self-existent and independent; the other, that it is an emanation of the divine essence. The first is inadmissible; it supposes two eternal beings independent of each other, and the latter leads to pantheism, or that all things are a part of God; as whatever emanates from him must be a part of his essence, for this is immutably the same. Though wisdom and power are the attributes which are first observed, they are not the only attributes of which we may learn something by studying the works of nature. For when we attentively consider the nature of the end, to accomplish which the innumerable contrivances are adapted, we cannot but observe that this end is beneficent. All the parts of animals are connected with the vitality, enjoyment, and preservation, of the animal or species. The goodness of God is therefore as manifest in the creation, as his wisdom. There is not a part in any animal body which can be shown to be without its use. Every species is fitted by the bodily structure, and by the instincts and passions with which it is endued, to enjoy in the most perfect degree that kind of life to which it is destined. Even the minutest animalculæ have bodies organized with as exquisite skill as those of the larger species. No living creature exists for which food is not provided, suited to the appetite and nourishment of the species, and which it has the means of procuring. So every species is endowed with the instinctive ability to provide for itself and its progeny suitable places of residence; and there are insects which, though they undergo a remarkable metamorphosis and change of appetites, are still able by their instinct to find the nourishment which is agreeable and necessary. And what is still more wonderful and indicative of far-seeing wisdom in the Creator is the fact, that these insects which were once in the chrysalis state, and afterwards assume the form and instincts of butterflies, are led by an invariable propensity to deposit their eggs on plants necessary for the young grubs, but on which they themselves never feed. Were it not for this wise provision for the young, they would all perish. Between the animal and vegetable world there is a beautiful harmony; the latter to a large extent supplies food for the former. It may be thought that the constitution of things by which one animal preys upon another, is an argument against the goodness of God; but these animals are only intended for a transitory existence, and as they all must die, and are tormented with no apprehensions in regard to the future, and the pain indeed is momentary, if they enjoy much more pleasure than pain during their existence, there seems to be no solid objection against this law of nature.

Objections from existence of pain. It has often been alleged as an atheistical objection against the goodness, and by consequence, against the existence of God, that pain or misery has a place among his works. This perhaps is the most plausible of all objections which infidels have ever produced; and yet it has no certain principles on which to rest. With a system such as the present, where there is a gradation of sensitive beings, it is impossible for us to conceive how all pain could be excluded. As far as we can see, the susceptibility of pleasure carries with it a liableness to some degree of pain. What if the pain which animals endure arise out of the principle of self-preservation, and from the appetites, in the gratification of which consists their enjoyment? Without desire and appetite there could be no animal enjoyment, and when the safety of the animal requires it, it is wisely ordered that by uneasiness or pain it should be stimulated to seek its necessary food, or flee from danger.

Miseries of the human race. And as to man, while in the present world we cannot conceive how he could have any enjoyment, unless he was also subject to such feelings of uneasiness human race. as rendered him capable of relishing his enjoyments. This remark relates to pains which cannot be avoided, such as the pain of hunger and thirst, and the pain arising from contact with some injurious body. The surface of man's body is the chief seat of pain, because danger commonly approaches him from without. It does not appear, therefore, possible that such a system of creatures as exist in the world could be constituted so as to be exempt from all un easy feelings. To make creatures whose constitution would exempt them from all liableness to pain, would, as far as we can see, exempt them from all susceptibility to pleasure. And as to those evils which men bring upon themselves by imprudence, intemperance, injustice, or by disobeying the voice of conscience within them, they must be attributed to themselves and not to the constitution of the world. And as God is not obliged to make every creature as great and as happy as it could be made, it may seem to exhibit his wisdom and power to produce beings in whose existence there is a mixture of natural good and evil.

Moral perfections of the First Cause. It appears clear, then, that the Author of this universe is powerful, wise, and beneficent; but how does it appear that he is possessed of a moral character? that he loves moral excellence, and disapproves of moral evil? This appears evidently from the moral constitution of man. The law interwoven in his constitution proves that his Maker approves of moral excellence. Again, it would be absurd to suppose that the creature could possess an excellence, and one superior to all natural endowments, of which there was no prototype in the Great First Cause. We may lay it down as a maxim, that whatever perfection we can conceive of must exist in the most perfect degree in the Creator, for all our ideas of perfection are derived from the contemplation of creation; and whatever excellence there is in the creation must exist in the Creator.

Divine approbation of virtue. Besides, by the laws of nature, virtuous conduct is generally productive of pleasure and peace of mind; and immoral conduct is generally a source of misery. These laws of nature are the laws of God, and manifest his approbation of virtue and disapprobation of vice.

Duties of Man to Creator

CHAPTER XXX.

DUTIES OF MAN TO THE CREATOR AS THUS MANIFESTED.

Foundation of law. HAVING given, in a summary, the proofs of the existence and character of God, so far as reason can guide us in the inquiry, we are now prepared to consider the relation in which man stands to God, and the obligations which arise out of this relation. As man himself, in the wise and wonderful constitution of his mind and body, has been supplied with the most striking and convincing evidences of a powerful, wise, and beneficent Author of the universe; we are led at once to see, that God, as being the Creator of man, and the Giver of all his remarkable endowments, has a perfect right to claim his obedience, to the utmost extent of his powers. And on taking an impartial survey of the origin of his being, of the goodness of the Creator in his various beneficent endowments, and of his continual dependence, not only for the continuance of his being, faculties, and susceptibilities, but also for all those gifts of divine Providence necessary to his health and comfort, man cannot but feel that he is under the strongest moral obligation to obey, honour, and glorify his Maker, with his best affections and most strenuous exertions. This is the foundation of what is called the law; that moral law which is, as it were, written on the heart of every man; for what man is there, who has come to the exercise of reason, who does not perceive a clear distinction between right and wrong? And where can be found a human being, who, upon having his relation to God as his Creator set before him, does not feel in his conscience, that he is under a moral obligation to be subservient to his will?

General obligation. The general obligation on all moral agents, to serve their Creator, is evident enough. It will require some time, and careful consideration of this relation in which man stands to his Maker, to ascertain the particular duties which are obligatory on all men.

Particular obligation. This we shall now attempt, so far as reason can guide us in this matter.

Here it may be proper to remark, that the essence of all obedience is internal; Obedience internal.that is, consists in the dispositions, affections, and purposes of the heart. Outward actions partake of a moral nature, only so far as they proceed from these internal affections. Human laws must be satisfied with external obedience, because human lawgivers cannot search the heart, nor scrutinize the motives of those who owe obedience. But even earthly judges, in administering justice, endeavour as far as human judgment can go, to discover from what internal motives any action under examination was performed; and their decision of acquittal or condemnation is grounded on the opinion which they form of the intention and motives of the person under arraignment. Much more then does the moral Governor of the World require of his creatures the obedience of the heart; for he possesses a perfect knowledge of what is in the heart of every one; and a most perfect estimate of the nature of moral good and evil as those qualities exist in the human heart. It seems evident, therefore, that the laws of nature demand the highest degree of excellence of which the mind of man is capable. And as God possesses every moral attribute in

the highest perfection, it is reasonable to infer, that man, as he came from the hands of his Creator, was endued with the seeds and principles of every moral virtue. And if the nature of man is not now found adorned with these moral excellencies, he must in the exercise of his free will have departed from his primeval state. Our present inquiry, however, is not whether man has fallen from his original integrity, but what are the duties arising out of man's relation to God as his Creator, Benefactor, and Preserver. Infinite excellency. Although the obligation to obedience arises primarily from the relations just mentioned, yet it is necessary to take into view the supreme excellence and majesty of the character of God; for if pious and devout sentiments towards God be required, it is because there is in the character of God as exhibited in his works, something to call forth such affections, from rational and rightly disposed minds. If God were not supremely excellent, it would not be reasonable to demand supreme love from his creatures, and so of other things. But as we know that God is possessed of every excellence in an infinite degree, there exists an object for every affection and sentiment toward him, of which the human mind is capable. From what has been said it is evident, that in order to perform any other duties to the Creator, some knowledge of his true character is requisite. Without knowledge the rational mind cannot exercise right affections.

Adoration. Supposing then a rational mind, such as it is reasonable to think man possessed, when he proceeded from the hands of his Maker, and possessing that knowledge of his attributes which may be learned from his works, what would be the first thoughts and feelings of the newly created soul? In our judgment, the first feeling would be an emotion of profound veneration, or perhaps the word adoration would more strongly indicate the state of the mind, absorbed in the contemplation of a Being so august, so powerful, and so immense. This feeling, then, is one which ought to exist in every rational mind toward the Almighty. This is the true foundation of divine worship. It is the deep and solemn emotion which is the essence of the worship, which holy beings in all worlds offer unto God.

Reverence. And this feeling would lead to a reverence of every thing which has any relation to God. His very name would be sacred. We have read of men of great eminence who never mentioned that name without a solemn pause, or some external token of reverence.

Thankfulness. The duty which most naturally arises from the relation which man sustains to God, as his Creator, Benefactor, and Redeemer, is that of gratitude. This is when strong a very lively and impulsive feeling. It draws men along as taken captive; and yet the constraint is not painful, but pleasing. Under the influence of gratitude, men will engage in the most odious duties, and will voluntarily make the most self-denying sacrifices. Under the influence of this affection men have been willing to lay down their lives. Gratitude is then an important principle of man's obedience. It is true, some have attempted to degrade this principle as one which scarcely can be said to partake of the nature of virtue, because it has respect to self, and to our own interest. But though gratitude originates in the sense of benefits received by ourselves, it deserves not to be classed with mere selfish affections. Its object is to make a return to a benefactor for favour received. It is, therefore, an elevated species of justice; for when a suitable and adequate return can be made for favours received, gratitude will not be satisfied until this is done. And in regard to the benefits received from our Creator, as an adequate compensation is utterly beyond our power, gratitude manifests itself in acknowledgment of obligation in thanksgiving and in unceasing praises. There is, however, no necessity to argue this matter; the appeal may safely be made to the feelings of

every rightly constituted mind. All men who acknowledge the existence and Providence of God, feel that a debt of gratitude is due to their great Benefactor.

Love. As the mind, when uncorrupted, is so constituted as to love and esteem whatever is excellent, and as moral excellence is superior to all other amiable objects; and as God possesses this excellence in an infinite degree, it is reasonable that he should be esteemed above every other object. Finite minds, it is true, can never exercise love proportionate to the excellence of this Glorious Being; but as far as they possess the capacity of apprehending it, and the susceptibility of affection, they are under moral obligation to love God with all their powers. And this cannot be considered as demanding too much of the rational creature, for no other measure of affection can be fixed without supposing a wrong estimate of the object, or a defect of right feeling; for what is more reasonable than to proportion the intensity of our affection to the excellence of the object? But in this also, the excellency of the object infinitely surpasses our capacity of love, so that if the mind should be enlarged a thousand-fold, so as to possess a thousand times as great a power of love and esteem as at present, the obligation to love God with this increasing capacity would be complete; and any less degree of esteem and care would be casting dishonour on God. And again, this obligation would exist, even if it were painful to come up in our affections to this high demand; but this is so far from being the fact, that man's happiness is perfect in the same proportion as his obedience is perfect. From every consideration, therefore, it is evident that man is bound by the law of his nature, and the relation which he sustains to God, to love him with his whole soul.

Submission. As the will of God is always guided by wisdom and goodness, whenever and however this will is manifested, it should be implicitly and cheerfully submitted to, even though contrary to our wishes, and even what seems best to our reason; which is submission to the Providence of God.

Trust. Another duty clearly incumbent on the rational creature of God, is trust or confidence. As man is dependent, and as the supply of his necessities can be derived from no other source than from God, it is evidently his duty to place his confidence in God for every thing, believing in his goodness, faithfulness and power.

Prayer. This trust in God, however, involves the duty of prayer. It is as natural and reasonable for a dependent creature to apply to its Creator for what it needs, as for a child thus to solicit the aid of a parent who is believed to have the disposition and ability to bestow what it needs. Plausible objections have been raised against the duty of prayer, derived from the omniscience of God, and from his immutable purposes. But these objections possess no real validity. For although God knows perfectly beforehand what his creatures need, yet the acknowledgment of their dependence is manifestly proper, and the offering of petitions for such things as they need, has a tendency to keep up a proper sense of dependence. And as God deals with his creatures according to the nature which he has given them, it is proper that he should require of them such dispositions and acts as are becoming independent creatures. This, too, is in accordance with the conduct of men on whom others are dependent. The object of prayer, including praise, is to preserve in the mind a right state of feeling towards a Being to whom it owes every thing, and from whom alone blessings can be expected. The highest privilege of the most exalted creature is to enjoy communion and intercourse with the Infinite Source of all good. Prayer is the only means which man enjoys of

holding immediate intercourse with his Maker. And this privilege is the highest honour which he can enjoy in the present state. So also, it is a means of the most sublime happiness. By this exercise he draws near to God, and when such approaches are made sincerely and affectionately on his part, it cannot be doubted that Divine communications will be vouchsafed, and the light of the Divine favour be lifted upon him, and the answer to his prayers be granted by the dispensations of divine Providence toward him. Not inconsistent with Divine plan. As to the objection derived from the immutability of the Divine purposes, it arises from a narrow view of this subject, which leaves out an important part of the Divine plan. The purposes of God, though immutable, are not inconsistent with the freedom of the creatures, nor with the use and efficacy of appropriate means. The truth is, all these acts and means are included in the Divine plan. If God has decreed that a certain field shall produce a plentiful crop; he has also decreed that all the influences of sun, rain, and the necessary labour shall take place. And if he has purposed to bestow certain favours on his rational creatures, he may in the same manner purpose that these benefits shall be given in answer to prayer; so that prayer may be considered as the means by which these blessings are obtained as truly as a plentiful crop is the effect of a skilful and laborious tillage of the ground.

Outward acts of religion. As to external acts of devotion, reason and nature teach that humility and reverence in our words, attitudes, and gestures are highly proper when we address our praises unto God. When we are filled with devotional feelings, nature prompts to give utterance to our emotions; and the use of appropriate sounds and gestures seems also to keep up and increase the feelings of the mind. These outward expressions, however, are not essential to acceptable prayer. The silent breathings of desire are known to God, and will be acceptable to him. It is reasonable to believe that God never takes more complacency in his creatures, than when they come before him in the humble, reverential posture of adoration, prayer, and praise.

Reference to the glory of God. Nothing can be more evident, than that the creature should exercise benevolence or good will towards the Author of his being. Not that we can desire Him to be more excellent, more wise, more powerful, or more independent than he is; but we may rejoice in all his attributes and glory in his greatness, and be delighted with the idea of his unbounded and uninterrupted happiness; and in these elevated emotions of joy, and acts of glorying and glorifying God, it is believed that the purest, sublimest, and most constant happiness of all holy beings consists. Nothing is more evident to impartial reason, than that the glory of God should be the supreme object of the rational creature's pursuit. It is, in fact, the noblest object which can be considered. We are unable to imagine any thing more glorious for God himself to seek, than his own glory. Certainly, then, it is the highest end at which any creature can aim; and it is a sentiment entirely accordant with reason, that all the creation was produced for the purpose of exhibiting the glory of God. And man was endowed with a capacity of knowing and loving God, for the very purpose of glorifying his Maker. Not that any addition can be made to the essential perfection and felicity of the Eternal One; but the manifestation of these perfections is what is properly called the glory of God.

Summary. All the duties which have been specified, commend themselves, as obligatory on the rational creature, to every impartial mind; all that seems further necessary is to give a brief summary of what has been said on this subject.

All included in love. The order in which these devotional exercises are set down is not very important; for though there is an order of precedence and sequence in all our mental exercises, yet while it is unnecessary to speak of these affections which have God for their object, *seriatim*, they are commonly combined and mingled in the conscious experience of the mind; so that in the same moment various acts and exercises appear to be simultaneous. They may, however, be all comprehended under the single term, Love, if we give a genuine meaning to that term. The summation which seems as proper as any other which occurs, is the following:

Duties to God. 1. Adoration, having for its object the greatness, majesty, holiness, and incomprehensibility of God.

2. Admiration, or holy wonder of the wisdom of God in the multiplied contrivances and organizations in the created universe.

3. Esteem for and complacency in God's moral excellence.

4. Desire of Union and Communion with God, and of conformity to his character.

5. Gratitude for his goodness manifested in all creation; but particularly to man, in the constitution of his soul and body, and in the provision made by the providence of God for the subsistence and comfort of the human family, and of all living creatures.

6. Trust, or Confidence in God, as a benignant and kind Father and Protector, who will not abandon the work of his own hands, nor be wanting in contributing to their happiness in future, as long as they are obedient to his will.

7. Acquiescence in the will of God, and submission to those dispensations which even cross the natural feelings, is an evident moral duty. Indeed, the surrender of soul and body to God, to be used and disposed of by him for his own glory, is the state of mind of which the moral faculty approves.

8. Prayer to God for such things as we need, is a duty dictated by the law of nature, including suitable expressions of our devotional feelings in words and gestures. But no creature has a right to institute or adopt any ceremonies of worship which God has not appointed.

9. Making the glory of God the supreme end of all his actions, the object of his constant and untiring pursuit; and rejoicing and triumphing in the infinite glory, independence, immutability, and blessedness of God.

What reason affirms of man's fallen state. The above enumeration, it is believed, comprehends the internal acts and exercises in which the duty of man to God consists, which duties plainly arise out of the attributes of God and man's relation to him, as his Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. And if man had never failed in the performance of these duties-if he had continued to exercise those affections which spontaneously spring up in his soul, when he came from the hands of his Creator, this world, instead of being a land of misery, would now have been a blooming paradise of joy. And we may be sure that a good God who loves all his creatures according to their actions, would never have permitted the natural evils which now oppress the human soul, to have entered into the world. Sickness, famine, and death in its thousand different forms, would have been unknown.

Conclusion. It is evident from the slightest view of the character of man in all ages and countries, that he has lost his primeval integrity, that the whole race have by some means fallen into the dark gulf of sin and misery. This, reason teaches; but how to escape from this wretched condition, she teaches not.

FINIS.

Indexes Index of Latin Words and Phrases * a fortiori: [1]1 * de facto.: [2]1 * de jure: [3]1 * honestum: [4]1 [5]2 * utile: [6]1 [7]2

Moral Sense compared with Taste

CHAPTER VI. THE MORAL SENSE COMPARED WITH TASTE, The term moral sense. FROM what was said in the preceding chapter, it appears that conscience, or the moral sense, is not a simple but a compound faculty, including both an intellectual act or judgment, and a peculiar feeling or emotion. The name moral sense was probably adopted to express this feeling, or internal emotion. It will serve perhaps to illustrate this subject, if we bring into view another faculty, between which and the moral sense there is a remarkable analogy. I refer to what is commonly called Taste, or that faculty by which men are in some degree capable of perceiving and relishing the beauties of nature and art. In this there is a judgment respecting that quality denominated Beauty, but there is also a vivid emotion of a peculiar kind, accompanying this judgment. The external objects in which beauty is resident, might be distinctly seen, and yet no such quality be perceived; as was before mentioned in regard to certain animals, whose sight and hearing is more acute than those of men, and which yet appear to be utterly insensible of the quality called beauty.

Analogy between judgments of taste and conscience. If the question should be raised whether Taste is merely an exercise of the understanding, the proper answer would be precisely as in the case of conscience, viz., so far as it consists in judgment, it appertains to the intellectual faculty; but so far as it consists in emotion, it does not. And in this, as in matters of conscience, errors of judgment will affect the emotions produced. In cultivating Taste, it is of the utmost importance that correct opinions be adopted in relation to the objects of this faculty. The question may perhaps be asked, why either of these should be considered a distinct faculty of the mind. In regard to mental faculties or powers, there is a want of agreement among philosophers, as to what is requisite to entitle any mental operation to be referred to a distinct and original faculty. Whether in either case a distinct faculty. In these two cases, there exists in the mind a capacity for perceiving peculiar qualities in certain appropriate objects. Though the ideas of beauty and morality are judgments of the understanding, it requires a faculty suited to the objects, to enable the understanding to obtain the simple ideas of beauty and morality. We can conceive of a rational mind without such a capacity. There is also in these faculties, the susceptibility of a peculiar emotion, dissimilar from all others; and these two things constitute the faculty of Taste or Conscience. But it is a matter of no importance whether taste and conscience be called distinct and original faculties, if what has been said respecting their nature be admitted.

Original susceptibility in both. There is in the human mind a capacity of discerning what is termed beauty, in the works of nature and art. This judgment is accompanied by a pleasurable emotion, and to this capacity or susceptibility we give the name Taste. There is also a power of discerning moral qualities, which conception is also attended with a vivid emotion; and to this power or faculty we give the name Conscience, or the moral faculty. Both these are so far original parts of our constitution, that if there did not exist in every mind a sense of beauty and its contrary, and a sense of right and wrong, such ideas could be generated, or communicated by no process of education.

S. A Practical View of Regeneration

A Practical View of Regeneration

by Archibald Alexander [Published in The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, volume 8 (1836).] That human nature has lost that moral purity and perfection with which it was originally endued, is a truth which lies at the heart of the Christian religion. Indeed, we see not how it can be denied by the deist, without casting a gross reflection on the character of God. It is only from the Scriptures, however, that we learn the origin of evil. Here we read, that God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions. Man being in honor continued not. When God created man he formed him in his own image and after his own likeness; and what that image consisted in, the apostle Paul informs us, when he speaks of the new creation. "And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The phrase "after God," means after the image of God. This is expressed in the parallel passage, "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." By the fall this moral image was effaced. The mind which had been illumined by divine truth became spiritually blind; the heart whose exercises had been holy and harmonious, became corrupt, the hot-bed of every vicious propensity, and the center of darkness and disorder. Instead of moral beauty, there was now deformity. In the place of pure felicity, misery succeeded. The soul was now turned with aversion from God and holiness, and the affections attached themselves to the creature. Reason and conscience no longer had control over the inferior passions and appetites; but these, seizing the reins of government, urged man on to carnal indulgences inconsistent with purity and peace. Being now alienated from God, man became his own center around which he endeavored to make all things revolve, from which the most direful disorder ensued; yet he persists in acting upon this principle of supreme selfishness. Although this depravity was from its commencement total, inasmuch as all holy exercise and all holy motives were banished from the mind; yet is human iniquity capable of indefinite increase. Its natural progress is from bad to worse, without a conceivable limit. All therefore are not equal in sin and guilt. The same person is comparatively innocent when he commences his course, to what he becomes at the end of a long life of transgression. And the enormity of his guilt, as well as the obstinate perverseness of his evil nature, depends on the clearness of the light resisted, and the multitude of the mercies abused. Wickedness may attain its greatest visible height among the heathen, but in the sight of God, self-righteous Pharisees are more guilty than Publicans; and Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum will have a more intolerable doom than Tyre and Sidon, or even than Sodom itself. The deepest guilt is contracted under the clear sunshine of the gospel, and by those whose privileges, opportunities, calls and professions, lay them under the strongest obligations to love and serve their Creator. The proof of the wickedness of man is found in every part of the Bible; and it is a truth confirmed by all history and experience. That a reformation would be desirable, and that all men need to be made better than they are, will not be denied. But there is a deep-rooted opinion in the minds of men, that this reformation and return to the service of God, will be easy whenever

they shall determine upon it. The need for supernatural power to regenerate the soul is not commonly felt; and when men begin to be convinced of their impotence as it relates to holy acts, they are prone to make their depravity, which is the only cause of their inability, their excuse. The necessity of regeneration arises from the fact, that man by the fall has become dead in sin. Spiritual life is extinct, and, therefore, if any are saved, they must be regenerated. Life cannot spring from death. Life is a gift of God in all cases. He breathed into man, when his body was formed out of the clay, the breath of life. It would be as reasonable to believe that the organized body could inspire itself with life, as that the dead soul can perform acts of spiritual life. All men having fallen into the same spiritual death, all need regeneration. Some men are amiable in their natural temper, and regular in their external behavior; but these also are naturally blind and depraved. They have no right apprehensions of God, no holy affections towards him, no cheerful and habitual purpose to serve him. They need therefore to be converted, however highly they may be esteemed among men. Though such, like the young ruler who came to Christ, may have many amiable qualities which entitle them to the love of their friends, yet, like him, they may lack one thing. Their hearts may be fixed, like his, on worldly objects. Let all such, therefore, be assured that, as well as others, they must be born again. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God searcheth the heart; and often that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Under a fair exterior there often lies concealed a heart full of unbelief, pride, and ingratitude. By the restraints of education, an enlightened conscience, and a regard to reputation, sin may be kept from breaking out into enormous and shameful actions; but the seeds of all iniquity are concealed in every heart. Men are satisfied commonly if they can so regulate their lives as to escape the censure of men, and the disgrace which follows wicked actions, but they pay little attention to their hearts which are as a cage of unclean birds. Most men are not in the habit of judging of their thoughts, imaginations and feelings, by the holy law of God, which condemns every wandering of desire, every unhallowed temper, and every want of supreme and perfect love. If we look upon our own hearts we must be convinced that all is not right within. If our hearts are naturally good, why do they turn away with strong secret aversion from the spiritual service of God? If our hearts are not dead to God, why are we not daily delighted with the contemplation of his glorious attributes? Why is prayer a burden? Why are we so entirely engrossed with sensible and worldly pursuits and pleasures? And if the moral and amiable need regeneration, what shall we say of the multitudes who are living in open rebellion against God? The profane, the unjust, the intemperate, the licentious, the scoffer, the false-swearer, the defrauder of the widow and the orphan, the sabbath-breaker, the liar, the neglecters of God's worship, the slanderer, and a multitude of others who live habitually in known sin, surely need to be reformed, and they will never be thoroughly reformed until they are regenerated. Such must put off the old man with his corrupt deeds, and put on the new man. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God who will abundantly pardon." There is an urgent necessity that every sinner should repent, for true repentance is unto life. And what our Lord declared to the Jews is true of all, and was intended for all. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," and Paul preached to the Athenians that "God now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Evangelical repentance, conversion and regeneration, are substantially the same. They all signify a thorough change of

views, affections, purposes and conduct; and this change is every where declared to be essential to salvation. And this is not a merely arbitrary constitution. No one is capable of the enjoyment of heavenly felicity who has never been born again. Without spiritual life, what would the sinner do in heaven? If men have no love to God, nor relish for his service, heaven is no place for them. Heaven is a holy place, and all the exercises and employments are holy, therefore, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And to be holy, ye must be born again.

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

Regeneration must be the peculiar work of God, because it is "a new creation," and no power but that of God is adequate to such a work. It is a resurrection from the worst kind of death, and none can inspire the dead with life but the Almighty. It is giving sight to the blind, and opening the eyes which never saw the light of day, to behold the beauty of holiness, and the glory of God; but the same power which in the beginning caused light to shine out of darkness, must shine into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, etc., so is every one that is born of the spirit." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Those who are the sons of God are not "born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Paul calls this change "the washing of regeneration," and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." And David prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." But why multiply proofs of a truth so evident from reason as well as Scripture? If there be any such internal change of the heart, God must be its author; for how else could it be produced? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." If a tree be evil, who can make it good, but he who created it? If the heart be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, will it purify itself? If all the thoughts and imaginations of man's heart are evil and only evil and that continually, whence will spring a holy nature? For a sinner to regenerate himself would be as absurd an idea, as for a man to create or beget himself. It is God that begins this good work within his people, and he will carry it on. As God the Holy Spirit is the Author of regeneration; so the instrument employed is the Word of God. This is as clearly taught in Scripture as that God is the author or efficient cause. God is able to work without means, but both in the worlds of nature and grace it has pleased him to employ appropriate means for the accomplishment of his own ends. But although we know the fact that there is an established connection between means and ends; yet we are not competent to explain, in any case, how the end is produced by the means employed. Our animal frame is formed, and organized, and nourished, and kept alive, and recovered from disease by means adapted to these ends, but no one can explain the secret process of nature in these operations. Curious inquiries respecting the way in which the word is instrumental in the production of this change are not for edification. Sometimes regeneration is considered distinctly from the acts and exercises of the mind which proceed from it, but in the Holy Scriptures the cause and effect are included; and we shall therefore treat the subject in this practical and popular form. The instrumentality of the word can never derogate from the efficient agency of the Spirit in this work. The Spirit operates by and through the word. The word derives all its power and penetrating energy from the Spirit. Without the omnipotence of God the word would be as inefficient as clay and spittle, to restore sight to the blind. Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy over the dry bones in the valley of vision. Thus

ministers are now sent to call upon those who are dead in trespasses and sins, to awake and arise from the dead, but none will obey their voice, unless a divine power accompanies their words. Men, it is true, are rational and accountable agents, and are therefore proper subjects of commands and exhortations; yet are they destitute of spiritual life, and no power but that of God as we have seen can communicate life. When the Spirit operates by the word, the soul before dead in sin is rendered susceptible of impressions from divine truth. The entrance of the truth under this divine influence gives light, and excites holy affections, which prompt to good purposes, and as a matter of course, the external actions are in obedience to the law of God. The man becomes a new creature. His wicked life is reformed. Actions before materially good are now performed from love to God and with a view to his glory. That the word of God is indeed the instrument or means of producing this change is evident from many plain testimonies of Scripture; such as the following, "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "The testimonies of the Lord are sure making wise the simple." "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "Being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." Therefore the word of God is called "the sword of the Spirit," and is said to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner to the thoughts and intents of the heart." So in the exposition of the parable of the sower, our Lord says, "The seed is the word of God." And this seed, when sown on good ground bringeth forth fruit manifold. "For these are they which hear the word and receive it and bring forth fruit." The most precious seed never vegetates nor brings forth fruit, until it receives a vivifying influence from without; so the word of God, unaccompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, remains unfruitful, however often it may be heard or read; or however it may be treasured in the memory or theoretically understood. To have fruit it is not only necessary to have good seed, but good ground. Make the tree good and the fruit shall be good; for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. There is need of a quickening influence on the dead soul of the sinner to render it capable of apprehending and appreciating the truth. In the order of causation life must precede action, but in the order of time the communication of life and the acts of the new creature are simultaneous. Lazarus was called from the dead by the voice of Christ, but he must have been inspired with life before he could hear that voice. But still it is proper to say, that he was called into life by the omnipotent voice of our Savior. So when the gospel is preached, the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Or we may illustrate the instrumentality of the word by the case of the blind man whose eyes our Lord opened. This man, when he first looked up, saw objects indistinctly, "men as trees walking;" but when he looked a second time, he saw things clearly. Christ caused this man to see by the light of heaven which shone around him; but the power causing him to see was exerted on the eye, removing the obstacles to vision, or supplying what was defective in the organ. As soon as this was done, the light was the medium of the perception of surrounding objects. Thus the soul of every man is by nature blind. The light may shine around him, but he comprehendeth it not. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." By the energy of the Holy Spirit this incapacity of spiritual vision is taken away; the eyes of the understanding are enlightened. The blindness is removed, and spiritual objects are perceived; but alas! with most, very indistinctly at first. "The light of the just increaseth more and more unto the perfect day." Truth is just as necessary to every spiritual act and exercise, as light is to vision.

Where the truth is not apprehended there can be no faith, for faith is a belief of the truth; there can be no love, for it is by the truth that the excellencies of the character of God and Christ are made known. Without the knowledge of the truth, there can be no repentance, for this is the light which shows the holiness and extent of the law and the evil of sin. Thus it is evident that without the truth there can be no holy exercise and no true obedience. Therefore, we never find the Holy Spirit operating on adults but as accompanying the word of truth. We can conceive of a preparation of the heart to receive the truth before it is known, as in fact the knowledge of the truth is acquired very gradually. Thus we can conceive of a divine agency on the heart of a heathen, by which he would be disposed to receive the truth as soon as it should be made known. Such a divine influence does probably prepare the way for the success of the gospel; but where the word is never sent, there we have no evidence that the Spirit exerts his renovating influence on the minds of men. Thus also we can form some idea how infants are regenerated. As they are capable of no moral exercises at present, they do not need the truth; but the Spirit of God can so renovate their depraved souls as to render them capable of apprehending and feeling the truth, as soon as their faculties are sufficiently developed; whether in this world or in another. And as we are all by nature the children of wrath — conceived in sin — and dead, infants need regeneration as really as adults, and cannot enjoy the holy happiness of heaven without such a renovation of their fallen nature. From the connection which God has established in ordinary cases between the word and regeneration, we see the importance of sending the gospel to the heathen, and of having the good seed of the word sown as much as possible in every soul. The word should be preached in season and out of season, and the truth should be inculcated on the minds of children from their earliest years. Here is work in which all may engage and be useful. Hence also we learn how precious the book of God is which contains his holy word, and how desirable it is to have it faithfully translated into all languages, and circulated round the earth, until every family shall be in possession of the oracles of God. For not only in the preaching of the word of God, but also the reading of the Holy Scriptures, an effectual means of salvation. Agreeably to that in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation." Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." That usually a conviction of sin takes place previously to a change of heart, is a fact of common experience: and there seems to be a solid reason for this, that the sinful moral agent may be sensible of his miserable condition before he is delivered from it. As man naturally seeks to justify himself by his own righteousness, it is necessary that he should be cut off from this dependence on a broken law, which is now 'weak through the flesh,' and cannot bring him to life; and that he should see and feel that he is already justly condemned, and must despair of relief from the law. God permits the awakened sinner to try what he can do towards saving himself, until wearied with his own ineffectual efforts, he is brought to feel that he is indeed a lost sinner, and that there is no hope for him but in the sovereign mercy of God, on which he has no claim. It is suitable that when so great a benefit as pardon and eternal life is bestowed, it should be so conferred, as that the unworthy recipient should be fully convinced that it is a free gift, and an undeserved favor which might be most justly withheld. Otherwise the saved sinner would not feel a deep sense of his obligations; and his gratitude for free grace through eternity would not be so ardent. Some, however, are inclined to the opinion that conviction of sin, which is of any real value, is subsequent to regeneration, and forms a part of that

evangelical repentance which all the chosen of God experience. They suppose, that mere legal terrors, which are often felt by the reprobate here, and by all the wicked in hell, can have no necessary connection with regeneration; and that that deep sense of the turpitude and demerit of sin, which commonly precedes a sense of reconciliation, and is by many thought to precede regeneration, is really a consequence of that spiritual change, and a sure evidence that it has taken place. As the question only relates to the order of the exercises of the true penitent, it seems unnecessary to occupy time in discussing it. On both sides it is agreed that mere legal convictions, however the conscious may be awakened, and the soul agitated with terror, are no evidences of a change of heart. And it is also agreed, that all regenerate persons are brought to a deep sense of the intrinsic evil of sin, and this leads them inevitably to the conclusion, that God would be just if he should inflict upon them the condign punishment which he has threatened in his word. Indeed, when the mind is spiritually enlightened to see something of the great evil of sin, the penitent soul cannot help taking the part of God against itself, and approving of its own condemnation. The question is sometimes asked, whether is regeneration an instantaneous or a gradual work? This is not a merely speculative question. If this is a gradual work, the soul may for some time, yea, for years, be hanging between life and death, and be in neither one state or nor the other, which is impossible. Suppose a dead man to be brought to life by a divine power, as Lazarus was, could there be any question of whether the communication of life was immediate? Even if the vital principle was so weak as not to manifest itself at once, yet its commencement must be instantaneous; because it may be truly asserted that such a man is dead or alive; if the former, life has not commenced, and whenever that state ceases, the man lives, for there is no intermediate state. So in regard to the communication of spiritual life, the same thing may be asserted; for whatever regeneration is, the transition from a state of nature to a state of grace must occur at some point of time, the moment before the sinner was unregenerate. This will be true even upon the principles of those who believe that the exercises of the regenerate man are not specifically different from those which are found in natural men under the common operations of the Spirit, but that the difference is merely in degree. For according to this theory, there will be some certain degree at which the man may be pronounced regenerate; at any inferior degree he is unregenerate; then the moment in which he passes from the next inferior degree to that in which regeneration consists is the moment of regeneration. We suppose that they who are pleased with this notion of the nature of regeneration would fix upon the time when pious feelings and desires become predominant as the period when the man is regenerated; but this must occur at some particular moment, and thus, regeneration is immediate and not gradual. By gradual regeneration, however, they may mean a gradual preparation for that state, by a continual increase of good desires and resolutions up to the time when the man becomes a true Christian. Upon this hypothesis, the correct way of speaking would be to say that the preparatory work was gradual, but regeneration itself was instantaneous. As if the change were compared to the entrance into some enclosure. The line of separation between the space within and the space without is passed in a moment; yet in coming to it many steps may have been required, and much time employed. But this theory of regeneration which makes it to be nothing else but an increase of previously existing principles is not consistent with reason, experience, or Scripture. Indeed, there would be no propriety in the use of the word on this hypothesis: for such a change would be nothing else but the growth of a principle already in existence. To regenerate is to beget again, to give origin to a kind of life not already existing in the person. Again, according to this theory, there may be an

almost inconceivably small difference between the regenerate and unregenerate. Suppose the latter to have advanced to the point nearest to the line of demarcation, of course the difference between him and the man who has actually passed the line may be so small that it cannot be distinctly conceived: and yet one of these is supposed to go to heaven, while the other is sent to hell. It is true that grace in the feeblest saint prevails over sin and the world habitually; but sometimes iniquities prevail against him for a season, as in the case of David and Peter. Upon this theory the believer, in every such case, must be fallen from grace; for if regeneration took place when good affections predominated, when at any time they lose their predominance, the believer must have fallen from his regenerate state, which opinion is held by some Arminians, who maintain that both David and Peter had entirely lost the principle of grace and had fallen into condemnation. But the true Scriptural doctrine is, that there is a specific difference between the exercises of the regenerate and the unregenerate. In the one there is true faith, sincere love to God, and genuine repentance, whereas in the other, there are no such exercises, in any degree. There may be resemblances and counterfeits, but in souls dead in trespasses and sins, there exists no faith, no sincere love, nor any other exercise of the spiritual life. The carnal mind is enmity against, and is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. But when regeneration takes place, although the exercises of piety may for a time be feeble, yet everlasting life is begun; such a soul can never perish for it is united to Christ by an indissoluble union. The commencement of this work is often involved in much obscurity, as in the case of those who have been religiously educated, and have been early made the subjects of the saving operations of the Holy Spirit. Such persons having never run to the same excess of wickedness as many others, the change in their external conduct is not very perceptible; and having been regenerated at a period of life when their knowledge was small, and their judgment weak, they are unable to determine satisfactorily the nature of their early impressions. In consequence of this, and from observing a more remarkable change in others, they are led to call in question the reality of their conversion. Indeed, there is much danger lest unregenerate persons should, through the exceeding deceitfulness of the heart, confound the tender impressions which are sometimes experienced by youth religiously instructed, with the saving work of the Holy Spirit. External regularity and decency of deportment, with a respect for religion, and occasional fits of compunction, and strong desires of salvation, have induced many to cherish a fallacious hope; and sometimes pious parents and ministers from a solicitous desire to see the young taking their place in the church, have been accessory to this delusion. And the danger of deception is greatly increased, when artificial means of excitement are applied to a mind tenderly awake to the importance of religion. Under such influences, many, after a season of agitation, have experienced an animal exhilaration, or a calm which naturally succeeds a storm, and have hastily taken up the fond persuasion that they had experienced a change of heart, when all that has been felt is nothing more than the workings of nature, or at most the convictions and desires which arise from the common influences of the Spirit. When such persons are persuaded to enter the communion of the church hastily, one of two events will ensue. Either they will forsake their profession and fall back to the world; or they will become formalists, and perhaps hypocrites, for life; secretly practicing iniquity, and utterly neglecting the religion of the heart, and often of the closet, while their public duties in the church are regularly, and it may be zealously performed. For as such professors have it as an object to lead others to think well of their religion, they will sometimes affect a zeal which is not genuine, and will manifest a strictness bordering on rigor, in external rites and observances. The savor of piety is however wanting, and

the spirit of Christian humility and meekness cannot be counterfeited: the very attempt betrays the want of these tempers. And God in his righteous providence often brings false professors into such circumstances, that their true character is manifested to all men. They are permitted to fall into disgraceful sins in the sight of men, or their secret crimes, in which they had long indulged, are made public. The conversion of some persons is so remarkable, either on account of the greatness and suddenness of the change, or the clearness with which God reveals Christ to their souls, that it is almost impossible for them to doubt the genuineness of their conversion. Such a case was that of Paul. Such also was the conversion of Col. Gardiner. The cases of John Newton and Richard Cecil are somewhat different. They had both gone to great lengths in infidelity and profligacy, so that the change was very great, yet it was not sudden but gradual. Still they seem never to have doubted of the reality of their change. The views and feelings of all regenerated souls are of the same kind, although they may be exceedingly different in degree, and greatly modified by a variety of circumstances. Probably every case of genuine religious experience has something peculiar. The circumstances which commonly give complexion to these exercises are constitutional temperament, early habits and associations, the doctrinal knowledge possessed, the degree of terror or pungency of conviction which preceded, and the nature of the truths which happen to be first contemplated by the regenerated mind. It is a vain thing, therefore, to attempt to give in exact detail and order, the exercises of the new creature. For one man to make his own experience the standard by which to measure all other Christians is as unreasonable as it would be to insist that all men should be of the same stature, strength, and complexion. But in the midst of this diversity there is a general likeness. The same truths operate on all, and the same affections are excited in all. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Without undertaking to describe the feelings of the renewed man in their actual succession, we will speak of them in relation to the truths by which they are produced. A regenerated soul has views of God's holy character and of his law, different from any experienced before. The doctrinal or speculative notions may have been correct or extensive, but to the intrinsic excellence of spiritual objects, the unregenerate man is blind. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." The view now enjoyed may be faint and indistinct, but still it is of the right kind, and the emotions which accompany it are new. A reverential fear of God is spread over the soul; a holy awe takes possession of the mind. There is also a deeper impression of the presence, power and majesty of God. His holiness is most distinctly contemplated in the moral law, and we cannot behold the divine image in the glass, without a deep conviction of our own sinfulness, and lively sorrow for the sins which we have committed. These sins appear now to be exceeding base, and the soul is not only penetrated with grief, but overwhelmed with shame, ceases not to condemn itself for having consented thus to transgress a holy law, and is deeply humbled in self-abasement before God. There is no longer any disposition to entertain hard thoughts of God as being too severe, but he is fully justified in the inmost convictions of the heart, and the penitent, instead of excusing or palliating his own sins, takes upon himself the whole blame, and freely acknowledges that God would be perfectly just in the infliction of the tremendous penalty of his holy law. Indeed, the view of divine justice is sometimes so clear, and that attribute appears so excellent, that the enlightened soul cannot but approve his own condemnation. He fully acquiesces in the righteousness of the divine administration, although he should be sent to hell. "And if my soul were sent to hell, Thy righteous

law approves it well."

Another emotion which is common to all penitents, is a pungent sense of ingratitude to the best of beings and kindest of benefactors. There is no view which so certainly breaks and melts the hard heart as a sense of God's goodness; especially of his long suffering and patience which bore with us while we were wickedly rebelling against him. If tears ever flow, this feeling will draw them forth in copious floods. There is one view of sin however which produces an effect without parallel. It is the representation of its abominable nature in the cross of Christ, in the painful wounds inflicted on his body, in the ignominy to which he was exposed, and above all, in the vials of wrath which were poured out without mixture or mitigation on his holy soul. Here, as it were in characters of blood, we see depicted the unspeakable turpitude and guilt of sin. Here, at the foot of the cross, the love of sin receives a death-wound, and the heart is divorced from all its long cherished idols. Now the solemn purpose is formed to forsake sin, and to endeavor to live to God, in all holy obedience. Christ appears glorious and lovely not only as a Savior but as a Lord; and there is now no reluctance or hesitation about receiving him and trusting in him. For a while the convinced and humbled sinner is kept back from closing with the gracious terms of the gospel, by a legal spirit, by a sense of its own unworthiness, and a fear that if it comes it will not be received. It cannot conceive of that riches and freeness of grace which will welcome the chief of sinners to the house of mercy. A lingering thought of some previous cleansing or preparation; or at least of some deeper conviction, or more tender relentings, prevents a speedy approach to Jesus. But O, when he manifests his love which brought him from a throne to a cross, doubt and unbelief are driven away, and like Thomas, the believing penitent exclaims, "My Lord and my God." Where sin is truly repented of, there is always a willingness, and even a desire to confess it. Therefore we read, "That with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Our confession should be made chiefly unto God, for him have we offended. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil." And the sincere penitent spends much time in humble prostration of soul before God, confessing with brokenness of heart his multiplied and aggravated sins. He is ready to confess faults before men, and especially before the church, so far as it is thought to be for the glory of God and edification of the church. And if he has done injustice to individuals, he wishes to confess the wrong, and is anxious to make reparation, and even to do more. "Half my goods," said the converted publican, "I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." The prayer of another publican was, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

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

divine glory. From the cross go forth the most potent influences to conquer the world, and to draw all men to the Savior. The regenerate man lives by faith upon his crucified Redeemer. Paul's experience is this, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The new life inspired in regeneration is a life of dependence — of entire dependence upon Christ. The love of God in Christ is the animating principle of the new creature. But graces rise not alone, they cluster together, and mutually support and adorn each other. Faith works by love; faith and love united generate hope; for the good which is loved and looked for, is not present but future. And when hope rises to assurance it brings forth joy; and a sense of God's favor, and confidence in his mercy and protection fills the soul with abiding peace; a peace which the world cannot give, but which Christ often breathes into the hearts of his disciples. "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled nor afraid." But although true religion consists essentially in right feeling, it does not stop there, but goes forth into outward acts of obedience. Prayer and praise are no longer a task, but a delight. Searching the Scriptures, and meditation on the works and word of God, become the daily employments of the genuine convert; and his progress in divine knowledge is often astonishingly rapid. He thirsts after the knowledge of God, and his prayers for divine illumination are answered by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, who by degrees leads him into the knowledge of all necessary truth. The occasions of social and public worship are pleasant and refreshing to the renewed man, and the sacred rest and holy exercises of the Christian sabbath are in perfect correspondence with the taste and temper of his mind. He is ready to exclaim, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts, my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand." A renewed heart is not only a devotional but a benevolent heart. One of the strongest feelings experienced by the person truly converted is a desire for the salvation of others. This expansive desire may begin at home among his own kindred and friends, but it will go on to enlarge the circle until it has no other limits but the ends of the earth. Every man, however separated by distance or other circumstances, is viewed as a neighbor and a brother, and the desire of happiness for all who are not removed beyond the reach of mercy, becomes a cherished and predominate feeling, and prompts to active exertions as well as fervent prayers in behalf of those who are perishing in unbelief or for lack of knowledge. And the sincere inquiry is made, "Lord what would thou have me to do?" To promote the glory of God and the happiness of men are now the two great ends to which all plans and actions are directed. With cheerful alacrity and steady purpose the regenerated man begins a life of obedience and active usefulness. And as God has connected him with others by various relations, out of which spring an obligation to perform relative duties, he feels this obligation, and endeavors to fill up the circle of prescribed actions with diligence and fidelity. Whatever may be his condition in life, he will find enough to do. As a parent, a husband or wife, a child or brother, a magistrate or private citizen, a teacher or pupil, a master or servant, a friend or stranger, the law of God is so broad that it reaches his case and embraces every relation of human life, whether natural or artificial. The man who steadily performs these duties, and from day to day, like the sun, goes through his prescribed course, is indeed a regenerated man, for the tree is known by its fruits. As this world is a place of trial and discipline, the child of God is not only called to act with energy, but to suffer with patience. He who is taught of God learns to be submissive to the divine will, and to bear with fortitude those evils

which are incident to pilgrims and strangers in this world. But while the regenerated man experiences those exercises of piety which have been mentioned, he is not free from feelings of contrary nature. The old man, or the deep-rooted principle of sin, has received a deadly wound in regeneration, but the carnal life lingers, and sometimes struggles with great force to recover the mastery of the soul. Innumerable corruptions are bred in the heart, and often these hidden evils are brought to view by the power of temptation, so that, for a season, "iniquities prevail," and the unwatchful Christian is led captive by his enemies; and if God did not reclaim him from his backsliding, he would be utterly lost. The existence, at the same time, of two opposite principles in the soul, of necessity produces a conflict. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would." This spiritual conflict is very painful, and the Christian soldier is often astonished at himself, and is led to bewail his own imperfection and inconsistency. He finds his enemies to be much more powerful and obstinate than he expected, when he enlisted under the banner of the cross. He pleased himself then with the prospect of an easy victory, and an almost unresisted progress. Sin appeared to be dead; but the appearance was deceitful, it only lay concealed in the depths of a deceitful heart. And when he finds the strength of his corruptions, and the feebleness of his graces, he is often much discouraged, and greatly fears that he shall one day fall by the hand of some of his numerous enemies. The stability of the covenant of grace, and the faithfulness of God's promises, are not at first fully understood; but gradually the sincere convert learns to live by faith, knowing and feeling that all his strength and comfort are treasured up in Christ. And after many painful contests, and some shameful defeats, he has the pleasure of finding that his enemies give him less disturbance than before, and learns to resist them more successfully, by means of the word, prayer and faith. From what has been said we may deduce the following summary.

1. Regeneration is the commencement of spiritual life in a soul before dead in sin, by the omnipotent agency of God; and the exercises of this life are specifically different from all the exercises of an unregenerate heart.
2. The strength of the principle of life in the new birth, as in the natural birth, is exceedingly various; for while some are brought into the world of grace in the clear light of day, and are from the first active and vigorous, and enjoy much comfort in their pious exercises; others give very obscure evidence of being in possession of life, and remain long in a state of feebleness. Indeed, some are like children who seem at birth to be dead, but afterwards revive, and by degrees acquire vigor and maturity. But it by no means is a uniform fact that the children who are most healthy and vigorous at birth, continue to be so throughout life. Disease or other disasters may check their growth, and debilitate their constitution; while those who commence life in extreme weakness may acquire strength, and grow prosperously from year to year; so that, in mature age, they may have greatly surpassed many who were much more healthy and vigorous in the earliest stage of existence. Analogous to this are the facts observable in the spiritual life.
3. While some may experience this change so remarkably that they never can doubt of its reality, and can refer to the very day when they emerged from darkness to life, others, who nevertheless are truly regenerated, remain long in doubt about their spiritual state; and even when the evidence of their conversion becomes satisfactory, they are utterly unable to fix the precise time when they began to live. And it is probable that many who speak with confidence of the time and place of their new birth, mistake entirely respecting this point: the time to which they refer the

commencement of their spiritual life, is more probably the season of some clear manifestation of the divine favor, when darkness and sorrow were succeeded by joy and peace; and yet the principle of life may have existed long before. There is good reason to think that the exercises of a soul under conviction are often those of the sincere penitent.

4. Spiritual life is progressive in its nature. Habitual growth in grace is the best evidence of its reality. Those affections and joys which are temporary, however high they may arise, are not the exercises of a new creature. Under the influence of a strong love of happiness and dread of misery, and the convictions of an awakened conscience, many are greatly concerned about their salvation, and are induced to attend diligently and earnestly on the means of grace, and often are deeply impressed and shed many tears; and from some latent principle in the human constitution an oppressive burden of misery may suddenly be succeeded by a feeling of pleasure and lightness, accompanied by the persuasion that sin is pardoned and God appeased. This change of feeling may have its origin merely in the animal frame or nervous system, and may be illustrated by the effects produced by physical causes, such as opiates, carminatives, nitrous-oxide, etc. Or these sudden joys may originate in some suggestion to the mind, as that our sins are pardoned, or that God loves us, and the delusion is more complete if this sudden suggestion comes clothed in the language of Scripture, as son or daughter "thy sins are forgiven thee." These false conversions soon die away, and like the seed on stony ground, bring no fruit to maturity. But genuine piety is a growing principle, and proves that it has deep root by its regular advancement towards perfection. This gradual process in piety is beautifully represented by our Lord under the figure of seed vegetating and going on to maturity. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear." Growth in piety resembles the growth of the human body from childhood to manhood. No progress is visible from one day to another, but in months and years the increase is manifest. And as the body, while rising to maturity, may for a season be retarded or thrown back by disease, so also the health of the soul is sometimes deeply impaired, and the exercises of piety in such a state of declension, become extremely feeble. But from these diseases the Great Physician knows how to recover the souls which he has redeemed.

5. Genuine piety is a permanent and undying principle, and thus it may be distinguished from transient impressions, however powerful; yet we should not suppose that the exercises of the real Christian are uniform, or that all experience equal fluctuations of feeling. We cannot ascertain, much less describe, all the causes which may singly, or in combination, give complexion to the frames and exercises of a child of God; nor can we determine, in many cases, why one believer enjoys so much more tranquillity and cheerful hope than another, who may be equally sincere, and equally fervent in spirit. A melancholy temperament, or a disposition to anticipate the worse in all matters, and to contemplate the dark side of the picture, has doubtless a great effect in modifying the exercises of many pious people. They are naturally gloomy and desponding, and they bring this temper with them into religion. They are always full of doubts and fears, and though they do really possess the characteristics of piety, they will not be encouraged to hope with confidence. They hang their heads daily like the bulrush, and are of a sorrowful spirit, and refuse to be comforted. On the other hand, persons of a sanguine temperament, as in other things, so in religion, are disposed to view every thing in the most favorable light; and although their evidences

may really be no clearer than his who is forever in doubt and distress; yet they cherish a favorable opinion of their spiritual state. That, however, which we wish to inculcate is, that true piety is an abiding principle, which, however the feelings may fluctuate, never becomes extinct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. The only other effect of regeneration which we shall mention is a grateful sense of the love and goodness of God. Gratitude is the soul of heart-religion. Unregenerate men may and often do experience a sensation of natural gratitude; and on some occasions it may come upon them with a gush of feeling. Such emotions are amiable and salutary, but they are transient, and involve no perception of the moral excellence of God. But the renewed man cherishes this lively sense of God's goodness continually. It is the most frequent emotion of the heart, and has the most powerful and practical influence upon his life. He is constrained by the love of Christ who died for

him. He sees in the manifestation of that love, moral excellence beyond expression. It is the brightest point in his horizon. And the more he contemplates this glory, the more is he fired with the love of gratitude. His only wish to live, is for Christ: his strongest motive for wishing to depart, is to be with Christ. Heaven appears infinitely desirable because there, an eternity will be spent in praising the Redeemer.

S. Counsels to Christian Mothers

COUNSELS TO CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

Archibald Alexander When I address myself to Christian mothers, I do not mean to intimate non-Christian mothers stand in no need of admonition. Alas! that in a Christian country there should be mothers who have nothing of the spirit of Christ! Young people often promise themselves that they will attend to true religion after they are married and settled in the world. How preposterous is this! It ought rather to be their resolution not to think of entering into a state involving such weighty responsibilities, and the exercise of so many virtues—until they have become the possessors of true religion! Without vital piety how is it possible for any woman rightly to fulfill the duties of a wife, and especially of a mother? I feel that no woman destitute of religion is fit to become a wife and mother. Only think of it—an impious mother! If it were not so common, the very expression would excite emotions similar to those which we experience when we hear of an impious minister.

I address Christian mothers, because from them alone can I expect a patient hearing. I address Christian mothers, because all mothers ought to be sincere Christians. Is there a person on earth, whose mind is so perverted by prejudice, as not to perceive a congruity between piety and this tender relation? It was formerly a current opinion, even among infidels that religion was an ornament and safeguard to a woman. I knew one distinguished man who had renounced all belief in the Christian religion himself, who encouraged it in his wife, and furnished her with all the necessary means of attending church; and when one of his friends complained to him, that his wife was becoming pious, which gave him great concern, he told him that he was a fool, for that nothing was more suitable and desirable than that a wife should be pious. Even infidels are constrained, like the demons of old, to give their testimony in favor of Christ. Many ungodly men desire to obtain wives of genuine piety, and few intelligent men in our country would be pleased with a female infidel. Such a character was so rare in Virginia forty years ago, when infidelity abounded among the higher classes of men, that when a certain lady was pointed out as the advocate of deistical opinions, it created a revulsion of feeling in almost every mind.

Here I take pleasure in saying that in no class of society anywhere have I found examples of more pure and elevated piety than among the ladies of Virginia. And I have reason to believe that these examples have rather been increased than diminished since I left my native State. It may, in an important sense, be said that the Commonwealth has been preserved from utter destruction by the prudence, purity and piety of Virginian mothers. They have been the salt which has arrested the progress of moral corruption in the mass of society. Accordingly there is no country in the world, perhaps, where mothers are so much respected by their children, and have so great an influence over them. Ask almost any young Virginian where he will look for the brightest examples of moral excellence, and his thoughts will turn at once to the character of pious females, and perhaps to his own mother, if she happens to be pious.

I recollect a young gentleman, who, although he had an uncommonly pious mother, broke over all the restraints of his education, and became a professed infidel and the advocate of licentiousness in its vilest forms; but a gracious God heard the unceasing prayers of his mother, and by means somewhat unusual he was converted from the error of his ways. In speaking of his former career—which he evidently did with shame and humility—he said, "I could get over all arguments in defense of religion but one, and that I never could eliminate, which was the pious example and life of my mother. When I had fortified myself against the truth by the aid of Bolingbroke, Hume, and Voltaire, yet, whenever I thought of my mother, I had the secret conviction which nothing could remove—that there was a reality in vital piety."

I could soon fill my paper with salutary precepts for mothers; but this is not exactly what is needed. Knowledge as to maternal duty is widely diffused. The theory of education, as it falls under the direction of mothers, is perhaps sufficiently understood by most. What I aim at, is "to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance", (2 Peter 3:1) or in other words, to arouse them to the consideration of the importance of the station which they occupy, and to persuade them to exert that influence which they possess. I have often heard pious females complain that they had little or nothing in their power, and they felt as if they were almost useless members of society. This is an flagrant miscalculation. Their influence is silent and spreads imperceptibly—but it is real and effective.

Piety is like light which cannot be hidden. The more it seeks concealment, and retires from public notice, the more brightly it shines. Female influence only ceases, or operates unfavorably, when women depart from their own proper sphere; or when they endeavor to obtrude themselves upon the notice and admiration of the public. As we are shocked with infidelity in a female, so female ambition is odious. Let the devoted mother exert herself in her own proper sphere, which is in the retirement of the domestic circle, and in constant and devout attendance on the worship of God. Let her look well to the affairs of her household. Let her manifest her graciousness and forbearance in the steady government of her children. Let her set an example of order, neatness, industry, and hospitality, and she will have enough to do. Every hour, and almost every minute, will furnish opportunity for the exercise of some virtue; and that Eye which goes everywhere will graciously notice, and bring to light too, those acts which are cheerfully and conscientiously performed. A mother cannot be placed in a more interesting field of labor than in the midst of a large circle of children. Here is her appropriate sphere of action. Here she has work enough to occupy her heart and hands. But some will be ready to think this is a narrow field in which to labor. They wish to act on a larger scale, and do something which will impact on the destinies of men—something more intimately connected with the conversion of the world. Some few women, by the possession of peculiar talents, and by being placed in peculiar circumstances, have been able to accomplish so much, that the world has been filled with their fame. Such was the brilliant course of Mrs. Hannah More, who by her benevolent exertions, and by her writings, became the benefactress of the human race. And such is now the luminous orbit in which Mrs. Fry moves. But it falls to the lot of very few of either gender to do good on what may be called a national scale. And if all should aim at such achievements, very little would be done. Much the larger part of the female gender must be contented to cultivate the small garden which providence has committed to them. But as the mothers in ancient Israel were solicitous to bear sons, in hope that they might enjoy the honor and unspeakable pleasure of giving birth to the promised Messiah, so mothers

now may cherish the pleasing hope that of the first fruit of their womb, God will raise up men of renown, eminent ministers, devoted missionaries, distinguished philanthropists, wise statesmen, or even men of humble, exemplary piety in retired life. Hannah waited upon God for her Samuel; and no doubt before the child was born, she consecrated him to God from whom she received him; and when she embraced him in her arms, and nursed him at her bosom, she continually darted up petitions for God's blessing upon His own precious gift. And O! how richly was she rewarded!

I have read or heard that someone asked an uncommonly devout woman how it happened that all her children became pious at an age so early. The good woman modestly disclaimed all merit or agency in the affair—but said she, "as many children as I have nursed, I never took one of them to my bosom to afford it the necessary nourishment—but at the same time I lifted up my heart in prayer to God for His blessing on the dear little infant." Would not this be a good rule for mothers universally to observe? Who can tell what the effect would be on the next generation? The question is often asked, "By whom shall Jacob arise?" (Amos 7:2,5) One answers one thing, and one another; but if I may be permitted to give a partial answer, though I believe a true one, I would say, by pious mothers. Yes, as a woman had the unspeakable blessing of being the mother of our Lord and Savior, so woman, collectively, shall be the mother of the church. Ten thousand Timothy's on the knee, and with sweet and persuasive speech, instilling into their opening minds the words of those "Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:15) A genuine and thorough reformation must commence in the family—which is the foundation of all social institutions, civil and religious. Here is the root whence springs the whole tree with all its spreading and towering branches. And if true religion, to be general, must begin in the domestic circle, to whom will belong the chief agency and the most distinguished honor? Undoubtedly to pious mothers. Theirs must be the hands which plant the precious seed; theirs the prayers and tears which water the growing plant; theirs the kind, seasonable, and well-adapted instructions which distill into the tender, susceptible mind like the gentle rain on the tender grass, or the more imperceptible dew upon the thirsty plant. Those are not the most important lectures which are, with solemn pomp, delivered in the schools and pulpits—but those which flow sweetly from the affectionate lips of mothers to their docile and interested group of little ones, gathered around their knees. No eloquence equals that of a sensible and pious mother, because no impressions made by human speech are so deep and indelible. These lessons, whether she knows it or not, she is engraving on tablets of human hearts—from which the inscription can never wholly be obliterated. Impression after impression may be made on the same—but these have the advantage of being first and deepest; and when all the others are gone, these will be left. In visiting a family belonging to my charge in Philadelphia, I observed a very brisk but old woman bringing chips into the house in her apron. I asked the lady of the house who it was. "It is my mother," said she, "but she no longer knows me." Upon inquiry, I found that she had forgotten everything except what had occurred in her early life. And though she had left Switzerland when a girl of fourteen, and had not spoken the German language since that time, yet she now repeats her German prayers aloud every night.

It would be difficult to draw a definite line of distinction between a good mother and a good wife. The character of the latter must have an important bearing on that of the former. For a woman to perform her part well when united with a worthy and affectionate husband is comparatively easy;

but when a pious woman of refined and susceptible feelings is connected with a man whose true character and temper have been destroyed by habits of intoxication—when she is treated with brutal tyranny, and even cruelty, to preserve equanimity, and to perform the duties of an obedient, respectful wife, requires the exercise of much self-denial. Such a situation is one peculiarly painful and trying to a pious mother—but it is one to which many excellent women, in our day, have been subjected. But the greater the trial, the more grace is needed, and the brighter the character which is enabled with meekness and fortitude to bear up under such a burden. If such a calamity should come on a woman of refined feelings at once, it would be overwhelming; but she is gradually prepared for the worst, and learns to discipline her passions, so as to exhibit no temper unsuitable to her station, and the tender relation of a wife. She avoids reproaches, and in her mouth there are no harsh reproofs. Some change in her appearance, and occasional spells of bitter weeping, when alone, will not escape the jealous eye of a drunkard; and it is not improbable that such symptoms of deep distress as these will only serve to provoke his ire, and cause him to rage more furiously, when under the influence of his inebriating cups. And what can she say to her children as they become capable of observation? She never mentions the subject to them, if it can be avoided; and when necessary, with no remarks which would tend to lessen their respect for an unworthy parent. She conceals from his children the faults and ill-treatment of the father as much as possible. And to all other people, however intimate their mutual friendship, her lips are sealed. This is the difficulty of patiently bearing this heavy burden, that it must be borne alone, in silence, without the usual relief derived from venting our sorrows into the bosom of a faithful, sympathizing friend.

I know of no condition in human life, free from guilt, which is more deplorable than that of a lady of education, piety, and refined sensibility, tied to a brutal husband who is seldom in his right mind; or who, though for a season he may refrain, yet has his paroxysms of the worst species of insanity to which our race is subject. This leads me to remark, that the very best view which a wife can take of such a case is to consider it a real madness, and to feel and act just as if it was the effect of some physical cause. However difficult the practice of duty may be in such circumstances, I have observed not a few examples of such consummate prudence, Christian fortitude, and meek forbearance, as excited my admiration. As gold is purified by the fire of the furnace, so it is probable that some women, under the pressure of such afflictions, rise to an eminence of piety, to which in other circumstances they never could have attained. But I must not indulge myself in speaking in a strain too laudatory of Christian mothers. Some have great weaknesses, the effects of which upon the character and destinies of their children are very unhappy. I recollect to have once been acquainted with a Virginian planter of the best old stamp. He was rich, hospitable, kindhearted, and better than all, truly pious. When he heard the Gospel, his whole soul seemed to be laid open to the impression of the truth; and so susceptible was he, that often while the man of God described the love of a Savior, the large, and not unmanly tear would trickle down his cheek. He was a man without deceit; and you always might know where to find him. But I was grieved and surprised to find that his sons were all profligates. By drinking and gambling and other vices, they soon ruined their reputation, wasted their estates, injured their health, and shortened their lives. In searching for the cause of this wide departure from the example of a good and affectionate father, I traced it to the injudicious indulgence of a fond mother. Not that she wished her sons to become dissipated; but when they did wrong, she carefully concealed their conduct from their father, connived at their vices, and afforded them facilities of gratifying their corrupt propensities by plentifully supplying them with money. And with such care were their vices concealed from the

unsuspecting father, that the first knowledge which he obtained was when his sons' ruin was completed, and their habits so fixed, that all regard to decorum was laid aside, and even the displeasure of a father could be braved.

Another class of mothers, happily not numerous, injure their children by a too rigorous discipline. They expect by external restraints and confinements to preserve them from temptation. The general principle is good—but may be pushed too far. A gradual exposure to such temptations as must be encountered in the world, is safer than for a son to be suddenly subjected to the whole influence of the world at once. If children dislike the severity of the discipline under which they are placed, they will be ingenious in finding opportunities of evading a yoke which they do not like to bear. And when they get free from parental restraint, they will be apt to run to greater excess than others.

While sober, consistent piety in mothers has a powerful and lasting effect on children, fanaticism has a contrary tendency. The children of parents who indulge in extravagant expressions of religious feeling, and whose religion comes on in violent paroxysms, are, in most cases, devoid of reverence for sacred things, and often show a disregard of moral principle.

It is exceedingly important in the education and discipline of children, not to confound their notions of right and wrong by treating little matters with the same seriousness and severity as great. Our instructions and conduct towards children should be such as to present to their minds virtues and vices, according to a just graduation. If we pursue a peccadillo with as much severity as a great crime, the danger is that a great crime will be committed with as little sense of its evil as a fault of the minor class. It is also dangerous to proclaim a crusade against some one vice, and magnify its evil beyond all comparison, while other vices equally or more malignant pass unnoticed. So one virtue or duty may be held up so continually, and placed in such importance, that other virtues, equally important and valuable, are left concealed in the background. As in the Christian character, symmetry or a due proportion of every grace, is essential to perfection; so in teaching morality, a strict regard should be had to the magnitude and proportion of every part of the system. Let all VICE be treated as vice—but let not all vices be treated as equal. Let every VIRTUE occupy its proper place, and fill its due space.

It is a good rule, even in the government of children, not to legislate too much. Vex them not with trivial and unnecessary rules. Train them to govern themselves as much as possible. That child who is obedient only when the eye of the parent is on it, has not been properly managed. Allow children liberty in such things as are innocent, and to which they are inclined by the instinct of nature. It is a poor, short-sighted plan to keep children moping all day over their books; they learn far more that is valuable while sporting in the fields, than we can teach them by such a process in the house. It is amazing how much they learn without effort, both of words and things.

We may even go too far, by inculcating piety upon their tender minds too incessantly. Mothers should watch the favorable moment for instilling religious instruction. One sentence at the favorable moment is better than a long lecture at an unseasonable time. Holiness cannot be rendered pleasing to the natural heart—but pious instruction may be made interesting.

Indirect methods of reaching the conscience are often better than the more direct. Occasional remarks not seeming to be intended for them, are often noticed and remembered; especially

conversation with godly visitors in their presence has a wonderful effect. Let your children come early into company, that they may hear—that is, if the conversation be edifying. By eliciting remarks on certain subjects from ministers and other pious people in the hearing of children, you will be likely to produce greater effect than if the same things were addressed directly to them by their parents.

Family slander is an evil against which mothers cannot too sedulously guard. There are some families who are extremely cautious about speaking evil of their neighbors outside of their own homes; but when at home, they feel privileged, and in the presence of their children, allow themselves great liberties in traducing the characters of those with whom they are living, ostensibly, in the habits of friendly fellowship. This is not only an evil habit, and readily contracted by children—but it is the most effectual method of teaching them to play the hypocrite, by constantly assuming the appearance of friendship, and using the language of kindness—when a contrary feeling is habitually cherished. It is impossible to entertain sentiments of true friendship towards those whom we are in the practice of maligning every day. O mothers, guard your children against this common vice, so freely indulged, and so little censured by many.

Akin to this—but less malignant, is the practice of ridiculing the foibles, and caricaturing the imperfections or personal defects of our friends. In some whole families there exists a talent for mimicry: they can so exactly imitate the tones, gestures, attitudes and manners of others, that the exercise of this faculty becomes a source of much amusement at the expense of their neighbors; especially when the quality or action imitated is a little exaggerated or distorted. This propensity should be carefully and resolutely repressed in young people. It is very apt to occasion a separation or alienation of affection among friends: for who among us is willing to be laughed at for the entertainment of others?

There is no one thing on which mothers should insist more uniformly and peremptorily, than that their children should tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Lying above all other things may be said to be the vice of children. "We go astray from the womb, speaking lies." (Psalms 58:3) Children soon learn that others cannot look into their hearts: they will often therefore say what they know is not true, from the confidence that they cannot be detected. Keep a vigilant eye on this matter, and pass not slightly over an offence of this kind. Many worthy parents, I have observed, seem to know little or care little about the habit of fibbing in their children. Manifest by every proper means your utter detestation of lying, in all its kinds and degrees.

I would also caution mothers against the foolish ambition of trying to make prodigies of their children, and against the vanity of so exaggerating their smart speeches and exploits as to make them appear to be prodigies. I would not be so rigid as to prohibit mothers from speaking of their own dear offspring, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak—but I may advise you not to make your children the everlasting theme of your conversation, morning, noon, and night. Rest assured that other people do not take as much interest in the subject as you do. And while I would commend those mothers who are diligent in the instruction of their children, I would respectfully say, be thankful that they are not idiots, nor deformed, nor destitute of the common sense of human nature; but be not anxious that they should be thought prodigies. Children may be so trained as to perform wonders—but what good can come of it? Do we not see pigs trained in the same way?

Exercise a salutary discipline towards your children, even with the rod, when it is necessary—but let this species of discipline be the last resort, and used rather seldom. It is far better than isolating them in a dark room, or depriving them of necessary food—or anything which keeps the child a long time in a bad humor. But carefully avoid chastisement in the heat of passion, for this will do your children more harm than good.

Keep your children as long as you can in your own house. Domestic feeling is a sacred tie which should be preserved fresh and strong—as long as possible. Often, mothers lose all their influence over sons by their being sent abroad to school. Have as much of your children's education, therefore, conducted at home, as is practicable. Be assured that no place is so favorable to the good feelings and morals of the young as the family circle, unless the family be destitute of religion and virtue; and for such I do not now write.

Boarding schools for girls may be useful—but I would advise you to keep your daughters at home, under your own eye, and when they go to school in the day, let them come home by night. You may possibly find a better school by sending them abroad—but the sacrifice is too great, and the risk of evil habits and evil sentiments is not small. And as to your sons, if they must go abroad, place them in the family of some pious man, and under the maternal care of some pious woman, where they may find a substitute for parental attention. While absent, let them return home as frequently as they can, that what I have called the "domestic" feeling may be preserved. If your sons must be put to a trade, or become clerks in a store or counting-house, be very particular as to the character and conscientious fidelity of their master. It is lamentable to see how youth in these circumstances are neglected; and how they are exposed to temptations from which it is hardly possible they can escape without guilt and contamination.

I would earnestly recommend it to mothers to keep up a correspondence, by letter, with their children when removed from the domestic roof: a single word of admonition and warning from a mother might be the means of reclaiming a beloved son from the verge of a precipice. But whatever else you neglect, omit not to follow your children, when absent, with your daily prayers. Very often, this is the only thing which is left to mothers. Their children are either removed far from them, or, if near, they have lost their influence over them. But there is One, who is near to them, and who can influence them. O mothers! plead for your dear offspring at the throne of grace; travail in birth for them a second time. God is gracious. God will regard the fervent, importunate cry of Christian mothers. Get friends to unite with you in social prayer. This leads me to speak of those societies called "Maternal Associations". If prudently and humbly conducted, they are calculated to be eminently useful. Let all parade and ostentation be avoided, and mothers may meet and pray for their dear children as often as they are disposed.

S. Fasting

FASTING

by Archibald Alexander

Yesterday a pious young minister called upon me, and said he wished I would write a short article on the duty of fasting. He observed, that among Christians of our day he feared this duty was much neglected.

I referred him to a valuable discourse of the late venerable Doctor Miller on that subject, published some years ago--which he said he had not seen. I told him that I was not in favor of periodic fasts once a week or once a month; that there were times when we ought not to fast--as our blessed Savior said to the disciples of John, in answer to their question, "Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but your disciples fast not? Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast."

Yet soon after our conversion he determined to fast one day in the week; but after practicing this for some time, he found that it was degenerating into a formal observance, and he gave up the practice. He remarked that it was evident from one declaration of our Lord, that there were cases of obstinate evils from which deliverance was not obtained, without adding fasting to our prayers. The reference was to Matthew 17:21: "Howbeit, this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting."

Fasting has made a part of all religions, true and false, and is much practiced among the heathen, the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Romanists, and the oriental Christians. And because the practice has been turned to superstition, Protestants have too much neglected this duty. But eminently devout men in all ages have found fasting an auxiliary to devotion and to the mortification of sin.

Some professors neglect it altogether, under the false notion that literal fasting is not enjoined, but only penitence and abstaining from sin. There are, however, degrees of fasting, both as to the time of abstinence from food, and whether the abstinence be total or partial. The Ninevites, when brought to repentance by the preaching of Jonah, tasted neither bread nor water for three whole days. This was a severe fast. Daniel fasted for three full weeks; but this was not a total abstinence, for he says, "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came meat nor wine in my mouth." And Peter's fast, when he saw the vision of the sheet let down, was only until three o'clock.

External fasting, without corresponding internal penitence and humiliation, is hypocrisy--and such fasting is severely reprov'd by the prophet. "'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a

reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord?" (Isaiah 58:3-5) "Even now--this is the LORD's declaration--turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster." (Joel 2:12-13) And our Lord warns us against ostentation in our fasting: "Whenever you fast, don't be sad-faced like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so their fasting is obvious to people. I assure you: They've got their reward! But when you fast, put oil on your head, and wash your face, so that you don't show your fasting to people but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)

One special occasion on which the apostles and their companions were accustomed to fast, was when ministers were to be ordained and sent forth. Thus we read in Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." And again, chapter 14:23, "And when they had ordained elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." Is this practice now followed by those who ordain? As fasting renders some people sick, so that it hinders their devotion, such should adopt partial abstinence; for the Lord will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

One end of fasting, is that we may "afflict our souls."

S. Lord's Day

The Lord's Day

Archibald Alexander Excerpted from Archibald Alexander's A Brief Compend of Bible Truth (1846)

Reason teaches that there is a God, and that he ought to be worshipped. Had man remained in his primeval state of integrity, social worship would have been an incumbent duty. But it is evident that continual worship, whatever may be the fact in heaven, would not have been required of him while on the earth. We know, from express revelation, that it was appointed unto him to keep the garden of Eden, and dress it; and this would have required much attention, and vigorous exertion. He was also constituted lord of the inferior animals; and the exercise of this dominion would of necessity occupy a portion of his time and attention. In order to perform the primary duty of worshipping his Creator in that manner which was becoming and proper, he must have had some portion of his time appropriated to that service. The worship due to the great Creator requires time for the contemplation of his attributes, as revealed in his glorious works. It requires time, also, to recollect all the manifestations of his wisdom and goodness in the dispensations of his Providence, and to give vocal expression to feelings of gratitude for the benefits received, and the happiness bestowed. No doubt, devotional feelings were habitual in the hearts of our first parents. No doubt, they sent up, more formally, their morning and evening prayers; but more time is needed to draw off the thoughts from visible things, and to concentrate them on the great invisible Giver of existence. Short snatches of time are not sufficient to perform this noblest of all duties in a proper manner. A whole day, at certain periods, was needed, so that there might be time for the contemplation of divine things, and for the full and free exercises of devotion. And as man is a social being, and so constituted, that by uniting with others who have the same views and feelings, his own through sympathy are rendered more animating and pleasing, it is evident that it was intended that mankind should worship and praise God in a general and public, as well as in an individual and private capacity. What proportion of time should be consecrated to this service, the reason of man could not have determined. If it had been left free by the law of God, the obligation to set apart the due proportion of time would not have been so binding and sacred, as if the Almighty Creator should designate the day which should be employed in his service. And behold the amazing condescension of God! With some view to this very thing, He was pleased to perform the work of creation in six days, and to rest on the seventh; thus setting an example to his creature man; for He not only rested on the seventh day, but sanctified it; that is, set it apart to a holy use — to be employed, not in bodily labour or converse with the world, but in the contemplation of the works and attributes of God, and in holding delightful communion with his Maker. God could have commanded the world into existence, with all its species of living creatures, in a single moment; but for man's sake, he created the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, the light, and the air, and vegetables, and animals, in six successive days, and then ceased to work; not that the Almighty could be weary and need rest; but for the purpose of teaching man that whilst he might lawfully spend six days in worldly employments, he must rest on the seventh day. This day, from the beginning, was a holy day.

It is wonderful to find learned commentators trying to prove that no day was sanctified at the beginning; but that Moses mentions it in his history of the creation, by way of anticipation. But this is an unnatural and forced construction. When the fourth commandment was proclaimed from Sinai, and written by the finger of God on one of the stone tables, the reason given for sanctifying the Sabbath day is, that "in six days God made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." When the Sabbath is first mentioned by Moses, after the exodus, there is no appearance of its being a new institution; but it is referred to as a day accustomed to be observed; or, at least, as one on which it was not lawful to perform the common labours of the week. The mention of it occurs in the account of the descent of the manna. It is said, on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much as on other days. "And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, tomorrow is the rest of the Sabbath; bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you, to be kept until the morrow. And Moses said, Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord. And so the people rested on the seventh day." Exodus 16:23. Evidently, this was no part of the ceremonial law, which was not yet given. It seems clear, that the reference is to a day of rest, of which the people had some knowledge. The decisive argument for the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath is the fourth commandment. The ten commandments, as being of a moral nature, and therefore always binding, were promulgated in a very different manner from the other institutions of Moses. They were first uttered in a voice of thunder, from the midst of the fire on Sinai, and were then inscribed by the finger of God on two tables of hewn stone. Now, it is admitted, that all the other precepts of the Decalogue are moral; and would it not be an unaccountable thing that a ceremonial, temporary commandment should be inserted in the midst of these moral precepts? This is the law which Christ says he came not to destroy, but to fulfill. None of these commandments have been abrogated; and therefore the fourth, as well as the others, remains in full force. And it is remarkable that the prophets, in denouncing the sins of the people, always mention the violation of the Sabbath in the same catalogue with the transgression of moral precepts.

It may seem to cursory readers of the New Testament, that our Lord abrogated the Sabbath, and in his own conduct disregarded it. But this is far from being a correct view of the fact. The Pharisees insisted on such a rigid observation of the day of rest, as to prohibit works of real necessity and mercy. This superstitious and over-scrupulous opinion, our Saviour denounced, and showed, that healing the sick, and satisfying the cravings of hunger, were things lawful to be done on the Sabbath. And what renders it certain that this is the correct view of the matter is, that our Lord justifies his conduct by the practice of the saints in ancient times, when the Sabbath was in full force by the acknowledgment of all, and by the provisions of the Levitical law itself, which required the priests to perform double labour on the Sabbath. And he, moreover, showed, that the accusation against him, for a violation of the Sabbath, was hypocritical; because, the very persons who made it, would pull an ox or sheep out of a pit into which it had fallen, on the Sabbath day; and also, because they thought it no violation of the sacredness of the Sabbath, to lead an ox or ass to watering, though they objected to the disciples satisfying their hunger on that day.

One of his expressions has evidently been misunderstood, by some interpreters. It is where he says, that "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." They have interpreted this to mean, that Christ claimed the right to do those things on the Sabbath, which would be unlawful to others on

that day. But this cannot be the meaning; for Christ was made under the law, and had bound himself to obey it. He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. A breach of the fourth commandment would have been sin in him, as much as in any other. I take the meaning to be, that as he appointed the Sabbath, so he best knew how to interpret his own law.

There is a text in Paul's epistle to the Romans, which has been supposed to teach that it is a matter of indifference whether we observe the Sabbath or not. — "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be full persuaded in his own mind." But evidently, the question here discussed relates to the ceremonial law. It relates not to the Sabbath; which, as we have seen, was no part of the ceremonial law, but belonged to the moral code. The ceremonial law was virtually abrogated by the death of Christ; but all Christians were not yet enlightened to understand their Christian liberty; and such were indulged in their continued observance of these rites. The apostle is treating here of meats and drinks and festival days, the binding obligation of which had ceased. But in the epistle to the Colossians, Paul says, "Let no man, therefore, judge you, in meat or drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or the Sabbath days." Here, again, the ceremonial law is obviously the subject of discourse. He is speaking of "meats," "drinks," "new moons," and "Sabbath days." And the word Sabbath relates to the numerous Sabbaths of the ceremonial law, distinct from the weekly Sabbath. Whenever a festival of the law continued eight days, the first and the last were always kept as Sabbaths. Or the reference might be to the sabbatical year, for the word days is not in the original. But on supposition that the weekly Sabbath was intended, the meaning might be that the Jewish Sabbath, namely, the seventh day of the week, was no longer obligatory on Christians, since they had, by divine direction, adopted the first day for their day of sacred rest and of holding public assemblies for the worship of God. This leads to the inquiry, what evidence have we that such a change was ever made by divine authority? The uniform practice of Christians, to meet on the first day of the week, from the very time of Christ's resurrection, is strong evidence that this change was introduced by Christ and the apostles. It was suitable, that as the worship of God by his people, would have principally respect to the work of redemption, it should be celebrated on that day on which it was made manifest that this glorious work was completed. Accordingly, Christ having risen from the dead always met his disciples on this day. And afterwards, the apostles and the churches were accustomed to come together on this day, "to break bread," that is to celebrate the Lord's supper. And when the apostle wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, it was already established as a custom, not only in the church of Corinth, but in the churches of Macedonia and Galatia, that their contributions for the poor, should be collected on this day. From the apostolical practice, we rightly infer the divine authority for this change. So generally was the first day of the week observed, in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, and for the celebration of religious worship, that in the times of the apostles, it had obtained the significant denomination of the Lord's Day.

Unless we had a particular day set apart, by divine authority for the worship of God, this important duty could never be performed in an edifying manner; and public worship would, for the most part, fall into disuse. And if a certain day should be agreed upon by the church, or by the civil government, it would want that authority and sanctity which are necessary to its general observance. As it is, we find how difficult it is to get men to cease from their earthly cares and pursuits on this day. It was, therefore, wisely placed among the most binding precepts of the moral

law. This chapter shall be concluded by a few directions for the observance of the Lord's Day.

1. Let the whole day be consecrated to the service of God, especially in acts of worship, public and private. This weekly recess from worldly cares and avocations, affords a precious opportunity for the study of God's word, and for the examination of our own hearts. Rise early, and let your first thoughts and aspirations be directed to heaven. Meditate much and profoundly on divine things, and endeavour to acquire a degree of spirituality on this day which will abide with you through the whole week.

2. Consider the Lord's Day an honour and delight. Let your heart be elevated in holy joy, and your lips be employed in the high praises of God. This day more resembles heaven, than any other portion of our time; and we should endeavour to imitate the worship of heaven, according to that petition of the Lord's prayer — "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Never permit the idea to enter your mind, that the Sabbath is a burden. It is a sad case, when professing Christians are weary of this sacred rest, and say, like some of old, "When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell corn, and set forth wheat?" As you improve this day, so probably will you be prospered all the week.

3. Avoid undue rigour, and Pharisaic scrupulosity, for nothing renders the Lord's Day more odious. Still keep in view the great end of its institution; and remember that the Sabbath was instituted for the benefit of man, and not to be a galling yoke. The cessation from worldly business and labour is not for its own sake, as if there was any thing morally good in inaction, but we are called off from secular pursuits on this day, that we may have a portion of our time to devote uninterruptedly to the worship of God. Let every thing then be so arranged in your household, beforehand, that there may be no interruption to religious duties, and to attendance on the means of grace. As divine knowledge is the richest acquisition within our reach, and as this knowledge is to be found in the word of God, let us value this day, as affording all persons an opportunity of hearing and reading the word. And as the fourth commandment requires the heads of families to cause the Sabbath to be observed by all under their control, or within their gates, it is very important that domestic and culinary arrangements should be so ordered, that no one be deprived of the opportunity of attending on the word and worship of God which this day affords. If we possess any measure of the true spirit of devotion, this sacred day will be most welcome to our hearts; and we will rejoice when they say, "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." To such a soul, the opportunity of enjoying spiritual communion with God will be valued above all price, and be esteemed as the richest privilege which creatures can enjoy on earth.

4. Whilst you conscientiously follow your own sense of duty in the observance of the rest of the Sabbath, be not ready to censure all who may differ from you in regard to minute particulars, which are not prescribed or commended in the word of God. Beware of indulging yourself in any practice which may have the effect of leading others to disregard the rest and sanctity of the Sabbath. Let not your liberty in regard to what you think may be done, be a stumbling block to cause weaker brethren to offend, or unnecessarily to give them pain, or to lead them to entertain an unfavourable opinion of your piety.

5. As, undoubtedly, the celebration of public worship and gaining divine instruction from the divine oracles, is the main object of the institution of the Christian Sabbath, let all be careful to attend on the services of the sanctuary on this day. And let the heart be prepared by previous prayer and

meditation for a participation in public worship, and while in the more immediate presence of the Divine Majesty, let all the people fear before him, and with reverence adore and praise his holy name. Let all vanity, and curious gazing, and slothfulness, be banished from the house of God. Let every heart be lifted up on entering the sanctuary, and let the thoughts be carefully restrained from wandering on foolish or worldly objects, and resolutely recalled when they have begun to go astray. Let brotherly love be cherished, when joining with others in the worship of God. The hearts of all the church should be united in worship, as the heart of one man. Thus, will the worship of the sanctuary below, be a preparation for the purer, sublimer worship in the temple above.

S. Nature and Means of Growth in Grace

Nature and Means of Growth in Grace

by Archibald Alexander THE word 'grace' is of frequent occurrence, and high and interesting import, in the sacred Scriptures. In the great concern of man's salvation, no other word has a richer meaning. But while the general idea of the term is every where retained, there are several shades of difference in the signification, as it is used in different passages of the sacred text. Its primary and more usual sense is, the favour of God to sinners; or in other words, the love and mercy of God. In this acceptation, grace is the fountain of life, the source of salvation, to which all other blessings may be traced, as to their first cause. Thus Paul, who abounds in the use of this word, in his epistle to the Ephesians, says, 'Having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' And again, 'By grace are ye saved,' that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.' But as the gospel is the channel through which this fountain pours forth its exuberant streams, it is called, not only 'the gospel of the grace of God,' but 'grace' itself. As where it is said, 'We then as workers together with him, beseech you, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.' And also in the following text, 'For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men :' in both which passages, the least attention to the context will show, that by the grace of God, is meant the gospel. And as the gospel is rendered effectual to the salvation of sinners, only by the aid of the Holy Spirit, therefore, his influences on the heart have also received the name of grace: as, 'my grace is sufficient for thee:' 'By the grace of God I am what I am :' 'And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' But in our text, the word 'grace,' has a meaning somewhat different from what it has in any of the passages which have been cited. Christians are here exhorted to 'grow in grace;' which could not be a practicable thing, in any of the senses of the word already given. By 'grace,' here, we must understand, the principle of new life, implanted in regeneration; a sense of the word, much in use among us, but rather unusual in the Scriptures. When the apostle exhorts Christians to 'grow in grace,' it is the same, as if he had said, increase in holiness, or advance in piety. And it would not be easy to select a subject of greater importance to all professors of religion. If comfort and usefulness here, and the degree of our felicity and glory in heaven, will be proportioned to our growth in grace, then the subject possesses an intrinsic importance, which should command attention, and deeply interest the feelings, of all who hear me. What I propose then is, I. To explain the nature of growth in grace.

II. To inquire, by what means growth in grace may be promoted.

It is evidently implied in the exhortation, that the persons addressed, were the subjects of grace; for that which has no existence cannot increase. But grace is a plant which does not grow in nature's garden. It is of heavenly origin. By nature we are all 'children of wrath,' conceived in sin,

and totally destitute of holiness. None, therefore, but the truly regenerated soul is capable of growth in grace. We have, it is true, a rational nature and a moral constitution, and are accountable, free agents; but in relation to spiritual exercises, we are dead 'dead in trespasses and sins.' If there existed naturally, in man, any principle of spiritual life, it might, by assiduity and favorable circumstances, be enkindled; and by being cherished, might, by degree's, advance to maturity. A seed which possesses vitality, although it has lain dormant for a thousand years, yet when placed in a congenial soil, and subjected to the Influences of heat, air, and moisture, will readily sprout, and grow, until it arrives at maturity. But if the vital principle be lost, it will never give any indications of life; and all the skill and power of man can never cause it to vegetate. And yet, this seed, when subjected to the minutest scrutiny by the aid of the best optical glasses, may appear to have no defect in its internal structure. It may possess the perfect organization of seeds of the same species, but its vitality has fled, and no power on earth can restore it.

Analogous to this is the condition of the human soul. Possessed still of all the faculties with which it was created, it has lost the image of God, which consisted 'in righteousness and true holiness.' The principle of spiritual life with which it was animated, has become extinct. And as the communication of life of every kind is the prerogative of God, so the regeneration of the soul is ascribed to him [in Scripture]; and as this work requires the exertion of the same power, which at first caused light to shine out of darkness, it is denominated 'a new creation ;' and, as there is in it, some analogy to the raising a dead body from the grave, it is called 'a resurrection ;' but as this divine power is exerted in a free and sovereign manner, without any consideration of merit in the creature, it is called 'grace.'

Although grace does not exist in any man by nature', but as a communicated principle, yet it may be received at any period of our existence in this world, from infancy to old age ; and we read of some who were sanctified from the womb ; but as far as can be judged from experience, the number of such is very small. Piety is seldom observed to exist with the first dawning of reason and moral feeling. Most persons, therefore, who become the subjects of grace, can remember the time, when they were alienated from the life of God; and have some knowledge of the change which took place in their views and affections.

Another thing implied in the exhortation of our text is, that grace in its commencement is imperfect, and that its progress to maturity is gradual ; for if it were perfect, there could be no room for growth. Although in different individuals, the vigour of spiritual life is different in degree, yet in most cases, grace is, in its infancy, feeble. The indications of its existence may be very clear, and its actions lively; but still, this is nothing more than the vivacity and strength of a healthy babe in Christ. For in young converts the knowledge of spiritual things, generally, is indistinct and confined, and their faith wavering. When their feelings are joyful, they can exercise confidence in God; but when a dark cloud overshadows them, they are cast down with discouragement, and sometimes driven to distrust the mercy and faithfulness of the Redeemer, to whom they have committed their souls. Their pious affections also are unsteady, and though apparently strong, are nevertheless mingled with gross animal feelings, and alloyed with selfishness. As grace is progressive in its nature, it may be inferred, that where there is no growth there is no life. The degree and rapidity of advancement in all, however, is not the same, nor does it bear an exact proportion, in every case, to the vigour of the principle of spiritual life, at the time of the new birth. As it is an observable fact, that some infants at first are so feeble, that they can barely be said to

be alive, and yet after a while, by assiduous nursing, become much more robust than others, that commenced life with greater strength; so, in the divine life some Christians, who in the beginning gave but obscure indications of grace, afterwards become vigorous in piety, and far outstrip many whose commencement promised more eminent advancement. It should be remarked

I here also, that the life of piety in the soul is subject to such diseases and decays as often greatly retard its progress, and cause it, for a season, to decline. These declensions are so common, that some have supposed, that all Christians do, in some part of their course, make a retrograde motion and instead of advancing, lose something of the ground already gained. But there seems to be no just foundation for this opinion. In some saints, both of those whose lives are recorded in Scripture, and of those who fall under our own observation, there is no evidence of backsliding; but still it is a lamentable fact, that there are very few, who have lived long in the profession of piety, who have not reason to confess with shame, that they have at some time 'left their first love,' and become remiss in their vigilance, and, of course, unfruitful in their lives. And not unfrequently, while in this feeble state, they are overcome by some temptation, so as not only to contract a painful sense of guilt, but also to bring reproach on the holy profession they have made. This frequency of spiritual decays, is one of the chief causes that so few Christians rise to eminence in piety. A fall may, indeed, make a man more cautious ever afterwards: but he purchases experience at a dear rate, who pays for it with a broken bone, or a joint out of place. And here it may be observed, that nothing is more insidious and dangerous to the back-sliding Christian, than a certain leaven of antinomianism, which too often diffuses its deadening influence over the soul. The soldier of Christ sleeps in the midst of enemies, and dreams of victory without conflict -he falls under the influence of some temptation, and excuses himself by referring to the example of other saints. But every professor ought to know, that every degree of backsliding is, so far as it goes, an evidence against the reality of his piety. Many, alas who once appeared well, go back by a perpetual declension, and thus prove that the 'root of the matter' was never in them. Every step in this backward course, should be viewed as an alarming circumstance; and it may be safely affirmed, that all confidence of security indulged by any, while in a backsliding state, is delusive. A man may, indeed, be in a safe state, as to his ultimate salvation, when under a spiritual decay but he cannot in such a state, possess any satisfactory evidence of safety. The strong tendency of the heart, even in the best, to depart from God, furnishes powerful reason for the exhortation, to 'grow in grace;' for, in religion, it has often been observed that there is no such thing as standing still. If the Christian makes no advancement, he is pretty certainly going backward. The only course of safety, therefore, as well as comfort, is, to make vigorous efforts to 'grow in grace.' The nature of growth in grace, after what has been said, will require little explanation. It is a gradual increase in the vigour and purity of all those affections in which holiness consists; and is necessarily accompanied with a decrease of the power of sin. A real growth in grace includes also an advancement in spiritual knowledge, especially in the knowledge of our own depravity and helplessness, and of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Mediator. The apostle, therefore, joins these two things together, in his exhortation, and says, 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ' An increase of faith is an essential part of growth in grace. The belief of the reality and excellence of divine things becomes more firm and constant; a more implicit reliance is placed on the promises of God ; and the soul, in the exercise of humble confidence, is enabled to commit all its concerns, for time and eternity, to the care of a covenant-keeping God. But there is no one thing more essentially involved in this progress of religion, than the growing fervor and constancy

of love to God. This holy principle continues to strike its roots deeper in the heart, and becomes more and more purified from the alloy with which it was at first mingled. Growth in divine love manifests itself in a reverential esteem for the moral attributes of God, in a greater delight in meditating on his holiness and goodness; and in a livelier exercise of gratitude for His love and mercy towards ourselves and others. It is accompanied also with a more ardent desire to please God, to enjoy communion with him, and to advance his glory in the world.

Progress in real piety includes also an increase of humility. The more true knowledge the believer acquires, the more penetrating is his view of the sin that secretly works within him; and the more holy he becomes, the more abominable does all sin appear. No evidence of growth in grace is less suspicious than this. Hypocrites, may, indeed, affect humility, and abound in the language of self-abasement; but it is difficult to wear this disguise without betraying on his true state of heart. The growth of grace is as much downward at the root, as upward in the towering and spreading branches; and he who supposes that he is making a near approximation to perfection, and yet is not abased before God, under a sense of his own vileness, does but deceive himself.

Resignation to the will of God, is another criterion by which growth in grace is ascertained ; or rather, it is an important part of that grace in the heart, of which growth is predicated. The more uniformly and cordially we can say, under all circumstances, even the most afflictive, 'Thy will be done,' the more strength has the principle of grace acquired. And as genuine progress in piety, is the growth of the whole spiritual man, so our love to the children of God, and our sincere good will to all men, will bear a just proportion to our piety to God.

Moreover, if piety flourish in the inner man of the heart, it will manifest itself by the abundance of its fruits in the life. Holy, active, universal obedience to the commandments of God, will flow from a heart warm with love to God and love to man; and will evince to others, as well as to ourselves, that we are thriving Christian. Our light will so shine, that others seeing our good works will be induced to glorify our Father who is in heaven. The conversation of a growing Christian will be edifying to all around: his speech will be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Out of the good treasure of his heart, he will be continually bringing forth something good. His example will be a model for the imitation of others; and in proportion as grace prevails in his heart, there will be exhibited a beautiful consistency in his life. His attention to all the duties of the worship of God, in public and private, will be constant and conscientious; and with alacrity and energy, he will exert himself to advance the cause and kingdom of Christ, in the world; counting no service too hard, and no sacrifice too costly, which will aid in promoting the glory of God, by the propagation of the gospel throughout the world.

Several stages, in the progress of the spiritual life, may be particularly noticed. The first is the state of the Christian immediately after his conversion; when both novelty and contrast are combined with the excellence of the objects presented to his view, in the new world into which grace has translated him, to make a more sensible impression on his mind than will be produced by the same truths afterwards. A new creation has, indeed, risen up before him; 'old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new.' His wonder is excited, his joy overflows, his hopes are buoyant, and his heart melts with tender compassion for those who are yet out of Christ. His frames are often delightful, but they are transient: and from the mount of vision, he quickly descends into the dark valley of doubt and sorrow. He lives rather by sensible feelings than by

faith. His eyes often overflow both with joy and grief In the exercises of religion, he is full of ardour, nor does he suspect a reverse, nor foresee the dangers which beset his path. In fervency of spirit, and alacrity in the service of God, he seems greatly to outstrip older disciples, who have been long engaged in the Christian race and is sometimes disposed to chide them, because they do not manifest that quick susceptibility of feeling, and that glowing zeal, with which he feels his own bosom penetrated and warmed. This period of the Christian's life bears a strong resemblance to infancy and childhood, when a succession of lively emotions fills up our days; when vivacity and activity are predominant traits in our Character when our transitions from one state of feeling to the opposite, are sudden and frequent; and when our happiness depends very much upon our ignorance of the evils which surround us. The clip of joy would be embittered to the young convert, if he had a clear view of the depth of iniquity which still remains in his heart, and of the dangers and conflicts which await him in his future pilgrimage. The second stage is that of temptation and severe conflict. Before, he resembled the young soldier just enlisted, and enjoying his bounty-money; but now his case is like that of the combatant on the field of battle. The same power which opened a passage for the children of Israel through the Red Sea, could have transported them to Canaan in a day or an hour, hut it was the plan of their invisible Leader to conduct them through the wilderness, and subject them to numerous difficulties and temptations, that he might put their faith and obedience to a severe test. So, also, our Heavenly Father could translate his redeemed children at once to heaven, or could render their passage through the world uniformly pleasant; but, instead of pursuing either of these courses, he leaves them to learn, by bitter experience, the treachery and wickedness of their own hearts, and the malicious devices of the invisible enemy, who is ever ready to assault and vex them.

These trials, from causes which exist without and within, often come upon the people of God at the time when they have 'left their first love,' and have become remiss in watchfulness and prayer. A conscience goaded with inward stings, is a fit subject for Satan to operate upon with his fiery darts; and his usual method is, first to seduce the unwary souls by baits of worldly glory or sensual pleasure, and then to attack the debilitated believer with desperate suggestions, calculated to make the impression, that the favor of God is 'clean gone,' and that 'he will be merciful no more ;' or, that his sins are unpardonable; or that the day of grace is gone by for ever. Now, also, the providence of God seems to combine with other causes to afflict Zion's pilgrim. Dark clouds of adversity gather over him. Earthly comforts decay. The sun of prosperity no longer shines. The fondest hopes are disappointed, and the brightest prospects of earthly bliss obscured. Malignant enemies arise from among those before considered friends; health is broken slander and reproach assail; dear friends and relatives are buried in the grave; children are disobedient and profligate, or die prematurely and, to complete the us' of troubles, the church, broken with schism, and overrun with heresy and hypocrisy, sits in sackcloth and mourns. Now the Christian pilgrim spends his days in trouble, and his nights in groans and tears. It, under these accumulated evils, the light of the Divine countenance was lifted upon him, he could still rejoice in the midst of tribulations; but, to add poignancy to all his other griefs, his Heavenly Father seems to frown upon him. To his most earnest prayers he receives no answer; or, if an answer comes, it is only this, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' But no evils so grievously afflict the renewed soul, as the corruptions of the heart. Evils unsuspected to exist show themselves, and manifest a strength and obstinacy, which baffle all the resolutions and efforts directed against them. Pride, envy, unbelief, insensibility, impurity, sloth, and evil thoughts without number, pollute and harass the afflicted spirit.

These conflicts are not experienced in an equal degree by all Christians, but every one has his share, and every one knows the plague of his own heart, so much better than that of others, that his secret thought is, that his case is, of all others, the most deplorable and desperate. In his extremity he is often ready to exclaim, 'If I am a child of God, why am I thus? Surely no others are so beset with sinful entanglements, and distracted with contending passions.'

There is, probably, in every case of Christian experience, something peculiar, something which distinguishes it from every other case ; but there is, notwithstanding, so great a general resemblance in the conflicts of the pious, that he who knows his own heart, sees, as in a glass, the condition of all his brethren. For 'as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' This may be termed the winter season of grace. The tree is now stripped of its foliage and its bloom, and very little fruit appears on the branches. But while it is shaken by the fierce blasts, so as to be almost overturned, it may be gaining strength by the concussion, and may be striking its roots more firmly in the earth. So the tempted and afflicted Christian, while he experiences a great loss of comfort and sensibility, may be, and often is, actually growing in grace. Much knowledge of the deceitfulness of the heart, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, is obtained; a deadly blow is struck at the root of self-confidence and self-righteousness; a broken and contrite spirit is produced; Christ and his grace are more highly appreciated; and the desire of total and universal purification from sin becomes more constant and intense. The third and last stage in the progress of the divine life, is a state of settled peace, when the violence of the conflict is over, and the risings of sinful passions are greatly subdued by the power of divine grace. This is the sweet calm which succeeds the storm. Now there is, instead of doubts and darkness, a comfortable assurance of the favor of God. This period is characterized by a steady trust in the promises and providence of God, and a meek submission to his holy will. The mature Christian is not less sensible of the depth of remaining depravity than before; for the more holy he becomes, the more quick sighted he is to discern the minutest spots which defile the 'inner man : ' but he has now learned to 'live by faith on the Son of God,' and has formed the habit of continual application to the blood of sprinkling,' and to 'the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness' Many of his former besetting sins are indeed subdued and he has learned the necessity of vigilance in guarding against the occasions of sin, as well as against the first buddings of evil desire but his peace does not result from any views which he takes of an increase of sanctification in himself, but from keeping his eye steadily fixed on 'Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith.' This advanced state of piety is also characterized by an increasing deadness to the world and all selfish interests, and by an enlarged and sincere good will to all men; but especially by a tender solicitude for the prosperity of Zion, and an anxious desire for the salvation of men. This has sometimes been denominated the state of contemplation because in it the meditations of the Christian are much occupied with heavenly things. The glory of the invisible world makes a deeper and more constant impression on his mind than formerly, and his thoughts are often elevated to delightful contemplations of the heavenly state. The aged saint, who has become mature in grace, and whose faith has grown strong, spends much of his time, by day and by night, in meditating on that 'rest which remains for the people of God.' In this exercise his soul is frequently absorbed, and he is fired with an intense desire 'to be absent from the body and present with the Lord;' yet his submission to the divine will, and his desire to promote the glory of Christ on earth, will not permit him to be impatient. He is willing to wait, even in the midst of suffering, until his change come. How beautiful, how lovely, how venerable, is old age, thus laden with the fruits of piety; and like a shock of corn fully ripe,

waiting to be gathered into the garner of the Lord! When the veteran soldier of the cross is unable to perform any more active service for his Master, he still watches about the doors of the sanctuary; he still lifts up his withered and trembling hands in prayer for the peace of Jerusalem. He is ever waiting for the consolation of Israel; and when the Saviour appears by some remarkable manifestation of favour to his church, he can exclaim with Simeon of old, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' And often, when the vigour of the mental faculties begins to fail, the flame of piety continues to burn brightly and, on a dying bed, such Christians exhibit a spectacle, than which there is nothing more lovely and interesting on this side heaven. Calm submission, humble confidence, holy aspirations, the kind emotions of benevolence, and the sublime joy of the Divine favour, often render the chamber of death like the vestibule of the temple above. Who, then, would not join in the prayer, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?' A few brief reflections shall bring this discourse to a close.

1. It appears from what has been said, that in some stages of the Christian's progress, the growth of grace, when it actually takes place, is not easily ascertained. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe, that some pious persons fall into mistakes on this subject, and judge that they are losing ground, when in fact they are slowly advancing. Because their first fervours have abated, and because they are conscious of much more indwelling sin than when they first believed, they draw the conclusion that they have been, all the time, growing worse : whereas, true religion has been taking deeper root in their hearts, and their knowledge of themselves and of divine truth, is greatly enlarged, and has become much more distinct.

2. It is also evident, from what has been said, that there may be a great display of zeal, much attention to the externals of religion much liberality in contributing to the support and spread of the gospel, and much appearance of sanctity, when there has been no real advancement in piety. The reason is, because all these external acts, and all this show of piety, may be produced by other motives than the lively exercise of grace in the heart. Such persons ought to be esteemed pious by men, where no contrary evidences appear: but often, 'that which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God; ' for man must judge according to the outward appearance, but the Lord searcheth the heart.'

3. Some Christians grow to much higher stature than others. In most, however, in our days, the advancement in piety seems to be small, compared with what we have reason to believe it was in the times of the apostles. No doubt there are some now who become eminent in piety; but the general standard of piety is apparently low. Few professors, in our churches, have attained to that state of settled peace, and calm submission to the will of God, which was described as the last stage in the Christian's progress towards perfection.

4. It is impossible to say how much the comfort and usefulness of most of the pious is diminished, by their failing to make greater progress in the divine life. The difference between a lively, growing Christian, and one who makes little or no advancement, is as great as between a healthy and a diseased body. The motives to growth in grace are, therefore, of the strongest possible kind.

Finally, upon a review of the past, every one of us must be sensible, that if we had improved our privileges, and exercised greater diligence and vigilance, our advancement would have been far greater than it now is. What Christian can look back without severely reproaching himself, on

account of his slothfulness and carelessness ? All may not have backslidden, but in all there has been often a criminal remissness. Many have to lament most sad declensions, and, some, disgraceful falls, by which the conscience has been wounded and religion dishonoured.

In view of this subject, therefore, all Christians are led upon to humble themselves before God, in deep penitence, on account of their unfruitfulness ; and to resolve that in time to come, they will more faithfully and vigorously strive to grow in grace.

S. Our Responsibility to the Poor

Our responsibility to the poor

by Archibald Alexander "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." This must have been a new thing, or it would not have been given to John the Baptist as a proof that Jesus was the Messiah. In our public system of religious instruction in cities and villages, the poor are too much overlooked. They cannot afford to give money to the church. They cannot appear in costly apparel, and they do not love to be stared at on account of the coarseness of their clothes.

Go into the churches of any Protestant denomination, and you will probably find a large, respectable audience of well-dressed people quietly occupying their own pews, and listening with more or less attention to the instructions of the pastor; but where are the miserable poor? In society they form a large proportion of the people, but here we see perhaps a few old women, the beneficiaries of the church.

There must be some more effective measures for conveying the gospel to the destitute poor than our splendid churches furnish. The system of tract distribution by pious men and women, who, as far as they have opportunity, converse with the people on religious subjects, is excellent. This system, in New York, has been the instrument of much good to the poor. But cannot a plan be contrived and carried into effect, by which they can be brought within the sound of the gospel? I think there can. Let every rich church build a meeting-house, plain but commodious, and let them, under the direction of their pastors, employ some zealous, self-denying young minister to go about and collect as many of the poor as he can, and preach to them in a plain, familiar, affectionate style. At first perhaps few would come, but by degrees the number would increase. The preacher must be assisted and encouraged by the occasional presence of the pastor and other officers or members. In every Christian church there are men and women who wish to do good, but they know not how to go about it. Let each of these go out into the lanes and dark alleys of the city, and persuade at least one poor person to go with them to the preaching of the gospel. All such exertions are useful to the person himself, whatever may be the effect on others. Let the meeting-house be seated with benches, and every seat be in common; so that the first person who comes shall have the right to occupy it. And let the missionary to these people speak kindly to them, and inquire into their needs and afflictions, and make known cases of extreme suffering to those whose office it is to relieve distress--the deacons. In the villages and country places there are often found many poor, miserable families, who are never seen in the church for lack of a place to sit, for lack of decent clothing, or for lack of disposition. Let five or six people agree to visit these families in turn, and let them provide a room for evening meetings, and let the pastor, as often as he can, preach to them; or let some layman read to them a tract or short sermon. Time is short. Try, try what can be done!

S. Practical Directions How to Grow in Grace and Make Progress in Piety

Practical Directions How to Grow in Grace and Make Progress in Piety

by Archibald Alexander (1772—1851) When there is no growth, there is no life. We have taken it for granted that among the regenerate, at the moment of their conversion, there is a difference in the vigor of the principle of spiritual life, analogous to what we observe in the natural world; and no doubt the analogy holds as it relates to growth. As some children who were weak and sickly in the first days of their existence become healthy and strong, and greatly outgrow others who commenced life with far greater advantages, so it is with the 'new man'. Some who enter on the spiritual life with a weak and wavering faith, by the blessing of God on a diligent use of means, far outstrip others who in the beginning were greatly before them.

It is often observed that there are professors who never appear to grow, but rather decline perpetually, until they become in spirit and conduct entirely conformed to the world, from whence they professed to come out. The result in regard to them is one of two things; they either retain their standing in the Church and become dead formalists, 'having a name to live while they are dead'—'a form of godliness, while they deny the power thereof'—or they renounce their profession and abandon their connection with the Church, and openly take their stand with the enemies of Christ, and not infrequently go beyond them all in daring impiety. Of all such we may confidently say, 'They were not of us, or undoubtedly they would have continued with us.' But of such I mean not now to speak further, as the case of back-sliders will be considered hereafter. That growth in grace is gradual and progressive is very evident from Scripture; as in all those passages where believers are exhorted to mortify sin and crucify the flesh, and to increase and abound in all the exercises of piety and good works. One text on this subject will be sufficient: 'Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' And this passage furnishes us with information as to the origin and nature of this growth. It is knowledge, even the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Just so far as any soul increases in spiritual knowledge, in the same degree it grows in grace. Persons may advance rapidly in other kinds of knowledge, and yet make no advances in piety, but the contrary. They may even have their minds filled with correct theoretical knowledge of divine truth, and yet its effect may not be to humble, but to 'puff up'. Many an accurate and profound theologian has lived and died without a ray of saving light. The natural man, however gifted with talent or enriched with speculative knowledge, has no spiritual discernment. After all his acquisitions, he is destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But it should not be forgotten that divine illumination is not independent of the Word, but accompanies it. Those Christians, therefore, who are most diligent in attending upon the Word in public and private, will be most likely to make progress in piety.

Young converts are prone to depend too much on joyful frames, and love high excitement in their devotional exercises; but their heavenly Father cures them of this folly, by leaving them for a season to walk in darkness and struggle with their own corruptions. When most sorely pressed

and discouraged, however, He strengthens them with might in the inner man. He enables them to stand firmly against temptation; or, if they slide, he quickly restores them, and by such exercises they become much more sensible of their entire dependence than they were at first. They learn to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, and to distrust entirely their own wisdom and strength, and to rely for all needed aid on the grace of Jesus Christ. Such a soul will not readily believe that it is growing in grace. But to be emptied of self-dependence, and to know that we need aid for every duty, and even for every good thought, is an important step in our progress in piety. The flowers may have disappeared from the plant of grace, and even the leaves may have fallen off, and wintry blasts may have shaken it, but now it is striking its roots deeper, and becoming every day stronger to endure the rugged storm.

One circumstance attends the growth in grace of a real Christian which renders it exceedingly difficult for him to know the fact, upon a superficial view of his case, and that is, the clearer and deeper insight which he obtains into the evils of his own heart. Now this is one of the best evidences of growth; but the first conclusion is apt to be, 'I am growing worse every day; I see innumerable evils springing up within me which I never saw before.' This person may be compared to one shut up in a dark room where he is surrounded by many loathsome objects. If a single ray of light be let into the room, he sees the more prominent objects; but if the light gradually increases, he sees more and more of the filth by which he has been surrounded. It was there before, but he did not perceive it. His increased knowledge of the fact is a sure evidence of increasing light.

Hypocrites often learn to talk by rote of the wickedness of their hearts; but go to them and seriously accuse them of indulging secret pride or envy or covetousness or any other heart sins, and they will be offended. Their confessions of sin are only intended to raise them in the opinion of others, as truly humble persons; and not that any should believe that corruption abounds within them.

Growth in grace is evinced by a more habitual vigilance against besetting sins and temptations, and by greater self-denial in regard to personal indulgence. A growing conscientiousness in regard to what may be called minor duties is also a good sign. The counterfeit of this is a scrupulous conscience, which sometimes haggles at the most innocent gratifications, and has led some to hesitate about taking their daily food.

Increasing spiritual mindedness is a sure evidence of progress in piety; and this will always be accompanied by deadness to the world. Continued aspirations to God, in the house and by the way, in lying down and rising up, in company and in solitude, indicate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency all progress in sanctification is made. A victory over besetting sins by which the person was frequently led away, shows an increased vigor in the renewed principle.

Increasing solicitude for the salvation of men, sorrow on account of their sinful and miserable condition, and a disposition tenderly to warn sinners of their danger, evince a growing state of piety.

It is also a strong evidence of growth in grace when you can bear injuries and provocations with meekness and when you can from the heart desire the temporal and eternal welfare of your bitterest enemies. An entire and confident reliance on the promises and providence of God,

however dark may be your horizon, or however many difficulties environ you, is a sign that you have learned to live by faith; and humble contentment with your condition, though it be one of poverty and obscurity, shows that you have profited by sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Diligence in the duties of our calling, with a view to the glory of God, is an evidence not to be despised.

Indeed there is no surer standard of spiritual growth than a habit of aiming at the glory of God in everything. That mind which is steady to the main end gives as good evidence of being touched by divine grace as the tendency of the needle to the pole proves that it has been touched by the magnet.

Increasing love to the brethren is a sure sign of growth; for as brotherly love is a proof of the existence of grace, so is the exercise of such love a proof of vigor in the divine life. This love, when pure, is not confined within those limits which party spirit circumscribes, but overleaping all the barriers of sects and denominations, it embraces the disciples of Christ wherever it finds them. A healthy state of piety is always a growing state; that child which grows not at all must be sickly. If we would enjoy spiritual comfort, we must be in a thriving condition. None enjoy the pleasures of bodily health, but they who are in health. If we would be useful to the Church and the world we must be growing Christians. If we would live in daily preparation for our change, we must endeavor to grow in grace daily. The aged saint, laden with the fruits of righteousness, is like a shock of corn fully ripe, which is ready for the garner; or like a mature fruit which gradually loosens its hold of the tree until at last it gently falls off. Thus the aged, mature Christian departs in peace. As growth in grace is gradual, and the progress from day to day imperceptible, we should aim to do something in this work every day. We should die daily unto sin and live unto righteousness. Sometimes the children of God grow faster when in the fiery furnace than elsewhere. As metals are purified by being cast into the fire, so saints have their dross consumed and their evidences brightened, by being cast into the furnace of affliction. 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you', but rejoice, because 'the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, shall be found unto praise, and honor, and glory'.

We shall here present some PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS HOW TO GROW IN GRACE AND MAKE PROGRESS IN PIETY.

1. Set it down as a certainty that this object will never be attained without vigorous continued effort; and it must not only be desired and sought, but must be considered more important than all other pursuits, and be pursued in preference to everything else which claims your attention.
2. While you determine to be assiduous in the use of the appointed means of sanctification, you must have it deeply fixed in your mind that nothing can be effected in this work without the aid of the Divine Spirit. 'Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God that gives the increase.' The direction of the old divines is good: 'use the means as vigorously as if you were to be saved by your own efforts, and yet trust as entirely to the grace of God as if you made use of no means whatsoever'.
3. Be much in the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and strive to obtain clear and consistent views of the plan of redemption. Learn to contemplate the truth in its true nature, simply, devoutly, and long

at a time, that you may receive on your soul the impression which it is calculated to make. Avoid curious and abstruse speculations respecting things unrevealed, and do not indulge a spirit of controversy. Many lose the benefit of the good impression which the truth is calculated to make, because they do not view it simply in its own nature, but as related to some dispute, or as bearing on some other point. As when a man would receive the genuine impression which a beautiful landscape is adapted to make, he must not be turned aside by minute inquiries respecting the botanical character of the plants, the value of the timber, or the fertility of the soil; but he must place his mind in the attitude of receiving the impression which the combined view of the objects before him will naturally produce on the taste. In such cases the effect is not produced by any exertion of the intellect; all such active striving is unfavorable, except in bringing the mind to its proper state. When the impression is most perfect, we feel as if we were mere passive recipients of the effect. To this there is a striking analogy in the way in which the mind is impressed with divine truth. It is not the critic, the speculative or polemic theologian, who is most likely to receive the right impression, but the humble, simple-hearted, contemplative Christian. It is necessary to study the Scriptures critically, and to defend the truth against opposers; but the most learned critic and the most profound theologian must learn to sit at the feet of Jesus in the spirit of a child, or they are not likely to be edified by their studies.

4. Pray constantly and fervently for the influences of the Holy Spirit. No blessing is so particularly and emphatically promised in answer to prayer as this; and if you would receive this divine gift, to be in you as a well of water springing up to everlasting life, you must not only pray, but you must watch against everything in your heart or life which has a tendency to grieve the Spirit of God. Of what use is it to pray, if you indulge evil thoughts and imaginations almost without control? or if you give way to the evil passions of anger, pride and avarice, or bridle not your tongue from evil speaking? Learn to be conscientious; that is, obey the dictates of your conscience uniformly. Many are conscientious in some things and not in others; they listen to the monitor within when it directs to important duties; but in smaller matters they often disregard the voice of conscience, and follow present inclination. Such cannot grow in grace.

5. Take more time for praying to 'the Father who is in secret', and for looking into the state of your soul. Redeem an hour daily from sleep if you cannot obtain it otherwise; and as the soul's concerns are apt to get out of order, and more time is needed for thorough self-examination than an hour a day, set apart, not periodically but as your necessities require, days of fasting and humiliation before God. On these occasions, deal faithfully with yourself. Be in earnest to search out all your secret sins and to repent of them. Renew your covenant with God, and form holy resolutions of amendment in the strength of divine grace. If you find, upon examination, that you have been living in any sinful indulgence, probe the festering wound to the core; confess your fault before God, and do not rest until you have had an application of the blood of sprinkling. You need not ask why you do not grow, while there is such an ulcer within you. Here, it is to be feared, is the root of the evil. Sins indulged are not thoroughly repented of and forsaken; or the conscience has not been purged effectually, and the wound still festers. Come to 'the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and uncleanness'. Bring your case to the great Physician.

6. Cultivate and exercise brotherly love more than you have been accustomed to do. Christ is displeased with many of His professed followers, because they are so cold and indifferent to His members on earth, and because they do so little to comfort and encourage them; and with some,

because they are a stumbling block to the weak of the flock, their conversation and conduct not being edifying, but the contrary. Perhaps these disciples are poor and in the lower walks of life, and therefore you overlook them as beneath you. And thus would you have treated Christ Himself, had you lived in His time; for He took His station among the poor and afflicted; and He will resent a neglect of His poor saints with more displeasure than He would of the rich. Perhaps they do not belong to your party or sect, and you are only concerned to build up your own denomination. Remember how Christ condescended to treat the sinful woman of Samaria, and the poor woman of Canaan, and remember what account He has given of the last judgment, when He will assume to Himself all that has been done, or neglected to be done, to His humble followers. There should be more Christian conversation and friendly intercourse between the followers of Christ. In former days, 'They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name.'

7. If you are in good earnest to make greater progress in piety, you must do more than you have done for the promotion of God's glory and of Christ's kingdom on earth. You must enter with livelier, deeper feeling into all the plans which the Church has adopted to advance these objects. You must give more than you have done. It is a shame to think how small a portion of their gains some professors devote to the Lord. Instead of being a tithe, it is hardly equal to the single sheaf of first-fruits. If you have nothing to give, labor to get something. Sit up at night and try to make something, for Christ has need of it. Sell a corner of your land and throw the money into the treasury of the Lord. In primitive times many sold houses and lands and laid the whole at the apostles' feet. Do not be afraid of making yourself poor by giving to the Lord or to His poor. His word is better than any bond, and He says, 'I will repay it.' Cast your bread on the waters, and after many days you will find it again. Send the Bible—send missionaries—send tracts to the perishing heathen.

8. Practice self-denial every day. Lay a wholesome restraint upon your appetites. Be not conformed to this world. Let your dress, your house, your furniture, be plain and simple, as becomes a Christian. Avoid vain parade and show in everything. Govern your family with discretion. Forgive and pray for your enemies. Have little to do with party politics. Carry on your business on sober, judicious principles. Keep clear of speculation and surety-ships. Live peaceably with all men as much as in you lies. Be much in ejaculatory prayer. Keep your heart with all diligence. Try to turn to spiritual profit every event which occurs, and be fervently thankful for all mercies.

9. For your more rapid growth in grace, some of you will be cast into the furnace of affliction. Sickness, bereavement, bad conduct of children and relatives, loss of property or of reputation, may come upon you unexpectedly and press heavily on you. In these trying circumstances, exercise patience and fortitude. Be more solicitous to have the affliction sanctified than removed. Glorify God while in the fire of adversity. That faith which is most tried is commonly most pure and precious. Learn from Christ how you ought to suffer. Let perfect submission to the will of God be aimed at. Never indulge a murmuring or discontented spirit. Repose with confidence on the promises. Commit all your cares to God. Make known your requests to Him by prayer and supplication. Let go your too eager grasp of the world. Become familiar with death and the grave. Wait patiently until your change comes; but desire not to live a day longer than may be for the glory of God.

If we are on the watch we may often find good things when they were least expected. It is seldom that I consult an almanac for any purpose, but wishing the other day to see when the moon would change, I opened the calendar at the current month, and the first thing which struck my eye was the heading of a paragraph in the very words which I had selected as the subject of this essay—'Hindrances to Growth in Grace'. Of course I perused the short paragraph, and I was so well pleased with what I read that I resolved to take it for my text—and here it is, word for word:

The influence of worldly relatives and companions;
embarking too deeply in business;
approximations to fraud for the sake of gain devoting too much time to amusements;
immoderate attachment to a worldly object;
attendance on an unbelieving or unfaithful ministry;
languid and formal observance of religious duties;
shunning the society and religious converse of Christian friends;
relapse into known sin;
non-improvement of graces already attained.

Now all this is very good and very true. The only objection is that several of the particulars mentioned should rather be considered as the effects of a real declension in religion than merely as hindrances to growth; although it is true that nothing so effectually hinders our progress as an actual state of backsliding.

It seems desirable to ascertain, as precisely as we can, the reasons why Christians commonly are of so diminutive a stature and of such feeble strength in their religion. When people are truly converted they always are sincerely desirous to make rapid progress in piety; and there are not lacking exceeding great and gracious promises of aid to encourage them to go forward with alacrity. Why then is so little advancement made? Are there not some practical mistakes very commonly entertained, which are the cause of this slowness of growth? I think there are, and will endeavor to specify some of them.

First, there is a defect in our belief in the freeness of divine grace. To exercise unshaken confidence in the doctrine of gratuitous pardon is one of the most difficult things in the world; and to preach this doctrine fully without verging towards antinomianism is no easy task, and is therefore seldom done. But Christians cannot but be lean and feeble when deprived of their proper nutriment. It is by faith that the spiritual life is made to grow; and the doctrine of free grace, without any mixture of human merit, is the only true object of faith. Christians are too much inclined to depend on themselves, and not to derive their life entirely from Christ. There is a spurious legal religion, which may flourish without the practical belief in the absolute freeness of divine grace, but it possesses none of the characteristics of the Christian's life. It is found to exist in the rankest growth, in systems of religion which are utterly false. But even when the true doctrine is acknowledged in theory, often it is not practically felt and acted on. The new convert lives upon his frames rather than on Christ, while the older Christian is still found struggling in his own strength

and, failing in his expectations of success, he becomes discouraged first, and then he sinks into a gloomy despondency, or becomes in a measure careless. At that point the spirit of the world comes in with resistless force. Here, I am persuaded, is the root of the evil; and until religious teachers inculcate clearly, fully, and practically, the grace of God as manifested in the Gospel, we shall have no vigorous growth of piety among professing Christians. We must be, as it were, identified with Christ—crucified with Him, and living by Him, and in Him by faith, or rather, have Christ living in us. The covenant of grace must be more clearly and repeatedly expounded in all its rich plenitude of mercy, and in all its absolute freeness.

Another thing which prevents growth in grace is that Christians do not make their obedience to Christ comprehend every other object of pursuit. Their religion is too much a separate thing, and they pursue their worldly business in another spirit. They try to unite the service of God and Mammon. Their minds are divided, and often distracted with earthly cares and desires which interfere with the service of God; whereas they should have but one object of pursuit, and all that they do and seek should be in subordination to this. Everything should be done for God and to God. Whether they eat or drink they should do all to His glory. As the ploughing and sowing of the wicked is sin, because done without regard to God and His glory, so the secular employments and pursuits of the pious should all be consecrated, and become a part of their religion. Thus they would serve God in the field and in the shop, in buying and selling and getting gain—all would be for God. Thus their earthly labors would prove no hindrance to their progress in piety; and possessing an undivided mind, having a single object of pursuit, they could not but grow in grace daily. He whose eye is single shall have his whole body full of light.

Another powerful cause of hindrance in the growth of the life of God in the soul is that we make general resolutions of improvement, but neglect to extend our efforts to particulars. We promise ourselves that in the indefinite future we will do much in the way of reformation, but are found doing nothing each day in cultivating piety. We begin and end a day without aiming or expecting to make any particular advance on that day. Thus our best resolutions evaporate without effect. We merely run the round of prescribed duty, satisfied if we do nothing amiss and neglect no external service which we feel to be obligatory. We resemble the man who purposes to go to a certain place, and often resolves with earnestness that he will some day perform the journey, but never takes a step towards the place. Is it at all strange that that person who on no day makes it his distinct object to advance in the divine life, at the end of months and years is found stationary? The natural body will grow without our thinking about it, even when we are asleep, but not the life of piety, which only increases by and through the exercises of the mind, aiming at higher measures of grace. And as every day we should do something in this good work, so we should direct our attention to the growth of particular graces, especially of those in which we know ourselves to be defective. Are we weak in faith? let us give attention to the proper means of strengthening our faith and, above all, apply to the Lord to increase our faith. Is our love to God cold and hardly perceptible, and greatly interrupted by long intervals in which God and Christ are not in all our thoughts? let us have this for a daily lamentation at the throne of grace—let us resolve to meditate more on the excellency of the divine attributes, and especially on the love of God to us—let us be much in reading the account of Christ's sufferings and death, and be importunate in prayer, until we receive more copious effusions of the Holy Spirit; for the fruit of the Spirit is love, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given unto

us. And so we should directly aim at cultivating and increasing every grace; for the divine life, or 'new man', consists of these graces, and the whole cannot be in health and vigor while the constituent parts are feeble and in a state of decay. The same remarks are applicable to the mortification of sin. We are prone to view our depravity too much in the general, and under this view to repent of it, and humble ourselves on account of it; whereas, in order to make any considerable progress in this part of sanctification, we must deal with our sins in detail. We must have it as a special object to eradicate pride and vain glory, covetousness, indolence, envy, discontent, anger, etc. There should be appropriate means used, suited to the extirpation of each particular vice of the mind.

It is true, indeed, that if we water the root we may expect the branches to flourish; if we invigorate the principle of piety, the several Christian virtues will flourish. But a skilful gardener will pay due attention both to the root and the branches; and, in fact, these graces of the heart are parts of the root, and it is by strengthening these that we invigorate the root. The same is true as it relates to the remaining principle of sin. We must strike our blows chiefly at the root of the evil tree; but those inherent vices which were mentioned, and others, should be considered as belonging to the root, and when we aim at their destruction particularly and in detail, our strokes will be most effectual.

I shall mention at present but one other cause of the slow growth of believers in piety, and that is the neglect of improving in the knowledge of divine things. As spiritual knowledge is the foundation of all genuine exercises of religion, so growth in religion is intimately connected with divine knowledge. Men may possess unsanctified knowledge and be nothing the better for it; but they cannot grow in grace without increasing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Being,' says Paul, 'fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' 'Grow in grace,' says Peter, 'and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Jonathan Edwards remarks that the more faithful he was in studying the Bible, the more he prospered in spiritual things. The reason is plain, and other Christians will find the same to be true.

S. Vital Piety

VITAL PIETY

by Archibald Alexander (1772—1851)

(Taken from Alexander's introduction to the anonymous book, "Advice to a Young Christian on the Importance of Aiming at an Elevated Standard of Piety", published by the American Tract Society in 1843.)

True religion not only enlightens the understanding, but rectifies the affections of the heart. All genuine feelings of piety are the effects of divine truth. The variety and intensity of these feelings depend on the different kinds of truth, and the various aspects in which the same truth is viewed; and also, on the distinctness and clearness with which it is presented to the mind. In a state of moral perfection, truth would uniformly produce all those emotions and affections which correspond with its nature, without the aid of any superadded influence. That these effects are not experienced by all who have the opportunity of knowing the truth, is a strong evidence of human depravity. In a state of moral depravity, the mind is incapable alike of perceiving and feeling the beauty and excellence of divine truth. The dead neither see nor feel, and man is by nature "dead in trespasses and sins." Hence, the necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit to illuminate and regenerate the mind. The nature of divine agency, in every case, is inscrutable by mortals. "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but can not tell where it comes, or where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We know, however, that the work of the Spirit, in the regeneration of the heart, is adapted to the rational nature of man. The thing to be accomplished is not the creation of some new faculty; it is a moral renovation; and all moral changes must be effected by understanding and choice. To put the soul, therefore, in that state in which it will rightly understand the truth, and cordially choose the highest good, is the end of regeneration. Truth, therefore, must be the means by which actual conversion to God takes place. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth." Although piety in the heart is the effect of a divine operation, yet all its exercises take place agreeably to the common laws of our rational nature. The understanding is enlightened, the judgment is convinced, motives operate on the will, and conscience approves or disapproves. That the soul, in the exercises of piety, is under the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit, is not known by any consciousness which it has of these divine operations, but by the effects produced in a change of views and feelings; and this change is ascribed to God, because no other is able to produce it; and his word assures us that he is its author.

Now, as all men are endowed with the same natural susceptibilities, and as all Christians contemplate the same fundamental truths, the work of grace in the hearts of all men must be substantially the same. All have, by the knowledge of the law, been convinced of sin; have been made to feel sorrow, shame, and compunction, upon the recollection of their transgressions; and to submit to the justice of the sentence of condemnation, which the law denounces against them.

All have been made sensible of their own inability to save themselves, and under the influence of these humbling and penitent feelings, have been led to seek refuge in Jesus Christ, as the only hope of their souls. This plan of salvation appears glorious and suitable to all believers; so that they not only acquiesce in it, as the only method of salvation, but they are so well pleased with it, that they would not have another if they could. And in the acceptance of Christ as a complete Savior, there is, in every case, some experience of joy and peace. Connected with the views which the true believer has of Christ as a Savior, there is also a discovery, more or less clear, of the glory of the divine attributes, especially of those which are most conspicuously manifested in the cross of Christ. Holiness, justice, mercy, and truth shine, in the view of the sincere convert, with a luster surpassing all other excellence; and God is venerated and loved for his own intrinsic excellence, as well as for the rich benefits bestowed upon us. But although these views may be distinguished, yet, in experience, they are not separated. The brightest discovery of divine excellence ever made, is God's love to our miserable race. The law of God is also viewed to be holy, just, and good, by every regenerated soul. The unrenewed heart never is, nor ever can be, reconciled to the law; "it is not subject to it, nor indeed can be": but the "new man" delighted in the law of God, and would not have one precept of it altered; and while it condemns all his feelings and works as imperfect, he approves of it still, and blames himself for his want of conformity to a rule so perfect.

Another thing in which the experience of all Christians is uniform, is, that they all are brought to a deliberate purpose to be on the Lord's side. On this point there is no hesitancy. Many are affected, and much agitated with religious impressions, and yet never come to a full decision to choose God and his service. They halt between two opinions, and have a divided mind. Such people, however lively their feelings, are not yet truly converted: all true converts, after counting the cost, have settled this point forever. And they can say with the Psalmist, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." They are, therefore, prepared now to comply with the terms of discipleship laid down by Christ himself. They are willing to "deny themselves, to take up their cross, and follow him; to forsake father and mother, wife and children, houses and lands, yes, also their own lives, for the sake of Him who gave himself for them."

Out of such views and feelings as have been described, arises an ardent hungering and thirsting after righteousness, an intense desire to know more of God, and to be admitted into closer union and more intimate communion with him. These habitual desires of the renewed soul find their proper expression in prayer, and lead to a patient and earnest waiting upon God in all the ordinances and means of his appointment. True piety, however, does not stop in mere desires, or in attendance on religious duties; it seeks to glorify God by action. The earnest inquiry of every soul inspired with the love of God, is, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" And wherever there is piety towards God, there will exist benevolence towards men. One of the most sensible emotions of the young convert is, "good-will to men"; a sincere desire for the welfare and eternal salvation of all, not even excepting its most inveterate enemies. And towards the children of God, there springs up a strong and tender affection. Such seem to be brethren indeed, because they are the brethren of Christ, and bear something of his image, in the humility, meekness, and benevolence of their character. In short, genuine piety disposes and determines all who are its subjects, to obey and respect all the commandments of God, and to hate and avoid all sin, according to that declaration of David, "I esteem all your precepts concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way." In all the above-mentioned essential characteristics of piety, there is a

sameness in the exercises of all true Christians. The same impression has been made on every renewed heart, and the only difference is, that it is imprinted more deeply on some than others; but still, the characters are identical; and therefore the evidences of a work of grace, contained in the holy Scriptures, are equally applicable to all people who have been brought from darkness to light. There often is, moreover, a striking resemblance in those accompanying exercises and circumstances which are not essential. Awakened sinners are liable to the same erroneous conceptions, and usually fall into the same mistakes. They are all prone to think, that by reforming their lives, they can restore themselves to the favor of God. They commonly apply to the works of the law for relief, in the first instance; and when driven from this false refuge, by a clearer view of the spirituality and extent of the law, and the depth of their own depravity, they are apt to give up all for lost, and seriously to conclude that there is no hope in their case. They are all prone to misapprehend the nature of the Gospel: of its freeness they can at first form no conception; and therefore they think it necessary to come with some price in their hands — to obtain some kind of preparation or fitness, before they venture to come to Christ. And when it is clear that no moral fitness can be obtained until they apply to him, this legal spirit will lead the soul under conviction to think, that very deep and pungent distress will recommend it to Christ; and thus many are found seeking and praying for a more deep and alarming impression of their sin and danger. It is also very common to place undue dependence on particular means; especially on such as have been much blessed to others. Anxious souls are prone to think, that in reading some particular book, or in hearing some successful preacher, they will receive the grace of God which brings salvation; in which expectation they are generally disappointed, and are brought at last to feel that they are entirely dependent on sovereign grace; and that they can do nothing to obtain that grace. Before, they were like a drowning man catching at every thing which seemed to promise support; but now, they are like a man who feels that he has no support, but is actually sinking. Their cry, therefore, is now truly a cry for mercy. "God be merciful unto me a sinner." "Lord save, I perish." And it has often been proverbially said, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," which is commonly realized by the soul cut off from all dependence on itself — the arm of the Lord is stretched forth to preserve it from sinking; the Savior's voice of love and mercy is heard; light breaks in upon the soul, and it finds itself embraced in the arms of the Savior; and so wonderful is the transition, that it can scarcely trust to its own experience. This similarity of feelings in the experience of the pious has often been remarked, and has been justly considered a strong evidence of the divine origin of experimental religion: for how, otherwise, can this uniformity of the views and feelings of the pious, in all ages and countries, be accounted for? Enthusiasm assumes a thousand different shapes and hues, and is marked by no uniform characteristics; but scriptural piety is the same now as in the days of David and Asaph; the same as when Paul lived; the same as experienced by the pious fathers of the Christian church; the same as described by the Reformers, by the Puritans, and by the evangelical preachers and writers of the present day. When the Gospel takes effect on any of the heathen, although it is certain that they never had the opportunity of learning any thing of this kind from others, yet we find them expressing the same feelings which are common to other Christians. People from different quarters of the globe, whose vernacular tongue is entirely different, yet speak the same language in religion. Members of churches, which hold no communion, and which, perhaps, view each other, when at a distance, as heretics, often, when brought together, recognize in one another dear brethren, who are of one mind in their religious experience. But the identity of religious feeling which has been described above, is consistent with

a great variety in many of the accompanying circumstances. Indeed, it seems probable, that each individual Christian has something distinctly characteristic in his own case; so that there exists as much difference in the peculiar features of the inner as of the outward man. The causes of this diversity are manifold: as first, the different degrees of grace received in the commencement of the divine life; secondly, the extent to which they have respectively run in sin, and the suddenness, or gradual nature of their change; thirdly, the degree of religious knowledge which is possessed; and finally, no small diversity arises from the various constitutional temperaments of different people, which must have a powerful effect in giving complexion to the exercises of religion. To all which may be added, the manner in which people under religious impressions are treated by their spiritual guides: and especially the manner in which the Gospel is preached to them.

It may, however, be laid down as a sound maxim, that in proportion as the truth of God is clearly brought to view, and faithfully applied to the heart and conscience, the good effects will be manifest. Erroneous opinions, although mingled with the essential truths of the Gospel, will ever tend to mar the work of God. The good produced on any individual, or on a society, must not be judged of by the violence of the feelings excited, but by their character. Men may be consumed by a fiery zeal, and yet exhibit little of the meekness, humility, and sweet benevolence of Jesus. Great pretenders and high professors may be proud, arrogant, and censorious. When these are the effects, we may, without fear, declare, "that they know not what manner of spirit they are of." Any religion, however corrupt, may have its zealots; but true Christianity consists in the fruits of the Spirit, which are, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Piety seems also to assume an aspect somewhat different, in different ages and periods of the church. There is in human nature a strong tendency to run to extremes; and from one extreme, immediately to the opposite. And as the imperfections of our nature mingle with every thing which we touch, so piety itself is not exempt from the influence of the tendency above mentioned. In one age, or in one religious community, the leaning is to enthusiasm: in another, to superstition. At one time, religion is made to assume a severe and gloomy aspect; the conscience is morbidly scrupulous; things indifferent are viewed as sins; and human infirmities are magnified into crimes. At such times, all cheerfulness is proscribed; and the Christian whom nature prompts to smile, feels a check from the monitor within. This alloy of genuine piety is also often connected with bigotry and censoriousness. Now, when true religion is disfigured by such defects, it appears before the world to great disadvantage. Men of the world form their opinions of the nature of piety from what they observe in its professors; and from such an exhibition of it as we have described, they often take up prejudices which are never removed. There is, however, an opposite extreme, not less dangerous and injurious than this, when professors of religion conform to the world so far that no clear distinction can be observed between the Christian and the worldling. If the former error drives men away from religion, as a sour and miserable thing, this leads them to the opinion, that Christians are actuated by the same principles as they are; and therefore they conclude that no great change of their character is necessary. It is sometimes alleged by professors who thus accommodate themselves to the fashions and amusements of the world, that they hope by this means to render religion attractive, and thus gain over to piety those who neglect it; but this is a weak pretext, for such conformity always tends to confirm people in their carelessness. When they see professors at the theater, or figuring in the ballroom, their conclusion either is, that there is no

reality in vital piety, or that these professors act inconsistently. The religious habits of some serious professors of religion are adapted to make a very unfavorable impression on the minds of sensible men. They assume a demure and sanctimonious air, and speak in an affected and drawling tone; often sighing, and lifting up their eyes, and giving audible utterance to their ejaculations. Now, these people may be, and I doubt not, often are, truly pious; but the impression made on most minds, by this affectation of religious solemnity, is, that they are hypocrites, who aim at being thought uncommonly devout. It appears to me, that religion never appears so lovely, as when she wears the dress of perfect simplicity. We ought not, indeed, to be ashamed of our religion before the world; but it behooves us to be very careful, not to give to others an unfavorable opinion of serious piety. The rule is, "Let your light so shine, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven." "Let not your good be evil spoken of." But the aspect and character of the piety of one age may differ from that of another, more from the peculiar circumstances in which Christians are placed, than from the prevalence of erroneous views or incorrect habits. In one age, vital piety seeks retirement, and runs in hidden channels. At such a time, the attention of Christians is turned chiefly on themselves. Much time is devoted to devotional exercises; often whole days. The secret recesses of the heart are explored with diligence and rigor; indwelling sin is detected in its multiform appearances, and is mortified with invincible resolution; the various means of personal growth in grace are studied, and used with persevering assiduity; and much useful knowledge of the nature of the spiritual life in the soul is acquired. But while vital piety is thus carefully cultivated, and the attention is earnestly turned to the exercises of the heart, there may be very little display of active, enlarged benevolence; there may be few vigorous efforts made to meliorate the condition of the multitudes perishing in sin. Under the influence of these defective views of the nature of religion, many pious people, in the early ages of Christianity, withdrew entirely from the world, and lived in the wilderness; which mistake occasioned innumerable evils to the church, the effects of which are not yet obliterated. The spirit of piety among the Reformers seems to have been pure and vigorous, but not as expansive as it might have been. They seem scarcely to have thought of the hundreds of millions of heathen in the world; and of course, made no efforts to extend the knowledge of salvation to them. Indeed, they were so much occupied at home, in contending for the faith against the Romanists, that they had little time left for benevolent enterprises at a distance; but if that zeal which was worse than wasted in controversy with one another, had been directed to the conversion of the heathen, their usefulness would have been far greater than it was. The Puritans, also, although profoundly acquainted with experimental religion, seemed to have confined their attention too exclusively to themselves. Their ministers were, it is true, silenced, and driven into corners and into exile, by an ungrateful and tyrannical government; but it seems wonderful to us, that when prevented from preaching the Gospel to their own countrymen, they did not turn to the gentiles. But the era of missions had not yet arrived, and probably they had but small opportunity, in their persecuted state, of uniting their counsels, or combining their energies in schemes of distant benevolence. One thing, however, is now manifest, that the providence of God overruled the retirement and leisure of those godly ministers who were ejected from their charges, so as to render their labors more useful to the church than if they had been permitted to spend their lives in preaching the Gospel; for, when deprived of the liberty of employing their tongues, they betook themselves to their pens, and they have left to the church such a body of practical theology, as all ages, before or since, cannot equal. I have no doubt, that such men as Owen, Baxter, Flavel,

Bunyan, Goodwin, Manton, Howe, and Bates, have effected much more good by their practical writings, than they could possibly have done by their preaching, supposing them to have been ever so successful. But our lot is cast in a different age, and in a different state of the church. After a long slumber, the attention of Christians has been aroused to consider the perishing condition of the heathen. We live in a period when great designs are entertained, and plans formed for the conversion of the whole world; when one benevolent enterprise or institution follows another in rapid succession, until the Christian community begins to exhibit an entirely new aspect from what it did within our own remembrance. Christians have begun to feel, that by a combination of effort, they have power to accomplish much. The public attention is kept awake by the frequent recurrence of public meetings of an interesting kind, and by that more potent engine, the wide circulation of religious periodicals, by which, interesting intelligence is conveyed to almost every corner of our extensive country. The duty of Christians to be active, is now inculcated in almost every form; tracts are multiplied; the Scriptures are circulated; the young and ignorant are instructed by new methods; and many are found running to and fro to promote the propagation of evangelical truth. The number of serious Christians is vastly increased; and many youth are brought forward to a course of preparation for the gospel ministry. A spirit of liberality also is witnessed, unknown to our fathers; and the duty of consecrating to the Lord a reasonable proportion of all their increase, is beginning to be extensively felt among serious Christians. And such is the spirit of enterprise, that no undertaking appears too arduous, which has for its object the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom: and such is the favor of heaven towards benevolent enterprises in our day, that scarcely one has failed of accomplishing some good. Now, in all these favorable appearances and benevolent exertions, every pious heart must and will rejoice. But is there no danger, that many who feel interested in the operations of the day, and contribute to their advancement, should be mistaken as to their true spiritual condition? When a powerful current takes a set, many will be carried along with it, whichever way it may run. And is there no danger that Christians themselves, while they seem to flourish in external profession, zeal, and activity, may be decaying at the root, for want of sufficient attention to their own hearts, and to the duties of the [prayer] closet? There is, indeed, much reason to fear that many professors now exist, who confine religion too much to those external acts which may be performed from motives no higher than those which operate on unrenowned men. The danger now is, that the religion of the heart will be neglected, and that many will feel well satisfied with themselves, on account of their activity and zeal, who are yet strangers to a work of grace. This being the point on which Christians of the present day are liable to err, it is a matter of congratulation, that some writers seem disposed to turn the attention of the Christian public to the importance of diligence and punctuality in performing the duties of the closet.

S. You Fool!

YOU FOOL!

by Archibald Alexander

"You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you!" What harsh language, some will be ready to say. But it is true; and the occasion requires all earnestness. If you see your neighbor's house on fire, while he is sound asleep in his bed, you do not hesitate to alarm him with the most penetrating cry that you can utter. The reason in both cases is of the same nature, but much stronger in the latter, because the loss of the soul is infinitely greater than that of the body; the fires of hell are much more to be dreaded than any material fire, which can only destroy property, or at most, shorten life. But why is this man called a fool? Surely he was not such in the world's estimation. He evidently possessed the wisdom of this world. He knew how to manage his farm successfully. If there was any defect in this respect, it was in not building his barns large enough at first. Often enterprising, industrious men run far before their own anticipations. Wealth flows in upon them, so that they have more than heart could wish. This man, no doubt, had labored hard, but now thinks of taking his rest, and entering on the enjoyment of his rich possessions. He said to his soul, "Take it easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!" No cloud appeared in all his horizon to darken his prospects. His expectation was, not only rest from labor, and ease from trouble; but actual enjoyment in feasting, and unceasing mirth. The course of this farmer and his success are the very objects at which thousands are constantly aiming. They look no higher; they ask no more than he possessed. How then was he a fool? Will not the epithet apply as truly to most of the people in the world? If this present world were our only state of existence, it would be hard to prove the folly of such a course and such sentiments. Then men might with some show of reason say, "Let us eat and drink--for tomorrow we die." If this were all of man, and death the end of existence, the scene will so soon be over, and all joys and sorrows so soon buried in eternal oblivion. If there were no hereafter, of what account would it now be, whether the thousands of millions who have inhabited this globe were sad or merry while they lived? The utter folly of this worldling, and of thousands like him, consisted in this--that being the creature of a supreme Being, he neglected to serve him, and took no pains to secure his favor, or to arrest his wrath. The folly of this he must have felt when God spoke to him and said, "This night your soul shall be required of you!" Oh, what a sudden interruption to his plans of future pleasure. What! Must he give up all his possessions--his fields loaded with ripe harvests, the fruit of his anxious toil? In a moment his fond dream of feasting and mirth is terminated. God, his Maker, calls for him, and none can resist his command. "And who knows the power of his anger?" His soul is required. His account, whether prepared or unprepared, must be rendered. "Give an account of your stewardship." Show in what manner you have improved the talents committed to you. What good use have you made of the riches conferred on you?

Poor, wretched man; what can he say for himself? What justification can he offer for a life of disobedience and forgetfulness of God? Where now can he turn? Where can he flee for refuge

from his angry Judge? Alas, there is no escape! His riches cannot profit him now. The whole world could not redeem his soul from destruction; and while his heirs are striving about his great wealth, his soul is writhing in unending anguish! Careless reader, take heed lest this be your case! You are in the same condemnation!

S. Annals of the Jewish Nation during the Period of the Second Temple

ANNALS

of

THE JEWISH NATION

during

THE PERIOD

of

THE SECOND TEMPLE By Archibald Alexander D.D.

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PREFACE

There never has existed, upon earth, a nation whose history is so deserving of our attention, as that of the Jews. From their origin, until this day, an extraordinary Providence has been exercised towards them. For more than two thousand years, they continued to be the peculiar and chosen people of God; and although they were often rebellious, and sometimes severely chastised, yet, during this long period, they were never entirely cast off. But after their enormous impiety, in the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, they, as a nation, were utterly rejected of God; exiled from the promised land; dispersed among all the nations of the earth, and abandoned to every species of persecution and cruel oppression. This has been their miserable condition for nearly eighteen centuries. But still, an extraordinary Providence attends them; not only in the awful dispensations of Divine displeasure in the fulfilment of the prophecies, but also in their preservation as a distinct people, in the midst of so many hot fires of persecution, and during so long a period of cruel oppression, such as no other people ever endured. Their remaining unamalgamated with the various nations of the earth among whom they have had their residence, is itself a prodigy, and has been denominated, "a standing miracle," in confirmation of the truth of God. Certainly, it is not too much to assert, that it is a most remarkable verification of the divine predictions delivered by

Moses, almost four thousand years ago; and as a dispensation of Providence, it is unique, and can only be accounted for, by referring it to the Divine will.

Every impartial observer must admit, that there is something truly wonderful in the history of this people; and it is not easy to see how any candid mind can evade the conviction, that the history of the Jews alone, is sufficient to establish the divine origin of the Bible. The history of this people, until after their return from the Babylonish captivity, is contained in the sacred books of the Old Testament. These are accessible to all, and it is hoped will become more and more an object of general attention. During this whole period, no other writers arose whose works have reached our times. On them alone, therefore, should we depend for information respecting the early history of the Hebrew nation; and it may better be read there, than in any narrative of human composition. But from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, until the commencement of the Evangelical history, a period of nearly five centuries, no inspired writer has recorded the revolutions, and extraordinary events, which occurred, in the Jewish nation; and yet, the history of this period contains the fulfilment of many important prophecies recorded in the Old Testament; and the origin of that political, moral, and ecclesiastical, state of things, which we find in existence, at the time of the advent of Christ. Without the knowledge of the events which occurred in this period, the intelligent reader must be utterly at a loss to account for what he reads in the New Testament. Here, he finds a king in Judea, while the nation is in fact subject to the Romans. Various sects and religious institutions are familiarly spoken of, concerning which we read nothing in the Old Testament. It is exceedingly important to have this chasm filled up; and this has been attempted by several; but has been accomplished by none so satisfactorily, as by the learned Doctor Prideaux, whose *Connexion*, is a work of great research and inestimable value to the Biblical student; but is at once, too learned and too voluminous, for the common reader; and, indeed, the style is so involved and obscure, and so little regard is paid to lucid order in the arrangement, that the work is far less read, even by the learned, than it deserves to be. The object of the compiler, of the little volume which is now presented to the public, has been, to furnish what he believed to be a desideratum, to aid the Biblical studies of young persons, and common readers. And, after examining other authors, on this period of Jewish history, he was of opinion, that all that was needful could be extracted from the above-mentioned work of Dr. Prideaux, as far as his history extends. But as this learned writer brings down his account of the Jews no lower than the advent, it was necessary to derive the narrative of the remaining interesting period, from other sources; especially from the history of Josephus and the Collections of Lardner, have been the principal. And this is the reason why this work has not been entitled, an abridgment of Dr. Prideaux's *Connexion*; and, also, because, in some instances, the opinions and statements of others have been preferred; but it is desired that it may be understood, that the materials for by far the largest part of this volume, have been derived from this learned author.

A. A.

Princeton, N. J.

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CHAPTER I("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

History of the Jews, from the edict of Cyrus permitting their return to their own land, to the finishing of the second temple

1. Cyrus, king of Persia, having taken Babylon, and become the sole sovereign by the death of his uncle, who in Scripture is called Darius the Mede, made a decree, that as many of the children of Israel as chose should return to Judea, and rebuild their city and temple.
2. To aid them in this pious and patriotic work, he directed that supplies should be granted them from his own revenues; and, also, that they should be at liberty to receive donations from their brethren who chose to remain in Chaldea.
3. It is said, that Cyrus was induced to resolve on this measure, by having the remarkable prophecies which related to himself, shown to him by Daniel the prophet, who was still alive at Babylon, though very old.
4. The decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued about five hundred and thirty-six years before the birth of Christ.
5. On this occasion, Cyrus brought out all the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple at Jerusalem, and gave them into the hands of the leaders of the Jews, who were about to return to their own land.
6. The chief leaders were Zerubbabel, who was of the royal seed, and Joshua, who was by regular descent, the high priest of the nation. The number of vessels of gold and silver, delivered by Cyrus into the hands of Zerubbabel and Joshua, was five thousand four hundred.
7. They who returned to Judea, at this time, were not all from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; but some of the other tribes, carried away by Tiglath Pilezer, Salmanezer, and Esarhaddon, also returned with their brethren.
8. The whole number of this first company was fifty-two thousand three hundred and sixty; whereas, they who are numbered in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, as belonging to Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, amounted to no more than thirty thousand.
9. Of the twenty-four courses of priests instituted by David, no more than four returned, making up the number of four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine persons. The rest either remained, or had become extinct. But to keep up the ancient number of courses, each of these four divided itself into six, and took the names of those which had become extinct.
10. The first work to which they addressed themselves, after their return, was, the erection of an altar of burnt-offerings; so that the daily service of God, according to the law of Moses, might immediately be resumed.

11. Next, they proceeded to lay the foundation of the temple. This they erected exactly on the site of the old edifice, and made it of the same length and breadth, and according to the same plan; but as they were poor and few in number, the building fell very far short of the glory and riches of the first temple, built by Solomon. So that when it was finished, many of the old men, who had seen the former edifice, wept aloud, on account of the meanness of this second temple, when compared with the glory of the first.

12. The Jews are accustomed to say, that five things were wanting in the second temple, which existed in the first. These were, 1. Urim and Thummim. 2. The ark of the covenant with its sacred contents. 3. The holy fire on the altar, enkindled from heaven. 4. The Schechina, or visible symbol of the divine presence, over the mercy seat. 5. The spirit of prophecy. To which might be added as a 6th, The holy anointing oil, made by Moses for the consecration of the priests, and of the kings.

13. It is a tradition among the Jews, that all the copies of the Holy Scriptures were lost; and that Ezra, by inspiration, restored the whole. But this is manifestly incorrect; for Daniel had the books of the Prophets, and "Ezra was already scribe in the law of his God;" and as soon as the people returned, we find, that they had copies of the law. The autographs of these books, preserved in the temple, were doubtless lost, and many new copies were probably now made under the direction of Ezra; and from these circumstances, probably, the tradition just mentioned, took its rise.

14. When the ten tribes were carried away from the land of Israel, the king of Assyria brought inhabitants from other countries, to occupy their place. These were Heathen, and worshipped various false gods, but knew nothing of the worship of Jehovah. Being greatly infested with beasts, they attributed this judgment, to their not knowing "the manner of the god of the land." Whereupon, the king of Assyria ordered, that one of the priests who had been carried away from that land, should return and teach the people how to serve the god of the country. This priest took up his residence in Bethel, and having brought with him a copy of the law of Moses, instructed the people how Jehovah should be worshipped: nevertheless, they did not abandon, at first, their former deities, but united the worship of them, with that of the true God. In process of time, these foreigners became incorporated with the poorer people of Israel, who were left in the country; and the mongrel race received the name of Samaritans, which name the few who remain there to this day, still retain. The Samaritans were more despised by the Jews, than the heathen themselves. They were also called Cutheans, and no greater reproach could be cast on any one by a Jew, than to call him a Samaritan or a Cuthean. After some time, they seem to have abandoned their gross idolatry, and pretended that Mount Gerizzim was the place originally appointed by God for his worship. They preserved among them the law received from the Israelitish priest, copies of which, in their peculiar character, have come down to our times; but the other books of the Jewish Scriptures they did not receive.

15. Upon the return of the Jews to rebuild their temple, the Samaritans came to them, and expressed a great desire to unite with them in the work, and in the worship of God; pretending, that ever since the days of Esarhaddon, they had been worshippers of Jehovah. But Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the elders of Israel, utterly refused to have any connexion with them, and informed them that the decree of Cyrus, related only to the Jews. This refusal to admit the Samaritans to their communion, was, because they suspected them of insidious designs, and knew, that whatever they might now profess, their religion was corrupt. The Samaritans were

greatly offended at this repulse, and set themselves, by every means, to obstruct the building of the house: and, although, they could not alter the decree of Cyrus, yet by bribes and other underhand dealings, they had influence with his ministers, to cause many hindrances to be thrown in the way of the Jews. By this means the animosity between the two nations was enkindled to a flame; so that, ever afterwards, no people ever hated each other with a more bitter hatred; which is sufficiently evident in the gospel history.

16. Daniel, although living, when the Jews returned to build Jerusalem, was too old to revisit his native country. He must at this time have been eighty or ninety years of age: for he was carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and was then a young man; since which time, seventy years had elapsed. He was a man greatly honored by God, and had great influence and authority, both during the reign of the Chaldean and Persian kings.

Josephus informs us, that he built a famous palace at Susa, which, he says, was remaining in his time; and finished it with wonderful art; in which it became the custom, to bury the Persian and Parthian kings; and in honor to the founder, it was always committed to the custody of members of the Jewish nation. Here, according to tradition, Daniel died and was buried, where they pretend to show his sepulchre to this day. The place is now called Tuster. The year of his death is uncertain, but, he did not long survive the restoration of his countrymen: and the loss of such a wise and influential friend at the court of Persia, must have been great indeed to all the Jews; but especially to those engaged in the arduous enterprise of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.

17. But about seven years after this work commenced, the Jews met with a still heavier loss, by the death of Cyrus himself. Concerning the place and circumstances of the death of this extraordinary man, we have no record in the Sacred Writings, and other historians are so entirely disagreed, that we cannot speak with certainty. Xenophon makes him die in his bed in Persia, when a little above seventy years of age; but Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Justin, relate, that he made an unsuccessful attack upon Scythia, where being defeated and slain by the queen of that country, his head was cut off, and placed in a barrel of blood.

18. Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who is thought by some to be the Ahasuerus of Scripture, the husband of Esther. This man was exceedingly different in character from his father; and, indeed, during his whole reign, acted more like a madman, than a person in his senses.

Having taken offence at Amasis, king of Egypt, he marched a powerful army into that country, which he subdued. Amasis, however, was dead before his arrival, but he prosecuted the war with great violence, and having got possession of Memphis the capitol, put the young king, the son of Amasis, to death, by causing him to drink bullock's blood. The body of Amasis he dug up, and treated with the greatest indignity. The stratagem which he used to take Pelusium, was, to place cows, cats, dogs &c., before his army, and thus march up to the walls; these being objects of worship with the Egyptians, they chose rather to be conquered, than to run the risk of killing any of the venerated animals.

He made a second expedition to Ethiopia, which was unsuccessful. At this time he sent forty thousand men to destroy the temple of Jupiter Hammon, all of whom were overwhelmed in a storm of sand. Finding the people of Memphis rejoicing on account of the discovery of the bull Apis, he commanded that he should be brought to him, and on seeing the animal which the superstitious

people adored, he ran his sword into the thigh of the bull, of which wound he died. The priests, he ordered to be whipped, and in every way manifested his contempt and detestation for the superstitions of the people; for the Persians worshipped no idols, but only the sun and fire.

It is related, that the king of Ethiopia sent Cambyses his bow, with a message, that when the Persians could bend such a bow, they might think of invading Ethiopia. Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and brother of the king, being the only man in the army who could with ease bend the bow, Cambyses became jealous of him, and sent him off to Persia, where, in consequence of a dream, he had him put to death.

He had one beautiful sister, the daughter of Cyrus, whose name was Meroe; her he married, contrary to all law and usage. From her is derived the name of an island in the Nile, between Egypt and Ethiopia. This woman he was accustomed to take with him in all his expeditions. But on a certain occasion, in a fit of passion, he struck her a blow, which, she being pregnant, caused her death.

Cambyses, having reigned nearly eight years, and being on his return from Egypt, a herald from Shushan, the palace of the kings of Persia, met the army, and proclaimed Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, king. Now Smerdis had already been put to death, secretly, by the order of Cambyses, as stated above; but the case was this, the prince whom Cambyses had left to govern Persia in his absence, had a brother who bore a remarkable resemblance to Smerdis. This young man the crafty Magian set upon the throne, having learned the secret of the death of the true Smerdis. Cambyses seized the herald, and after a careful examination having ascertained that his own brother was really dead, and that this pretended Smerdis was the brother of the governor, set forward with his army to dethrone the impostor, and punish the governor; but as he mounted his horse, his sword slipping from its scabbard, gave him a wound in the thigh, of which he died in a few days. The Egyptians considered this as a special judgment on the king for his impiety, in killing Apis; for they remarked, that the part of his thigh into which the sword entered, was the same which he had wounded in the bull.

19. During the reign of Cambyses, the work of rebuilding the temple, we have reason to believe, advanced very slowly. The Samaritans, we know, sent a petition to obtain, an order to have the building arrested; but how it was received, or whether it produced any effect, we are not informed.

20. The pretended Smerdis reigned only seven months. By profane historians he is called by several other names; but in Scripture, he is named Artaxerxes. As soon as he was settled on the throne, after the death of Cambyses, the Samaritans wrote a letter to him, setting forth, that the Jews were rebuilding their city and temple, at Jerusalem; and that, as they had always been a rebellious people, there was much reason to suspect, that as soon as the work was accomplished, they would withdraw their allegiance from the king. For proof of what they alleged, they referred to the ancient records of the kingdom; requesting, that search might be made, whether the facts stated by them were not true. Upon which, Artaxerxes having ascertained that the Jews had carried on obstinate wars with his predecessors, and that their city had been taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, gave order, that the building should cease; whereupon, the Samaritan came immediately to Jerusalem, and by force caused them to desist from the further prosecution of the work.

21. Smerdis or Artaxerxes, endeavored by every method to ingratiate himself with the people; and, with this view, remitted all the taxes due to the government. And to secure himself on the throne, he took to wife Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, who had before been the wife of Cambyses her brother. At length, however, it began to be suspected among the nobles of Persia, that this was not the true Smerdis. One of them whose name was Otanes, undertook to make a discovery, by means of one of the wives of the king. He had ascertained, that the Magian who resembled Smerdis, had, on some occasion, lost his ears; wherefore this woman was to find out whether her husband had ears or not. It being found that he had none, it became certain that he was an impostor. Otanes, then, associated six others of the nobles of Persia with him, who entering into the palace slew the king, and his brother Patizethes, who had been the contriver of the whole plot; and bringing out their heads, shewed them to the people, and laid open the whole imposture. Such was the indignation of the multitude against these men, that they slew all the Magians whom they could find.

22. The idolatry of the world, at this time, was divided between the worshippers of images, who were called Sabeans, and the worshippers of fire, who were called Magians. The Magian sect, who were followers of Zoroaster, prevailed greatly in Persia, and a few of their successors are still found in the mountains of that country, under the name of Gauri, or fire-worshippers.

23. Smerdis being now out of the way, a consultation was held by the nobles of Persia, respecting the form of government which should be adopted. Otanes was in favor of democracy, Megabyzus of aristocracy, and Darius Hystaspes, of monarchy. The last mentioned opinion prevailed, and Darius himself was advanced to the throne. He was the son of Hystaspes, a noble Persian, who had followed Cyrus in all his wars. The other nobles concerned in this revolution, stipulated that they should enjoy peculiar privileges, one of which was, that they should always have free access to the royal presence, without ceremony, except when the king was in his harem.

24. The building of the temple having been arrested by an edict of Smerdis, the work was not immediately resumed upon the accession of Darius. The remissness of the Jews in prosecuting this sacred object, occasioned severe judgments on the land; and to awake them from their apathy, Haggai the prophet was sent to them with a message from Jehovah, which is recorded in the book which bears his name. This solemn exhortation, had the effect of stirring up the leaders and the people to return to the work of rebuilding the temple. Towards the close of the same year, another message was sent to the Jews, by the same prophet, announcing that the glory of the second house should be greater than the glory of the first; and that the desire of all nations should come, and that this temple should be filled with the glory of Jehovah.

Zechariah the prophet, was also commissioned to preach to the people, at the close of the same year.

25. At the beginning of the second year of Darius, the work was recommenced; but the Samaritans betook themselves to their old malicious practices; and to obstruct the work, applied to Tatnai, who had been appointed governor, on this side the river. They alleged that the Jews were acting wholly without authority in this business. Tatnai, to satisfy himself, came to Jerusalem, and upon being shown a copy of the edict of Cyrus, did not forbid the work, but wrote an account of the whole matter to the king. Whereupon, search being made, the decree of Cyrus was found among the rolls, in the royal palace at Ecbatana, in Media. Darius, upon this, ordered, that the decree of Cyrus should be carried into complete effect and threatened severe punishments against any who

should dare to obstruct the work.

26. The seventy years captivity predicted by Jeremiah, may be considered as commencing either in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when the first Jews were carried captive to Babylon, and then the end of this period will be in the first year of Cyrus: or, eighteen years afterwards, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, and then the close of the seventy years will be on this second year of Darius, when the decree of Cyrus was renewed and republished, and all obstructions to the carrying on the work taken out of the way.

27. The kings of Persia having removed their residence from Babylon to Shushan, the inhabitants of the former city began to think of a revolt from the dominion of the Persians. For several years they were employed in collecting and treasuring up provisions, within the walls of the city. In the fifth year of Darius, the revolt took place; the Babylonians openly renouncing their allegiance. Darius now collected a mighty army and besieged the city; but the walls were so thick and high, and the gates so strong, that all attempts to reduce it by force must have been ineffectual: and there was so much vacant ground within the city and so large a store of provisions had been accumulated, that there seemed no prospect of reducing it by famine. The desperate determination of the besieged was also manifested in a very extraordinary way. In order to lessen the number of consumers of their stock of provisions, they resolved to put to death all persons who could not be useful in the defence of the city; especially, all the females were slain, except one for each family. And the probability was strong that they would have been able to defend themselves successfully against the Persian army, had it not been for the device of a nobleman, by the name of Zopyrus, who having cut off his own ears and nose, fled to the Babylonians, pretending that he had been thus cruelly treated by Darius. They received him confidently, for there seemed to be no room to suspect treachery, in such a case; and, by degrees he so insinuated himself into their favor, that they gave him the command of the city; upon which he immediately opened the gates to the Persians. Darius took signal vengeance on the leaders of this rebellion, by crucifying no less than three thousand of the nobles. And to prevent the danger of a second revolt, he almost levelled the walls of the city, reducing them from two hundred, to fifty cubits; and took away the hundred brazen gates, by which the entrance had been guarded. The reign of Darius was long, but turbulent. He invaded Scythia with an army of seven hundred thousand men, but the expedition was not prosperous. He succeeded, however, in subduing Macedonia, and in bringing under his authority some of the western provinces of India. Towards the latter part of his reign he was involved in wars with the Ionians who had revolted, and with the states of Greece; which disputes led on to the great war between the Greeks and Persians, which was so signal, in the reign of his successor.

28. In the sixth year of Darius, according to the Jewish computation, the temple of Jerusalem was finished, and was dedicated with great joy and solemnity, in the month Adar.

Twenty years had elapsed from the second of Cyrus to the seventh of Darius; so long was the second temple in building. At this dedication, it seems, that the 146th, 147th, and 148th Psalms were sung; for in the Septuagint version, they are called the Psalms of Haggai and Zechariah, by whom they were probably composed, for this solemn occasion. The decree of Darius for finishing the temple having been granted at Shushan, the eastern gate, in memory of that event, received the name Shushan; on which was engraved a picture of that city, which remained until the final

destruction of the temple, by the Romans.

29. On the 14th of Nisan, the next month after the dedication of the temple, the passover was celebrated at Jerusalem. This was a season of great rejoicing to the Jews who had returned to Judea.

CHAPTER II("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews, from the completion of the building of the temple, to the mission of Nehemiah

30. The Samaritans, when the temple was finished, refused to pay the tribute for carrying on the building which had been first assigned for this purpose, by Cyrus, and afterwards, by Darius. The Jews, therefore, sent Zerubbabel the governor, with Mordecai and Ananias, two principal men among them, to make a complaint to Darius, of the injury which they sustained, in being deprived of the king's bounty, contrary to the edict which he had made in their favor. The king, upon hearing this complaint, issued an order to his officers in Samaria, requiring them to see to it that the Samaritans obeyed his edict, in paying their tribute to Jerusalem, as formerly, and give the Jews no further cause to complain of them.

31. The Tyrians, after the taking of their city by Nebuchadnezzar, having been reduced to a state of servitude, continued under the yoke for seventy years, agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah 23:15-17. But when this time was expired, Darius permitted them again to have a king of their own, which favor seems to have been granted, because of the service rendered to him, in his naval expeditions. After this restoration, they arose speedily to a state of prosperity and power.

32. Darius lived to be an old man, and was a prince distinguished for wisdom, clemency, and justice. Before his death, being desirous of fixing the succession to the throne, he appointed Xerxes the son of Atossa (the daughter of Cyrus) to be his successor; for, although, he had other sons who were older than Xerxes, yet they having been born before Darius ascended the throne, he judged that it was most proper to grant the kingdom to him who was first born after his accession to royal authority. And no doubt, the influence which Atossa had over Darius was the principal reason of this determination. But it deserves to be remarked, as an uncommon fact, and much to the honor of the parties concerned, that while this matter was under consideration, it created no alienation of the affections of the competitors for the crown, from each other. And, when Xerxes was raised to the throne, Artabazanes, the eldest son, gave no indications of envy or dissatisfaction, but treated his brother with all affection, served him with fidelity in his wars, and at last died in his service, being slain in battle.

Darius did not long survive the settlement of the succession to the throne upon his son Xerxes. He died in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, and four hundred and eighty-six years before the birth of Christ. The tradition of the Jews is, that in the last year of Darius, died the prophets Haggai Zechariah and Malachi, from which time the spirit of prophecy ceased from among the children of Israel.

33. Xerxes, having ascended the throne, confirmed to the Jews all the privileges granted by his father; especially, the right to the tribute from Samaria, for furnishing the temple with sacrifices for the service of God, according to the law of Moses. The Egyptians having revoked before the death

of Darius, Xerxes went against them with an army; and, in a short time, the rebels were reduced again, and their yoke made heavier than before.

34. Xerxes, being much elated by his success against the Egyptians, listened the more readily to the counsel of his son-in-law Mardonius, and others, who persuaded him, to undertake an expedition against Greece. Three years were spent in making preparation for this war, and troops were collected from every part of the Persian empire. In the fifth year of his reign, which was the four hundred and eighty-first before the Christian era, he led his enormous army towards Asia Minor, and took up his winter quarters at Sardis. To distract the attention of the Greeks, Xerxes entered into a league with the Carthaginians, who it was agreed, should fall upon the Greeks who dwelt in Sicily and Italy. The army with which Xerxes marched into Greece, was much the most numerous recorded in history. The infantry alone, are said to have been one million seven hundred thousand men; and the cavalry, eighty thousand; which, with the necessary drivers of the chariots and camels, must raise the number of his land-army, to one million eight hundred thousand men. His fleet consisted of twelve hundred and seven ships, besides gallies, transports, &c., which were three thousand more: manned by five hundred and seventeen thousand, six hundred men.

It was, moreover, reckoned, that the nations who submitted to him on the way, and after he creased, the Hellespont, increased his army by the addition of three hundred thousand men, besides those on board of the two hundred and twenty ships added to his fleet, who were calculated to be at least twenty-four thousand, more. Herodotus says, the whole number of fighting-men were two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand, six hundred and ten; who, with the servants, sutlers, mariners, women and children, make the whole number of persons, not less than five millions. Other historians make the number smaller; but no one makes it less than two millions.

35. Xerxes occupied a whole week, day and night, in crossing the Hellespont, by two bridges of boats; the army passing upon one, and the carriages and beasts of burden, on the other.

36. At the straits of Thermopylæ, he was met by Leonidas, king of Sparta, who, with a band of six thousand men, had the desperate resolution to oppose the progress of this mighty host; and for three days, this devoted band of patriots actually hindered the Persian army from proceeding, and killed twenty thousand of their men. But at length a passage was effected over the dead bodies of the devoted Spartans, who determined to perish, rather than see their country laid waste by a hostile army. The Persian monarch had the pusillanimity to treat the dead body of the brave Leonidas with dishonor, by cutting off the head, and suspending the trunk upon a gallows.

Xerxes would not have succeeded so soon in forcing his way through the straits of Thermopylæ, had not a secret path been pointed out by a treacherous Greek, by means of which, the Persians were enabled to attack the Greeks in the rear. Upon this, all fled except Leonidas, and three hundred of his followers, who had resolved to devote themselves, for their country Besides, the twenty thousand Persians slain on this occasion, Xerxes lost two of his own brothers.

37. The fleets of the belligerents soon met in conflict, and naval battles occurred, in which much blood was spilt, and much execution done; but nothing decisive took place, until the battle of Salamis: in which the Grecian fleet, under the command of Themistocles, gained a great and decisive victory. To witness this action, Xerxes had ascended an eminence on the neighboring

promontory, where, seated on a splendid throne, he had the mortification to see the utter ruin of his great fleet; and fearing lest his retreat should be cut off, he hastened to recross the Hellespont; but, upon his arrival, found, that the bridges, which he had erected with so much labor and expense, had been broken by a storm; so that he was forced to cross in a common fishing boat, and betake himself immediately to Sardis.

38. On the same day, according to Herodotus, on which the victory of Salamis took place, the Carthaginians, the confederates of Xerxes, met with a dreadful overthrow at Panormus in Sicily; where their fleet was burnt, their general, Hamilcar, slain, and one hundred and fifty thousand fell in the field of battle. Others, however, maintain, with more probability, that this defeat occurred on the day in which Leonidas arrested the progress of the Persian army at Thermopylæ.

39. Mardonius, the general of Xerxes, being left in Greece with three hundred thousand men, (the rest of the army having followed the king to Sardis,) endeavored to make peace with the Grecians; but they, elated with victory, and confident in their own strength, declined all negotiation, and collected an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, on the isthmus of Corinth. Mardonius, however, although his army was now not less than three hundred and fifty thousand, withdrew from their neighborhood. The Grecian army, under the command of Pausanias the Lacedemonian, and Aristides the Athenian, pursued him, and, at the city of Platea, a decisive engagement took place, in which Mardonius was slain, and the Persian army cut to pieces. Artabazus, one of the Persian generals, foreseeing the event of the battle, made his escape, with forty thousands men: all the rest were destroyed, except about four thousand. On the same day, a naval action took place, at Mycale, in which the Persian fleet was burnt

40. Thus was this vast armament, the greatest which the world ever saw, almost annihilated by a mere handful of men. Xerxes returned home, chagrined and mortified; and taking Babylon, on his way to Shushan, plundered the temple of Belus, and carried away the dedicated treasures; and, especially, a golden table, which Darius had not ventured to remove.

41. Scaliger, is of opinion, that Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, in which he is followed by many, especially by Jahn, in his history of the Hebrew commonwealth. One principal reason alleged in favor of this opinion, is derived from the name of one of Xerxes' queens, which was Hamestris, between which and Esther there is a strong affinity; but Prideaux objects, that Xerxes had a son by Hamestris, who was of marriageable age, according to Herodotus, in the seventh year of his reign: whereas, Esther was not married to Ahasuerus until the seventh year of his reign; and the putting away of Vashti, occurred, in the fourth year of his reign, when Esther was first selected, among other virgins, for the king's purposes. It seems, therefore, impossible, that Hamestris the wife of Xerxes, and Esther the wife of Ahasuerus, were the same person. Moreover, Hamestris was a woman of licentious character, of which many instances are given by the Greek historian; but no such thing can be said of Esther. But Jahn, considers Xerxes to be not only Ahasuerus, of the book of Esther, but also the Artaxerxes, of the book of Ezra, as he is mentioned next after Darius Hystaspes; and observed, that the names Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, were given to many kings, and that Daniel, (c. Daniel 9:1) calls Astyages, of the Median line, Ahasuerus. The opinion of Usher is, that Darius Hystaspes, was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, and that Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, was Vashti, and Artysona, the Esther of the Scriptures; but according to Herodotus, this queen was also the daughter of Cyrus, but Esther we know was a Jewess.

Moreover, he informs us, that Atossa, before she was divorced, had four sons and one daughter, all born after Darius was king, which is altogether inconsistent with what we read in the book of Esther—that Vashti was put away in the fourth year of the reign of Ahasuerus.

42. Josephus mentions, that there were many Jews in the great army of Xerxes, which marched into Greece, and the same may be inferred from the description of the various nations and languages, composing this immense army, by Herodotus; and, as a great multitude of Jews were still resident in Babylonia and Media, it would be strange, if this had not been the fact.

43. The restored Hebrews do not appear, during all this time, to have been in a prosperous condition. They seem to have had no stable and regular government, and the administration of justice was exceedingly defective.

44. Xerxes, after many unsuccessful efforts to subdue the Greeks, relinquished all further attention to this war, and gave himself entirely to a life of voluptuous ease; in consequence of which, he fell into contempt with the people. Artabanus, the captain of his guards, formed a conspiracy against him, and having slain him, in his bed, went to Artaxerxes, his third son, and charged the murder on his elder brother, Darius; which the young man believing, went immediately to the chamber of Darius, and, by the assistance of Artabanus, slew him, also. The second son, Hystaspes, was absent; Artabanus, therefore, had no difficulty in placing Artaxerxes on the throne; but his real object, in this plot, was to secure the kingdom for himself and his sons, of whom he had seven, all occupying stations of importance. The young king, however, discovered his design, and prevented its execution, by cutting him off with his adherents. Artaxerxes is said to have been the handsomest man of the age, in which he lived; but was surnamed Longimanus, or long-handed; because, when he stood upright, his hands reached as low as his knees. He is said to have been a prince of mildness and clemency. Notwithstanding all that has been said in favor of other hypotheses, it is much most probable, that Artaxerxes Longimanus was the husband of Esther; and this is expressly asserted by Josephus. The Septuagint version, also, uniformly renders Ahasuerus by Artaxerxes; and the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther, call him by the same name. This opinion has many advocates among both the ancients and the moderns; is more free from difficulties than any of those already mentioned; and accords entirely with the extraordinary kindness towards the Jews, manifested in his sending, first Ezra, and then Nehemiah, to their assistance. Jahn, however, seems to think, that Ezra was sent to Jerusalem in the reign of Xerxes, who, he supposes, is called Artaxerxes, as well as Ahasuerus; but this is improbable.

45. Artaxerxes Longimanus, having put Artabanus out of the way, was still exposed to danger from two quarters. First, the seven sons of Artabanus still lived, and had great power; and, secondly, his brother Hystaspes, whose birth-right the throne was, had an army in Bactria, and would, doubtless, claim his right. He soon, however, mastered the first difficulty, by taking signal vengeance upon all who had any connexion with the murderers of his father. To subdue his brother, he sent an army into Bactria; which, though at first repulsed, succeeded, the next year, in reducing him.

46. It seems to have been in consequence of having conquered all his enemies, that he made the festival, mentioned in Esther, which was prolonged for one hundred and eighty days. This feast was celebrated in Shushan; on which occasion, his queen, Vashti, refusing to exhibit herself, was

divorced; and, soon afterwards, Esther was selected to become queen in her place. Her uncle Mordecai, was of the number of those carried captive from Jerusalem, in the reign of Jeconiah; and having no children of his own, had undertaken the education of Hadassah or Esther, the daughter of his deceased brother. This young woman, being exceedingly beautiful, was among the virgins selected by Hegai, the king's chamberlain; and after undergoing a year's purification, was introduced to the king; and being, by him, preferred to all the rest, was advanced to the dignity of queen. By her interposition, the Jews, scattered throughout the Persian empire, were secured from total destruction, which had been prepared for them by Haman, the favorite of the king.

47. In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and the 458th B. C., Ezra received an ample commission to return to Jerusalem, and to take with him as many of his nation as were willing to accompany him; with full authority to regulate and reform the Jewish commonwealth, according to their own laws. This great favor was probably granted in consequence of the request of Esther, who, before this, had been introduced into the king's harem. This Ezra, was a descendant of Seraiah, the high priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar, at the time when Jerusalem was taken. He is, indeed, called in Sacred Scripture the son of Seraiah; but it is scarcely probable that he was a son of the first generation, and we know that the Hebrews call all descendants, sons. He was a holy man, and profoundly skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures. In the king's commission, Ezra is called "a ready scribe in the house of his God." He left Babylon, for Jerusalem, on the first day of the month Nisan, and Stopping at the river Ahava, until all his company should come up, he there proclaimed a day of solemn prayer and fasting, to implore the blessing of God on their journey. On the first of the fifth month, he arrived at Jerusalem, and presented the various gifts, with which he was intrusted, for the service of the temple.

48. The Egyptians, ever impatient of a foreign yoke, revolted, again, in the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes, and called in the Athenians to their assistance; who, having at that time a fleet, of two hundred sail, at Cyprus, gladly laid hold of the opportunity of crushing the Persian power in Egypt. Artaxerxes intended to go himself at the head of the expedition against Egypt; but being dissuaded from exposing his own person, he sent one of his sons; or, as some say, one of his brothers, Achæmenides, who marched with an army of three hundred thousand men, and encamped on the banks of the Nile; but, in the mean time, the Athenians had beaten the Persian fleet at sea, sailed up the Nile, and joined Inarus, whom the Egyptians had set up for their king; and falling on the Persian army, defeated them in a great battle; killing one hundred thousand men, and, among the rest, Achæmenides, the general; whereupon, the remainder of the Persian army fled to Memphis; but were immediately pursued by the Egyptians and Athenians, who took two parts of the city; The Persians, however, kept possession of the other part, which was the largest and strongest, when they suffered a siege of nearly three years; during which time, they valiantly defended themselves against their assailants; until, at length, they were succoured by the arrival of a reinforcement from Persia.

49. Themistocles, the famous Athenian general, who had gained so glorious a naval victory at Salamis, being banished from his own country, by the ostracism, sought refuge in the Persian court, where he was received with great kindness, and treated with much attention. Artaxerxes being now resolved to send an army into Attica, that he might divert the Athenians from Egypt, selected Themistocles to be the general of this expedition, against his own country. The Athenian general, not willing to disoblige the king from whom he had received so many favors, and at the

same time, abhorring the idea of making war on his native country, determined to put an end to his own life; and therefore inviting all his friends together, and having sacrificed a bull, he drank its blood and died.

50. An army of three hundred thousand men was sent against Greece, under the command of Megabyzus. This general, when Inarus, the king of Egypt, submitted, had promised a general amnesty, which was confirmed by Artaxerxes; but the latter, at the instigation of his mother, was at length induced to put Inarus, and fifty other leading Egyptians, to the death of the cross. Megabyzus was so much displeased at this want of good faith in the king, that he revolted with the troops under his command, and twice defeated the royal forces sent against him; but was afterwards, received again into favor.

51. The Peloponesian war, so famous in Grecian history, between the Lacedamonians and Athenians, commenced in the thirty-fourth year of Artaxerxes. This war, so destructive to the power of Greece, lasted for twenty-seven years; but, although application was made to Artaxerxes for aid, by the Lacedemonians, he prudentially declined all interference in the contest. The miseries brought upon Greece by this war, were greatly increased by the desolating plague which prevailed, especially, at Athens.

52. Ezra exerted himself greatly at Jerusalem to have the worship of God completely restored; but the work for which he has been most celebrated, both by Jews and Christians, was, the collection and revision of the Sacred Books. In this work, it is said, he was assisted by the Great Synagogue of one hundred and twenty men, among whom the Jews reckon Daniel and his three friends, the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, and Simon the Just; but between the first and last of these, there was an interval of two hundred and fifty years. It, seems, therefore, more reasonable to suppose, that the Great Synagogue were not all contemporaries, but a succession of learned men, who devoted their attention to the preparation of correct copies of the Scriptures.

There is a story (already referred to) in the second apocryphal book of Esdras, and believed by most of the Christian fathers, that all the Sacred Books were lost, during the captivity; but this is directly contradicted by Scripture. No doubt, the autographs preserved in the temple, were destroyed with the ark; but that all copies were destroyed, is a groundless opinion. It is probable, however, that correct copies were, at the restoration, few in number; and, therefore, Ezra, who was a "ready scribe," and an inspired man, took pains to prepare authentic copies of all the Sacred Books, and collected them into one volume, that the people might have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the whole of that revelation, which God from time to time, had caused to be penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But as many of the people who returned from captivity had lost the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, by so long a residence in a foreign country, Ezra appointed certain persons, who were skilled in both the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, to give a version or paraphrase, of the lessons which were publicly read, from the Scriptures. These paraphrases, at first, were not written, but the Sacred Text was explained to the people by the interpreter, sentence by sentence, as the reader proceeded; but in process of time, several persons undertook to commit them to writing; a number of which have come down to our times under the name of Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases; which are nothing else than a free translation of the Hebrew into the Chaldee, with explanatory remarks. The oldest and best of the Targums, are those of Onkelos on the Law, and Jonathan on the Prophets; the language of which

is purely Chaldaic, and approaches near to the style of Chaldee found in the book of Daniel and Esther. The language of the later Targums is impure, being much mixed with foreign words and idioms. No authentic history of the origin of these Paraphrases has reached us. They seem to have been altogether unknown to Origen and Jerome, the only persons among the fathers who understood Hebrew. From this, some learned men have argued, that they were written after the fourth century; but considering the style of the oldest of them, this opinion is destitute of all probability. It seems most reasonable to believe, that the Targums, at least those of Onkelos and Jonathan, were written in Babylonia, where a large number of Jews resided from the time of the captivity, until long after the Christian era. This supposition best accords with the style of these paraphrases, and accounts for the ignorance of the fathers, above mentioned, in relation to them. As to the age in which they were written, nothing can be said with certainty. They are commonly referred to the first century, or a period somewhat earlier; but this is matter of mere conjecture. They may have been written long before the Christian era; but however this may be, they probably contain the old hereditary comment of the Jews who lived before the time of Christ, and are therefore of great importance in controversies with the modern Jews.

53. About this time also, it is probable, commenced the synagogues of the Jews, of which we read so much in the New Testament, and which to this day, form so conspicuous a part of the religious institutions of the Jews. As the custom of reading a portion of the Law every Sabbath now took place, it would soon be found convenient to have houses set apart, every where, for this purpose. In the public reading of the Law it was the custom to go over the whole of the books of Moses, in the course of the year, which led to a division of the Pentateuch, into sections or lessons; which division is still found in all Hebrew Bibles. The reading of the prophets in the synagogue was not customary until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the Jews being forbidden any longer to read the Law, introduced the reading of certain select portions from the prophets, which was continued after the reading of the Law was resumed.

54. In the latter part of the administration of Ezra, great distress and confusion, arose from the transgression of the people, in taking strange wives who were not of Jewish extraction.

Many of the priests and leaders of the people were involved in this great guilt. Ezra was deeply afflicted on this account, and wept bitterly for the sins of the people, casting himself prostrate on the ground. He also assembled around him all who trembled at the word of the Lord; and with them he prayed, and lamented, and fasted, "because of the transgression of them that had been carried away." At length, proclamation was made by authority, that all who would not, within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, come and put away their strange wives, should be punished with the forfeiture of their substance, and should, moreover, be themselves separated from the congregation of the Lord. This severity had the desired effect, for the people being generally assembled at Jerusalem, and being solemnly and tenderly warned by Ezra, made public confession of their sin, and agreed to put away their strange wives. And for a warning to future ages, the principal persons who were guilty in this affair, were recorded by name. (See Ezra 10:1-44)

CHAPTER III("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \ "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews, from the arrival of Nehemiah, to the invasion of Asia by Alexander the Great

55. In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Nehemiah, the cupbearer of the king, obtained permission to visit Jerusalem, and bringing a commission from the king, to act with plenary authority as governor, he of course superseded Ezra, and took the supreme direction of all affairs into his own hands. Nehemiah was a man of uncommon piety; and, immediately, on his arrival, devoted himself to the business of repairing, or rather rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and setting up the gates, for which work he had obtained an express commission from the king. That which stirred up the heart of this good man, was the reports brought to him of the desolate condition of the holy city, and the deep affliction of the people, there.

56. It is altogether probable, that his petition to the king, was rendered successful, in a great measure, by queen Esther; for it is particularly mentioned, that the queen was sitting by the king. (Nehemiah 2:6.) A royal decree was issued for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem; and the king to give honor as well as safety to the mission of his favorite courtier, sent with him a guard of horse. Still, however, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Samaritans, continued, to cast obstructions in the way of the execution of this work. Not only were they influenced by their old hatred of the Jews, but during the captivity they had seized on their vacant lands, which they were now required to relinquish. But Nehemiah, in spite of all opposition, pushed on the work, distributing to particular persons and companies, the several parts of the wall; so that, in fifty-two days after the commencement of the work, the wall was finished.

Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, were the men who continually endeavored to obstruct the work in which Nehemiah was engaged. They laid many snares for his life, which by his courage and wisdom he was enabled to escape. During part of the time, however, the people were obliged to work on the wall with their weapons in their hands; and as they were far separated from each other, on different parts of the wall, the Tirshatha or governor, gave orders, that in case of attack, the trumpet should sound, and all hands should immediately resort to him. After the walls were finished and the gates set up, a public dedication was celebrated with great solemnity, by the priests, Levites, and all the people.

57. The people having much public work to perform, and many of them being poor, were under the necessity of borrowing money, of which necessity avaricious usurers took advantage, by lending out their money at exorbitant interest; by which means, multitudes were ruined in their circumstances, and were forced to mortgage their lands, and sell their children for bondmen, to obtain bread for their subsistence.

Nehemiah was much displeased, upon hearing of this iniquity, so contrary to the Jewish law. He, therefore, set himself with energy to correct the abuse. After expostulating with the transgressors, he had a decree enacted in a full assembly of the people, that all money exacted for usury should be returned; and that all mortgaged lands should be restored, and thus the yoke of oppression was broken off from the necks of the poor.

58. Nehemiah having spent twelve years at Jerusalem, prepared to return to the Persian court, for he had received permission to be absent only for a limited time. Having arranged affairs as well as he could, and appointed Hanani and Hananiah to be governors of Jerusalem, he returned to Persia. This fact is not stated in the sacred text, but it may be inferred from the appointment of the aforementioned persons as governors, which could not have been necessary, had he continued there.

59. His object in returning to Persia, was not to remain there, but to obtain a new commission from the king, to carry on the reformation of the Jewish church and state.

It seems probable, that he was not absent much more than one year, after which, he came back to Jerusalem, and continued his pious and useful labors, by establishing a strict and regular police in the city. But observing that the number of inhabitants was still too small to occupy the place, he invited the rulers and great men of the nation, to build houses in Jerusalem, and dwell there; and also caused every tenth man of the tribes to be taken by lot, whom he compelled to make this the place of their residence. Every thing being now well regulated, and the city well supplied with inhabitants, it arose rapidly to a state of prosperity; so that Herodotus, the historian, who visited it not long after this time, compares it to Sardis, the Metropolis of Asia Minor.

60. Nehemiah now addressed himself to the work of having the genealogies of the people, and especially of the priests correctly made out; which was necessary, not only for the regulation of the landed property of the nation, but also for the service of the temple; so that no person not of the sacerdotal race might be permitted to officiate there. He, therefore, searched for the genealogies of those who first returned from captivity, under Joshua and Zerubbabel, and from these he formed new tables, by striking out such families as had become extinct, and inserting the names of those who had returned since that time. This will account for the discrepance, between the genealogies recorded in the book of Ezra, and in that of Nehemiah.

61. Although after the arrival of Nehemiah, at Jerusalem, the government devolved upon him; yet Ezra continued his Biblical labors; and by the time that Nehemiah made his second visit, he had copies of the Scriptures corrected and prepared, and began the public reading of them at the feast of Trumpets. This occurred on the first day of Tisri, which had always been reckoned the first month of the year, until the time when the Israelites left Egypt, after which they were directed to commence their year with the month Nisan. Still, however, for all merely civil matters, Tisri was reckoned the beginning of the year. At this festival, the people being assembled from all parts at Jerusalem, Ezra was requested to bring out the law and read it. A pulpit, or scaffold of wood, was erected, that he might be elevated above the people, and that there might be room, this pulpit was set up in the widest street of the city. And so intent were the people on hearing, that they assembled for the same purpose, the next day; and although, there fell a hard rain during the time, they remained in their place. When Ezra had read as far as to Leviticus 23:1-44, it was found, that the law of God required the people to make booths of the branches of trees, and for seven days to celebrate a feast. Upon the hearing of which, they determined, that when the appointed day arrived, (the fifteenth of Tisri,) they would literally comply with the requisitions of the law; which, accordingly they did, and celebrated this feast with a solemnity, exceeding any thing which had been witnessed since the days of Joshua. At this festival, also, Ezra took advantage of the collection of all the people, and went on with the reading and expounding of the law, which had been commenced at the feast of Trumpets; and, during the whole seven days, he read to the people out of the law. The people, on hearing the precepts and commandments of the Lord, were greatly troubled on account of their transgressions, which they now found were very numerous.

Ezra and Nehemiah, to improve the present convictions and penitent feelings of the people, proclaimed a fast, immediately, after the feast was over. At this time they engaged the people to enter into solemn covenant with God; obliging themselves, 1st. Not to intermarry with the Heathen.

2. To observe the Sabbath, and the Sabbatical years. 3. To pay their annual tribute for the support of the temple. The conviction which the people now felt, that their transgressions were very much owing to their ignorance of the law, was the occasion of that frequent reading of it, which eventually led to the building of synagogues, wherever a sufficient number of Jews were settled to bear the expense, and conduct the worship.

62. Artaxerxes died 424 B. C. after a reign of forty-one years and a few months, and was succeeded by Xerxes, the only son that he had by his queen. By his concubines he had seventeen sons, among whom were Sogdianus, Ochus, and Arsites.

Xerxes having made himself drunk at a public feast, and having retired to his chamber, Sogdianus taking advantage of it, went in and slew him, when he had sat but forty-five days on the throne. The mother of Xerxes died on the same day.

63. Sogdianus having rendered himself odious to the people, by the murder of his brother, and also by that of one of his father's most faithful eunuchs, found himself very unsafe on the throne, which he had obtained so unrighteously; whereupon, he grew very jealous of his brothers, and especially of Ochus, whom he sent for to come to him. But Ochus apprehending some mischief, drew together a large army, and marched against him, professing that it was his purpose to avenge the death of his brother. Upon which, many of the nobility revolted from Sogdianus, and went over to Ochus, and having put the royal diadem on his head declared him king.

Sogdianus finding himself abandoned, entered into negociation with Ochus, who, having got him into his hands, put him to death, by throwing him into a furnace of ashes.

64. As soon as Ochus had possession of the throne, he changed his name to Darius. Among the Greek historians, he is known by the name of Darius Nothus. He, for a while, yielded himself up to the direction of his eunuchs, and his wife. He ascended the throne 423 B. C. His brother Arsites revolted against him; but was unsuccessful, and being taken, was, like Sogdianus thrown into a furnace of ashes;—a cruel death in use among the Persians, in which the person died of suffocation, very gradually. Another insurgent, named Pysuthnes, was executed in the same manner. About the year 410 B. C., the Egyptians threw off the Persian yoke, and made one Amyrtaeus king. With the aid of the Arabians, they expelled the Persians from Egypt, pursued them as far as Phenicia, and maintained their independence, sixty-four years.

Ochus or Darius, sent another army into Egypt, which, marching through Judea, inflicted many evils on the Jews.

65. Eliashib, who was high priest when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, died, 413 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Joiada. He had continued in the office of high priest, for no less than forty years.

66. About his time, Diagoras the Melian, who had settled himself at Athens, was condemned for teaching atheism; and though he made his escape, the sentence was pronounced on him, while absent, and a talent offered to whomsoever should kill him, wherever he might be found

About twenty years before this time, the Athenians had proceeded against another philosopher, called Protagoras, for only expressing a doubt concerning the existence of God.

67. According to Dr. Prideaux, the first of the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel, ended with the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus; for then the restoration of the Jewish state, and the worship of the temple was completed. The last act of Nehemiah, which is recorded, (Nehemiah 1:1-31,) was just forty-nine years after the work had been begun by Ezra, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. This last act was the separation of those from their heathen wives, who had transgressed the law in regard to marriage, and the prohibition of all such alliances forever after. But it seems to have been impossible to prevent the continual repetition of this evil, and that by men in the highest stations; for Manasseh, as he is called by Josephus, the son of Joiada, married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, and when Nehemiah was using his utmost power to enforce the law, and cause the people to put away their strange wives, Manasseh rather than comply, left the nation; and relinquishing all his prospects of distinction, he took up his abode with his father-in-law, the governor of Samaria.

68. This event gave rise to an important transaction, which perpetuated the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Sanballat obtained leave from Darius Nothus, to build on mount Gerizim, at Samaria, a temple, in imitation of the temple at Jerusalem, of which he made his son-in-law, Manasseh, the high priest.

Josephus places this event much lower down in another reign, but he has probably fallen into a chronological mistake.

Samaria having now a rival house of worship, became the asylum of all renegado Jews. This ready reception of rebellious, and excommunicated persons, produced a bitterness of hatred in the Jews against the Samaritans, which induced them to denounce against them an awful curse; and reject them from every sort of friendly intercourse; and even prevented their exercising towards them the common rites of humanity, of which there is sufficient evidence in the Gospels, as has been said before. The Jews went so far in their anathemas against the Samaritans, that they excluded them from all part in the resurrection, and would on no account receive them as proselytes.

69. After their temple was built, the Samaritans pretended that this was the mountain which God had chosen for his place of worship. They asserted, that here Abraham and Jacob offered sacrifices and built altars; and that Joshua, when he brought the people into Canaan, caused the blessings to be pronounced from this mountain, and on it built an altar of the twelve stones taken out of Jordan; and that very altar, they averred, was the one on which they sacrificed. But in regard to this they were guilty of a sacrilegious impiety, in changing the sacred text in their copies; for, in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is said, that Ebal was the mount, on which the altar was built, for which the Samaritans substituted, Gerizim. This corruption, the Jews loudly charge upon them; but they with equal violence retort it upon the Jews; insisting, that they are the corruptors of the Sacred Text; and bring for argument, that Gerizim being the mount appointed for the pronouncement of the blessings, was a fit place for the altar, but not Ebal, from which the curses were pronounced. But all other copies of the Pentateuch, and all versions are against them. They have also added, in Exodus 20:1-26, after the tenth commandment, a command to erect an altar, in Gerizim.

70. These two mountains are in the tribe of Ephraim. In the valley between them is, Shechem, now called Naplous. This place the Jews by way of reproach called Sichar, which means, drunken. Near this was the field which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and Jacob's well, where our Saviour

asked water of the Samaritan woman.

71. The opinion is entertained by some, that Nehemiah did not return to Jerusalem until towards the close of the reign of Darius Nothus, when he was growing old. Josephus relates that he lived to a very advanced age; and this opinion, which brings down the second administration of Nehemiah to a much later period than the date commonly assigned, will accord with the facts recorded in Nehemiah 13:1-31; for, it can scarcely be conceived, that so great abuses could have crept in, during one year: such as, the profanation of the temple; the violation of the Sabbath; the neglect of sending in the tythes and prescribed offerings; and various abuses, in the official duties of the priests. All that the Scriptures say, in regard to the absence of Nehemiah, is, "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem; for in the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and after certain days, obtained I leave of the king; and I came to Jerusalem," &c. The expression, "after certain days," literally is, at the end of days; a phrase which, according to the idiom of Scripture, may signify a longer or shorter time.

Jahn, who adopts the above opinion, supposes, that the second administration of Nehemiah was contemporaneous with the events referred to in the book of Malachi, where the desolations of Edom or Idumea are spoken of, which he thinks were occasioned by the perpetual wars carried on, during this period, between the Persians and Egyptians; whose armies often marched through this land, and laid it waste. It is expressly asserted that Joiada was high priest during the last administration of Nehemiah, (Nehemiah 13:1-31,) and the Alexandrian chronicon, places the death of Eliashib, the father of Joiada, in the eleventh of Darius Nothus, which answers to the 412 B. C. The second arrival of Nehemiah must, therefore, be placed much later, and is by Dr. Prideaux referred to the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus; but even this date is, probably, too early.

72. We have now arrived at a period where we can derive no further aid from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for Nehemiah 13:1-31, contains the latest history found in the sacred record; and the prophecy of Malachi closes the canon of the Old Testament, which, as was observed, refers to the same state of things as is referred to in the closing chapter of Nehemiah. There is, it is true, in Nehemiah 12:1-47, an extension of the genealogy of the high priests, for a long time after this, even to Jaddua, who was in office when Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem; but, undoubtedly, the high priests who came after Joiada, were added by some one, after the canon was closed; most probably, by Simon the Just.

73. How long Nehemiah lived, is nowhere said, but he must have been about seventy years of age, at the time when the facts occurred, which are last recorded in his book. After him, the king of Persia appointed no one to be governor of Judea, but seems to have annexed this country to the province of Syria.

74. Darius Nothus continued to have wars with the Egyptians, until they were subdued; and also with Mades, who had revolted, and whom he brought under a heavier yoke than before.

75. His policy towards the Lacedemonians and Athenians, in the Peloponesian war, was, to leave them to waste, and destroy each other; occasionally directing his generals to assist the weaker party, so that the war might be the more prolonged. The general who was intrusted with the management of this delicate and difficult business, was Tissaphernes, a man of great talents.

76. In the seventeenth year of his reign, (407 B. C.,) the king sent his younger son Cyrus, to be commander-in-chief of all the provinces of Asia Minor. Cyrus must have been, at this time, a very young man, scarcely above sixteen years of age. On receiving his commission, he was directed by his father, contrary to the policy pursued by Tissaphernes, to help the Lacedemonians. The impolicy of this course was soon manifest, for the Lacedemonians, by the aid of the Persians, soon became completely victorious over the Athenians; and being, thenceforward, released from this troublesome war, they turned their forces against the Persians themselves, and actually sent several armies to invade the country; one of which was commanded by the famous Agesilaus.

77. Cyrus gave great offence to his father, while he resided at Sardis, by putting to death two of his own cousins, sons of a sister of Darius, for no other reason, than because they, upon meeting him, did not wrap up their hands in their sleeves, as was customary on meeting with the king. An order was therefore sent for the recall of Cyrus, by his father; but assigning as the reason, that he was sick.

78. Cyrus, before he set out on his return, had sent to Lysander, the Lacedemonian general, subsidies, which enabled him to put his fleet into such a condition as to gain over the Athenians that decisive victory at the Goats' river, on the Hellespont, which put an end to the Peloponnesian war.

79. Soon after the return of Cyrus, Darius Nothus died, after a reign of nineteen years. By the interposition of his mother, Cyrus was reconciled to his father; and, not contented with this, she entreated to have her favorite made king, on the same principle as Xerxes was, because he was the first born after the accession of his father. Darius, however, would not yield this point, but gave the crown to Arsaces, the eldest son of Parysatis the queen, who, on ascending the throne, took the name of Artaxerxes, and to whom the Greeks gave the name of Mnemon, on account of his extraordinary memory.

80. It is said, that when the father was near his end, this son, appointed his successor, asked him to inform him, by what art he had been able to manage the government, so prosperously. To which he is reported to have made the following memorable reply. "By doing, in all things, that which was just towards God and man."

81. Cyrus, being disappointed in his ambitious views, of ascending the throne quietly, as soon as his father was out of the way, began to plot against the life of his brother; which, being discovered, he was taken into custody, and condemned to die; but his mother, again interposing in his behalf, prevailed on the king to send him back to the government of Asia Minor, which had been left to him by his father's will.

82. But no sooner did this ambitious young man find himself at liberty, and invested with authority again, than he began, on various pretences, to raise an army; and the cities under the government of Tissaphernes revolting from him, joined themselves to Cyrus, which occasioned a war between them. This served as a pretext for what Cyrus now did, in collecting forces; as Artaxerxes supposed, that the only object was to oppose Tissaphernes; and to blind the king yet more, he wrote letters to him, complaining bitterly of the conduct of Tissaphernes, and entreating him to grant him aid against him. He now applied to the Lacedemonians, who were under great obligations to him, for the subsidies afforded them for the aid of their fleet, which they readily

granted. All this time, Artaxerxes seems to have had no suspicion of the true designs of Cyrus.

83. When he had raised and mustered his forces, he threw off the mask, and marched his army directly against his brother. It consisted of thirteen thousand Greeks, who were the flower of his army, and about a hundred thousand besides, drawn together from all parts, under the command of Clearchus.

84. With this force, Cyrus marched forward without meeting with much opposition, until he came to the plains of Cunaxa, in the province of Babylon, where Artaxerxes met him, with an army of nine hundred thousand men, and a decisive battle was fought, in which Cyrus was slain, at the very moment when his auxiliary Greeks were on the point of gaining a great victory.

85. These Grecian troops, of whom about ten thousand remained, were now left in a most embarrassing situation, in the midst of the Persian empire, in the presence of a vast hostile army, and with a long distance between them and home; the inhabitants of the intervening countries, being all inimical to the Greeks. But by valor and consummate generalship, they succeeded in reaching one of the Grecian cities, on the Euxine sea, after a march of two thousand three hundred and twenty-five miles. This is the most famous retreat of which we have any account in history, and of which, Xenophon, who was their leader, has given us so lively and interesting a description, in his work, entitled *Anabasis*.

86. The death of Cyrus, and the retreat of the Ten thousand, occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, (401 B. C.,) being the very year in which Socrates was put to death, at Athens.

87. The reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon was long, extending to forty-six years; that is, from the year 404 to 358 B. C. He carried on wars with the Lacedemonians, Egyptians, Cadusians, &c., but no great success attended his arms.

88. Shortly before his decease, he appointed his son Darius his successor, but on discovering that he was engaged in a plot against his life, he had him executed. The second son by the queen destroyed himself by poison. The succession to the crown, then fell to Ochus, in the year 358 B. C. He assumed also the name Artaxerxes, which seems to have been among the Persian kings, what Pharaoh was with the Egyptians; but in history, this monarch is known by his own proper name of Ochus.

89. During the greater part of the long reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, the Jews enjoyed peace; except when the Persian armies marched along the coast of the Mediterranean, into Egypt. On one occasion, there were assembled on their borders, no less than two hundred thousand barbarian soldiers, and twenty thousand Greeks, together with a vast fleet, which rendezvoused at Acre.

90. The high priest Joiada died in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and was succeeded by his son Jonathan or Johanan or John, who held the office for thirty-two years, and was the occasion of much trouble to his country.

91. The brother of the high priest Johanan, whose name was Joshua, having ingratiated himself into the favor of Bagoses governor of Syria, through his agency and influence obtained a royal order, that he should be made high priest, instead of his brother. Johanan not yielding to this, a

contest took place between the two brothers, within the temple, when Joshua was rashly murdered by Johanan. Bagoses, on hearing of this outrage, came to Jerusalem to examine into the affair, and demanded to be admitted into the temple, where the murder was committed; and when this was refused, on account of the sanctity of the place, he answered with indignation, "What! am not I as pure as the dead carcass which lies in your temple," and immediately forced his way into the interior, where Joshua had been slain. As a punishment for the murder of Joshua, he inflicted a fine of fifty drachms on every lamb which should be offered up in the temple. Some say the mulct was five hundred drachms, but this has arisen from a manifest mistake in the text of Josephus. This tax continued no longer than during the government of Bagoses, a space of about seven years.

92. Ochus, upon ascending the throne, was guilty of shocking cruelties towards his own relations. As soon as the death of Artaxerxes, and the accession of Ochus, were known in Asia Minor, all the provinces in that quarter revolted.

93. In the third year of his reign, (366 B. C.,—100th Olympiad, and 385 after the building of Rome,) Alexander, surnamed the Great, was born at Pella, in Macedonia, on the same day that Erostratus attempted to immortalize himself, by setting fire to the temple of Diana, at Ephesus.

94. About the fifth year of Ochus, died Mausolus, king of Caria; an event rendered famous in history by the extraordinary grief of his wife, Artemisia, who was also his sister. For having gathered together his ashes, and powdered his bones, she took a portion of them every day in her drink, till she had, in this manner, drank them all; thus making her own body the sepulchre of her deceased husband, and in two years pined away with grief. But before her death she erected for him that famous monument at Halicarnassus, which was reckoned among the seven wonders of the world, and from which all monuments of unusual splendor, are called, Mausoleums.

95. In the eighth year of the reign of Ochus, the Sidonians and Phenicians revolted, and entered into a confederacy with Nectanebis, king of Egypt. He sent to their aid a large body of Grecian mercenaries, by whose assistance the Persians were driven entirely out of Phenicia. The Jews also seem to have taken part in this revolt of the Phenicians.

96. The Cyprians, too, encouraged by the success of the Phenicians, threw off the Persian yoke, and joined the confederacy.

97. Ochus, perceiving that his wars with the Egyptians had been badly managed by his generals, determined to go in person at the head of his army; and having collected three hundred thousand foot, and twenty thousand horse, marched into Phenicia. Mentor, who commanded the Grecian mercenaries, being terrified at the approach of so great an army, sent privately to Ochus, offering to deliver up the city of Sidon to him, and engaged Tennes, the king of Sidon, in the same treachery. Ochus was rejoiced at this proposal, and promised them their own terms. The Sidonians, to cut off all hope of escape from the inhabitants, that they might make a more desperate resistance, had purposely burned all their ships. When they found that they were betrayed, and that the enemy was within their walls, retired to their houses, and setting fire to them, perished in the flames, to the number of forty thousand; and among the rest, Tennes their king, whose treason did not save him. This was the commencement of the destruction of that ancient and famous city, predicted by the prophets in such glowing language. The Phenicians,

terrified with the overthrow of the Sidonians, submitted to the conqueror without a struggle.

98. Ochus, having subdued the Sidonians and Phenicians, marched into Judea, besieged and took Jericho, and carried many of the Jews into captivity, taking some with him into Egypt, and sending many others into Hyrcania. The latter were planted near the borders of the Caspian Sea, where some modern travellers think they have discovered their posterity, at this day. (See Morier's Travels.)

99. Not wishing to be diverted from Egypt, on which his attention was fixed, Ochus made peace with the Cyprians, by relieving them from some of the burdens of which they complained.

100. Ochus, arriving with his army in Egypt, besieged Pelusium, while a part of his fleet sailing up the river, encamped in an advantageous spot, and being attacked by the Grecian mercenaries in the service of the Egyptians, defended themselves, and slew a large number of the enemy. Upon which Pelusium capitulated, and Nectanebus fled to Memphis, his capitol; but on the approach of Ochus, he retired from Egypt into Ethiopia, thus abandoning his country, to which he never afterwards returned. He was the last native king who reigned in Egypt, for ever since, that devoted country has been in the hands of foreigners. By this a remarkable prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled.* Ezekiel 29:13-16.

101. Mentor the Rhodian, having been of great service in this war, Ochus rewarded him with a hundred talents, and made him governor of the provinces in Asia Minor, where he acted with great fidelity to the king, and brought over to him his two brothers, Memnon and Artabazus, who were also men of extraordinary talents, who had been engaged in the war against Ochus. These brothers were of the greatest service to the king's interest, by bringing back to their allegiance, many revolted provinces.

102. In the eleventh year of Ochus, (348 B. C.,) which answers to the 108th olympiad, died the celebrated Athenian philosopher, Plato. Among his scholars, Aristotle was by far the most eminent, the founder of the Peripatetic sect. This man was born at a small town on the river Strymon, called Stagira; on which account, he is often called the Stagirite. But the successor of Plato in the school, was Speusippus. Aristotle, after the death of his master, went into Asia, and lived with the king of Atarna, a city of Mysia, whose neice he married; but after the death of this person, he went to Mytilene, and from thence to Macedonia, and became preceptor to Alexander the Great, with whom he remained eight years. After this he returned to Athens and taught the Peripatetic philosophy, for twelve years, in the Lyceum. But being accused of teaching something contrary to the established religion of the State, and being unwilling to expose himself to the fate of Socrates, he retired to Chalcis, a town in Eubœa, where he died two years afterwards, in the sixty-third year of his age.

Josephus informs us, that Aristotle, while he resided with Hermias, in Mysia, became acquainted with a learned Jew, from the upper parts of Asia, who had come there on business. This fact, he says, he learned from a book written by Clearchus, one of Aristotle's principal scholars.

103. After Ochus had brought Egypt and all his other revolted provinces into subjection, he gave himself up entirely to ease and luxury, and took no more concern about the government of the empire, which he committed to Bagoas, his favorite eunuch, and Mentor the Rhodian.

104. In the eighteenth year of this reign, (341 B. C.,) died Johanan or John, the high priest of the Jews, after holding the office for thirty-two years. He was succeeded by his son Jaddua, who held it twenty years.

105. Ochus came to his end by means of poison, administered by his favorite eunuch Bagoas, (338 years B. C.,) after a reign of twenty-one years.

106. Bagoas, after the death of Ochus, having the whole power in his hands, raised Arses, the youngest of the kings sons to the throne, and then murdered all the rest; thinking to free himself from all control, by placing one upon the throne who was a king merel in name.

107. About this time, Philip, king of Macedon, having made himself master of all Greece, determined to carry on war against the Persians, by an invasion of their country. With this view, he called a general assembly of the States of Greece, at Corinth, where he caused himself to be chosen captain-general of the Grecian forces, and required every city to furnish a certain number of men. But while he was making these preparations, intending shortly to put himself at the head of his troops, he was slain, at the nuptials of his daughter Cleopatra with Alexander king of Epirus. The assassin was Pausanias, a young Macedonian, who having received great injury from one of the king's favorites, and obtaining no satisfaction from Philip, he watched his opportunity, and slew the king as he was passing in great pomp to the theatre. He was succeeded by his son Alexander; then only twenty years of age.

108. Bagoas, finding that Arses whom he had placed on the Persian throne, began to suspect his villainy, resolved to be beforehand with him, and accordingly destroyed him. After producing a vacancy in this iniquitous manner, he elevated to the throne Codomanus, who assumed the name of Darius, after he was made king. He was descended from Darius Nothus. As Ochus, on his accession to the throne, had killed nearly all the descendants of Darius Nothus, it is not certainly known how Codomanus escaped. The first appearance which he makes in history is, in the character of astanda, or courier, in the early part of the reign of Ochus. When this king was engaged in a war with the Cadusians, a champion of that nation challenged the whole Persian army, to send out a man to fight him, in single combat. When all declined this challenge, Codomanus accepted it, and killed his antagonist; as a reward for which, he was made governor of Armenia.

109. Bagoas, however, finding that Darius was not a man to suit his purpose, determined to put him out of the way, as he had done his predecessors; but the king being informed of his purpose to poison him with a certain potion, when it was brought, forced Bagoas to drink it himself; and thus the traitor fell by his own artifice. In regard to personal appearance, courage, and bodily strength, Darius had no superior in all his empire. He was also, it is said, of a mild and generous disposition; but it was his misfortune to have to contend with that irresistible conqueror, Alexander the Great.

CHAPTER IV("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews during the reign of Alexander the Great—the invasion of Asia by Alexander—the conquest of the Persian Empire—siege and capture of Tyre—Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, to punish the Jews—is met by Jaddua and the other priests in their pontifical robes—his strange behaviour, said to have been occasioned by a dream, which he had in Greece—his kind treatment of the Jews—conduct towards the Samaritans—death of

Darius—invasion of India—voyage of Nearchus—Capricious and violent character of Alexander—his death

110. Alexander, having been appointed successor to his father, as generalissimo of all the forces of Greece destined to go against Persia, after subduing all his enemies at home, set off for Persia, with no more than thirty thousand infantry and five thousand horse. Encountering the Persian army at the river Granicus, he totally defeated it, though five times more numerous than his own. His victory put him in possession, not only of all the treasures of Darius, in Sardis, but all the provinces of Asia Minor came over to him, or were subdued by force.

111. Before he went into winter quarters, he gave permission to all his newly married soldiers to return home, and spend the winter with their wives; which custom being found among no other but the Jews, it is probable that it was borrowed from them.

112. Darius finding his empire so seriously menaced, exerted himself to prepare for the approaching contest, and mustered six hundred thousand men, near Babylon. He also had recourse to policy, for knowing that the Grecian States, were not friendly to Alexander, he sent Memnon, the wisest of his generals, with a fleet, to the Grecian seas, where the Athenians and Lacedemonians would have been ready to join him; but after taking possession of a few islands, he died, and the scheme was not prosecuted.

113. Darius, contrary to the advice of some of the most experienced and skilful of his generals, who advised him to wait for Alexander, in the champaign country, marched to get possession of the straits, which led from Cilicia into Syria. In consequence of the unfavorableness of the ground, Darius was able to bring but a small part of his immense host into the field, at once; and the Macedonians soon broke the first lines of the Persian army, and drove them back on the second, and then on the third; and thus the whole was soon thrown into perfect confusion. Such was the press of the crowd, in the narrow defiles of the mountains, by which they were enclosed, that more perished that day, by being trodden to death by their own men, than were slain by the enemy.

114. It was with the greatest difficulty that Darius made his escape; but his camp and baggage, with his mother, wife, and children, fell into the hands of the enemy. This battle was fought at Issus, in Cilicia, towards the close of the year. The result of this victory was the conquest of all Syria, and its capital Damascus, whither Darius had sent his most precious treasures, with his concubines, and most of the ladies of his court. The governor of this town, as soon as he heard of the flight of Darius, delivered it up to Alexander, who sent Parmenio to take Possession.

115. Alexander now pursued his march through Phenicia, where all submitted to his arms, except the Tyrians; who refused him admittance into their city, depending on its insular and inaccessible situation. Alexander, naturally impetuous, and now flushed with victory; resolved, that cost what it might, he would take the place. The first thing he attempted, was to raise a bank, between the main land, and the island on which Tyre was now built; and by this means, after some delay he took the city. In making this causeway, he employed the rubbish of the old town, which had stood on the continent, before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Since the time of Alexander, the island has disappeared, or rather forms a part of the main land.

116. Among the captives taken at Damascus, there was one, who, by her extraordinary beauty, captivated the conqueror of the world. This was Barsena, the widow of Memnon, a famous Persian

general, of whom mention has already been made. Her, Alexander married, and by her had a son whom he named Hercules.

117. Tyre, being altogether devoted to commerce, was dependent on other countries for her supplies of grain; which were commonly obtained from Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Alexander, therefore, during the siege, was obliged to look to the same quarter, for supplies for his army, and ordered the inhabitants to furnish him with all necessaries. The Jews pleaded, that they were bound by an oath to Darius, and refused to obey Alexander's commands. This answer greatly provoked him, who, as soon as he had finished the siege of Tyre, marched his army directly towards Jerusalem, with the intention of punishing the Jews as severely as he had done the Tyrians, for not obeying his orders.

118. In this exigence, Jaddua the high priest, and others who had now the chief authority in Jerusalem, being in great perplexity, and all Jerusalem with them, had no other resource, but to throw themselves on the merciful protection of God. Accordingly, they earnestly sought his favor, by prayers, sacrifices, and oblations. In answer to which, it is reported by Josephus, that God appeared to Jaddua by night, in a dream, directing him to go forth to meet Alexander, dressed his pontifical robes, accompanied by all the priests in their sacerdotal habits, and all the people of Jerusalem, clothed in white garments. This divine admonition they obeyed, and marched in procession to an elevated spot, not far from Jerusalem, called Sapha, where they arranged themselves in solemn order, and waited for the coming of Alexander; who, when he saw them, was struck with a solemn awe, and bending down, saluted Jaddua, with profound and religious veneration. All his attendants were astonished at this conduct, and the enemies of the Jews in his train were greatly disappointed, for they expected nothing else but to see the Jews devoted to destruction.

119. Parmenio could not refrain from asking him the reason, why he, whom all adored, should pay such reverence to the Jewish high priest. He answered, that he did not worship the priest, but that God whom he served. For he said, that when he was at Dio in Macedonia, and was hesitating about undertaking this expedition, this very person had appeared to him in a dream, in the very same robes, in which he now appeared, and had encouraged him to pass boldly into Asia; promising him, that God would guide him during the whole expedition, and would make him master of the Persian empire.

120. Alexander then kindly embraced Jaddua, and entered Jerusalem with him in a friendly manner. Here Jaddua showed him the prophecies of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian prince; (see Daniel 8:1-27) This, it is said, inspired him with the utmost confidence of success; not doubting but that he was the person intended in the prophecy. All which disposed him to treat the Jews with great kindness, so that when they petitioned for the freedom of their country, laws, and religion, and exemption from tribute every seventh year, he readily granted them all their requests.

121. No sooner had he left Jerusalem, than the Samaritans met him with great pomp and parade, and begged that he would also visit their city and temple. Now the Samaritans had a strong ground for their plea, because when the Jews refused to send supplies to the army of Alexander, the Samaritans readily complied with his orders; and moreover, sent eight thousand men to assist him in the siege. Alexander answered them kindly, and told them that he was then hastening to Egypt,

but on his return, would consider their petition, and grant to them what they desired, as far as was consistent. They then requested freedom from tribute, every seventh year. Upon which he asked them whether they were Jews, to which they answered they were Hebrews, who observed the same laws as the Jews; and neither sowed nor reaped, in the seventh year; and that as this immunity had been granted to the Jews, they hoped it would not be withheld from them. Alexander not being at leisure to make the necessary inquiries, deferred a decision, on this point also, to his return.

122. On coming to Gaza, he found it strongly garrisoned, under one of Darius's eunuch's, named Betis, a valiant and faithful man, who defended the city for his master as long as he could: as it was at the very entrance into the country claimed by Egypt, he could not pass, until he had taken it. But notwithstanding, all the force and art by which it was assailed, it detained Alexander two whole months. This delay, together with two dangerous wounds received during the siege, led him to treat the commander and inhabitants with inexcusable cruelty. He put to death ten thousand of them, and sent all the rest into slavery.

123. Alexander, now marched immediately to Egypt. When he arrived at Pelusium, the Egyptians flocked to meet him, as a deliverer; for such was their hatred to the Persians, that they were ready to welcome any other master. He was, therefore, received with open arms, and Egypt was possessed without a struggle. Even the Persian governor at Memphis, seeing that it was in vain to resist such a torrent, submitted to Alexander.

124. From Memphis, he projected a journey through the desert to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, situated in the sands of Lybia, at the distance of two hundred miles from Egypt. The famous temple erected here was probably in honor of Ham, the first settler of Egypt. Alexander's errand to this place was very foolish and vainglorious. It was no other, than to get himself acknowledged as the son of the god called Jupiter Hammon. In order to effect his purpose, he had sent before him messengers to bribe the priests, so that when he came, the oracle might declare what he vaingloriously and impiously wished.

125. On his way, his sagacious eye observed a spot near the coast, over against the island of Pharos, very suitable for a city. He immediately resolved that one should be built, which he intended to make the capital of his empire, and called it Alexandria, after his own name. According to the course of trade, in those days, no situation could be more eligible; for it has before it the Mediterranean, and behind it the Nile, with a short and easy communication with the Red sea. But the state of the world as to commerce, is now entirely changed, and at present, Alexandria is famous for nothing, but its ruins, the remains of its former grandeur.

126. Having laid out the city, he left the work in the hands of the famous architect, Democrates, the builder of the celebrated temple of Diana, at Ephesus; while he went on his projected journey, to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, where he received from the oracle the answer which he wished, that he was the son of the god worshipped in that temple. Upon which he returned in great triumph. In making this journey, his army ran great hazards in passing through the sands, for two hundred miles; where Cambyzes, as we have before mentioned, lost an army of forty or fifty thousand men. In one instance, he was preserved from death, by a seasonable, but almost miraculous shower of rain.

127. On his return, he collected inhabitants from all quarters to people his new city, and among the rest, invited many Jews to settle there, offering them the free exercise of their own laws and religion; and even granting them, the same privileges as were conferred on the Macedonians, themselves.

Varro relates, that about the time of building Alexandria, the use of the papyrus, as a material for writing on, was discovered.

128. While Alexander was gone to Egypt, he left as governor of Syria and Palestine, a special favorite, whose name was Andromachus, who had his residence at Samaria. The Samaritans, it would seem, chagrined at not receiving equal privileges with the Jews, or on some other ground, set fire to the house of the governor, who was consumed in the flames. At this, Alexander was exceedingly exasperated, and on his return, put to death all who had taken any part in this affair; drove the rest out of the city, replaced them with Macedonians, and gave their land to the Jews. Those who escaped, went and settled at Sichem, under Mount Gerizzen, which has been ever since the principal residence of the Samaritans.

129. Darius, having several times in vain solicited peace from Alexander, at last determined to make a mighty effort, and collecting a vast army, marched towards Ninevah, where he was pursued by Alexander, and overtaken at an inconsiderable village called Guagimola, where a great battle was fought, and Darius' army entirely defeated, though it was twenty times as numerous as that of Alexander; and where he had all the advantage of an extensive plain, to bring his whole force into active operation. This battle is usually named, not from the obscure village where it was fought, but from the city of Arbela, which was at no great distance.

130. Any one may see in these events, how remarkably the prophecies of Daniel were fulfilled, which relate to "the ram and the he-goat," and which were interpreted to mean the kings of Persia and of Grecia. (See Daniel 7:6, Daniel 8:5-7, Daniel 8:20-21.) Darius now fled to Media. Alexander pursued him as far as Arbela, where he took all his treasure and royal equipage, which was of very great value. Alexander then turned his course to Babylon, which city was given up to him at once by the governor.

131. Alexander now gave himself up to feasting and every species of dissipation. When inflamed with wine, he often acted like a perfect madman, as an example of which we may mention, that, one night to gratify the caprice of a famous Athenian courtesan, he, and all his companions, seizing torches, set fire to Persepolis, and burnt it to the ground.

132. Hearing that Darius was collecting another army, in Media, Alexander pursued after him; and on his arrival, finding that he had fled to Parthia, he continued his pursuit. This unfortunate monarch, being thus driven from country to country, and subjected to great privations and sufferings, grew desperate, and refused to proceed further. Upon which his attendants inflicted several mortal wounds on him, and left him; in which situation he was found by one of Alexander's generals; but breathed his last before Alexander himself arrived. When he saw the dead body of so great a prince, thus forsaken and mangled, the conqueror wept, and throwing his cloak over it, commanded that it should be conveyed to Susa, and be honored by a royal burial.

133. Thus ended the Persian empire, after it had endured from the first year of Cyrus, two hundred and nine years.

134. The enterprize of conquering India was another example of the excessive vain glory of this prince. Having read in the fabulous histories of Greece, of the heroic exploits of Hercules and Bacchus, in the invasion of this remote country, he was ambitious of equalling them, as he now gave himself out to be the son of Jupiter, and began to require divine honors to be paid to him. One of his worst actions was the putting Callisthenes, the philosopher, to death, because he remonstrated against this foolish expedition. About the same time, also, he put Clitus to death with his own hand.

135. When Alexander crossed the river Indus, he gave orders to build ships, with the view of sending them down the river, and along the coast, until they should reach Persia. This fleet was committed to Nearchus, who coasted along the southern shores of Asia, until he reached the gulph of Ormus, in Persia, much about the same time that Alexander arrived in those parts, in his dreary march by land, through the barren sands of the southern parts of Persia. In this march, which was also in imitation of Hercules and Bacchus, he lost more than half his men.

136. After his return, he married the eldest daughter of Darius, and gave the youngest to Hephestion his chief favorite; and most of his leading generals were married, at the same time, to noble Persian ladies.

137. The mind of Alexander was capable of the most enlarged and comprehensive views, and he was full of grand projects, which few others would have conceived. One of these was the circumnavigation of Africa; another, the restoration of Babylon, which had suffered greatly, from the time that Cyrus removed the mounds which restrained the waters of the Euphrates in their channel. A third was a survey of the Caspian sea. But when unoccupied with his wars, he gave himself up to luxury, especially to hard drinking, in which he would often spend whole days and nights; until, at length, he brought on a fever by his excesses which in a few days, put an end to his life, at Babylon.

138. The death of Alexander occurred, in the first year of the 146th olympiad, (323 B. C.) As is very common, in regard to the end of great princes, his death was attributed to poison, and this report was not only current, but fully believed among the Macedonians: and to give plausibility to the story, a great many particular circumstances, as to the manner in which the poison was concealed and administered, were circulated.

139. After the death of Alexander, great confusion ensued, about the succession. But eventually the supreme authority was divided among his four principal generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. Cassander had for his allotment, Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus, Thrace, and those parts of Asia which lay along the Hellespont and Bosphorus; Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, and Syria; and Seleucus all the rest.

Thus the prophecy of Daniel (Daniel 7:1-28, Daniel 8:1-27) respecting the breaking of the horn of "the he-goat," was most exactly and wonderfully verified. The words of the prophet are, "Therefore the he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones," taken in connexion with the interpretation, given to Daniel, by the angel. "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn between his eyes, is the first king. Now, that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not

in his power.” The same events are predicted in Daniel 7:5-6, under a different prophetic emblem. “After that I beheld, and lo, another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.”

CHAPTER V("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews, during the time of the immediate successors of Alexander the Great, to the death of Onias the high priest

140. Incessant wars were carried on between these generals, to give an account of which, is not consistent with our plan, except so far as they are connected with the fortunes of the Jewish people.

141. Perdiccas, who was left in Babylon, and to whom was committed the guardianship of the young kings, the half brother and the infant son of Alexander, was a man of great ambition, and very soon began to meditate important conquests. He first invaded Egypt, and then waged war against Ptolemy; but Ptolemy, having governed in Egypt with great wisdom and moderation, was beloved by the people, and even the Grecian soldiers, in the army of Perdiccas, were so unwilling to fight against him, that they revolted from their leader and put him to death, after which event all the Macedonians, who invaded Egypt, came over to the side of Ptolemy. This prince, now observing how convenient it would be for him to regain the possession of Phenicia and India, resolved to make himself master of these provinces, which having been assigned to Laomedon the Mitylenian, one of Alexander's captains, in the original division, and confirmed to him in the second partition made by Antipater, had remained in his undisturbed possession, from the death of Alexander until this time. Ptolemy at first attempted to purchase them, and offered large sums for this purpose; but failing in these measures, he had recourse to war, and, sent Nicanor with a fleet, into Syria, while he invaded Phenicia.

142. But while all the country beside yielded to her power, the Jews alone refused to submit, and, for some time, stood out against him. Upon which, Ptolemy marched out against Judea, and besieged Jerusalem. The reason of their opposition was, a conscientious regard to the oath which they had taken to Laomedon. Jerusalem being by nature strong, and being also well fortified, might have resisted long, had not Ptolemy taken advantage of their too strict observance of their Sabbath, and chosen that day for a general assault. The place fell into his hands, because none of the Jews would, on the Sabbath, defend their walls against him. Josephus, indeed, gives a different account of this transaction, but he was probably induced to conceal the truth, for fear of the ridicule of the Greeks. And we know, that until the time of Matthias, the Jews did consider it wrong to fight upon the Sabbath.

143. When Ptolemy got possession of Jerusalem and Judea, he carried away one hundred thousand of the Jews to Egypt; but observing how faithful they were to those whom they served, he chose out thirty thousand of them, to govern those towns which it was most important to preserve. And having recently added Lybia and Cyrene to his dominions, he sent many of them to occupy that country. This was the origin of the Jewish colony, who long resided there, and who were numerous in the time of our Saviour, and long afterwards.

144. Although the real power of the empire had been usurped by Alexander's generals, yet there was an agreement among them, that Aridæus, his half brother, should have the title of king, and

Alexander, the son of the conqueror by his wife Roxana, who was born after his father's death, was also joined with the former, in the title of king, and many wars carried on by those in actual power, were professedly in the name of their kings; the first of whom was an idiot, and the other an infant.

About this time Aridæus, the king, having been carried into Macedonia, was there seized by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, and put to death. After this, the infant Alexander only, had the title of king; but almost all the time that he bore it he was a prisoner, and it was not long before he also was put to death.

145. In the year 312 B. C., Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, having seized on Babylon, speedily and unexpectedly arose to great power; for by his clemency, justice, and wisdom, he so conciliated the affections of those under his authority, that from being the exact obscure, he became the greatest of Alexander's immediate successors. His name is introduced here, on account of a famous chronological era, called Seleucidæ, or the era of contracts, which was made use of all over the East, by Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. The Jews gave it the name of the era of contracts, because while under the Syro—Macedonian kings, they were found to use it in all their contracts; and it grew so much into use, that for a thousand years after Christ, they knew no other method of computing their time. In the eleventh century, they were driven from the East, and settled in Spain and in other countries, in the West of Europe. The commencement of this era corresponds with 953 of the Julian period. The Arabs call it Tarikh Dhilkarnain, the era of the two-horned, by which they mean Alexander; whose coins were often impressed with a figure of two horns. In the books of the Maccabees, this era is called the era of the kingdom of the Greeks. It corresponds with the year 312 B. C.

146. During the incessant struggles which agitated the empire, Judea had passed out of the hands of Ptolemy into those of Antigonus, whose power in the East had become enormous. Ptolemy, however, again made himself master of the country, and sent his general to seize upon Upper Syria; but the sons of Antigonus defeated him. Upon which Antigonus joined his sons, and they marched against Ptolemy, who not being able to stand his ground withdrew to Egypt, and all these countries fell again under the power of Antigonus. But many of the inhabitants of these regions were so much better pleased with his government, than that of Antigonus, that they followed him into Egypt; and among the rest a great many Jews, which still increased the number of this people there. In Alexandria, which Ptolemy wished to make the capital of all Egypt, they had a particular quarter of the city assigned to them, when it was first built, the inhabitants of which now increased to many thousand families.

147. Among those who went with Ptolemy, to Egypt, on this occasion, was a man eminent for his wisdom and virtues, by the name of Hezekias, of the sacerdotal race. Hecatæus, the historian, who accompanied Ptolemy on this expedition, makes particular mention of him, as a man not only of great prudence, but of great eloquence. He, moreover, says, that from him he learned the religion, policy, and manners of the Jews, which, he observed, Hezekias had with him, written in a book. This, doubtless, was no other than the Law of Moses. And from his acquaintance with this person, no doubt, it was, that he entertained so favorable an opinion of the Jews and their religion.

148. This Hecataëus composed a history of the Jews, from Abraham down to his own time; the materials for which, he probably derived from Hezekias. This led a heathen writer, in the time of Trajan, as Origen informs us, to doubt whether Hecataëus ever wrote the history; for he supposed, either that it was written by some Jew, under the name of Hecataëus, or that if he was the true author, he must have been converted to the Jewish religion.

149. Hecataëus was a native of Abdera, a Grecian city of Thrace, memorable as the birth place of several other great men. He was brought up with Alexander, followed him in all his wars, and lived with him in Egypt, where he became acquainted with the history, religion, and customs of the Jews. The book is no longer extant, but Josephus gives several extracts from it, in his first book against Apion. This man must not be confounded with another historian, by the same name, who lived in the time of Darius Hystaspis.

150. Josephus informs us of another Jew, who, about this time, followed Ptolemy, and enlisted in his cavalry. His name was Mosollam. And from Hecataëus he gives us the following anecdote of him. "As I was travelling towards the Red Sea, there was a certain man in company, called Mosollam, who excelled all the Greeks and barbarians of his time, in archery. While several of us were travelling on together, a certain soothsayer undertook to foretell the fortunes of our journey. He bade us all stand still; on which the Jew asked why we stood. 'Look ye,' answered he, throwing him a bird. 'If that bird stands, ye are to stand. If he rises and flies, ye must go forward; but if he flies the contrary way, ye must all go back.' Upon which the Jew without speaking a word lets fly an arrow and kills the bird: at which the diviner and some others expressed great indignation. 'Are ye not all mad, said the Jew, to make so much ado about a foolish bird? How could that poor creature show us our fortune, who knows so little of his own?' "

151. The Arabs of the desert were, in those times, of the same character as now. They had their stations in the recesses of the wilderness, but their occupation was that of robbers. The Nabathean tribe had Petra for their chief residence. The Hebrews called it Selah, the Arabs Hagar, all which names signify, a rock. Antigonus sent an army against them under Athenæus, who came upon Petra, when the men were all out on a predatory expedition, and carried away the women and children; but the Arabs soon returning, pursued after him, and came upon him, in the dead of night, and slew all of them, except about fifty horsemen, and recovered all that had been taken from them.

152. Antigonus next sent Demetrius to take signal vengeance on these robbers; but they had early intelligence of it, and leaving a strong garrison in Petra, the rest of them took their wives, children, and friends, and buried themselves in the recesses of the wilderness. Demetrius finding it in vain to contend with such a people, offered them favorable terms of peace, and returned. In his return, it is mentioned, that after travelling thirty-six miles from Petra, he came to the lake Asphaltites, called also, the sea of Sodom, because Sodom once stood there; and, the Dead sea, because of the heavy, stagnant nature of its waters; and in the Scriptures, the Salt sea, on account of its great saltness. Demetrius, observing the vast quantities of bitumen formed here, suggested to Antigonus, the advantage which might result to his revenue, if he would send proper persons to gather it up. With this hint, Antigonus was pleased, and accordingly sent workmen to collect the bitumen; but when they had succeeded in getting it together, the Arabs, to the number of six thousand, fell upon them, and either slew or drove them away.

153. Antigonus, hearing of the rising power of Seleucus at Babylon, sent his son Demetrius to subdue that place; but although successful at first, he was ultimately baffled in his design, and Seleucus retained his power undiminished.

154. In this year, 318 B. C., a treaty of peace took place, between the contending powers; according to which, it was agreed, that Lysimachus should have Thrace; Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, and Arabia; Antigonus, all Asia. But this compact was of short duration. The increasing power of Antigonus filled the others with continual alarm, and they set about measures to curtail it, which brought on new wars.

155. The philosopher, Epicurus, began, this year, (312 B. C.,) to disseminate his pestiferous doctrine. He first taught at Mytelene, in the island of Lesbos, and afterwards, at Lampsacus, and the Hellespont; and finally, at Athens, of which city he was a native. Here he kept his school, in a garden, from the thirty-seventh to the sixty-third year of his age, when he died. The sum and substance of his doctrine, was, that all things exist and take place by chance. He did not deny the being of God, but held that he lived at his ease, having nothing to do either with the creation or government of the world. He taught that this world was man's all; and, therefore, he was wisest who sought and attained the greatest share of earthly pleasure; but, at the same, he taught, that this end was most certainly attained by a life of temperance and virtue.

156. While the power of Antigonus was rising so high in the west of Asia, that of Seleucus was extending itself still more rapidly beyond the Euphrates; so that it now reached the Indus, on the East, and he began to invade the territories of Antigonus, to the West. This brought on war again between these great powers. And while Antigonus was called to the defence of his dominions against Seleucus, Ptolemy thought it a good opportunity for recovering Syria and Palestine. This he soon accomplished, with the exception of Tyre and Sidon, which being well garrisoned, were able to hold out against him.

157. This return of Judea under the dominion of Ptolemy, occurred in the year 301 B. C. In this same year, the armies of Antigonus and Seleucus, came to a battle, in Phrygia, in which Antigonus, then above fourscore, was slain, and his army entirely defeated.

158. This was the period at which that fourfold dominion of Alexander's empire, mentioned before, (123) took place. The other competitors were now out of the way, the nominal kings, as well as almost all Alexander's kindred, being dead. Ptolemy now took undisputed possession of Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. Lysimachus took Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces along the Hellespont. Cassander, Macedon, and Greece; and Seleucus all the rest of Asia.

159. This division of the empire, into four great kingdoms, did not take place until about twenty-two years after the death of Alexander. These were the four horns of "the he-goat" which came up in the place of "the great horn;" the four heads of the leopard; and the four kingdoms, into which the kingdom of the mighty should be broken, and divided towards the four winds of heaven, who should not be of his posterity.

CHAPTER VI("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews, from the accession of Simon the Just—Megasthenes, historian of India—the building of Seleucia—destruction and desolation of Babylon, as predicted by Isaiah and

Jeremiah—the death of Simon

160. In the year 300 B. C., died Onias the high priest of the Jews. He was succeeded by his son Simon, surnamed the Just, on account of the holiness of his life, and the strict justice which marked all his actions. He was the first of that name who was invested with this office, and continued in it nine years. He is the last, according to the Jewish tradition, of the Great Synagogue, who, they say, assisted Ezra in preparing the sacred books, and settling the canon.

161. After the battle in which Antigonus was slain and his army defeated, Seleucus took possession of the greater part of Asia Minor, and gave himself up very much to the building of cities. Sixteen he called by the name of Antioch, in honor of his father and son, both of whom were named Antiochus. The principal of these was on the river Orontes, about seventy miles from its mouth, which became the most famous city in all the western part of Asia. There Christianity early took root, and flourished under the ministry of Paul, Barnabas and others. Here the disciples were first called Christians. In the early ages of Christianity it was a metropolitan city, and its bishop held rank with the first four in the world. This city continued to be famous, in the East, for sixteen hundred years.

162. In A. D. 1265, Antioch was taken from the Christians by the sultan of Egypt, soon after which it fell into decline, and since that time Aleppo has become the chief city in those regions; which, however, has itself been recently overthrown by an earthquake.

Another town by the name of Antioch, in Pisidia, is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.

163. About this time flourished Megasthenes, who wrote a history of India, some fragments of which are preserved by Josephus, and Eusebius. He is often quoted by Strabo, Athenæus, Arrian, Pliny, Cicero, and Solinus. In this work, mention was made of Nebuchadnezzar and the greatness of his power. But the book is not now extant.

164. In the year 293 B. C., Seleucus built Seleucia, on the Tigris, about forty miles from Babylon. It was situated on the West side of the river, opposite to the place where Bagdad now stands, and soon grew to be a very great city. Pliny tells us, it had six hundred thousand inhabitants. One reason of its rapid growth was, that Babylon becoming every year less habitable, on account of the inundation of the river, which turned its level grounds into a fen, the inhabitants were glad to seek a more commodious habitation. The Babylonians, therefore, flocked in great numbers to the new city. And, moreover, Seleucus having called it after his own name, gave it many privileges, above the other cities of the East.

165. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah respecting the utter desolation of this great city, have been most remarkably fulfilled, even to this day. Three hundred years before Christ, it began to be forsaken. Pliny says, that in his time it was exhausted of its inhabitants, and brought to desolation. Strabo says the same. Pausanias tells us, that Babylon, once the greatest city in the world, had, in his time, (second century,) nothing left but the walls. These remained long, for they served as a park for the Parthian kings, for the keeping of wild beasts for their hunting. And in this state it was in Jerome's time, in the fourth century, for he tells us, that "except the walls which were repaired for enclosing wild beasts, all within was desolation." And in another place, "that Babylon was nothing else, but a chace of wild beasts, kept within its ancient walls, for the hunting of the king." For in Jerome's time, a race of Persian kings had possession of this country, who continued until

they were dispossessed by the Saracens.

166. From the time of Jerome, no writer speaks of Babylon, for several centuries. How the walls were demolished we know not. Benjamin the Jew, tells us, in his itinerary, that he was on the place, where the old city formerly stood, and found it then wholly desolate. "Only" says he, "some ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were then still remaining; but men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and scorpions, that were then in the place."

167. Texeira, a Portuguese traveller, tells us, "that there was nothing then remaining of this old and famous city, but only some faint vestiges; and that there was no place in all the country less frequented than that tract of ground, wheron it formerly stood."

168. Rawolf, a German traveller, who passed that way A. D. 1574, says, "the village of Elugo lieth on the place, where old Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea did stand. The harbor lieth a quarter of a league off, where those are to go who intend to travel to the famous city of Bagdad, which is situated further to the East on the river. Tigris, at the distance of a journey of a day and a half. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I should have doubted very much, whether this powerful city (which was once the most famous in the world) did stand there, if I should not have known it by its situation and antiquities, that are still standing hereabout in great desolation. First, by the old bridge over the Euphrates, of which some piers and arches are still remaining, built of burnt brick, and so strong, that it is admirable. Just before Elugo is the hill on which the castle did stand, in a plain, were some ruins are still visible. Behind it, and near it, did stand the town of Babylon. This we see still, and it is half a league in diameter; but is so completely ruined and low, and so full of venomous reptiles, that have bored holes through it, that we cannot come near it, within half a mile, but only in two months in the winter, when they come not out of their holes. Among these reptiles, there is a species, in the Persian language called Eglo, that are very poisonous. They are bigger than any lizards."

169. Of the ruins of Babylon on the Western side of the river, none, of these travellers makes the least mention, for they speak of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, which we know was on the Eastern side.

170. One reason for introducing, here, a description of the situation of Babylon is, that the reader may compare it with the prophecy of Isaiah, (Isaiah 13:19-22) "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there; but wild beasts of the desert shall live there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

171. Whenever we read of Babylon, as inhabited, after the time of her desolation mentioned above, we must understand Seleucia; for that city is often called by the name of Babylon. At first it was called Babylonia Seleucia, then Babylonia, and finally, Babylon.

172. Simon the Just, high priest of the Jews, died in the year 292 B. C., leaving only an infant son, named Onias. Eleazar, the brother of Simon, therefore succeeded to that high office.

173. Simon, of whom mention has already been made, was certainly a very extraordinary person, as may be gathered from the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiastious, where his pious and beneficent acts are set forth. But his chief work was the completion of the canon of the Old Testament. It is evident that the canon could not have been completed by Ezra, for the books of Nehemiah and Malachi were pretty certainly written after his time; and Chronicles, Ezra, and Esther, were probably written by himself. All these, it is probable, were added to the canon, by Simon the Just, who, on account of his attention to this business is mentioned as the last of the men of the Great Synagogue, concerning which the Jewish writers have so much to say.

174. The main reason, however, for ascribing this work to Simon, is, that the genealogies contained in Nehemiah and Chronicles, seem to reach down near to his time, but none of them go farther. Thus in Nehemiah 12:1-47 we have mention of Jaddua, who was high priest when Alexander visited Jerusalem; and in 1 Chronicles 3:1-24, we have so many generations of the descendants of Zerubbabel mentioned, that they must in all probability reach to the time of Simon.

CHAPTER VII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Retrospect of the succession of kings and high priests who had authority over Judea, until the death of Simon the Just—Simon succeeded by Eleazar in the priesthood—by Antigonus as president of the Sanhedrim—mishnical doctors—Sanhedrim—how conducted—changes in the Jewish worship

175. Having brought the history down to the close of the canon of the Old Testament, it may not be amiss to take a brief retrospect of the several kings and high priests, who were in authority, during this period. As our history commences with Cyrus, he will of course stand first on the list.

B. C. 536 —Cyrus.

529 —Cambyses.

522 —Smerdis.

521 —Darius Hystaspis.

465 —Xerxes I.

464 —Artaxerxes Longimanus.

424 —Xerxes II.

424 —Sogdianus.

423 —Darius Nothus.

404 —Artaxerxes Mnemon.

358 —Darius Ochus.

337 —Arses.

335 —Darius Codomanus. This last was the Darius, who was conquered by Alexander the Great.

176. The nominal kings, after the death of Alexander, were Aridæus, his half brother, and Alexander Egeus his son by Roxana; the first of whom was put to death about 313 B. C. The latter lived to be only fourteen years of age, and was put to death by Cassander, about 310 B. C.

177. After the death of Alexander, numerous competitors arose from among his officers, who laid claim to whatever countries they were able to seize. Hence arose a confusion of historical facts, which it is almost impossible to reduce to any order.

178. But after a series of revolutions and incessant wars, about the year 313 B. C., the whole empire was divided between four principal successors of the conqueror.

Cassander had Macedon and Greece.

Lysimachus, Thrace, Bithynia, &c.

Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia.

Seleucus, the other Asiatic provinces. This division of the empire, however, did not continue long.

179. The Jewish nation though they changed masters several times, remained for the most part in connexion with Egypt, and under the government of Ptolemy, by whom, as well as by Alexander before, multitudes of them were transported to Egypt, especially to Alexandria, and also to Lybia, in the region of Cyrene.

180. The high priests, who, in succession, filled that, high and sacred office, from the return of the Jews from captivity, on the accession of Cyrus, until the time of Simon the Just, were as follows; though some have doubted, whether there might not have been others between those here named, of whom we have no account.

B. C. 536 —Joshua, who continued in office 49 years.

483 —Joakim, who continued in office 30 years.

453 —Eliashib, who continued in office 60 years.

413 —Jaiada, who continued in office 40 years.

373 —Johanan or John, who continued in office 32 years.

351 —Jaddua, who continued in office 20 years.

321 —Onias, who continued in office 21 years.

300 —Simon the Just, who continued in office 9 years.

181. Simon the Just was succeeded by his brother Eleazar, his own son being too young to be invested with the office. Eleazar, the brother of Simon, executed this high office, for fifteen years.

182. Simon the Just was also president of the Sanhedrim, or grand council of the Jews, in which office he was not succeeded by Eleazar, but by Antigonus of Socho, who was advanced to it, on account of his great learning; for he was an eminent scribe in the law of God, and a great teacher of righteousness, among the people.

183. The death of Simon and accession of Eleazar are placed in the year 241, B. C., and in the fourteenth of Ptolemy Soter.

184. At this time commences the succession of those called Doctors of the Mishna. The first was Antigonus above mentioned, and the last Judah Hakkadosh, who committed the Mishna to writing, in the middle of the second century. They were sometimes called scribes, sometimes lawyers, or such as sat in Moses' seat. All these titles mean the same thing, viz.: that they who were honored with them had been brought up in the knowledge of the law of God, and the tradition of the elders concerning it, as taught in the Jewish schools and synagogues; by which the judgment of the Sanhedrim was regulated.

185. Out of this profession were always chosen the members of the Sanhedrim, and of the court of twenty-three, which existed in every considerable town. Such were Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, mentioned in the New Testament. They were also called elders, councillors, and rulers, for to them the judgment and execution of the law belonged.

186. The Jews tell us of great changes which occurred in their worship after the death of Simon the Just; as that before his time the scape-goat was always broken to pieces when cast down from the precipice, but afterwards he escaped and was eaten by the Saracens; and that before the death of this high priest, the lot on the day of expiation always came out on the right hand, but afterwards on the left. In his days the western lamp in the golden candlestick, always continued burning, but after his death sometimes it did not. So, likewise, as long as he lived, the fire on the altar burnt bright and clear, and when they had laid on two sticks of wood, they needed no more all the day. Before this event the blessings of God so attended the distribution of the two loaves waved at the feast of Pentecost, that when they were distributed, every priest after being satisfied, had something left; whereas, afterwards, the quantity was so small, that the modest priests would not take any part, and the greedy were not satisfied. Here we may see at what period the age of superstition commenced among the Jews.

CHAPTER VIII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews, during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus—Tower of Pharos—Septuagint version—library of Alexandria

187. Ptolemy Soter, having reigned twenty years in Egypt, from the time of his assuming the title of king, and thirty-nine from the death of Alexander, placed his son Philadelphus, as a partner, on the throne. This event occurred in the year 285 B. C.

188. In the first year of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the famous light house on the island of Pharos was finished. It has been reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. It was built entirely of white marble, and was furnished with lights on the top for the direction of seamen. It is said to have cost eight hundred talents; which if estimated by the value of the attic talent will amount to more than seven hundred thousand dollars, and if according to the Alexandrian, to double that sum. The architect, Sostratus, practised an ingenious fraud to perpetuate his own fame; for being directed to inscribe the name of the king, at whose expense it was erected, deeply in the marble, accompanied with a suitable device, he first inscribed his own name, which he plaistered over with white mortar, and on this he placed the inscription directed by the king; so that for a while nothing else was seen, but when the mortar wore away, there appeared the indelible name of the

artist. But as an evidence of the transitory nature of all human glory, the building itself is not to be found.

Here it may be mentioned, that what was formerly the island of Pharos is now connected with the main land, of which it forms a peninsula.

189. Ptolemy Soter died in the second year after his son Philadelphus ascended the throne, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He was the wisest and best of his race, and left behind him an example of prudence, decency, and justice, which none of his successors were emulous to imitate. During his long reign of forty years, Egypt, notwithstanding the continual wars in which she was engaged, was brought into a very prosperous condition.

190. This first Ptolemy was a great patron of learning, to promote which, he instituted a society of learned men at Alexandria, and laid the foundation of that famous library, which was afterwards greatly augmented by his successors. Ptolemy Philadelphus, at his death, left in it no less than a hundred thousand volumes; and his successors went on adding to it, until at length, it amounted to the number of seven hundred thousand volumes.

191. One method of obtaining books for this library was not very honorable. They seized the MSS. of every learned stranger, who came into the country, and had a fair transcript made, which they presented to the owner, while the original was placed in the library.

192. When Julius Cæsar besieged Alexandria, one part of this immense library was burned, containing four hundred thousand volumes. But Cleopatra afterwards augmented it by the addition of two hundred thousand volumes, brought from Pergamus; and others, until it was fully as large as it ever had been before the disaster above mentioned.

193. This library continued to be famous, until 642. It is said to have been burnt by order of the Caliph Omar, whose memorable reason for this barbarous act is often repeated: "If those works," said he, "contain nothing but what is in the Koran, they are useless; but if they contain something different from what is read there, they are impious:" and accordingly the order was given to commit the whole of them to the flames. They were distributed for the purpose of heating the baths, which end they answered, during a period of six months. By some, however, all this is denied.

194. The person principally depended on by Ptolemy Soter, in the collection and general superintendence of this library, was Demetrius Phalereus. Indeed, according to Plutarch, he was properly the projector of the whole scheme, by whose persuasion Ptolemy was induced to engage in the enterprize.

195. After the death of Ptolemy, only two of the captains of Alexander remained—Seleucus and Lysimachus—both of them above eighty years of age. But old as they were, and wide as the world was over which they ruled, they again engaged in war with each other; the result of which was, the overthrow and death of Lysimachus, which left Seleucus master of all that had belonged to him. This, however, he did not live long to enjoy, for on his way to Macedonia, he was assassinated by Ptolemy Ceraunus, whom he had most kindly received and entertained in his family. A more base act of ingratitude is hardly to be found in the annals of any age.

196. Upon the death of Seleucus, which occurred in the year 280 B. C., his son Antiochus succeeded him in the empire of Asia, over which he ruled for nineteen years.

197. According to Usher, the version of the Old Testament into Greek, commonly called the Septuagint, was executed in the year 277 B. C., and if we give any credit to the history of Aristæas, it must have occurred about this time; for he tells us that this translation was made while Eleazar was high priest of the Jews, who died about the beginning of the following year. And it cannot be placed at an earlier period, because Eleazar addressed an epistle to Ptolemy, in which, according to the aforesaid author, he speaks of his queen, Arsinoe, to whom he was not married before this year.

198. The account given by Aristæas, and implicitly followed by Josephus, is briefly this. Demetrius Phalereus, while collecting the royal library, of which some account has been given, had heard of the book of the Jewish law, and told the king that it would be desirable to obtain a correct copy of it, and also a version into the Greek tongue.

199. On this occasion, certain persons, of whom Aristæas himself was one, petitioned the king for the release of the Jewish captives, who were held in bondage, alleging that unless they were released, it would be in vain to expect from the Jews a correct copy of their law, or a faithful translation of it. Upon which the king made a decree for the release of all Jewish captives, whose number amounted to more than a hundred thousand, and ordered that an equivalent for their redemption should be paid to their owners, which was computed at four hundred talents; but to this must be added the sum requisite for the redemption of the children of the captives, which raised the whole amount to the enormous sum of six hundred and sixty talents. An epistle was then addressed to Eleazar the priest, by the king, requesting a correct copy of the Law of Moses, and six elders out of each tribe to translate it into Greek. The messengers sent on this embassy were Aristæas, the author of the narrative, and Andreas, who carried as a present for the use of the temple, one hundred talents, from the king.

200. On their arrival at Jerusalem, they were received with great respect by Eleazar the high priest, and by all the people of the Jews, and their requests were finally granted. A copy of the Law, written in letters of gold, was sent, and six men out of each tribe, well skilled in both languages, to turn it into Greek.

201. When these men arrived at Alexandria, they were received with much honor by the king, and the island of Pharos was selected as a suitable place for their residence, while occupied with the translation. Demetrius attended them all the time, and when by mutual conference, the interpreters had agreed on the version of any portion of the Law, he immediately wrote it down.

202. Thus, in seventy-two days, the work was completed. The king having heard and approved the version, and presented to each of them three suits of garments, and two talents of gold, with a cup of gold of the weight of a talent, sent them back to their own country.

203. The next author who makes mention of this version, is Aristobulus, an Alexandrian Jew, who flourished about 125 B. C. He is said to have written a commentary on the five books of Moses, and to have spoken of the Greek version, made under the superintendence of Demetrius Phalereus, by the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus. This book is not now extant; all that remains are a few fragments, preserved by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius, who cite this author to prove that the Holy Scriptures were partly translated into Greek before the time of Alexander, but that a more perfect translation was made of the whole, by the care of Demetrius Phalereus.

204. The next who speaks of this version, is Philo, also an Alexandrian Jew, who was contemporary with our Saviour. His account agrees with that of Aristæas, as to Ptolemy's sending to Judea for elders to make this version; and their returning to the island of Pharos, all which he undoubtedly took from Aristæas; but he adds this remarkable circumstance, that in their interpretation they all agreed, to a word, whence he concludes they were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. He also states, that the Jews of Alexandria celebrated the event by a solemn anniversary, when they went to Pharos, and praised God for his divine assistance, in making this version.

205. Josephus, who wrote his Antiquities towards the close of the first century of the Christian era, closely follows Aristæas.

206. The first Christian writer who speaks of the origin of this version, is Justin Martyr, who flourished in the middle of the second century. He had been to Alexandria, and informs us that the account of the wonderful agreement of all the interpreters, as related by Philo, was the common belief of the Jews then residing in Alexandria; and adds, that each interpreter had a separate cell, the ruins of which were shown to him.

207. All the Christian fathers who come after Justin, and make mention of this subject, agree as to the foregoing facts. But by the time when Epiphanius wrote, the story of Aristæas had gathered new circumstances to render it more marvellous. He says, that the interpreters were shut up in cells by pairs; and that to each pair one book was given, and that the whole of the books of the Old Testament were by them rendered into Greek: that when one pair had finished a book, another was given to them; and so every pair made a separate version of each book; that is, each of the twenty-seven books was translated thirty-six times.

208. By modern critics, the whole story is believed to be fictitious, and to have been written, not by Aristæas, but by some Jew, to give celebrity to the version. And it is probable, that some fabulous circumstances are connected with the history, which were increased from time to time. But in a matter of historical fact, it seems dangerous to set aside such an array of testimony, Jewish and Christian, on the ground of probable arguments. Leaving out the wonderful facts of this story, there is nothing incredible in the substance of the narrative ascribed to Aristæas. If that history had been entirely fabulous, would it have been so implicitly adopted by Josephus and Philo, and by all the christian fathers? It seems safest to receive ancient facts on the uncontradicted testimony of the ancients, rather than reject them, upon the critical conjectures of the moderns. It should be admitted then, that this version (or at least that of the Law) was made by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and by seventy-two men obtained from Judea, for the purpose.

209. But whatever may be thought of the origin of the Septuagint version, there is no doubt entertained by any, that it was made at Alexandria, and by learned men of the Jewish nation, in the days of the Ptolemies. The only doubt is, whether the whole Bible was translated at once, and by the same interpreters. None of the authors quoted above, say this, except Epiphanius, whose testimony, in such a case, is of little value. Aristæas, Josephus, &c., speak only of the Law of Moses; and there is internal evidence sufficiently strong to convince us, that all the books were not translated by the same interpreters; for there is a marked difference in the style as well as in the words used to express particular things. The faithfulness and skill too, with which the version of the several parts is executed, proves conclusively that the whole is not the work of one man, nor of

one set of translators. The probability is, that the five books of Moses were first turned into Greek, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 277 B. C., and that the other books were added after no long interval, by different interpreters, until all the books of the Old Testament were finished.

210. There is no reason, however, to believe that any of these translators were divinely inspired. It has every mark of being a human production; yet its value is great. And this version for a long time was held in the highest veneration by the Jews, not only in Egypt, but also in Judea, where it came into common use in those towns, in which the Greek language was spoken, and was even read in some of their Synagogues. But after the introduction of Christianity, when disputes became common and violent between Jews and Christians, the former thinking that the latter had the advantage from this version, disowned it, and betook them century undertook new versions of the Old Testament into Greek. The principal of these translators were, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. The version of Aquila is servilely literal, and therefore pleased the Jews; that of Symmachus was paraphractical; and Theodotion's a medium between the two, and more like the Septuagint. In our present copies of the latter, the book of Daniel is from Theodotion's version; for the fathers, finding this very faulty in the Alexandrian translation, substituted the other in its place: the original however is still preserved. But it does not come within the compass of our work to give any history of these versions.

211. The most important fact, in regard to the Septuagint, with which we are concerned, is, that the writers of the New Testament, in their citations of the Old Testament, commonly quote in the words of this version. This fact proves, not only that it was in common use when the books of the New Testament were written, but also that it was considered as sufficiently faithful and accurate to be generally referred to, for the conveyance of inspired truth. It cannot, however, be hence inferred, that the whole of it is sanctioned by these quotations, for sometimes the inspired penmen give a more correct version of what they quote, and in many instances do not exactly follow the Septuagint.

212. Between this version and the Hebrew original, there are some important discrepancies, not commonly affecting doctrines and facts, but names and dates. In chronology, the difference is great, and learned men are still divided in opinion as to this subject; some greatly preferring the Septuagint chronology, while most Christians prefer the Hebrew. But this is not the place for discussing such a subject.

213. The pretence, however, that the Septuagint must be more correct than the present Hebrew copies, because taken from a copy made probably when the autograph of Ezra was extant, has no weight; because, waiving all doubts which might be started respecting the accuracy of the copy from which the seventy translated, the copies of this version have been subject to as great, and indeed much greater, injuries from the carelessness of transcribers, than the Hebrew copies. We know that as early as the time of Origen, it had become very much corrupted.

214. Still, the value of this version is great, as furnishing proof of the early existence of the prophecies of the Old Testament; as helping us, in some cases, to detect errors which have crept into the Hebrew text; and, above all, as furnishing us with the source whence the writers of the New Testament borrowed their peculiar dialect and use of the Greek language.

CHAPTER IX("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \ "Annals_contents-")

Origin of the Sadducees—Berosus, the Chaldee historian—riches and commerce of Tyre—Alexandria—Arsinoe, her death and monument—character of Ptolemy

215. Antigonus of Socho, already mentioned as the successor of Simon the Just, in the presidency of the Sanhedrim, died about the year 263 B. C. He was also the great master and teacher of the principal theological school in Jerusalem; and also the first of the doctors who gave regular instructions concerning the traditions of the Fathers, which were added to the written law, for the explanation of the ceremonies. These were afterwards called Mishnical Doctors. His successors in the school, were Joseph the son of Joazar, and Joseph the son of John; the first of whom was also president of the Sanhedrim, and the other vice-president.

216. In the days of Antigonus, the sect of the Sadducees took its rise, of which he was the occasion, although not the founder. For he having inculcated the doctrine, that men ought not to serve God from mercenary, but disinterested motives; not from the hope of future reward, but from love to God himself; two of his disciples, Sadoc and Baithus, inferred, that there were no rewards after this life; and separating themselves from the school of their master, they taught that there was no resurrection, nor future state. Many persons being seduced by this false doctrine, a sect arose, which received the name of Sadducees, from Sadoc, one of its founders.

This, therefore, is the oldest sect which we read of among the Jews. Its commencement must have been more than 363 years before Christ; for in that year Antigonus of Socho died.

217. About this time, flourished Berosus, the famous Babylonish historian. He must have written in the reign of Antiochus Theus, for his history is dedicated to this prince. He was, according to Tatian, a priest of Belus at Babylon; and lived in the time of Alexander, but dedicated his work to the third in succession from him, which was Antiochus Theus; Seleucus Nicator being the first, and Antiochus Soter the second. If this account of Tatian be correct, Berosus must have been of a great age when he published his history; for if he was only twenty years of age when Alexander died, he must have been above four score in the first year of Antiochus. Only some fragments of his history are extant, preserved by Josephus and Eusebius; but these are very important, as without them the series of the Babylonian kings could not be made out, and they cast much light on some passages of the Old Testament.

218. The greatness and wealth of Tyre were owing to her extensive trade, especially her commerce with the East. But now Ptolemy Philadelphus laid his plans to give a new direction to the precious commodities of India, and bring them to Alexandria, which he in a great degree accomplished, by establishing a depot on the western side of the Red Sea, considerably south of its northern termination, where there was a good depth of water. This place he called Berenice, after his mother. And as the road between the Nile and Red Sea lay through deserts where there was no water, Ptolemy, to remedy this inconvenience, formed a canal from Coptus on the Nile, all along the road, to supply the caravans, which carried their goods, with water, and, at convenient distances, he established inns. To protect the trade, he formed large fleets, both in the Mediterranean and Red Seas. By these wise arrangements, Alexandria became the emporium of most of the commerce between the East and the West. In consequence of which, Tyre began thenceforward to languish, until at length the prophecies, respecting her utter desolation, were completely fulfilled.

219. About the year 249 B. C., a war broke out between Ptolemy and Antiochus, the events of which it is not necessary that we should here relate.

220. Onias, the son of Simon the Just, being an infant at the time of his father's death, could not be invested with the office of high priest, which was therefore, bestowed upon Eleazar, Simon's brother. Eleazar also dying, before Onias was of legal age, the priesthood was given to Manasseh the son of Jaddua, who executed it for six and twenty years, and died in the year 276 B. C. Onias now succeeded to the office.

221. A great revolt having taken place against Antiochus, in the eastern part of his empire, he became weary of the war with Ptolemy, and a peace was made between them, 249 B. C. The condition of this treaty was, that Antiochus should divorce Laodice, his former wife, and marry Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy. Accordingly, Antiochus put away his Wife, who was also his half sister, by whom he had two sons; and Ptolemy having taken his daughter to Seleucia, near the mouth of the Orontes, and delivered her to Antiochus, the marriage was solemnized with great pomp. Thus was the prophecy of Daniel literally fulfilled (Daniel 11:5-6) "For the king's daughter of the South shall come to the king of the North, to make an agreement." By South and North in this passage, must be understood Egypt, which lay south of Judea, and Syria which was situated to the north.

222. In the year 248 B. C., Arsinoe, the wife of Ptolemy died, which caused him great grief; for although she was much older than himself, he doted on her. To commemorate her, he formed an extravagant project, which was, to erect a monument, having a vault lined with load-stone, which should, by its attraction, cause an image of her to remain suspended in the air. This design was conceived by Dinocrates, a famous architect of that time; and so pleased Ptolemy that he commanded the work to be immediately commenced; but neither the king nor the artist lived to have it completed. This probably gave rise to the fable so long current respecting the coffin of Mohammed.

223. Ptolemy did not long survive his beloved wife. He was naturally of a weak constitution, which was greatly debilitated by luxurious indulgence; so that when grief for the loss of his wife was added, he sunk under the burden, and expired in his grand climacteric, after having reigned over Egypt thirty-eight years.

224. Ptolemy was the greatest patron of learning and the fine arts, among all the kings of antiquity. Seven celebrated poets of that age are said to have resided in his court. The works of four of these, (Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron and Aratus,) are still extant. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, dedicated his work to him. Zoilus, the snarling critic, who distinguished himself by abusing Homer, also frequented the Egyptian court, but received no countenance from Ptolemy.

225. Ptolemy had also a passion for building. He rebuilt Acco in Palestine, on the Mediterranean, which he called Ptolemais, after his own name. This place has been famous in the history of all ages, especially in the wars of the crusades. It is now called Acre, and in our own times has been famous for the unsuccessful siege which it sustained from Buonaparte.

226. The city formerly famous, under the name of Rabbah, he rebuilt, and called it Philadelphia after his own surname. It has long been desolate. Such was his taste for fine buildings, that it became proverbial, to call an edifice of more than usual magnificence, Philadelphian.

227. Notwithstanding the great expenses, necessarily attendant on his favorite pursuits, he died exceedingly rich, leaving no less than seven hundred and forty thousand Egyptian talents in the treasury. He left also large and well furnished fleets, both in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER X("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The history of the Jews, from the death of Ptolemy Philadelphus—Ptolemy Euergetes—Berenice—prophecies fulfilled—the Arundelian marbles

228. As soon as Antiochus heard of the death of Ptolemy, he put away Berenice, and invited his former wife, Laodice, to return; but she knowing his fickleness, caused him to be poisoned by his servants, and placing a man who greatly resembled him in his bed, to personate him as being confined by sickness, she concealed his death until by orders, forged under her hand, she placed her own son Seleucus on the throne, which he occupied for twenty years. She also pursued Berenice and her son, with unrelenting vengeance, until she had them both put to death by the treachery of some who were about them.

229. And here again we see the fulfilment of the sequel of the prophecy of Daniel before cited. After predicting the marriage of the king of the North, to the daughter of the king of the South, as the band of agreement, he goes on to say: "But she"—that is Berenice—"shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he"—that is Antiochus—"stand, nor his arm: but she"—that is Berenice—"shall be given up, and they that brought her"—that is her Egyptian friends—"and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her." (Daniel 11:6.)

230. While Berenice was besieged by Laodice in Daphne, where she had fled for refuge, with her son, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes, who had succeeded his father on the throne of Egypt, marched with a powerful army to her relief; but before he arrived at Daphne, both she and her son were killed.

He avenged himself, however, by putting Laodice to death, and making himself master of all Syria and Cilicia. He even extended his conquests, beyond the Euphrates, as far as the Tigris, and was in a fair way to reduce under his dominion all the Eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, when he was suddenly recalled to Egypt, by a sedition, that had arisen there. He greatly endeared himself to the Egyptian people, on his return from this expedition, by bringing back from Persia their gods, which Cambyses had carried away; and on this account, he received the name, Euergetes, or Benefactor.

231. All these events were in exact fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, who tells us, that after the queen of the South, with her son and attendants, should be out off, and her father, who was her chief support, should be dead, "there should one arise out of a branch of her roots, in his estate"—that is, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes—and that "he should come with an army and enter into the fortress of the king of the North, and prevail against him, and carry captive into Egypt, their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and gold; and then come into his kingdom, and return into his own land." Now, how exactly all this was fulfilled, the history of Ptolemy Euergetes most manifestly shows. Again, it is said, in the same prophecy that "the king of the South should continue more years than the king of the North," and such was the event, for Ptolemy Euergetes survived Seleucus Callinicus; whom Laodice had placed on the throne of Syria, four years.

232. The wife of Ptolemy Euergetes, also named Berenice, being very apprehensive of danger to her husband in his northern expedition, made a vow, that she would consecrate her hair, of which she was vain, as being very beautiful, if he should return safe. Accordingly it was cut off and sent to the temple, which Ptolemy Philadelphus had built in Cyprus, but, by some accident, was lost, an occurrence, by which Ptolemy was much disturbed. It happened, that Conon of Samos, a distinguished mathematician, was then at Alexandria, who, to relieve the king's mind, and also to ingratiate himself into his favor, pretended that this hair was caught up into heaven; and showed seven stars, near the tail of the Lion, not before connected with any constellation, which he said was the consecrated hair of the queen; which conceit being countenanced by subsequent astronomers, a new constellation was added, called Coma Berenices, the hair of Berenice.

Callimachus, the poet, wrote a hymn to celebrate the hair of Berenice.

233. Ptolemy Euergetes, who seems to have been of a devout turn of mind, on his return from his Syrian expedition, took Jerusalem in his way, and there caused many sacrifices, to be offered up to the God of Israel, as an acknowledgment for the great success which he had experienced, in his contest with the king of Syria. And it is not improbable, that the prophecies of Daniel, relative to these events, might have been shown to him.

234. Seleucus, in the years 245 and 244 B. C., entered into new wars with Ptolemy, for the recovery of his lost dominions, but the issue was as unfortunate as before; for being overcome in battle, he was obliged to flee to Antioch, accompanied only by a few of his followers. In consequence of the broken and disastrous state of his affairs, he invited his brother Antiochus, who was then at the head of an army, to join with him. Antiochus although he was only fourteen years of age, yet being of an ambitious turn, readily accepted the proposal, not so much to aid his brother, as to gain the empire for himself.

235. At this time, the cities of Smyrna and Magnesia, as a testimony of their affection for Seleucus, entered into a combination to assist him with their might, and erected a column of marble, on which their mutual agreement was engraved. And it is a remarkable fact, that this identical marble is now standing in the court-yard of the theatre at Oxford, with the inscription still distinctly legible, in Greek capital letters. It was brought from Asia, by Thomas earl of Arundel, in the reign of Charles the first, and was given, with other marbles, to the University of Oxford, by Henry duke of Norfolk, his grandson, in the reign of Charles the second. These are commonly spoken of under the name of the Arundelian marbles.

236. The union of the two brothers against Ptolemy, was attended with no great issue; for the latter made a peace with Seleucus, while Antiochus went on with his preparations for war. These, his brother soon suspected, were intended against himself. He, therefore, marched an army over Mount Taurus, to surprise him. A battle was fought between them, near Ancyra in Asia Minor, in which Seleucus was overthrown, and scarcely escaped with his life. It fared little better with Antiochus, for the Galatians, or Gauls of Asia, whom he had taken into his service, upon a rumour that Seleucus was slain, immediately plotted the death of the other brother, thinking, that if he were out of the way, the whole empire would fall into their hands. Antiochus having no other method of saving his life, gave all his treasure as a ransom for it.

Eumenes, king of Pergamus, taking advantage of the distracted state of the Syrian empire, made an attack on the Gauls and on Antiochus, and gained a victory over them.

About the same time, Theodotus and Arsaces, revolting against Seleucus in the East, seized Parthia and Hyrcania. But notwithstanding all these disasters, the war continued. Fraternal discord is the most difficult to be reconciled.

237. The seat of war was now transferred to Mesopotamia; and about this time probably occurred the battle mentioned (2 Maccab. 8:20.) by Judas Maccabæus, in which he says that eight thousand Jews, with four thousand Macedonians, vanquished the Galatians, and slew one hundred and seventy thousand men.

238. About this time, it was customary for the Jews to hire themselves as soldiers, to all parties, in the wars which were then carried on by the kings of the East; and their services in these wars were held in the highest estimation.

CHAPTER XI("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Ptolemy Euergetes an encourager of learning—Seleucus defeated and taken prisoner—origin of the kingdom of the Parthians—remarkable history of Joseph—great earthquake in the east

239. Ptolemy Euergetes, being now relieved from war, devoted his attention to the arts of peace; especially to the promotion of learning, and the increase of the vast library which his father had founded in Alexandria. Of this he made Eratosthenes, a learned Athenian, the keeper, after the death of Zenodotus, who was appointed librarian by Ptolemy Philadelphus. The person now advanced to this office was one of the most learned men of his age, as appears from the manner in which he is frequently referred to, by Pliny, Strabo, and others. He was the author of many works, none of which are now extant. The only writing of his, which still remains, is an important document, preserved by Syncellus, containing a catalogue of all the kings who had reigned at Thebes in Egypt, from Menes or Misraim, down to the time of the Trojan war. It contains a series of thirty-eight kings, and has been of great service in writing the Egyptian chronology. It is one of the most authentic and important documents of remote antiquity, extant in profane history. It was extracted from the most ancient records of the country, by order of Ptolemy Euergetes, and was probably intended to supply the defects of Manetho's catalogue, which commences exactly where that of Eratosthenes ends.

240. In the year 230 B. C., Seleucus marched against Arsaces, who had seized Parthia and other districts in the East; but the event of this expedition was most disastrous to him, for he was not only defeated, but taken prisoner. This was the origin of the kingdom of the Parthians, which became so terrible in after times, even to the Romans, who were a terror to all others. The day on which Arsaces obtained this victory was long celebrated as an anniversary in Parthia. From this time the conqueror styled himself king, and all his successors assumed his name, just as the kings of Egypt, for a long period, took the name of Ptolemy.

241. Onias, the high priest of the Jews, who was a weak and rash man, having neglected to pay the customary tribute to Ptolemy Euergetes, and the arrears continually increasing, the king sent Athenion, one of his courtiers, to demand full payment. The arrival of this minister created a great sensation at Jerusalem; for it did not appear what course could be taken to appease the king's

displeasure, as the sum requisite to satisfy the demand could by no means be raised.

242. In this emergency, a young man by the name of Joseph, a near relation of Onias, who was in great reputation among the Jews, for prudence, justice and sanctity, came to Jerusalem from his residence in the country, and going immediately to his uncle, the high priest, expostulated with him freely on the course which he had pursued, in relation to the tribute; and exhorted him to go immediately to Egypt, and endeavor to satisfy the king. But this was a business for which Onias was by no means qualified; besides, he was now old and feeble. Upon his declining the journey, Joseph offered his own services on the occasion, which were joyfully accepted by his uncle and the people.

Joseph went immediately to find Athenion, whom he took to his own house, and entertained sumptuously while he remained; and so gained the esteem of the Egyptian minister, that he returned to the king with kind feelings towards the Jewish people, and the most favorable impressions of the character of Joseph. He also conveyed to the king the intelligence, that this excellent young man, would shortly attend upon him, to explain every thing which related to the tribute, so long due.

243. Joseph, as soon as the ambassador was gone, began to prepare for his journey, and having provided himself with proper equipage, set off for the court of Ptolemy. On the way he happened to fall in company with some noblemen of Phenicia and Cœlo-Syria, who were going to Egypt for the purpose of farming the revenues of their respective provinces. During the journey, he learned much from these persons, of the value of the revenues, which knowledge he afterwards turned to good account. Finding, when he arrived at Alexandria, that the king was at Memphis, he hastened thither, and fortunately met him returning in a chariot with his queen and Athenion. The latter no sooner espied Joseph, than he pointed him out to the king as his young Jewish friend, concerning whom, he had before so often spoken to him. Upon which the king invited him into his chariot, and conversed freely with him. He complained of the ill conduct of Onias in withholding the tribute, for so many years.

244. Joseph excused his uncle on the ground of his age and weakness, in so handsome a manner, that he not only pacified the king, but gained for himself his particular favor. When they arrived in Alexandria, the king ordered that he should be lodged in the palace, and maintained at his own table.

245. On the arrival of the day for farming the revenues of the provinces, which were set up to the highest bidder, Joseph observed that the highest sum bid for Judea, Samaria, Cœlo-Syria and Phenicia, by his companions in travel, was no more than eight thousand talents, and being assured, from their conversation, on the way, that they were worth, at least, double that sum, he bade sixteen thousand talents, exclusive of the forfeitures.

246. Ptolemy was pleased with the prospect of such an augmentation of his revenues, but was doubtful of the young man's ability to give adequate security. When Joseph was asked what surety he would give, he facetiously answered, that they should be persons beyond all exception, and immediately named the king and queen. The king was so delighted with the pleasantness and confidence manifested by this answer, that he trusted him on his own word, dispensing with all other pledges.

247. Receiving now the appointment of receiver-general of the king's revenues, in the provinces above named, he set off on his way home, accompanied with a guard of two thousand men, for his support, in the execution of his office. On his arrival at Askelon, the people not only refused to pay the tribute to him, but used opprobrious language towards him; whereupon he commanded his soldiers to seize twenty of the ringleaders, on whom he executed exemplary punishment, and sent their forfeited estates to the king's treasury. The same process was repeated at Scythopolis, by which all the other places in the provinces were so intimidated, that he had no further trouble in collecting the king's revenues.

248. The conduct of Joseph in this high office was so marked with justice and energy, that he was continued in it, not only while Ptolemy Euergetes lived, but during the reign of his successor, Ptolemy Philopater, and also of Ptolemy Epiphanes, until these provinces were wrested from him by Antiochus the Great.

249. Seleucus, who, it has been seen, was taken prisoner in Parthia, remained there in custody, but royally entertained by Arsaces, until the year 326 B. C., when he was killed by a fall from his horse. He left two sons, Seleucus and Antiochus, and a daughter, who was given in marriage to Mithridates, king of Pontus, with Phrygia for her dower.

Seleucus being the oldest of his two sons, succeeded him in the throne, and took the name of Ceraunus. He was a weak prince, and his reign was very short.

250. Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, was sent to Babylonia for his education, and was there at the time of his brother's death; on which event he was sent for to Antioch, and ascended the throne, which he occupied for thirty-six years. On account of his many great actions, he received the surname of Great.

251. In the year before Christ two hundred and twenty-two, there happened a very violent earthquake in the east, which made great devastations in many places, especially in Caria, and the island of Rhodes. It threw down not only the walls of the city of Rhodes, and the houses, but also the great colossus, which bestrode the harbor, and was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. It was a prodigious statue of brass, erected to the sun; one hundred and five feet in height, and every thing else in proportion. Chares was twelve years employed in its erection, and sixty years afterwards it was thrown down. The Rhodians sent ambassadors to all the neighboring countries to beg money for the purpose of raising this colossus again; but after collecting vast sums, they pocketed the money, pretending that an oracle had forbidden there erection of the colossus. There it lay for eight hundred and ninety-four years, when Moawiah, the sixth caliph of Damascus, having taken Rhodes, sold the brass to a Jewish merchant, who loaded with it nine hundred camels; so that it would seem that its original weight could not have fallen greatly short of a million of pounds.

252. Towards the close of the year 222 B. C., died Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt, after having reigned over that country for five and twenty years.

253. He was succeeded by his son Ptolemy Philopater, a very profligate and vicious prince. He was suspected of putting an end to his father's life by poison; and soon after he was seated on his throne, he added the murder of his mother, and of his brother Magas; and also of Cleomenes, king of Sparta, who had taken refuge in the court of Ptolemy Euergetes; and was a person of great

wisdom and sagacity.

CHAPTER XII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Accession of Ptolemy Philopater to the throne of Egypt—his contest with Antiochus—his cruelty—visits Jerusalem and attempts to enter the sanctuary; but is prevented—resolves to exterminate the Jews—their providential deliverance—he dies and leaves the kingdom to his son Ptolemy Epiphanes, only five years of age. Antiochus endeavors to conquer Egypt—engages in war with the Romans—marches an army to the east, to collect tribute—robs the Temple of Belus of its treasures but is slain by the enraged populace—remarkable story of Joseph and his son Hyrcanus

254. As soon as Ptolemy Philopater ascended the throne, Antiochus formed the design of recovering Syria, which he prosecuted with various success for several years, until about the year 219 B. C., he took Damascus, and reduced all Phenicia, Galilee, and Gilead beyond Jordan, under his dominion.

255. In the year 217 B. C., Antiochus marched for Egypt with a large army, and a great battle was fought between Gaza and Rhinocrura, with the two kings at the head of their respective forces; on which occasion, the presence of mind and masculine courage of Arsinoe, queen of Egypt, was strikingly exhibited, in her encouraging the soldiers, and remaining by the side of her husband, through the whole battle. The result was, that although the right wing of the Syrian army, commanded by Antiochus in person, drove the Egyptians before them, the contrary occurred on the left wing, where the Syrians gave way and fled, and the Egyptians turning on the flank and rear of the other part of the Syrian forces, gained a complete victory; for Antiochus had, in his ardor, pursued so far, that he did not return in time to give any aid to his routed troops. This battle was fought on the same day that Hannibal defeated Flaminius the Roman general, at the lake Thrasimenus.

256. On the retreat of Antiochus, the cities of Coelo-Syria and Palestine were forward to make their submission to Ptolemy; for they had been long accustomed to the Egyptian yoke, and were better pleased with it than with the government of Antiochus.

Many ambassadors presented themselves before Ptolemy, with the submission of their respective cities, and with presents, all of whom he received kindly. Among these, the Jews were not last. Ptolemy now made a progress through the provinces which he had regained, and among the cities visited, Jerusalem was not forgotten. Here he took a view of the temple, and offered many gifts and sacrifices to the God of Israel. But not contented with an exterior view of this sacred edifice, he resolved to enter into the sanctuary, and even into the most holy place. On this occasion all Jerusalem was in an uproar. The priests and Levites were convened to hinder it, and the people to deprecate the impious act. Great lamentations were every where made, and many supplications offered to God, to preserve his sacred house from profanation. But entreaties availed nothing with Ptolemy; the more he was opposed, the more he seemed resolved to execute his impious purpose. Accordingly, he pressed into the inner court; but here he was struck with such a terror and confusion of mind, that he could proceed no farther, and was carried out, in a manner half dead. On this, he left the city, filled with great wrath against the Jews, and uttering many menaces against the nation.

257. The high priest now in office, who had the courage to withstand Ptolemy, was Simon, the son of Onias the second; for his father having deceased towards the close of the former year, the son had been consecrated in his room. This, therefore, was among the first acts of his pontificate: and it was well that a man of firmness and wisdom was now in authority; for affairs had been negligently managed during the whole of the administration of Onias, who was not only a weak man, but extremely covetous.

258. During the incessant wars between the great Northern and Southern powers, Judea, as lying exactly between the belligerents, suffered exceedingly by the passage of hostile, and friendly armies. The old hatred of the Samaritans also, was not dormant, during this period; but often when they observed the Jews to be unable to make resistance, they ravaged the country, lying near them; carrying off many of the inhabitants, and selling them into slavery.

259. Antiochus, on his return, finding his own subjects in an unsettled state, thought it best to make peace with Ptolemy, which he effected by resigning all title to Cœlo-Syria, Palestine, and Phenicia.

260. When Ptolemy returned to Alexandria, his anger against the Jewish nation was undiminished, and he determined to revenge himself on all those who inhabited that city. He made a decree, and had it engraven on a pillar at the gates of his palace, forbidding all to enter, who did not sacrifice to the gods he worshipped.

Alexander the Great had, in the division of the people into ranks, placed the Jews in the first, on a level with his own Macedonians; but Ptolemy, now degraded them to the third rank, among the common people of Egypt.

261. But this was not the worst which these devoted people had to suffer. He enacted a law, that they should all be branded with the badge of his god Bacchus, or be reduced to slavery. However, he provided that those who would be initiated into the heathen religion, should retain their privileges. Of the whole number in Alexandria, only three hundred took advantage of this immunity. All the rest stood firm to their religion, rather choosing to suffer the greatest extremities than depart in the least from it. And those who for worldly considerations, had apostatized, were held in the utmost abhorrence, and excommunicated from all intercourse with their brethren.

262. The king, considering their measures as indicative of hostility to him, now determined that he would destroy the whole nation, wherever found. He accordingly sent out orders, that all Jews, who resided in Egypt should be brought in chains to Alexandria. This being executed, he directed that all of them should be assembled in the Hippodrome, a large open space prepared for horse-races, where his purpose was to destroy them by his elephants, and then march to Judea and treat the Jews there in the same manner. But on the day appointed, when all were ready, the king did not make his appearance; for having been up late at a carouse¹ he over slept himself, until the hour for the intended spectacle was over. It was, therefore, deferred until the next day; but another disappointment occurred, from the same cause.

263. During all this time, the Jews were kept shut up in the Hippodrome; but they ceased not day and night, with uplifted hands and loud voices, to pray to God for deliverance; which he in mercy was pleased to vouchsafe. For on the next day, when, the king being present, the elephants were brought forth drunk with wine and frankincense, that they might with more rage destroy the

devoted Jews, they became ungovernable, and instead of rushing upon the Jews, turned upon the spectators, and killed many of them. It is also said, that appearances were seen in the air, which terrified the king and all the spectators.

264. This remarkable interposition of providence, had such an effect on Ptolemy, that he relinquished his bloody purpose, and not only set the Jews at liberty, but fearing the vengeance of heaven, restored them to all their former privileges, and gave them leave to put to death, all those Jews who had apostatized from their religion.

265. It must be confessed, however, that the evidence of the truth of this history is not as satisfactory as could be wished. Josephus, in his Antiquities, does not mention it, though he does in his book against Apion; but this we have only in the Latin translation of Ruffin. He also places it in another reign. The narrative here given is from the third book of Maccabees, which whole book relates to the persecutions endured by the Jews. It became common, after the name Maccabees was given to Judas and his brethren, of whom we shall speak hereafter, for all who suffered for their religion among the Jews to be called Maccabees, for which reason, the third book of the Maccabees, received this title; although it treats of matters which occurred long before their time. This book is found in all the ancient copies of the Septuagint, and also in the Syriac version; but is extant in no copy of the Latin Vulgate. The first authentic mention of it is in the Alexandrian Chroincon. It is also named in the eighty-fifth of the apostolical canons, but their date is altogether uncertain.

266. Antiochus spent seven years on an expedition against Parthia, Bactria, Hyrcania, and other eastern provinces, which had revolted from the empire, and declared themselves independent. In this expedition he discovered great skill and generalship, but finding that there was no prospect of bringing these countries permanently under subjection, he made peace with Arsaces and the other leaders, and returned to Antioch in the year 205 B. C.

267. The next year, 204 B. C., died Ptolemy Philopater king of Egypt, after having sat on the throne for seventeen years. He was a most flagitious and cruel man, and brought himself to a premature end, by his debaucheries.

268. He was succeeded by Ptolemy Epiphanes, his son, a child of five years of age. The people finding that the vile associates of Philopater's guilty pleasures, were plotting against the young king and those who would be likely to oppose their measures, brought them to the Hippodrome, and slew them.

269. The young king was now committed to the care of Sosibius, an old, crafty politician, who had contrived by his cunning, to retain his power in the court for more than sixty years: and who had kept in favor with the late king, by consulting and anticipating all his voluptuous inclinations.

270. Antiochus, king of Syria, and Philip king of Macedonia, on the death of Ptolemy Philopater, entered into a league to conquer Egypt, and divide the kingdom between them; but the rulers of Egypt, to defend themselves against this formidable coalition, sent an embassy to the Romans whose power had now risen to greatness, and who were ever disposed to extend it more and more.

Just about this time, Scipio had defeated Hannibal in Africa, so that the Romans being delivered from a dangerous enemy, were now at liberty to turn their attention to the east. Accordingly, they did not hesitate to take the young king under their protection.

271. The Jewish writers—the worst historians that ever lived—inform us, that in the year 203 B. C., Joshua the son of Perachia, was made president of the Sanhedrim, and Nathan the Arbelite, the vice-president. Of the latter they have given us no information, but of the former they tell a story the most absurd and inconsistent with chronology. The sum of it is, that for reproving Alexander, the Asmonean king, who had slain the doctors at Jerusalem, he was obliged to flee to Egypt; and that Jesus Christ being his scholar, accompanied him thither; whereas, the time which they assigned for this man's entering on his presidency was many years before the reign of Alexander the Asmonean, and two hundred years before the birth of Christ!

272. The war between Antiochus and the Egyptians went on, notwithstanding the Romans had sent a formal embassy to the former, announcing, that they had undertaken the guardianship of the young king; and Antiochus having defeated Scopas the Egyptian general, in a great battle at Paneas, near the sources of the Jordan, soon got possession of all Palestine and Cœlo-Syria. At this time the Jews were much disaffected towards the Egyptian government; and when Antiochus came with his army to Jerusalem, they received him with gladness, and entertained his whole army and elephants, bountifully, as long as he remained. Antiochus, in return, granted them many privileges, and particularly ordained, that no stranger, of whatever quality, should pass over the sept, into the sacred inclosure of the temple.

273. But Antiochus was no stranger to the Jews, before this visit to Jerusalem. Many of them resided in Babylonia, who were very serviceable to him in his eastern expedition, and of whose fidelity he entertained the highest opinion. And a sedition having once arisen in Phrygia and Lydia, he transplanted two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia into those regions, with a view to keep the people quiet, by stationing them in the strongest fortresses. The descendents of these Jews were found in great numbers in Asia Minor, when the gospel was first propagated in those regions, by the labors of the apostles.

274. In the year 195 B. C., Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, who had lived quietly at Carthage, being suspected of inimical designs by the Romans, fled to the court of Antiochus. When he arrived, the latter had been debating with himself about engaging in a war with the Romans; which point, however, was soon decided after the arrival of Hannibal, who had, in many battles, vanquished the Romans, and who induced Antiochus to believe, that, with his aid they could be easily overcome.

275. In the same year 195 B. C., Simon the high priest of the Jews died, and was succeeded by his oldest son, Onias the third, who held that office twenty four years. He had the character of being a worthy good man, but happened on evil times, and perished in them, as shall be related in its place.

276. About this time died Eratosthenes, the second keeper of the famous library of Alexandria, in the 84th year of his age, and was succeeded by Apollonius Rhodius, the author of the Argonautics, who had been a scholar of Callimachus. He was called Rhodius, not because he was born at Rhodes, for he was a native of Alexandria; but he had long resided in that island, from

which he was recalled to take charge of the library.

277. Antiochus, having determined on war with the Romans, used a wise policy in strengthening himself, by forming alliances and matrimonial connexions with the kings who might have it in their power to aid or injure him. And if he had listened to the counsel of Hannibal, who would have had him land an army immediately in Italy, agreeably to the plan pursued so successfully by himself, there is no knowing what the event might have been. But by some means, the old African general had fallen into suspicion with Antiochus, and his counsels were not followed. On the contrary, it was determined, to commence hostilities in Greece. But in all his designs against the Romans, he was unsuccessful, and at last was forced to retire from all the countries of Europe, and quit all Asia west of Mount Taurus, and pay the whole expenses of the war, which were estimated at fifteen thousand talents.

278. Antiochus, finding it very difficult to raise so large a sum of money, marched into the eastern provinces to collect the arrears of tribute which were then due. When he had come into the province of Elymais, hearing that a vast treasure lay concealed in the temple of Belus, he seized the temple by night, and rifled it of its treasures. On account of this act of sacrilege, the inhabitants actuated by the fury of religious zeal, rose against him, and slew him and all that were with him. In this statement, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Strabo, and Jerome, agree; but Aurelius Victor says, he was slain by some of his own followers.

279. Antiochus was a prince of clemency, justice, and beneficence; and until the fiftieth year of his age, administered his affairs with much discretion; so that his enterprises were attended with almost uniform success, which obtained for him the name of, Great. But in the latter part of his life, declining in wisdom as well as vigor, his course became disastrous, and his bright prospects were greatly clouded over; for being vanquished by the Romans, he was driven out of the best part of his dominions; and was forced to accept very hard and disgraceful terms of peace. And at last lost his life while engaged in an impious enterprize; so that the close of his career formed a perfect contrast to the glory of his early exploits.

280. The prophecies of Daniel, recorded in the eleventh chapter, from the tenth to the nineteenth verse, had their exact fulfilment in the actions of Antiochus.

281. In the year that Antiochus died, Cleopatra his daughter and queen of Egypt, the wife of Ptolemy Epiphanes, having given birth to a son, who afterwards succeeded his father, by the name of Ptolemy Philometor, all the great men and nobility of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, hastened to Alexandria to present their congratulations to the king. Joseph, the king's receiver general, of whom we have spoken before, and who had continued in office all this time, being now too old to take such a journey, sent his son Hyrcanus, to make his compliments to the Egyptian court.

282. Josephus gives a very curious account of the circumstances connected with the birth of Hyrcanus; a brief outline of which, I shall now lay before the reader.

Joseph, having often occasion to visit Alexandria, in the execution of his office, on one occasion, took with him a brother, by the name of Solymius, who having a very beautiful daughter of marriageable age took her along, probably with the view of obtaining for her a respectable connexion in marriage, with some wealthy Jew of Alexandria. While they were at court, Joseph was desperately smitten with the beauty of a young Egyptian girl, whom he had seen in one of the

dances which took place in the palace. Being unable to suppress the violence of his passion, he solicited his brother to endeavor to obtain this beautiful dancing girl as a concubine for him. Solymius, while he seemed to assent to his brother's proposal, yet resolved to prevent his forming such a connexion with a heathen woman; and the method which he took, according to our ideas of propriety, were very unbecoming in the father of a young virgin. For, as Josephus tells the story, instead of introducing to his brother's bed the Egyptian girl, he substituted his own daughter, and the affair was so managed, that for some days the cheat was not discovered. But Joseph becoming more and more attached to his Egyptian concubine, as he supposed she was, expressed his devoted attachment to his brother, who then confessed to him what he had done, and avowed as his motive, the desire of keeping him from violating the law of God, by taking a strange wife, against which the displeasure of the Lord had been, so strongly manifested in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Joseph was so far from expressing any displeasure, that he thanked his brother for his friendship, in thus taking measures to preserve him from a disgraceful transgression of the law of God. Joseph now received his brother's daughter, as his lawful wife; for the Jews hold, that for a man to marry his niece, is no violation of the law of Moses, nor of the law of nature; but for a man to marry his aunt is forbidden, and is contrary to the law of nature; because it reverses the order of reverence and obedience, which younger persons naturally owe to their near relatives of superior age and relative standing.

283. This story should not have been introduced here, but for the important figure, which Hyrcanus, the fruit of this marriage makes, in the subsequent history of the Jews.

284. Joseph had seven other sons by another wife, all older than Hyrcanus, to each of whom he offered the commission to go as his deputy to the court of Ptolemy; but they all refusing, Hyrcanus, then a very young man, undertook it. And as he had a very large sum of the collected tribute to pay into the king's treasury, he persuaded his father not to send presents from Judea, but to permit him to purchase in Alexandria such articles as would be suitable for the occasion. Accordingly, an order was given by Joseph to Arion his agent, to let his son have as much money as he should need. But Hyrcanus, on his arrival, instead of demanding ten talents, or any moderate sum, required a thousand talents to be paid to him; equal to a hundred thousand pounds sterling. With this money he purchased one hundred beautiful boys, as a present for the king, and as many beautiful maidens for the queen. Each of these, when presented, carried a talent in their hands. By this means he so ingratiated himself into the favor of the king and queen, that he came away with a commission to collect the king's revenues, in all the country beyond Jordan. Having thus overreached his father, and having obtained for himself most of that authority and influence, which his father had so long possessed, his brothers were so enraged against him, that they laid a plot to assassinate him. But being well attended, he got the better of them in the affray, and left two of them dead on the spot; on which account, his father being greatly exasperated, as well as for his unfair dealing in Egypt, refused any longer to own him. Hyrcanus now passed over Jordan, to execute his office; but his father dying soon afterwards, a violent dissension arose between him and his remaining brothers, about the possession of his estate, which was carried on with such violence, on both sides, that for some time the peace of Jerusalem was disturbed by their quarrels.

285. The high priest and people of Jerusalem generally, took part with the brothers; and Hyrcanus was obliged to retreat again beyond Jordan, where he built a strong fortress which he called Tyre, and from which he carried on a predatory war with the neighboring Arabs.

286. These events occurred while Seleucus Philopator, the son of Antiochus the Great, reigned in Persia; but when Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded to the throne, and had regained these provinces, Hyrcanus attracted his attention, and he threatened to execute vengeance upon him for his lawless conduct. On hearing of this, Hyrcanus fell on his sword, and killed himself.

287. Before his death, however, he had contrived to gain over Onias the high priest, who undertook the safe-keeping of his treasure, and laid it up for him in the temple, which was probably the first occasion of the quarrel between Onias, and Simon the governor of the temple, who is believed to have been the brother of Hyrcanus.

288. It seems, that Joseph had been appointed governor of the temple. He was, perhaps, the first who held that office; for before this time, the high priest seems to have had the sole authority in Jerusalem. But the kings who ruled over Palestine, no doubt found it convenient, to have an officer of their own selection stationed in that important city; and Joseph being greatly in favor with the Ptolemies, as he was ever faithful to their interests, was probably clothed with authority to act for them in Jerusalem. However this may be, we find Simon a Benjamite, holding this office, in the year 176 B. C., who is believed to have been the son of Joseph, as before hinted.

289. Between this man and Onias the high priest, a difference arosé; and when Simon could not prevail, he and his associates, who are called the sons of Tobias, fled from Jerusalem, and went to Apollonius, governor of Cœlo-Syria, informing him, that great treasures were concealed in the temple of Jerusalem; in consequence of which intelligence, the king sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to bring them away.

290. An account of what befell Heliodorus, in consequence of this Sacrilegious attempt to rifle the temple of Jehovah, is related at large, in the third chapter of the second book of Maccabees. The substance of this account is, that Heliodorus on Coming to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the determined opposition of Onias the high priest, the solemn and importunate entreaties of the other priests and Levites, and the mournings and supplications of all ranks and sexes, would not be diverted from his purpose. But when, with his guard, he had penetrated to the treasury, he was met with a fearful apparition; for "there appeared unto him a horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering; and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet; and it seems that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on the other side, and scourged him continually and gave him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly upon the ground, and was compassed with great darkness; but they that were about him took him up and put him in a litter." And he was restored only through the prayers of the high priest. See the account in full, 2Ma_2:3.

CHAPTER XIII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Judea falls under the power of Antiochus—predictions respecting Seleucus—good character of Onias the high priest—Jason's wicked conduct—and the more wicked of Menelaus—deate of Onias—robbery of the temple by Lysimachus—strange sights seen at Jerusalem—temple desecrated by Antiochus—wretched end of Menelaus—Antiochus invades Egypt, but is met by an embassy from Rome—dreadful persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes

291. After the battle of Paneas, before mentioned, Judea and all the neighboring provinces came under the power of Antiochus the Great. But when he made peace with Ptolemy, and gave his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to him, these provinces it was agreed, should go with her, as a part of her dowry. There is, however, reason to believe, that this treaty was never executed, so far as relates to these intermediate countries: for in the reign of Seleucus, the successor of Antiochus, we find them still under the Syrian government; yet if the story of Josephus, related above, respecting Hyrcanus, is worthy of credit, they must have belonged to Egypt at the birth of Ptolemy Philometor. There seems to be, therefore, a chasm in the history of Judea, about this period. It is certain, however, from the testimony, both of Josephus and the author of the second book of Maccabees, that they were in the possession of Seleucus king of Syria, at the time of his decease.

292. The prophet Daniel, who was so particular in predicting the fortunes of Antiochus the Great, has not passed over his successor Seleucus, without notice. He is spoken of as his successor, in the words following: "There should stand upon his estate a raiser of taxes." And it is a fact, that Seleucus was occupied during his whole reign in collecting money from all quarters to pay what had been laid upon his father, by the Romans. The whole sum was fifteen thousand Eubæan talents, which they agreed should be paid by instalments of a thousand talants annually, and the last of the years of this tribute, was the last of his life; so he did little else than gather taxes. But the prophecy goes on to say, that, "Within a few years he should be destroyed, and that neither in anger, nor in battle." And so it turned out, for he was neither slain in foreign war, nor sediton at home, but fell by the treachery of one of his own friends.

293. Seleucus died in the year 175 B. C.; and Heliodorus, who was the treacherous author of his death, used every effort to place himself on the throne. Antiochus the brother of Seleucus, hearing of his death at Athens, and of the treasonable designs of Heliodorus who had secured a powerful party in his favor, applied to Eumenes the king of Pergamus, and to Attalus his brother, to assist him in getting possession of the throne, to which he was the legitimate heir; which, through policy, they did. Fearing a war with the Romans, they knew that the friendship of the king of Syria would be important. Antiochus, when seated on his throne, took the name of Epiphanes, which signifies illustrious, the very opposite of his true character. The unerring pen of the prophet gives an exact description of this prince, when he is called, "a vile person," (Daniel 9:21.) The original, however, would be more correctly rendered, a despicable person. But the truth of this character is also confirmed by the most unexceptionable testimony of profane writers.

Polybius, Philarchus, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus, the two first of whom were contemporary with him, all concur in describing him as a king of corrupt manners, of which they give many pertinent examples. Indeed, his conduct was so extravagant and so unbecoming his royal station, that he appeared to many to be a fool or insane; and for shameless impudence and beastly lust and intemperance, no one could be more debased.

294. Onias, who was now high priest, was held in great esteem by all the people for his piety and justice; but he had a brother named Jason, of a very opposite character. The ambition of this man led him to the impious attempt to supplant his brother. And knowing the high esteem in which Onias was held, he prevailed upon Antiochus, to call him to Antioch, that he might be out of his way. To induce Antiochus, who was in great need of money, to comply with his wishes, he offered him a large sum. In addition to what Jason gave the king for the priesthood, he offered a hundred

and fifty talents more for the liberty of erecting a gymnasium, and an ephibeam, according to the manner of the Greeks, in the city of Jerusalem. He also bargained with the king to have as many of the Jews, as he wished, made freemen of Antioch. This introduction of Grecian customs, and Grecian amusements, had a powerful tendency to corrupt the young people of the Jewish nation, who appear by their long captivity to have been entirely weaned from their propensity to idolatry. But now, through the dissolute principles of Jason, a great corruption of manners took place. The services of the altar were often neglected, and many of the Jews apostatized from their religion.

295. Upon the death of Ptolemy Philometor, Cleopatra his queen, the sister of Antiochus Epiphanes, administered the affairs of the kingdom with much prudence. But on her decease, Ptolomy Philometor being still an infant, the administration fell into the hands of some of the nobility; who speedily involved the country in a war with Antiochus Epiphanes, by a demand of the provinces of Cœlo-Syria, Palestine, and Phenicia, which had always belonged to Egypt, until the times of Antiochus the Great.

296. Ptolemy Philometor, having reached his fourteenth year, was crowned king, and inaugurated with great pomp.

297. Jason, now high priest, sent his brother Menelaus to the king at Antioch, to carry the tribute due from the province of Judea. This man, being even more unprincipled than his brother, availed himself of the favorable opportunity which this embassy afforded, to supplant Jason, as Jason had Onias. The king regardless of the Jewish law and of the wishes of the people, for the sake of a higher price, agreed to advance Menelaus to the priesthood; but on his arrival, the party of Jason proved too powerful for him; so that he was obliged to return to Antioch. Here he showed how little he cared for the priesthood or the religion of his fathers, by offering, with his adherents, to embrace the religion of the king. His only object in aspiring to the office of high priest, was, to obtain the civil power which had been connected with it, since the days of Nehemiah: for during this long period, the high priests were invested with the principal authority in all civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs. Antiochus being much gratified with the offer of Menelaus, to conform to his religion, sent now along with him to Jerusalem, a sufficient force to place him in the office. Jason was, therefore, obliged to flee to the land of the Ammonites.

298. Menelaus, being now advanced to the high priesthood, was little careful to pay the money which he had promised for the office. On which the king summoned both him and the captain of the temple, to appear before him at Antioch. When they arrived at that city, the king was gone to suppress an insurrection in Asia Minor. This gave Menelaus time to make an exertion to raise the money, which he effected by purloining some of the golden vessels which belonged to the temple, and causing them to be sold at Tyre. By this means, he not only raised the sum due to the king, but was able to bribe Andronicus, and some other of the courtiers, to use their influence in his favor.

299. Onias still resided at Antioch, and by his piety and virtue had greatly won the affections of the people. When he was informed of the sacrilege of his brother Menelaus, he sharply reproved him; by which he was so deeply offended, that he got Andronicus to agree to murder Onias. Onias obtaining information of this plot, fled to the famous asylum, at Daphne; but Andronicus, by various flattering and false pretences, having enticed him from the sanctuary, immediately destroyed him. With this act of cruelty towards so good a man, the inhabitants of Antioch were so much

displeased, that when the king returned, they made complaint of Andronicus. Antiochus as soon as he had satisfied himself of the truth of the charge, ordered Andronicus to be taken and killed on the very spot, where he had slain Onias.

300. The time of the priesthood of Onias until his death, was twenty four years.

301. In the meantime, a great mutiny arose at Jerusalem, respecting the vessels which had been taken from the temple by order of Menelaus. He having gone to Antioch, had left Lysimachus, another brother no better than himself, to manage his affairs, during his absence. He used his iustrumentality to procure the vessels above mentioned, which he sold at Tyre. The report of this sacrilegious action having got wind among the people, produced a wonderful tumult. Lysimachus, to defend himself against the multitude, collected around him about three thousand men; but the multitude becoming outrageous, fell upon them, and having slain many of them, found their way to the presence of Lysimachus, whom they put to death.

302. 170, B. C. The war having commenced between Antiochus and the king of Egypt, while he was at Tyre with his army, the Jews sent an embassy of three respectable citizens to complain of the conduct of Menelaus. These ambassadors were commissioned by the Sanhedrim, and on being admitted to an audience, made good their accusation. Menelaus, to avoid the sentence which he deserved, bribed with a great sum, one of the king's chief favorites, by whose influence it was brought about, that Antiochus, instead of punishing the sacrilegious priest, put to death the three envoys from Jerusalem.

303. At Jerusalem, about this time, there were seen strange lights in the air, for forty days together; horsemen and footmen armed with shields, spears and swords, and in great companies fighting with each other, as in battle array; which are supposed to have been ominous of the calamities which speedily fell on that city. Similar appearances were beheld before its utter destruction by the Romans.

304. Antiochus met with but small resistance from the young king of Egypt, who seems voluntarily to have put himself into the power of his enemy. While he was in Egypt, the report reached him of a revolt among the Jews. Jason, thinking this a good opportunity for recovering his lost power, marched to Jerusalem with more than a thousand men and took the city, forcing Menelaus to take refuge in the castle, and exercising the utmost cruelty on the citizens,—putting to death without mercy as many of his adversaries as he could lay hands on. Antiochus marched with all his forces into Judea; and on being told that the people of Jerusalem had greatly rejoiced at a report which had been circulated of his death, he was exceedingly exasperated; and in great rage laying siege to Jerusalem, and taking the city by force, slew of the inhabitants, in three days, forty thousand persons; and sold as many more for slaves, to the neighboring nations.

305. But the impious king not contented with these cruelties, found his way into the temple, under the guidance of Menelaus; and entering into its inmost recesses, polluted by his presence not only the holy place, but also the holy of holies. To complete the climax of his impieties, he sacrificed a sow upon the altar of burnt-offerings; and having ordered broth to be made of part of the flesh, he had it sprinkled all over the temple, that its defilement might be carried to the very uttermost. After this, he proceeded to plunder it, by taking away the golden altar, the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, and other vessels, to the value of eighteen hundred talents of gold.

306. Having completed the desecration and robbery of the temple, the wicked wretch marched home to Antioch, laden with the spoils of both Egypt and Judea. To increase the vexation of the Jews, he appointed one Philip, a Phrygian, of ferocious temper, to be ruler of Samaria; and, what was to them the worst of all, left Menelaus in the office of high priest.

307. As soon as Antiochus approached Jerusalem, Jason fled again to the Ammonites; but being there accused by Aretas king of the Arabians, of some injury done to his dominions in that vicinity, he fled to Egypt, and thence to Greece, hated and despised of all men, and receiving countenance from none, until at last he died miserably in exile, without even a decent burial.

308. When the Egyptians found that through the imbecility of Ptolemy Philometor, their country was fallen under a kind of vassalage to Antiochus, they made his brother king in his room, whose name was at first Ptolemy Euergetes; but on account of his corpulency through luxury, he was afterwards known by the name of Ptolemy Physcon, i. e. the fat. This led Antiochus to make another expedition to Egypt, where, upon his arrival, he laid siege to Alexandria; but being unable to take the city, he went to Memphis, and pretended to put the whole country into the hands of the elder brother, but reserved in his own hands Pelusium, the key of the country. After his departure, the brothers were reconciled, through the influence of Cleopatra their sister, by which means peace was restored to Egypt; the youngest brother having yielded the throne to Philometor.

309. As soon as Antiochus heard of this revolution, he was filled with rage; for he had laid his plans to set them at war with each other, by which means he hoped the country would fall an easy prey to himself. He, therefore, sent a large fleet to Cyprus, from which island he designed to invade Egypt. This he soon after did, and having reduced it, as far as Memphis, laid siege to Alexandria, which he would have taken, had he not been met by a Roman embassy, which put an end to all his fond hopes of subduing Egypt.

310. As Popilius, the chief of this embassy, had been an intimate friend of Antiochus, when he resided, in his younger days, at Rome, he offered to embrace him in a friendly manner; but Popilius drew back, and told him that private friendship must yield to the public interest; and when he observed that Antiochus wished to gain time and not to give an immediate answer, he took his staff, and making a circle round him in the sand, preremptorily told him, that he should not move out of that circle, until he had given his reply.

311. This interposition of the Romans was brought about by an embassy to Rome from Cleopatra and Ptolemy Physcon, during the former siege of Alexandria. The ambassadors, on that occasion, represented the dangerous height of power to which Antiochus was likely to arise, if Egypt should be added to the other countries under his dominion.

312. Antiochus, enraged at the failure of his design upon Egypt, but not daring to resist the Roman power which was now growing formidable in Greece, where Paulus Emilius had just obtained a great victory over the Macedonians, turned his wrath against Judea. On his march homeward from Egypt, he detached from his army two and seventy thousand men, and sent them, under the command of Apollonius, to destroy Jerusalem.

313. The arrival of Apollonius at the holy city was just two years after Antiochus had been there himself, as related above. At first he behaved peaceably, until the Sabbath arrived, when, the people being all collected in their Synagogues, he let loose his soldiers among them; giving them

orders to kill all the men, and seize the women and children, that they might be sold as slaves. This order was executed with the most horrid cruelty. The streets of Jerusalem were made to swim with the blood of its innocent inhabitants. None were spared whom the soldiers could lay hands on.

314. Having completed this work of destruction, Apollonius spoiled the city of all its riches, pulled down the walls, and set fire to it in several places. Out of the ruins of the walls he built a strong fortress over against the temple, so as completely to command that edifice. In this fortress he placed a strong garrison, and there deposited great quantities of arms and munitions of war, together with the spoils which he had taken from the city.

315. From this fortress, the garrison attacked all who came up to the temple with their sacrifices, or to worship, and shed their blood around the courts and the altar; so that in a little time, the service of the temple fell into neglect; for no one durst come up thither to make his offerings according to the law; and in this condition did affairs remain for three years and a half.

316. At this time many of the pious Jews fled into the wilderness, where they concealed themselves in caves and among the rocks, living upon herbs and such scanty provisions, as the wilderness afforded.

317. Antiochus, after his return to Antioch, issued a decree, that all the nations within his dominions, should worship the same gods which he did. This was particularly intended for the destruction of the Jews, not only these in Palestine, but also those who were scattered through the surrounding countries.

318. The heathen conformed, without scruple, to the king's edict, as one form of idolatry was as good, in their view, as another. The Samaritans, also, who were forward, when the Jews were in prosperity, to claim kindred with them, now pretended that they were of Sidonian origin, and manifested no opposition to conforming to the king's edict. The whole weight of this decree, therefore, fell on the afflicted Jews. The Samaritans, moreover, petitioned, that their temple, on Mount Gerizzim might henceforth be dedicated to the Grecian Jupiter; which being favorably received by Antiochus, he sent Nicanor to Samaria, to see that it was done according to their wish.

319. It is also a melancholy truth, that under this grievous persecution, many of the Jews also fell away into heathen idolatry, and became bitter enemies to the religion of their fathers; joining with the king in all his cruel persecutions of their brethren.

320. Antiochus showed that he was in good earnest in executing this decree; for he sent one Athenæus, an old man, well skilled in all the rites of the Gentiles, to carry it into full effect, in Judea and Samaria. All sacrifices to the God of Israel were now prohibited, and all the observances of the Jewish religion were suppressed: their children were forbidden to be circumcised, and their law, wherever a copy could be found, was seized and destroyed. The temple itself was consecrated to Jupiter Olympus, whose image was set up over the altar of burnt-offerings, just before which they built a smaller altar, on which sacrifices were offered to Jupiter.

321. The same change was made in the public worship at Samaria, but with the full consent of the people. Their temple was dedicated to Jupiter, under the name of, Protector of Strangers.

322. The severity with which this cruel and impious decree was executed, will appear by the following narrative. Two women were discovered in Jerusalem to have circumcised their new-born sons. The officers suspended the children around the necks of their mothers, and then led them through the streets of Jerusalem, until coming to a high part of the wall, they precipitated them from the top, and slew all who had given any assistance in the performance of the sacred rite. With the same cruelty they persecuted all who were found practising any part of their old religion. And, to propagate paganism more effectually, chapels for idols were erected in every city, and sacrifices offered to their false deities. The feast of Bacchus was especially celebrated, in which the Jews were forced to join the procession, carrying in their hands branches of ivy.

CHAPTER XIV("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Asmonean family of Modin—constancy of Matthias—he and his friends take refuge in the mountains—martyrdom of Eleazar—of the mother and her seven sons—Assideans—Antiochus aims to destroy all copies of the Law—death of Matthias—Judas Maccabæus—books of the Maccabees—victories of Judas—Antiochus resolves to destroy the whole Jewish nation—wonderful success of Judas—occupies Jerusalem—cleanses and dedicates anew the temple—prophecies respecting Antiochus Epiphanes

323. While these efforts were making utterly to suppress the Jewish religion, and to introduce the impure rites of heathenism, Apelles, one of the officers who had charge of this matter, came to the town of Modin, where Matthias a priest of the course of Joarib, had his residence. He was the son of John, the son of Simon, the son of Asmonæus; from whom the family had the name of Asmoneans. This man was truly zealous for the law of his God; and had five sons, all valiant men, and equally zealous for the law as himself. The names of these young men were, John, surnamed Kaddis, Simon call Thassi, Judas surnamed Maccabæus, Eleazar named Avaran, and Jonathan whose surname was Apphus.

324. Apelles, having called together the inhabitants of Modin, informed them of the purpose of his visit, and persuaded them to comply with the king's mandate; and especially he addressed himself to Mattathias, as being the principal man of the place; promising, that if by his example he would induce the other inhabitants to obey, he should be advanced to great power and wealth. To which the venerable Mattathias answered with a loud voice, so as to be heard by all the people, that no consideration should induce him or any of his family, to forsake the law of their God; but that they would still adhere to the covenant which he had made with their forefathers.

325. When he had made this public declaration of his stedfastness, he saw one of the Jews coming up to offer sacrifice on the heathen altar; at the sight of which, being transported with zeal, like Phineas of old, he fell upon the apostate and slew him at the altar. After this he, and his sons, put Apelles, and all his attendants to the sword, and inviting all who were zealous for the law to follow him, retired to the mountains. Many others, in various places, followed this example; so that the wilderness was filled with the refugees who had escaped from the cruel persecution, which raged throughout Judea.

326. Against them, Philip the Phrygian, governor of Samaria and Jerusalem, went out with an army. At first he persuaded them quietly to submit to the king's authority; promising a complete amnesty for all that was past. To this they all answered, that they would rather die, than forsake

the law of their God. On which, Philip then laid siege to the cave where they were collected, and knowing their sacred regard to the Sabbath, he waited till the arrival of that day of rest, when he fell upon them, not a hand being raised in their defence, and all the men, women, and children, who were collected in that cave, were butchered.

327. Mattathias and his friends, who were in another part of the mountain, when they heard of this disaster, and the reason of it, held a solemn consultation; whether, in such circumstances, they were bound by the laws of the Sabbath, foreseeing, that on these principles, they must all inevitably perish. The result of their deliberation was, that, in such a case, the law of God did not bind them to refrain from self-defence. Accordingly, it was resolved, that after this time, when assaulted by their enemies upon the Sabbath, they would fight for their lives. Having ratified this decree by the consent of all the priests and elders, who were with them, they sent it to those throughout the land, who stood up for the observance of the law; by whom it was received with the like consent; and ever afterwards it was made the rule, in all the wars which the Jews waged against their enemies.

328. The next year 167 B. C. Antiochus, hearing that his edict met with opposition from the Jews in many places, came himself to see to its execution; and to strike terror into the other Jews who adhered to their law, he exercised the greatest cruelties on such as fell into, his hands.

329. It was on this occasion, as we read in the second book of Maccabees, that Eleazar suffered martyrdom; and a mother and her seven sons, who bravely encountered death, “not accepting deliverance;” of which transactions Josephus has also given a very particular account.

330. In the mean time, Mattathias and his company, lay concealed in the fastnesses of the mountains, where they were scarcely accessible: and as soon as Antiochus had returned home, great numbers of the Jews who were zealous for their religion, resorted to Mattathias, to fight for the law of their God, and for their liberties.

331. Among these, there was a company called Assideans, men mighty in valour, and of great zeal for the law; who had voluntarily devoted themselves to a more rigid observance of it than others; whence they obtained the name of Chasidim, or Assideans, that is, the pious. For after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, there were two sets of religious men among them. The first were called Zadikim, the righteous; who were contented with an exact observance of the written law: the others, Chasidim, the pious; who, to the written law, added many observances, which they had received from the tradition of the elders.

332. The company of Mattathias increased so much, that they began to assume the appearance of a little army. He no longer, therefore, confined himself to his fastnesses, but came boldly forth into the inhabited country, and going from village to village, pulled down the heathen altars, caused the male children to be circumcised, and cut off all apostates and persecutors, wherever he came. He, moreover, re-established the worship of the true God; and having recovered several copies of the law, restored the worship of the synagogue.

333. One object at which Antiochus aimed in his persecution, was to destroy all copies of the law. A proclamation was, therefore, made by him, that every person, who was in possession of a copy, should, upon pain of death, deliver it up to his officers. By this means, all the copies of the law fell into the hands of the persecutors, except such as were carried away by those who fled into the

wilderness. And when they did obtain them, they either destroyed them, or polluted them by painting on their margins the images of their Gods; so that the Jews could make no further use of them.

334. This work of destruction, however, had relation only to the books of Moses; for these only, had before this time been read in the synagogues. Those Jews, therefore, who still persisted in attending to the worship of God, being destitute of copies of the law, began now to read select portions of the prophets; and this practice has been continued in the synagogues, ever since. The law and the prophets are both read every Sabbath day, wherever there is a synagogue of the Jews.

335. Mattathias, being advanced in years, was soon worn out with this state of perpetual warfare, and died the very next year after he had commenced his resistance to the impious edict of the king, 166 B. C.

336. Before his death, the old man called his five sons together, and exhorted them to stand up manfully for the law of their God, and with a steady courage and constancy, to fight the battles of Israel, against their present persecutors. That there might be no contention among them about pre-eminence, he, knowing the character of each, appointed Judas to be their captain, and Simon to be their counsellor. Mattathias was then buried by his sons in Modin, in the sepulchres of his forefathers, and great lamentation was made for him by all the faithful in Israel.

337. But the place of this good patriarch was more than supplied by his son Judas Maccabæus; for as soon as his father's funeral was over, he took on him the chief command of the forces collected, according to his father's will; and his army being continually increased by those resorting to him from all parts, who were zealous for the law, he erected his standard and marched forth to meet the enemies of his God. The inscription on his standard consisted of the initial letters of the words, mi camo-ka baalim Jehovah; the meaning of which motto is, "who is like unto thee among the Gods, O Jehovah?" Hence, Judas was called Maccabæus, and all who followed his standard were denominated Maccabees or Maccabæans. Such abbreviations, and names formed from them, are so common among the Jews, that it will be unnecessary to give particular instances. Because Ruffin has called the eldest of the seven brothers who suffered martyrdom Maccabæus, some have supposed that the name was derived from him; but there can be little doubt that Ruffin called him by that name, because, in this war, the chief defenders of the Law were so denominated.

338. The books which have received the title, Maccabees, are four in number. The first and second are contained in the apocrypha of our Bibles, and are reckoned to be canonical by the Romanists. The third is a book, already mentioned, which contains the history of Ptolemy Philometor's attempt to destroy till the Jews in Egypt, by his elephants. The fourth is a history of the martyrdom of Eleazar, and the mother and her seven sons, by Josephus, the Jewish historian.

339. Antiochus the king, having heard, that Paulus Emilius, after his victory over Perseus king of Macedon, had celebrated games at Amphipolis, on the river Strymon, proposed to do the same in imitation of him, at Daphne, near Antioch. These games were celebrated with much pomp, and at great expense, for several days, during which time, the king gave himself up to his usual impudent folly and vileness, to such a degree, that many decent people left the games in utter disgust, at the

indecentcy of his behaviour.

340. But while Antiochus was thus playing the fool at Daphne, Judas was playing another sort of game in Judea. He went round the cities, as his father had done before, destroying the whole apparatus of idolatry, and slaying all apostates from the true religion; and not only delivered the faithful worshippers of God from their oppressors, but fortified the towns, and rebuilt the fortresses, in which he placed strong garrisons, that, henceforward, they might be in a state of security.

341. Apollonius, who was left governor of those regions, now thought it high time to arrest the alarming progress of a force, which, in the beginning, appeared too despicable to create any apprehensions. But Judas, on the first meeting with this impious foe, who had spilled so much innocent blood in Jerusalem, fell upon his army with such vehemence and determined courage, that they could not stand before him. Apollonius himself was slain in the battle, and a great slaughter was made among his soldiers. Among the spoils taken, was the sword of Apollonius the general, which Judas took to himself, and used ever afterwards, in all his battles.

342. Seron, deputy governor of some part of Cœlo-Syria under Macron, on hearing of the overthrow of Apollonius, collected all the forces that were at his command, and marched into Judea, calculating on reaping a rich harvest of renown, by speedily conquering Judas, whose name now began to be terrible. But on meeting with this valiant captain, with his little army, the event was very different from the expectation of the haughty Syrian: for he met with the same fate as Apollonius, being vanquished and slain in battle by Judas, and a great slaughter made among his men.

343. When Antiochus heard of these two defeats, his indignation and fury were enkindled to the highest pitch, and he immediately gave orders, that all his forces should be collected, intending to march in person at their head into Judea, and inflict tremendous vengeance on Judas and his associates. Upon examination of his treasury, however, it was found that there was not money sufficient to pay his troops, which rendered it necessary to suspend his design of utterly extirpating the Jews, on which he had resolved.

344. Antiochus was a king of great profusion and magnificence, dealing out to his followers munificent gifts, so that he obtained the name of the magnanimous and munificent. And thus also his character exactly answered to the description of the prophet, that "he should scatter among his followers the prey, and the spoil and riches." Another prophecy of Daniel was also fulfilled at this tinge. "Tidings came to him out of the East, and out of the North, that troubled him;" (Daniel 11:24-44.) For he now received intelligence, that Artaxias, king of Armenia, had revolted against him; this was from the North; and from Persia, in the East, he learned, that his taxes, of which he now stood in so much need, were no longer duly paid. This failure was the effect of his laws requiring uniformity in religion, by which the minds of the Persians were disturbed and alienated.

345. In this difficult state of his affairs, he resolved to divide his army, and to send the one half of his forces against Judea, under Lysias; and with the other half, to march himself into Armenia and Persia. Accordingly, having invested Lysias, who was of the royal family, with authority over all the countries on this side the Euphrates, and having committed to his tutelage his infant son, then seven years of age, he set out on his march to the east, taking the rout over Mount Taurus into Armenia; where having vanquished Artaxias, and made him prisoner, he marched directly into

Persia.

346. Lysias, intent on executing the king's orders, which required him utterly to destroy and extirpate the whole nation of the Jews, and to settle the country with people brought from among other nations, among whom the lands of the Jews were to be divided, made haste to send an army into Judea; which seemed to become more necessary, every day, as intelligence was constantly received of the progress made by Judas, in bringing all places under his authority. The conduct of this army was committed to Ptolemy Macron, governor of Coëlc-Syria, who appointed Nicanor his lieutenant, and sent him before him with twenty thousand men. Gorgias, an old and experienced soldier, was associated with him in command. But Ptolemy was not long in following with the rest of the forces, which, when joined together, amounted to an army of forty thousand infantry, and seven thousand horse. They met with no obstacle to their march, until they came near Jerusalem, where they encamped at a village, called Emmaus. To this place also resorted merchants to the number of one thousand, who came to purchase slaves. For, Nicanor, having it in view to raise two thousand talents, to pay the tribute due to the Romans, had made proclamation in all the neighboring countries, that ninety Jews would be sold for a single talent. The plan was to kill all the full grown people and sell the rest for slaves.

347. Judas, finding his country threatened with utter destruction, for the orders of the king in relation to the extirpation of the Jewish nation were known, resolved, with his associates to stand on their defence, and bravely fight for their laws, their lives, and their liberties. Having about six thousand men, he divided them into four bands of fifteen hundred each. Of one of these Judas himself took the command, and committed the others to three of his brothers, he then led his little army to Mizpah, there to supplicate God for his divine aid, in this time of imminent danger. This place was chosen for this solemn purpose, because it had formerly been one of the places chosen of God for his worship, and Jerusalem was now in the hands of the enemy. When they had arrived at Mizpah, a day was spent in prayer and fasting before the Lord; immediately after which, they marched to meet the Syrian host.

348. Judas, who was fighting for the law of his God, was very careful to observe all the precepts of that law himself. He, therefore, made proclamation, that all who had recently married wives, built houses, or planted vineyards, were at liberty to return home; for he knew that the battle was not to the strong, and that God could save by few as well as by many. In consequence of this permission, his army was reduced from six to three thousand, with which diminished force he valiantly resolved to encounter an enemy of fifty thousand veterans. He, therefore, went and pitched his camp very near to the Syrian host, informing his men, that it was his purpose, early the next morning, to attack the enemy; for which they prepared accordingly.

349. During the night he received intelligence that Gorgias, by the guidance of certain apostate Jews acquainted with the country, was leading five thousand selected men by unfrequented paths, to attack him by surprise. He immediately determined on a counter march, and on an enterprise of the boldest kind. For instead of waiting for the attack of Gorgias, he marched his force directly on the camp of the enemy, now weakened by having its best soldiers detached on this secret expedition.

350. This bold, and well-planned manœuvre was attended with complete success, for the Syrians left in the camp were taken by surprise, and were thrown into confusion, so that they made

scarcely any resistance, but fled in all directions, leaving three thousand of their men dead on the ground.

351. Judas, finding himself master of the Syrian camp, would not permit his men to lay their hands on the spoil, because the corps of Gorgias, superior in numbers to his force, and chosen men, were untouched; but as soon as his soldiers heard of the total defeat of their main army, they threw down their arms, and fled also. Judas, on being informed of this fact, engaged in the pursuit of the fugitives, nine thousand of whom he slew, and wounded many more.

352. When he and his men returned to the Syrian camp, they found it full of riches, and there got possession of the large sums of money which had been brought to purchase their wives and children, as slaves.

353. Judas and his associates, flushed with this great victory, and their number being increased by the addition of many who now were encouraged by their success, to join them, resolved to march over Jordan, and attack Timotheus and Bacchides, who were collecting forces in that country. Accordingly, they met the army of the enemy and overthrew them in a great battle, killing twenty thousand of their men, and enriching themselves with abundance of spoil. On this occasion, the vengeance of heaven overtook two men who had distinguished themselves by acts of impiety and cruelty. The one was Philarches, the author of many evils to the Jews, who was slain in battle; the other, Callisthenes, the man who set fire to the gates of the temple and burnt them down; he was pursued into a small house, which being set on fire, he perished in the flames.

354. Nicanor, the Syrian general, escaped home with his life, but was ever after held in the utmost contempt, on account of his total failure, in this expedition. To excuse himself, he was constrained to acknowledge the great power of the God of Israel, who, he said, fought for his people. As to Ptolemy Macron, he seems not to have been present, for although he came to Emmaus, it is probable that he returned before the battle.

355. When Lysias heard of the total defeat of all his armies, by Judas with his small band of associates, he was utterly confounded: but knowing how much the king had the execution of his orders at heart in relation to the Jews, he set himself about collecting another army. Having mustered sixty-four thousand men, and five thousand horse, he put himself at their head, and marched into Judea, aiming at nothing less than the utter destruction of the country.

356. On entering Judea, he pitched his camp at a place, called Bethsura, not far to the south of Jerusalem. Here, Judas met him with ten thousand men, and having unshaken confidence in God, he did not hesitate to engage with the whole Syrian army, of seventy thousand chosen men. And God, in whom he trusted, did not disappoint his expectations; for he completely defeated the army of the Syrians, slaying five thousand men, and putting the rest to flight. Lysias being greatly dismayed, returned home to Antioch with the scattered remains of his forces, intending to return with a more unmerous army, the next year.

357. This extraordinary success of Judas, took place in the year 165, B. C.

358. By the retreat of Lysias, the whole country being left under the power of Judas, he proposed to his brethren, that they should march to Jerusalem, and, after cleansing the place, restore the worship of Jehovah. When they arrived, and beheld the destruction of the city, which was a heap

of rubbish, and the defilement of the sanctuary of the Lord, they were all affected with the deepest grief, and were urgent, that the work of cleaning and rebuilding the place, should immediately commence. But as Antiochus had carried away the altar of incense, the table of shew bread, and the golden candlestick, Judas caused to be made out of the gold taken from the Syrians, other holy furniture for the sanctuary, exactly according to the pattern of those which they had lost. By his care, too, all other vessels and utensils, necessary for the service of God, were provided. The ensigns of idolatry being thus removed, and the house of God cleansed, it was determined to dedicate it anew, in a solemn manner. For this celebration, the twenty-fifth of the month Cisleu was appointed, which was about the time of the winter solstice, and the very day on which, three years and a half before, the temple had been profaned, and desolated, by Apollonius.

359. This feast of dedication was celebrated for eight days together, with great joy and thanksgiving, for the deliverance which God had wrought for his people. They commenced the solemnities by offering sacrifices according to the Law, upon the new altar which they had erected. The fire was obtained by striking two flints together; and from the same fire they lighted the seven lamps of the golden candlestick, which stood in the holy place. All other parts of the divine service were now restored, according to the prescriptions of the law, and the usage of former times.

360. This feast continued to be observed by the Jews on the same day of the year, the twenty-fifth of Cisleu, as long as the temple stood. It is once mentioned in the New Testament, and our Saviour was at Jerusalem at the time of its celebration; (John 10:22.) That it was the anniversary of this dedication, and not of that of Solomon, or of Zerubbabel, is manifest, from the season of the year in which it occurred, which is expressly stated to have been the winter; whereas, both the other dedications occurred, at other seasons. This was sometimes denominated, the feast of lights, because, during its celebration the Jews were accustomed to set up candles at every door.

361. Although the temple was now recovered and purified, and the worship of God restored, the fortress or castle, which overlooked and commanded the temple, remained in the hands of the enemy, and was strongly garrisoned by them, partly with heathen soldiers, and partly with apostate Jews. The people who came up to the temple to worship, were therefore, greatly annoyed by the soldiers of the garrison; who often sallied out upon them, and sometimes slew those who were bringing their sacrifices to the temple. This castle stood on a mount which received the name of Acra, on account of the fortress on the top. Judas, at first, stationed some of his men, so as to prevent these sallies from the garrison; but that plan not succeeding, he built high walls around the mountain of the temple, and so fortified the place, as to secure those who were coming to the temple, to worship.

362. As a barrier against the Idumeans, who were now troublesome to the Jews, Judas fortified Bethsura, which was on their borders. But it should be remarked, that what is here called Idumea, is not the same country as the land of Edom, so often mentioned in the Old Testament. This lay between the Dead Sea and Red Sea, and was afterwards known by the name of Arabia-Petrea: but while the Jews were in captivity, the Edomites took possession of the south part of the land which had been assigned to the tribe of Judah, in the original distribution; and also, that part of the land of Simeon, which was included in the general survey of the lot of Judah. There they dwelt ever afterwards, and in process of time, all went over to the Jewish religion.

363. Antiochus, while in Persia, heard the news of the repeated defeats of the Syrians in Judea, at which he was so much enraged, that he immediately turned his face towards that country in haste, to inflict vengeance on the Jews; for his whole soul seemed to be fired with wrath against this people, especially when he heard that Judas had pulled down all his heathen altars, and restored the worship of God. But while on his march to Babylonia, which lay in his way, he was seized with a painful and incurable disease in his bowels, for which no remedy could be found; and yet, so ardent was his desire of vengeance on the Jews, that he could not be persuaded to stop, nor to slacken his march. While pressing on, however, with redoubled speed, the chariot, in which he rode was overturned, and he was bruised, in a fearful manner. He was now obliged to stop in a small village, where he lay suffering excruciating pains. A loathsome ulcer began to discharge fetid matter, and was soon filled with vermin; in which distressing condition he continued until his death. And the hand of God seemed to be heavy upon him, in spirit as well as body; for his conscience was agonized with a sense of his crimes, and especially of his sacrilegious conduct, in regard to the temple at Jerusalem. Polybius relates the fact of his agony of mind on account of this crime, but ascribes it to the attempt to rob the temple of Diana, in Elymais. Josephus, however, and the author of the book of Maccabees, refer it all to his actual and horrid profanation of the temple of God, at Jerusalem.

364. Antiochus being the greatest enemy of the church and people of God, who ever arose, the prophecies have been very particular in describing him. Daniel 11:25-45, seems to be entirely occupied with predicting the character and deeds of this enemy to all righteousness.

365. The revolt of Ptolemy Macron from Ptolemy Philometor, is referred to, in Daniel 11:25-26. Daniel 11:27 relates to the free, and apparently friendly intercourse, which took place between the two kings, at Memphis, when Antiochus and Ptolemy often eat at the same table; but they spoke lies to one another, while they pretended friendship. In Daniel 11:29-30, there is a prediction of the last visit of Antiochus to Egypt, after he had taken off the mask, for then "he returned again towards the south, that is, to Egypt; but he did not then prevail, as in the former and latter attempts," that is in the two former expeditions; because of the ships that came from Chittim; that is the Grecian ships that brought Popilius and the other Roman ambassadors into Egypt, to Alexandria, whose arrival put an end to all his expectations of conquering that country; for they made him, "to his great grief, return out of Egypt." What is said in Daniel 11:43-44 of his stretching forth his hand upon the land of Egypt, "and his having power over the treasures of gold and silver, and all other precious things of that country," was fulfilled exactly, in the frequent expeditions to that country, from which he carried off great spoils.

366. The prophet in this chapter (Daniel 11:1-45) also predicts, in strong language, the disappointment of Antiochus, upon his being prevented by the Romans from seizing on Egypt, which was just ready to fall into his hands: and, also, how he turned his vengeance against the holy city, and desecrated the sanctuary of God. "For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant; so shall he do; and he shall have intelligence with them that forsake the covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

367. These prophecies respecting Antiochus Epiphanes, so exactly correspond with the events related of him by all the historians, that Porphyry, who wrote largely against the Scriptures, acknowledged the exact coincidence, but pretended that these predictions were never penned by Daniel, but by some writer who lived after the time of Antiochus. And to make this the more probable, he compared what is contained in Daniel 11:1-45, with the accounts of all the historians extant in his time, most of which are now lost, and proved that the agreement was most exact; from which he drew the inference, that this chapter must have been written after the events took place. This work of Porphyry is now lost, and also several answers to it by learned christians. All we now have of it is found in Jerome's Commentary on Daniel.

CHAPTER XV("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

History of Judas continued—distressing condition of the Jews—death of Eleazar brother of Judas—death of Antiochus—miserable end of Menelaus—civil war between the two brothers in Egypt—interposition of the Romans—Demetrius succeeds Antiochus—Alcimus appointed high priest—the quarrel of the two brothers Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Physcon brought before the Roman senate, and decided

368. Judas Maccabæus was not permitted to be idle; for although the Syrians were driven from Judea, the neighboring nations seemed to have entered into a general conspiracy against the Jews. Judas, therefore, turned his arms against the Edomites, who had been foremost in forming this confederation. Of them he slew twenty thousand men. He next passed over Jordan to the land of the Ammonites, where he fought many battles, and having vanquished the enemies of the Jews in that quarter, and taken Jazar, returned to Judea.

369. The heathen about Gilead, hearing of the discomfiture of so many of their friends, rose against the Jews, and having slain a thousand of them in the land of Tob, forced the rest to take refuge in a castle. The people of Phenicia also rose against the Jews of Galilee; and Judas, receiving urgent calls for help from both these places, was at a loss, which way he should march. He, therefore, consulted the Sanhedrim, who advised him to divide his forces. Accordingly, he and Jonathan passed over Jordan, and arrived just in time to relieve the Jews who were besieged in Dathema.

370. Simon, took another division of the army, and marched to Galilee, where also he met with great success; for in many conflicts with the enemy, he came off uniformly victorious. But finding that the Jews in those parts could not be protected from the heathen round about, he took measures to have them transplanted into Judea.

371. While these two divisions of the army had been completely successful, a third which had been left at Jerusalem, under Joseph and Azarias, having undertaken an expedition against Jamnia, on the sea coast, where Gorgias commanded, were by him repulsed with great loss.

372. Lysias, who, after the death of Antiochus, had seized upon the chief authority, as he had the young king in his power, now resolved to march with a great army against Judas. He collected sixty thousand infantry, as many cavalry as he could find, and eighty elephants, and with this force marched towards Judea.

373. This great army commenced the war by laying siege to Bethsura; but Judas, coming upon them, slew eleven thousand of his infantry, and sixteen hundred of his cavalry, and put the rest to flight.

374. Lysias, growing weary of this unsuccessful war, now made peace with Judas and his people, Quintillus Memmius, and Torquatus Manlius, who were then ambassadors from the Romans, in Syria, were very helpful to the Jews on this occasion. The edict of Antiochus, requiring the people to conform to the heathen worship was entirely rescinded; and liberty was given them, to live according to their own laws.

375. But this law was not of long continuance. The nations by whom the Jews were surrounded, began to raise disturbances as soon as Lysias was gone. Judas was soon called to inflict punishment on Joppa, where two hundred Jews had been drowned. He burnt their shipping, and then turning to Jamnia treated them in the same manner, and for a similar offence.

376. He was next called into Gilead, where Timotheus continued to raise disturbances. He had now collected a more numerous army, which was entirely overthrown by Judas, and thirty thousand of his men slain. Timotheus himself was in his flight taken prisoner, but on the promise that he would release many Jews whom he had in his power, he was premitted to go free. Judas, finding that the Jews beyond Jordan would be perpetually molested, treated them as Simon had the Galileans, and transplanted them into the land of Judea.

377. As the garrison, however, in the fortress at Jerusalem, was a perpetual thorn in the sides of the Jews, Judas collected a great force, and prepared all sorts of engines of war used in sieges, and pressed with all his might to take it; but the apostate Jews, who were in the garrison, knowing, that they should receive no mercy if the castle were taken, several of them made their escape, and going to the king at Antioch, urged their suit so earnestly, that he was persuaded to collect a great army of a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, and thirty-two elephants, at the head of which he marched himself, accomplished by Lysias his guardian. When they arrived in Judea, they laid seige to Bethsura, when Judas making an attack upon them in the night, slew about five thousand men, and returned without suffering any loss. The next day Judas encountered the whole Syrian army with his small force; but finding that he must be overwhelmed by the multitude, withdrew to Jerusalem.

378. In this battle, Eleazar, one of Judas' brothers, lost his life, by a very daring act. Observing that one of the elephants was much larger than the rest, he imagined that the king was carried on the back of this large animal, and that by destroying him, he should deliver his country, and obtain everlasting renown; he ran under the elephant and pierced his belly with his sword; but before he could make his escape, the wounded beast fell upon him, and crushed him to death.

379. Bethsura, now, after a brave defence by its garrison, fell into the hands of the Syrians. Antiochus marched immediately to Jerusalem, and laid siege to the sanctuary: and when they were reduced to great straits, deliverance was obtained in an unexpected manner.

380. When Antiochus Epiphanes was near his end, he had called one of his generals named Philip, and in a formal manner, appointed him the guardian of his young son; and committed to him his signet and his crown. But before Philip arrived at Antioch, Lysias, who had been left governor of Syria, and guardian of the young king, had taken the supreme power into his own hands, and

retained possession of the king's person, refusing to resign either the one or the other to Philip. But now while Lysias, and all the best troops were absent, he watched his opportunity for seizing Antioch, and endeavoring to make himself master of the Syrian empire. Lysias, hearing of this event, found it necessary to return back, and thereupon, again made peace with the Jews.

381. Menelaus, the wicked high priest of the Jews, had a great hand in instigating the king to engage in this war; and accompanied the Syrian army into Jerusalem, with the hope that he would be restored to his office; and also that the government of the whole country would be put into his hands. But when the issue of the war proved to be unfortunate, Lysias was so much exasperated against this wretch, that he accused him to the king as the author of all the mischief: on which he was condemned to death, and carried to Berhœa, a city of Syria, where he was cast headlong into a tower of ashes, which was in that place. This punishment was inflicted for treason, sacrilege, and such other crimes, as were considered more than commonly enormous; and was well adapted to the shocking crimes of which this man had been so long and signally guilty.

382. On the death of Menelaus, the office of high priest should have descended to Onias, the son of that Onias whom Menelaus caused to be put to death at Antioch: but it was conferred on one Alcimus, or Jacimus, as he is sometimes called; a man not less wicked than Menelaus himself. Onias being much dissatisfied that he was thus deprived of his right, escaped from Antioch, where he had resided from the time of his father's death, and fled into Egypt; where he succeeded in insinuating himself into the favor of Ptolemy Philometor, and his queen Cleopatra.

383. On the return of the King and Lysias with the Syrian army, Antioch was, without difficulty recovered, and Philip, seeking safety in flight, soon after perished.

384. It has been seen, that there were two brothers in Egypt, Ptolemy Philometor, and Ptolemy Physcon, both of whom had been crowned; and although for a while there was a compromise between them, their rival pretensions soon involved them in a fresh quarrel. In this contest, Ptolemy Physcon had prevailed against his brother, and driven him out of the kingdom.

385. The Roman senate, hearing of this civil war in Egypt, sent orders to their ambassadors in Syria, Cneius Octavius, Spurius Lucretius, and Lucius Aurelius, to go to Egypt, and settle the dispute between the two brothers. But while they were on their journey, Philometor had fled, and was on his way to Rome, on foot, and in a sordid habit. Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, late king of Syria, who was then a hostage at Rome, being informed of the fact, provided a royal equipage and robes for Philometor, and met him before he reached the city. He not only refused, however, to accept them, but would not even permit Demetrius to accompany him. He did this, that the senate seeing his miserable condition, might be the more disposed to compassionate his cause, and grant him the assistance which he asked.

386. As soon as the Senate heard of his arrival, they sent for him, and immediately directed that he should be furnished with every thing answerable to his royal dignity; and having heard his complaint, decreed that the kingdom should be restored to him, appointing Quintus and Canuleius, two of their own body, to see that their decree was executed. These ambassadors, on their arrival in Egypt, made a compromise between the brothers, assigning Egypt and Cyprus to Philometor, and Lybia and Cyrene to Physcon.

387. The Roman ambassadors who were sent to Syria, finding that the Syrian fleet contained more ships, and the Syrian army more elephants, than were allowed by the treaty made with Antiochus the Great, proceeded to burn the supernumerary ships, and slay the supernumerary elephants. Many of the Syrians were exceedingly indignant at this arbitrary proceeding of the ambassadors, and one Leptines was so transported with rage that he fell upon Cn. Octavius, while he was anointing himself at Laodicea and slew him in the gymnasium. This Octavius, had recently been consul at Rome, and was the first of his family, who had attained that high honor. From him was descended Octavius Cesar, (commonly called Augustus,) who was so long emperor of Rome.

388. It was supposed that Lysias had secretly instigated the man to commit this violation of the law of nations; but he immediately dispatched ambassadors to Rome to disclaim this act, on the part of the government. The Senate heard them but returned no answer, saying that they would reserve their judgment of the true authors of the murder, until future inquiry.

389. Demetrius, having made another unsuccessful attempt to obtain permission to return to his own country, by the advice of his friends, (among whom was Polybius the historian,) made his escape from Rome. As soon as he arrived at Tripoli he gave out that he was sent by the Roman Senate to take possession of the kingdom. The cause of Eupator being now considered desperate, most of the people joined themselves to Demetrius; and Lysias was put to death by his own soldiers.

390. The first act of Demetrius, after his accession to the throne, was the punishment of two tyrannical governors, whom Antiochus had set over the province of Babylonia. This act of prompt and salutary justice rendered him so exceedingly popular in that region, that they gave him the surname of Soter, which he ever afterwards retained.

391. Alcimus, who, as was before said, received the appointment of high priest from the king of Syria, when he came to Jerusalem to enter on the office, was rejected by the people, because he was one of those who had conformed to the religious customs of the Greeks, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Upon this he collected all the apostate Jews, then living at Antioch, and went with them in a body to Demetrius, to petition for relief against Judas and his brethren; accusing them of slaying many of the king's friends, and expelling others from the country.

392. Demetrius was so exasperated against Judas, in consequence of these misrepresentations, that he forthwith sent Bacchides, governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, and renewed the appointment of Alcimus to be high priest, joining him also with Bacchides in authority over the country. On their first arrival, they attempted to circumvent Judas, by offering conditions of peace; but he was aware of their designs, and escaped the snare. Others, however, were deceived by them, and among the rest a company of Assideans, and some of the rulers; who relying on the pacific professions of Bacchides and Alcimus, committed themselves to them. No sooner, however, had they got them in their power than they put them all to death.

393. Bacchides now returned home, leaving Alcimus part of his forces to secure him in the possession of the country, who had influence to draw over many deserters, and in no small degree to disturb the state of Israel. But no sooner was Bacchides gone, than Judas came forth with his forces, and took vengeance on those who had revolted from him, Alcimus being unable to stand before him. This wicked disturber of the public peace, now resorted again to the king, and renewed

his complaints against Judas and his brethren; declaring that as long as Judas lived, the king's authority could never be established in that country. This being confirmed by other enemies of the Jews about the king's person, Demetrius, more incensed than ever, sent another army against them under the command of their old enemy, Nicanor, with peremptory orders, to cut off Judas, disperse his followers, and so reinstate Alcimus in the office of high priest. Nicanor knowing the power of Judas, as having been already defeated by him, was afraid to encounter him in battle. He, therefore, endeavored to enter into negotiation for peace; and accordingly a treaty was made between them; after which Judas and Nicanor communed together, in a friendly manner.

394. But Alcimus not liking the treaty, as thinking that his own interests had not been sufficiently provided for, went a third time to the king, and so prepossessed him against the peace, that he refused to ratify it; and sent positive orders to Nicanor, to renew the war, and not to cease until Judas was slain, or sent prisoner to Antioch. Nicanor, was then, though reluctantly, obliged to engage in new hostilities with Judas.

395. When the agreement made between the two Ptolemies, was laid before the Senate, they were not satisfied with the division which the ambassadors had made, thinking that too much had been allotted to Philometor, and too little to Physcon. They, therefore, determined, that Cyprus should be taken from Philometor and given to his brother. This was brought about very much by the presence of Physcon at Rome, where, in person, he had the opportunity of urging his suit with the senators. Ambassadors were now sent back with him, to obtain the consent of Philometor, to this new arrangement. While they went forward to Alexandria, to carry on the negotiation, Physcon waited, on the borders of the kingdom, for the result. Philometor treated the ambassadors with great respect, but contrived to spin out the negotiation for forty days, and then peremptorily refused to comply with the last arrangement; but professed his willingness to abide by the allotment first agreed on.

396. At the same time the affairs of Physcon became more involved in difficulty, on account of the conduct of the Cyrenians; who having heard an ill report of him, were unwilling to come under his government, and raised the standard of rebellion against him. This event prevented his return to Rome, but Merula, the Roman ambassador, who had been employed in the negotiation, spread before the senate a full account of the whole transaction: on which it was decreed, that all friendship and alliance with Philometor should be broken off; and his ambassador was ordered to leave Rome forthwith.

CHAPTER XVI("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The war renewed—suicide of Razis—victory of Judas and death of Nicanor—Bacchides is sent to succeed Nicanor—death of Judas—dreadful state of the Jews—Jonathan and Simon, brothers of Judas, make a successful stand—death of Alcimus—the Jews enjoy rest for two years—war between the two Ptolemies renewed—Deme Trius abandons himself to dissipation—an impostor arises to claim his crown—both court the aid of Jonathan—Jonathan assumes the office of high priest—Alexander Balas obtains the throne of Syria

397. Nicanor, having received his orders to renew the war, came to Jerusalem with his army, and endeavored, by craft, to get Judas into his power. For, in the first place, he invited him to a conference, with which Judas complied, relying on the peace which had been agreed upon; but

soon finding that there was an ambush laid for him, he made his escape; after which all confidence was at an end, and the war again commenced. In the first action, Nicanor lost five thousand men, and was forced to retreat; and being greatly chagrined and mortified at his defeat, he vented his rage on Razis, a venerable senator of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who was held in the highest esteem by the people for his pious and benevolent acts. Nicanor therefore judged that it would be felt as a sore calamity to the Jews, if he were cut off; he therefore sent a body of men to take him, intending to put him to death. This man, however, was in a castle, where he defended himself for some time, with great bravery; but finding that the place could not hold out any longer, he rashly put a termination to his own life, by falling on his sword. This act is spoken of with approbation by the writer of the Maccabees, which is a clear proof that he was not an inspired man. No countenance is given to such acts of bravery, any where in the Holy Scriptures. The idea, that suicide, in such cases, was not only lawful, but noble and heroic, was derived from intercourse with the Greeks and Romans. It is, moreover, related, that when he found that the wound did not produce immediate death, he thrust his hand into it, and pulled out his own bowels. For this act, he has been reckoned a martyr by the Jews; but St. Augustine, in his Epistle to Dulcilius, has given unanswerable reasons to prove, that it was unjustifiable.

398. Nicanor, then, went up into the fortress, situated on the mountain of the temple, and demanded that Judas and his associates should be delivered up; threatening, in case of refusal, that he would pull down the altar and burn the temple, and in their place erect a temple to Bacchus. At the same time, he uttered many blasphemous words against the temple, and against the God who was there worshipped. But he soon experienced the power and vengeance of Him whose name and worship he dared to blaspheme. For coming out with all his forces to encounter Judas, Nicanor was slain on the very first onset, on which the whole of his army took to flight. But all the country rising up against them, scarcely a man of them was able to effect his escape.

399. When Judas and his men returned from the pursuit, to the field of battle, and found Nicanor among the slain, they cut off his head and his right hand, and hanged them up in the temple, as a memorial of the vengeance of Jehovah.

400. This victory was gained on the 13th of the month Adar; and on account of the wonderful deliverance obtained on that day, it was resolved, that, ever afterwards, it should be observed as an anniversary of thanksgiving: accordingly, it is so commemorated by the Jews, until this day.

401. Judas was not only a valiant and skilful general, but a wise politician. Finding that there was likely to be no end to the Syrian invasions, and having heard of the power and magnanimity of the Romans, he sent ambassadors to Rome, to obtain their protection against the Syrians. These ambassadors, Jason and Eupolemus, were kindly received, and a decree was made, that the Jews should be acknowledged as the friends and allies of the Romans. A letter was at the same time written to Demetrius, ordering him to desist from vexing them, and threatening him with war if he persisted. But before this favorable intelligence reached Judea, Judas was no longer in the land of the living.

402. Demetrius, upon hearing of the defeat and death of Nicanor, collected another army of chosen troops, and again sent Bacchides and Alcimus into Judea. When this army arrived, Judas had with him no more than three thousand men; and most of these were so terrified at the mighty force which they had to oppose, that they deserted his standard; so that he was left with only eight

hundred men. But such was the undaunted spirit and unshaken confidence of the man, that with this handful of soldiers, he dared to engage the host of the Syrians. In this instance, his courage seems to have degenerated into rashness; or, at least, the event naturally suggests this idea; for in this unequal battle, Judas himself was slain. I do not believe, that in all the annals of the world, there is exhibited to our view, a character more distinguished for bravery and extraordinary success: taking into view the small number of his soldiers, and the numerous and well appointed armies, headed by experienced generals, to which he was opposed. But he evidently was actuated by a spirit superior to mere human courage. His confidence was firmly fixed on God, in whose aid he relied in all difficulties, and in all times of danger.

403. After the death of Judas, the Syrians overran the land; the apostate Jews came forward in multitudes, and Alcimus was put in possession of the object of his ambition. Now a time of great distress was experienced by all the faithful Jews; not surpassed even by the persecutions in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Bacchides used great diligence in finding out, and punishing, all the Maccabæans, wherever they could be found; putting them to death, with every species of indignity and cruelty.

404. At length, Jonathan and Simon the brothers of Judas, collected a small force of those who were disposed, to resist the tyranny and cruelties of Bacchides and Alcimus, and retreated into the wilderness of Tekoa; where being defended by the river Jordan on the one hand, and a morass on the other, they could not with advantage be attacked.

405. To secure their goods in these dangerous times, Jonathan and Simon sent their brother John, with All their carriages and baggage, to their friends, the Nabatheans, to be kept for them until they should be in a condition to reclaim their property: but while he was on his journey, he was attacked by the Jambrians, a tribe of Arabians, who slew him, and seized all the goods which he had under his care.

406. To revenge this unprovoked violence, Jonathan and Simon, having learned that a great marriage was to be solemnized on a certain day, at Medaba, the chief town of the Jambrians, placed an ambush by the road, along which the bridegroom and bride with their numerous attendants were to pass, in meeting each other; who killed most of the party, and took from them much rich spoil.

407. Bacchides, learning that Jonathan and his adherents were encamped on the bank of the Jordan, made an assault on them, on the Sabbath day; calculating upon no resistance; but Jonathan, agreeably to the decision made in the days of Mattathias his father, exhorted his brethren to resist the enemy, which they did so manfully, that they killed a thousand men: but not being able to withstand so great a multitude, they swam the Jordan and escaped.

408. The next year died Alcimus, the great troubler of Israel. As soon as he was established in the priesthood, he set himself to corrupt and change the Jewish religion; endeavoring to bring it to a nearer conformity with the religious institutions of the Greeks. When the temple was rebuilt after the return from captivity, there was erected around the sanctuary, a low wall, it is said, by order of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, beyond which, no uncircumcised person was permitted to pass. This wall, commonly called Hil, Alcimus directed to be removed, that the Gentiles might be put on a level with the Jews. But during the progress of this work, he was struck with the palsy,

and suddenly expired.

409. After the death of Alcimus, Bacchides was recalled to Antioch, and for two years the land had rest. This was probably owing to the letter which Demetrius received from the Roman Senate: for he was solicitous not to provoke the displeasure of that formidable power; and, indeed, they had never recognized him as the lawful king of Syria. For, as has been related, he fled from Rome, when residing there as a hostage, and coming into Syria, usurped the throne, and slew Antiochus Eupator, the reigning king. He, therefore, took every opportunity of gratifying the Romans, and so earnestly and repeatedly urged his petition for reconciliation, with their ambassadors, that at length he accomplished his wish, and was acknowledged king of Syria, by the Roman Senate, and all the treaties made with the former kings of Syria, were renewed with him.

410. The death of Alcimus occurred in the year 160 B. C.

411. The Jews having now, as was before said, two years of uninterrupted quiet, Jonathan exerted himself to restore every thing, to its proper state: but the Jews who were ill effected to him and his cause, sent again to Antioch, and procured an order for Bacchides to return with his army into Judea. A conspiracy was also formed to seize Jonathan and his brothers, and deliver them up: but he, receiving intelligence of it, seized about fifty of the conspirators and put them to death. He and Simon then retreated to the strong fortress called Bethbasi, where one of them remained to defend the place, while the other hung upon the skirts of the Syrian army, until Bacchides grew weary of the war, and turned his wrath against some of those who induced him to undertake the expedition. At which time, Jonathan and Simon made to him offers of peace, which he gladly accepted, and solemnly swore that he would never any more carry on war with the Jews, with which he complied; for he never after this returned in a hostile manner to Judea.

412. In the year 166 B. C., another war broke out between the two Ptolemies. Physcon became so odious to his subjects, that some of them way-laid him, and in attempting to assassinate him, wounded him severely. He attributed it to his brother, who, he supposed, had hired these assassins to kill him; on which, he repaired again to Rome, where he showed his scars, and entered grievous complaints against his brother. The Romans, without much inquiry, directed an army to accompany him, and put him in possession of Cyprus, which Philometor refused to give up. Being met, however, on the island, by Philometor, he was vanquished, and taken prisoner; but his mild and affectionate brother, instead of putting him to death, according to his deserts, restored him to his kingdom in Lybia and Cyrene, and added some other territories, to render the possession more valuable.

413. Demetrius now gave himself up entirely to drinking and dissipation. He relinquished all care of the public administration, and shut himself up in a castle, near Antioch, from which he seldom came out. But while he was thus indulging himself in indolence and pleasure, an unexpected enemy arose. Heraclides, a favorite of Antiochus Epiphanes, whom Demetrius had banished from Babylonia, on account of his male-administration, found an obscure young man, called Balas, who was willing to subserve his views, by acting the part of an impostor, and pretending that he was the son of Antiochus Epiphanes. This imposture could have had little effect, had not several of the crowned heads of the neighboring countries favored it; but Ptolemy, Attalus, and Ariarthes, having all received great provocation from Demetrius, were disposed to lend their countenance to any scheme which would have a tendency to annoy, or ruin him.

414. The three kings, above mentioned, having acknowledged the impostor, under the name of Alexander son of Antiochus, Heraclides took him to Rome; and to give color to the deception, carried with him Laodice, the real daughter of Antiochus. There, by craft and false pretences, he got him acknowledged, and obtained a decree, not only permitting him to return to Syria, for the recovery of his kingdom, but granting him aid in accomplishing this object.

415. These events roused Demetrius from his inactivity; and as he had a high opinion of the powers and fidelity of Jonathan, and thought it would be important to secure his services, he appointed him his general, in Judea, with authority to raise forces. As soon as Jonathan received this letter, he caused it to be read in the hearing of the officers of the garrison, in Jerusalem; by which they were induced to give up the hostages which they had in the fortress.

416. Alexander, hearing what Demetrius had done to gain Jonathan, sent proposals to him also. He offered to make him high priest, with the title of the kings's friend. He also sent him a purple robe, such as princes only wear, and a crown of gold. On this, Demetrius sent new offers to Jonathan, promising him all that had been offered by Alexander, together with extraordinary privileges to the Jewish people.

417. But the Jews, remembering the long and bitter enmity of Demetrius to their nation, and how much injury he had done them, could place no confidence in him, and therefore resolved to take sides with Alexander.

418. Jonathan now entered on the office of high priest, which had been vacant for seven years; and from this time the office became settled in the family of the Asmoneans, and so continued, until the days of Herod. From the Babylonish captivity, the office descended on the family of Jozadak, until the time of Onias the third. After his expulsion, it was occupied by Jason, his brother; then by Menelaus, an older brother; and then by Alcimus. Whether the Asmoneans were of the family of Jozadak, is nowhere said; but they were of the course of Joarib, which was the first class of the sons of Aaron.

419. Alexander, backed by the three king's already mentioned, and his tide being acknowledged by the Romans, was in a condition to cope with Demetrius, on equal footing. Demetrius, on the other hand, was not inactive in preparing for a contest, in which his kingdom was at stake. The hostile armies met, and a decisive battle took place, in which, although the wing commanded by Demetrius himself gained some advantage, the left wing was put to flight, and Demetrius slain in the pursuit.

420. Alexander, having now obtained the throne of Syria, sent to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, requesting his daughter Cleopatra, in marriage. To this Ptolemy consented, and carried her to Ptolemais where the nuptials were celebrated. To this wedding, Jonathan the high priest of the Jews, was invited, and was received with signal favor, by both the kings; especially by Alexander, who had him clothed in purple, and enrolled among the chief of his friends. And although his enemies presented accusations against him, the king would listen to none of them; but sent him back with honor, to Judea.

CHAPTER XVII("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Onias obtains the favor of the king and queen of Egypt—builds there a temple similar to that of Jerusalem, where daily offerings were made—contentions between the Jews and Samaritans about the place of worship—Hipparchus the Astronomer—war between Alexander the impostor and Demetrius—the former, forsaken by his father-in-law, is overthrown and slain

421. Onias, who on being disappointed of the high priests' office, had fled into Egypt, became a favorite both with the king and queen; for he was a great soldier, and a great politician. By degrees, he was advanced to the highest station in the army, and also at court; and had influence to introduce another Jew of talents into the royal favor, whose name was Dositheus: these two, in fact, managed all the affairs of the kingdom.

422. Onias made use of his influence, to induce the king to permit him to erect, in Egypt, a temple, similar to that at Jerusalem, with the grant, that the office of high priest should, forever, be continued in his family. He did not find it difficult to persuade the king, that this would be good policy, since it would induce many of the Jews to settle in Egypt. But the difficulty was, to reconcile the minds of the Jews to the idea of worshipping any where else, but at Jerusalem, which had been selected by God himself, as the site of his temple.

423. To satisfy their minds, he referred to the prophecy of Isaiah, (Isaiah 19:18-19) where it is said, "In that day, shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts: one shall be called the city of Destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord, in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof, to the Lord."

424. The place selected for this temple, was, Heliopolis, only twenty-four miles from Memphis; where, formerly, a temple had stood, which was now in ruins. Onias made it exactly according to the pattern of that at Jerusalem; although not so high, nor so costly: and furnished it with all the apparatus for worship; an altar of burnt-offerings, an altar of incense, a table of shew-bread, and other utensils and vessels, such as were used in the temple at Jerusalem; except, that instead of a candlestick with seven lamps, one large lamp was suspended in the holy place. In this temple daily sacrifices were offered, and the whole ritual service of the law performed, by priests, just as it was at Jerusalem; and continued so to be, until after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, when it was shut up, and soon afterwards utterly demolished.

425. The building of this temple took place about the year 150 B. C.

There is pretty strong internal evidence, that the prophecy of Isaiah was translated into Greek, by Jews, who worshipped at this temple, and consequently, that the version was made after its erection; for the text cited above, is here rendered not the city of destruction, as in the Hebrew; but (Πολις Ασεδεκ κληθησεται η μια πολις,) one of the cities shall be called the city of righteousness.

426. About this time there arose a great commotion in Alexandria, between the Jews and Samaritans, respecting the place appointed by God for his worship. Ptolemy, in order to quell it, appointed a day to hear both parties, before himself and council. On this trial, the Samaritans failed entirely in their proof, and their leaders were condemned to death, for exciting so great a disturbance, without cause.

427. As soon as Alexander found himself in quiet possession of a rich kingdom, he gave himself up to luxury and vice. He surrounded himself with lewd women, and relinquished all attention to

the government. The principal management of affairs was left to one Ammonius, who acted in a very cruel manner towards the people. By such a course of life, Alexander soon became odious to his subjects, and Demetrius, the son of the late king, now grown to manhood, thought this a fit opportunity to recover his crown. Accordingly, he landed in Syria, with some mercenaries from Crete, and soon gathered a considerable army, which was greatly strengthened by the revolt of Apollonius, the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who declared in favor of Demetrius.

428. Jonathan, who had entered into a treaty with Alexander, adhered to his interest. Apollonius, therefore, turned his forces, in the first place, against him; and drawing together a large army at Jamnia, sent a challenge to Jonathan, to meet him in battle. Jonathan marching out of Jerusalem with ten thousand men, took Joppa, in the presence of Apollonius and his army; and then joining battle with him, vanquished him in the open field, and pursued his broken forces to Azotus. Having taken the place, he set it on fire and burnt it down, together with the temple of Dagon, which was in it. In consequence of this victory, Alexander sent Jonathan a buckle of gold, such as was used only by the royal family; and gave him the city of Ekron.

429. About the year 147 B. C., flourished the celebrated philosopher Hipparchus of Nice, in Bithynia. He spent thirty-four years in studying the motions and relative positions of the heavenly bodies. The Jews call him Abrachus, and his name is deservedly great among them; for their rabbis received from him that form of the year, which has been in use among them, ever since.

430. The war between Alexander and Demetrius, for the crown of Syria, still continued; and Ptolemy Philometor being desirous of assisting Alexander his son-in-law, marched with a great army into Palestine; where he was met by Jonathan the high priest of the Jews, whom he received with great honor and friendship, and took him with him to his camp at Ptolemais. But here he found, that snares were laid for his life by Ammonius, the general of Alexander; and when he demanded of this prince, that Ammonius should be delivered up to him, for punishment, he met with a refusal. Ptolemy was, on this account, so much displeased with Alexander, that he not only ceased to aid him, but even took away his daughter from him, and gave her to Demetrius, his competitor for the crown.

431. The people of Antioch had Ammonius in such hatred, that they rose up tumultuously against him, and slew him; and at the same time revolted from Alexander, and opened their gates to Ptolemy, whom they invited to be their king. This offer he declined and recommended to them Demetrius, the legitimate heir of the kingdom, whom accordingly they received into Antioch, and placed on the throne of his ancestors.

432. Alexander, who was then in Cilicia, hearing of these events, hastened towards Antioch, where he laid waste the surrounding country; until, being met by the army of Demetrius, he was overthrown in a decisive battle; and made his escape with only five hundred horse, to Zabdiel, an Arabian prince, to whom he had privately sent his children for security. But here, in a few days, he was murdered by those in whom he most confided. Such was the end of this successful impostor, after a reign of five years.

433. The head of Alexander was brought by his murderers to Ptolemy, who was greatly delighted at the sight of it; but his joy was short-lived, for in a few days afterwards, he himself received a wound, which caused his death, after a reign of thirty-five years.

Carthage and Corinth destroyed in the same year—history of Polybius—Cleopatra marries Physcon, who murders her son by her former husband—Syria in a disturbed state—tyrannical conduct of Demetrius—Tryphon conspires against him and over comes him—Theos is made king, who grants great privileges to Jonathan and Simon

434. The year 147 B. C., was not only famous for the death of the kings of Egypt and Syria, within a few days of each other; but also for the destruction of the two famous cities, Carthage and Corinth. The former by Scipio Africanus; the latter, by L. Mummius. In the burning of Corinth, all the brass was melted down, and mingled with other metals, which formed the famous Corinthian brass of the ancients.

435. With this year ends the history of Polybius, which he wrote in forty books; extending from the beginning of the second Punic war, to the end of the third. Of these, only five are now extant; which are written with so much spirit and correctness, that they serve to increase our regret for the loss of all the rest. Polybius was a native of Megapolis in Arcadia, the son of Lycortas, the famous supporter of the Achæan league. Being overcome by the Romans, a thousand of the principal youth were carried to Rome, as hostages, of whom Polybius was one. It was here, that he wrote his history.

436. Ptolemy Philometor being dead, his wife, Cleopatra—who was also his sister—wished to secure the succession to her son, then an infant; but Ptolemy Physcon, king of Cyrene, the brother of Philometor, now laid in his claim. On this occasion, Onias and Dositheus, surrounded the queen with an army of Jews; but the Romans interposing, to prevent a civil war, proposed that Physcon should marry his brother's widow, and that after his death, the son of Cleopatra should succeed to the throne. This was agreed to; but on the very day of the nuptials, this unprincipled and unfeeling wretch, murdered the son of his brother, in his mother's arms.

437. The affairs of Syria were also in a disturbed state, under Demetrius, who was a young and inexperienced man, and of an unhappy disposition.

438. Jonathan, finding all quiet in Judea, resolved to reduce the fortress of Jerusalem. But as soon as he commenced the siege, complaints were made against him to Demetrius, who, coming to Ptolemais, summoned Jonathan to appear before him. He accordingly came down, attended by some of the priests and chief people of Jerusalem, and bringing with him valuable presents for the king. And he so managed, as to obtain the favor of Demetrius, who not only confirmed him in his priesthood, but admitted him to a chief place among his friends, and bestowed on him several cities which had formerly belonged to the Samaritans.

439. Demetrius conducted himself in a very tyrannical manner at Antioch, so that the inhabitants became greatly disaffected towards him; and on one occasion rose in arms, and would have destroyed him, had it not been for a body of Jewish soldiers, whom Jonathan sent to his aid, in consideration of a promise, that the garrison should be removed from the fortress in Jerusalem, which he was unable to reduce, either by violence or stratagem. These Jewish soldiers fell upon the inhabitants of Antioch; and, it is said, slew no less than a hundred thousand of them. Thus retaliating the massacres of the Syrians, in the streets of Jerusalem, in former days.

440. A man, called Tryphon, observing how odious Demetrius had become to his subjects by his tyranny formed the design of placing one of Alexander's sons on the throne; or rather, as is commonly supposed, of availing himself of his name and claims, to ascend the throne himself. With this view, he went to Zabdiel, the guardian of Alexander's children, and prevailed on him to commit Antiochus, the son of Alexander, into his hands; brought the boy immediately to Syria, and proclaimed him king. On this, the soldiers who had been disbanded by Demetrius, and many others, flocked to his standard. He was soon in a condition to march against Demetrius, whom he vanquished in battle, driving him into Seleucia, and taking all his elephants. The result of this victory was, that Antioch fell into his hands; and he was placed on the throne. The people gave him the name of Theos, or divine.

441. The new king, anxious to secure Jonathan in his interest, immediately sent an embassy to him, with a confirmation of all the grants which he had received from former sovereigns, with the privilege of wearing purple, and the golden buckle. Simon was, at the same time, made commander of all the king's forces from the border of Syria to Egypt, on condition that the two brothers should declare for him; which they were very ready to do, on account of the perfidious conduct of Demetrius, who had neither withdrawn the garrison from Jerusalem, nor released the country from tribute, according to his promise. The brothers, therefore, raised a large army in Palestine and Coelo Syria, and Jonathan, leaving Simon in Judea, went to Galilee, where he was very near being taken prisoner, by being drawn into an ambush: but his men rallying, after being put to flight, rescued their leader, and gained the victory. Bethsura, which had a strong garrison, was reduced, to the great comfort of the surrounding inhabitants; who had been long annoyed by the heathen soldiers.

CHAPTER XIX("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Jonathan renews his league with the Romans and Lacedemonians—he and Simon call a great council of the nation—Tryphon treacherously murders Jonathan—Simon succeeds him—erects a famous monument for his brothers—seizes and demolishes the strong fortress at Jerusalem—Demetrius goes against the Parthians, but is unsuccessful, and falls into their hands—his life is spared by Mithridates, who gives him his daughter in marriage—Cleopatra marries Antiochus Sidetes, who invades Syria, and overcomes and slays Tryphon—Simon sends an embassy to Rome to obtain their confirmation of his authority—Antiochus seeks the destruction of Simon—beastly character of Ptolemy Physcon and Attalus—Simon treacherously murdered at Jericho

442. Jonathan, being now relieved from all disquietude at home sent ambassadors to Rome, to renew the treaty, which had been concluded with Judas. They were kindly and honorably received, and obtained all that they wished. The ambassadors, agreeably to their orders, on their return, renewed the former league with the Lacedemonians, and other allies of the Jews in Greece.

443. The general of Demetrius, who had been defeated in Galilee by Jonathan, returned with a greater force, but was again obliged to fly; and the two brothers brought the whole country under subjection to Antiochus.

444. When the country was freed from invading foes, Jonathan and Simon convened the great council of the nation, to consult about repairing and fortifying Jerusalem, and other strong places,

in Judea. At this meeting, it was agreed, that the walls of the city should be repaired, and a new one erected between the town and the castle, so as to prevent all intercourse between the garrison and the inhabitants; by which means it was hoped, that for want of supplies, they would, before long, be under the necessity of surrendering.

445. Tryphon, who had brought back the young king, supposed that the time was now come, for him to execute his nefarious scheme of putting him to death, and seizing the crown for himself. But foreseeing that Jonathan would never countenance such villainy, he resolved to remove him out of the way, in the first place. He, therefore, marched into Judea, with a strong force, but found Jonathan prepared to meet him, at the head of forty thousand men. He therefore assumed the appearance of friendship, and informed Jonathan, that the purpose of his coming was, to put Ptolemais into his hands; and so deceived him by his specious pretexts, that he was induced to send away all his men, except one thousand. With these he went to Ptolemais, to receive the city, which Tryphon had sworn to surrender to him; but no sooner was he within the walls, than he ordered the gates to be shut; and resolved to put Jonathan and all his men to the sword.

446. The Jews, greatly intimidated, and distressed, by the loss of their leader, appointed Simon to be their captain; who soon collected a formidable force, and marched to meet Tryphon, then on his way to besiege Jerusalem, and relieve the garrison. To Simon he pretended, that his only reason for seizing Jonathan, was, because he owed the king a debt, which, if he would pay, his brother should be released. Simon saw through the deception, but lest any censure should light upon himself, for not ransoming his brother, he raised the money and sent it to him. But this wicked wretch, instead of complying with his promise, put Jonathan to death. Thinking that the only obstacle to the accomplishment of his ambitious purpose was now removed, he finished by making way with Antiochus.

447. As soon as Simon heard of his brother's death, he sent and brought away his bones from Bascama, and buried them at Modin, in the sepulchre of his father; over which, he built a splendid monument of marble. Near this monument, he erected seven pyramids, one for his father, another for his mother, four for his brothers, and the seventh for himself.

448. The architecture of this monument, is said to have been very excellent, and as it was erected on an eminence near the sea-coast, it served as a light house to mariners. Josephus, says, that it was entire in his time, and considered an admirable piece of architecture. Eusebius, who lived two hundred years later, informs us, that it was still standing when he wrote.

449. Tryphon, now very anxious to conciliate the Romans, sent them as a present, a golden image of victory, valued at ten thousand pieces of gold; hoping to be recognized as king of Syria. The Roman Senate accepted the present; but ordered the name of Antiochus, whom Tryphon had murdered, to be inscribed on the image, as if it had been received from him.

450. Simon, also, sent ambassadors to Rome, after his brother's death, who were received with distinguished honor; and had all their former grants and promises renewed. The same ambassadors renewed their leagues with the other allies of the Jews, who lay in their way home.

451. The Jews who had joined the young king, in opposition to Demetrius, now felt disposed to return to his aid against Tryphon the usurper, who had perfidiously inflicted on them so deep an injury. Simon, therefore, sent an embassy to Demetrius, with a crown of gold. This aid was so

much needed by Demetrius, and so seasonable, that he not only confirmed Simon in the priesthood, and renewed all former grants, with an amnesty for all acts done against his government; but actually confirmed the sovereignty of the country on Simon, by which means the land was freed from a foreign yoke. The Jews, therefore, from this time, instead of dating their contracts, by the years of the Syrian kings, dated them by the years of Simon and his successors. Simon now made a progress through the land, reducing such fortresses as were garrisoned by the heathens, and fortifying those places, which served for the defence of the country. He made Bethsura a depository of the munitions of war; and Joppa, the seaport of Jerusalem, being the nearest place on the Mediterranean. Gazara, which had revolted on the death of Jonathan, he reduced, driving off the heathen garrison, and building a house there for himself.

452. In the year 142 B. C., the strong fortress at Jerusalem, which overlooked the temple, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering, for the want of provisions; and other necessities, by which means the inhabitants were delivered from a great and long continued grievance. That they might never again be subjected to a similar annoyance, Simon not only demolished the fortress, but proposed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to take away the hill itself, on which it had been built. This proposal met with universal acceptance; and for three years, they were engaged in this herculean labor.

453. Simon, also, renewed and strengthened the fortifications of the temple; and built for himself and his attendants, a house within the circuit of the outer wall, which probably occupied the site, where the tower called Antonia, was afterwards erected.

454. John, the son of Simon, afterwards called Hyrcanus, being a valiant man, and skilled in military matters, his father made him general of all the forces of Judea, and sent him to live at Gazara, as being a frontier town; and also, that he might be near Joppa, to superintend the works, which he was erecting there, to render it a commodious place for commerce.

455. Demetrius found, this year, 141 B. C., a new enemy rising up against him, in the east. The Parthians had extended their conquests from the Euphrates to the Indus; his friends in the eastern provinces, therefore, invited him to come over and secure his territory from the grasp of usurpers. In compliance with this invitation, Demetrius passed the Euphrates, leaving Tryphon in possession of a considerable part of Syria, behind him. At first, he defeated the Parthians, in many battles; but at length being drawn into a snare, he was taken prisoner by Mithridates, king of Parthia, and his whole army cut to pieces. By this event, the Parthian power was established in the east, and became a formidable enemy to all, even to the Romans. Mithridates was the fourth in descent from Arsaces, who, by his revolt, laid the foundation of this empire. He extended his conquests far into India, and to the west, as far as the Euphrates. Having got Demetrius into his power, he carried him about, through all the provinces which formerly belonged to him, to let the people see the man in whom they had confided for deliverance from his power. But he treated him in a manner suitable to his dignity; and after a while, gave him his own daughter in marriage, though he still retained him as a captive.

456. Simon, having received from the king of Syria the sovereignty of the nation, all that was necessary to make him a lawful king, was the free, and explicit consent of the people; and this was given in a general congregation of the priests, elders, and people. Here it was agreed, that the office of high priest, and the supreme power of the nation, should be settled on Simon, and his

family, forever. A copy of this act they caused, to be engraved on tablets of brass, and hung up in the sanctuary; and the original writing was laid up among the archives belonging to the treasury of the temple. From this time, Simon assumed the state, style, and authority of a royal prince; and all public acts were in his name.

457. Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius, when she heard of his captivity, and of his marriage to the daughter of Mithridates, sent to his brother Antiochus Sidetes, and offered him her hand and the crown of Syria, if he would come and assist her against Tryphon: which offer he gladly accepted.

458. In the year 139 B. C., he wrote a letter to Simon, king of Judea, complaining of the usurpation of Tryphon; and to gain him over to his interests, made him many promises; 1Ma_15:2-9.

459. Having landed in Syria with a large body of mercenaries, he marched against Tryphon, whose soldiers having become much disaffected towards him, deserted in great numbers, and joined the standard of Antiochus. The forces of the latter, by the accessions which he received in Syria, soon amounted to more than a hundred thousand men. Tryphon, not being able to withstand such a force, fled from place to place, until he came to Apamia, where he was taken and put to death.

460. Simon thought it would add much to the stability of his government, if he could get the Romans to confirm him in his authority. He, therefore, sent an embassy to Rome, which was received very favorably, as all former embassies from the Jews had been. In compliance with their request, letters were written to all the kings, whose territories lay near Judea, informing them, that the Jews were the allies and friends of the Romans, and forbidding all persons to molest or injure them. But the letters to the king of Syria, being addressed to Demetrius, who was then in captivity, they were of no service to the Jews, for as soon as Antiochus was settled on the throne, he sought an opportunity to quarrel with Simon.

461. In pursuance of this design, he sent an ambassador to Simon, to demand the restoration of Gazara, Joppa, and the fortress of Jerusalem—or five hundred talents in lieu of them—and five hundred more for injuries done in other parts of his dominions. Simon answered, that he was willing to pay one hundred talents for Joppa and Gazara, but as for his other demands, the places belonged to the inheritance of his forefathers, which had for a while been unjustly taken from them, but which he was now resolved to keep.

462. Antiochus on hearing this answer immediately sent Coëndebeus into Judea, with an army, to enforce his demands. Simon, now too old to take the field himself, sent his two sons John and Judas, with twenty thousand men, to meet the Syrian army. A battle was fought, not far from Modin, in which the Syrians were defeated, and two thousand of them slain. They were pursued as far as Azotus, where John took their towers of defence, and burned them, and then returned to Jerusalem, in triumph, with his brother.

463. Two greater brutes in human shape, perhaps, never appeared in the world, at one time, than Ptolemy Physcon king of Egypt, and Attalus Philometor, king of Pergamus. Folly and madness were never more completely exemplified, than in the conduct of them both.

464. The former, either killed or banished all the friends of his late brother, and so oppressed and terrified the inhabitants of Alexandria, that most of them fled to other countries, leaving the city

almost desolate. To supply their places, he invited strangers of all sorts, to come and occupy the vacant habitations. By the dispersion of men of letters, and of artizans, the countries of Greece and Asia Minor, were filled with learning of various kinds; for after the conquests of Alexander, literature flourished no where so much as in Egypt, under the fostering patronage of the Ptolemies.

465. About this time, the Romans sent ambassadors to visit all the countries in aliance with them; a prudent measure, frequently adopted. Of this embassy, was Publius Scipio Africanus, Sp. Mummius, and L. Metellus; who made Egypt the first object of their attention. At Alexandria, they were received with great honor, and every luxury was provided for them; but their simple republican manners, formed a complete contrast with the luxurious effeminacy of the Egyptians. Scipio, then the greatest man at Rome, had in his train, only one friend, and five servants. In the midst of the most sumptuous entertainments provided expressly for them, they refused to take more than what was necessary for sustenance, and refreshment.

466. Physcon, the king, was, at this time, one of the most disgusting sights that could be seen. He was naturally deformed, very short of stature, and very thick, with a belly so prominent, that from this circumstance his name was derived. But to render himself still more odious, he wore a dress entirely transparent, by which means the turpitude of his deformed body was rendered altogether visible.

467. In the year 135 B. C., Simon, making a progress through Judea, to settle every thing on a proper footing, came to Jericho, with his two sons, Mattathias and Judas, where he was invited to an entertainment, by Ptolemy son of Abubus, who had married one of his daughters. But this perfidious wretch, aiming to make himself master of all Judea, and having, it is supposed, concerted the plan with Antiochus Sidetes, had concealed assasins in his house, who, at a concerted signal, rushed into the room, and slew the venerable old man and his two sons. It was also a part of the design, to murder John, who was governor of Gazara; but he had received early intelligence of what was done at Jericho; so that when the persons commissioned to murder him arrived, he fell on them and cut them off. Then, hastening to Jerusalem, he secured the city and the mountain of the temple, against those sent by Ptolemy, to take possession of them. John was now declared high priest and prince of the Jews, who took measures, immediately, to provide for the security of the country. Ptolemy, the traitor, fled, but what became of him afterwards, is not recorded in history.

CHAPTER XX("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Antiochus invades Judea—besieges Hyrcanus in Jerusalem—terms of peace—family of Josephus—book of Ecclesiasticus—Antiochus Sidetes marches an army into the east, where he is attacked and slain by Phraates—Hyrcanus seizes the opportunity of delivering his country from subjection to the Syrian yoke—Demetrius restored to his throne—invades Egypt—is called back by a revolt at Antioch—Ptolemy raises up a youth who pretends to be the son of Alexander Balas—he raises an army and defeats Demetrius, who is slain at Tyre—Alexander Zebina reigns over Syria—vast swarm of locusts—Zebina defeated and put to death

468. Antiochus, the king, on hearing of the death of Simon and his sons, immediately marched with, a powerful army into Judea, and overran the country. Hyrcanus being driven from the field, by a superior force, shut himself up in Jerusalem, where he was besieged by the whole Syrian army,

which Antiochus divided into seven camps, that the city might be entirely surrounded. But the besieged defended themselves valiantly, and often sallied out to burn the engines and works of the assailants. To render it more difficult on those within the walls to hold communication with the country, Antiochus caused two large and deep ditches, to be drawn round the city. Hyrcanus, to lessen the pressure of famine, put without the gates, all such persons as were unable to be of any service within the walls; but by means of the ditches, they could not make their escape, and he was obliged to take them in again.

469. When the time for celebrating the feast of Tabernacles approached, Hyrcanus sent to Antiochus, requesting, that there might be a truce, during the festival; which he not only granted, but himself sent into the city beasts for sacrifice; which act of generosity gave Hyrcanus such an opinion of the character of the king, that he sent again to sue for terms of peace. A treaty was accordingly concluded. The conditions were, that Jerusalem should be dismantled; and that, for Joppa and other towns, held, out of Judea, five hundred talents should be paid. Antiochus wished to have the fortress in Jerusalem rebuilt and garrisoned again; but with this Hyrcanus would not comply.

470. When this treaty was made, the Jews were reduced to the last extremity, and could not have held out much longer. Their enemies were urgent with Antiochus, not to make peace with them; but utterly to destroy the hated nation. And it is admitted, not only by Josephus, but Diodorus Siculus, that it was entirely owing to the generosity and clemency of this prince, that the whole nation of the Jews was not extirpated.

471. Three hundred talents of the sum laid upon Hyrcanus, was paid upon the spot; for the remainder, time was given. Josephus tells a very improbable story, respecting the manner in which the money was obtained, by Hyrcanus. He says, he robbed the sepulchre of David, and took from thence three thousand talents. If there is any truth in this account, it must have been, that many rich men, in the times, of trouble which the nation had experienced, hid their treasures in this sepulchre, to preserve them from the capacity of their enemies; for, certainly, these treasures could not have remained there untouched, from the time of David; and especially, during the captivity.

472. About this time, Matthias, a priest of the course of Joarib, married a daughter of Jonathan, the late high priest and prince of the Jews; of whom was born Matthias Curtus; and from him another Matthias, whose son, Josephus, was the father of a third Matthias; of whom was born Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, in the first year of the emperor Caligula, which answers to the thirty-seventh of the Christian era.

473. In the year 133 B. C., died Attalus Philometor, the mad king of Pergamus, who left all his dominions, by his will, to the Romans, which they did not hesitate to take possession of, without delay.

474. In the year 132 B. C., Jesus the son of Sirach, a Jew of Jerusalem, came into Egypt, and translated out of Hebrew into Greek, for the use of the Jews, who spoke that language, the book of Jesus his grandfather; the same which we now have in the apocrypha, by the name of Ecclesiasticus.

475. In the year, 131 B. C., Antiochus Sidetes, marched a vast army over the Euphrates, under pretence of delivering his brother from captivity, but, in reality, to recover the eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, which had been wrested from its princes. The Parthian king, Phraates, was overthrown by him, in many battles. On this expedition, he was accompanied by John Hyrcanus, prince of the Jews, who returned home at the end of the year, with much glory.

476. In the year 130 B. C., Antiochus, having remained in the east, with his army, was obliged to disperse them in places remote from each other, for the sake of subsistence. Phraates, having ascertained how the Syrians were scattered, formed a plan of a simultaneous attack, upon their several encampments. Antiochus hastened to the help of those who lay nearest to him; but was overpowered and slain; and of that vast multitude, said to have been three hundred thousand, who crossed the Euphrates with him, not one returned to Syria, to tell the doleful tidings. Of this army, however, more than one half were butlers, bakers, cooks, confectioneries, and others who only ministered to the luxury of the soldiers.

477. As soon as Antiochus had crossed the Euphrates, the king of Parthia released Demetrius, his brother, and sent him back to claim the kingdom in Syria, hoping thus to withdraw him from the east: but upon obtaining this complete victory, over the Syrian army, he sent messengers after him, to arrest him and bring him back. Demetrius, however, had made so much haste, that he had passed the Euphrates, before they arrived.

478. Phraates took up the body of Antiochus from among the slain, and enclosing it in a silver coffin, sent it into Syria, to be honorably buried among his friends: and finding among the captives, a daughter of the king, he was so smitten with her beauty, that he took her for his wife.

479. After the death of Antiochus, Hyrcanus seized the favorable opportunity of rendering his country entirely independent of Syria. He also took possession of several strong places, beyond his own border, as Medaba, Samega, and several others. From this time, Judea was no more subject to the kings of Syria.

480. Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple, which was built by Sanballat, on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans, however, still offered sacrifices on an altar there, as they have continued to do, unto this day.

481. In the year 129 B. C., Hyrcanus, having conquered the Idumeans, gave them their choice, to leave the country, or to embrace the Jewish religion: they chose the latter, and became incorporated with the Jewish church and nation.

482. The Parthians, in the war with the Syrians, having called in the aid of the Scythians, these were so much pleased with the country, that as soon as the war was over, they began to seize upon it for themselves. And now Phraates was guilty of a second folly; for having taken, in the late victory, a multitude of Grecian mercenaries, he put arms into their hands, and employed them against the Scythians. But these vetrean soldiers, resenting the cruel treatment received from the Parthians, went generally over to the Scythians; and having with them ravaged the country, then returned home.

483. Hyrcanus, next, sent an embassy to Rome, to renew the treaty made with his father Simon, to which the Roman Senate readily consented. And as Antiochus Sidetes, had made war upon the

Jews, contrary to the provisions of that treaty, and had exacted from them a heavy tribute, for Gazara and Joppa, and by besieging Jerusalem, had forced them to a disadvantageous peace, it was now resolved, that those cities should be restored to them, free from all tribute; and that the Syrians should be accountable for all damages which they might have incurred, while in their possession. And, moreover, it was ordered, that the expenses of the Jewish ambassadors should be paid out of the public treasury.

484. A war having broken out in Egypt, between Cleopatra, the wife of Philometor, and Physcon, the latter was, for a while, driven from Egypt, and took refuge in Cyprus; but collecting an army, he afterwards defeated the forces of Cleopatra; on which, she sent to Demetrius, now restored to the throne of Syria, to come to her aid: promising him the possession of the kingdom.

485. Demetrius readily complied with this invitation, and invaded Egypt; but while he was absent, a revolt was raised against him at Antioch, on account of his tyrannical behavior. Cleopatra, being now disappointed in her expectation of aid from Demetrius, whose affairs required his presence at home, took all her treasures, and putting them into a ship, sailed to Ptolemais, where her daughter Cleopatra resided. This daughter had first married Alexander Balas, the king of Syria, and afterwards Demetrius, in her father's life time; but when Demetrius was taken prisoner, in Parthia, she was married to his brother Antiochus; and after his death, returned again to the bed of Demetrius.

486. Ptolemy, now returned to the throne of Egypt; and out of resentment for the hostile conduct of Demetrius, raised up a youth called Alexander Zebina, who he pretended was the son of Alexander Balas; and sent him into Syria, where his pretensions were countenanced by many, out of hatred to Demetrius. In a short time, he was strong enough to meet Demetrius in the field. A battle was fought near Damascus, in which Demetrius, being defeated, fled to Cleopatra, at Ptolemais. But she being not fully reconciled to him for marrying Rhodoguna, the Parthian, refused to admit him into the city; on which, he was obliged to fly to Tyre, where he was slain.

487. Zebina now reigned over the greater part of Syria; Cleopatra being permitted to hold in her possession, a certain part. John Hyrcanus, who was a politic man, formed a close alliance with Zebina, by which means he enlarged and strengthened his territory.

488. In the year 125 B. C., a vast swarm of locusts came into Africa, and destroyed all the verdure and fruits of the earth, wherever they came; and being driven into the sea by the wind, on the coast of Lybia and Cyrene, and carried on shore by the tide, they occasioned such a plague in those regions, as carried off, according to report, above eight hundred thousand persons.

489. Seleucus, the son of Cleopatra, queen of Syria, being now twenty years of age, aspired to the crown of Persia, with which his mother was so much displeased, that she murdered him with her own hands; but finding, that she needed some one to bear the royal title, whose claim would be respected, she sent to Athens, for Antiochus, her other son, who was then pursuing his education, intending that his power should be merely nominal, as she was ambitious to rule the country herself. This young man, who was not more than twenty years of age, was declared, on his arrival, king of Syria. To distinguish him from others of the same name, he has been called Grypus; though Josephus calls him Philometor; and the name Epiphanes is on his coins.

490. Zebina, not discovering a disposition to hold Syria as a dependent of the crown of Egypt, according to the wishes of Physcon, who had set him up, he was not permitted by the latter to retain the quiet possession of his power; for he, entering into an agreement with Cleopatra, married his daughter Tryphœna to Grypus her son, and sent an army into Syria. Zebina being overthrown in battle, fled to Antioch, where, being detected in an attempt to rob the temple of Jupiter, he was expelled from the city; and wandering about for a while, was at length put to death.

CHAPTER XXI("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Remarkable season—Cleopatra dies by a potion prepared for her son—disturbances in Syria—John Hyrcanus goes on prosperously—is opposed by the Pharisees—origin of this sect—Hyrcanus joins the Sadducees—his death—the Castle of Baris

491. The year 121 B. C., (L. Opimius and I. Fab. Maximus being consuls at Rome,) was distinguished for the excellency of its seasons, and value of its productions. The wine made this year, was so excellent, that some of it was kept for two hundred years, and is celebrated by the poets, under the name of the Opimian wine.

492. The next year, 120 B. C., Grypus having attained to manhood, began to exercise the power of a king, as he had before assumed the name; on which, Cleopatra was so much displeased, that she resolved to dispatch him, as she had done his brother; and, accordingly, prepared a poisonous potion, which he made her drink herself. Nor did it fail of its effect; for in a little time, this ambitious and wicked woman was a corpse, by the draught which she had prepared for her, own son.

493. In the year 117 B. C., Ptolemy Physcon having reigned twenty-nine years after the death of his brother, died at Alexandria. His vile character has already been given. He was succeeded by his son Lathyrus, as he is commonly called in history; though the name assumed by himself, was, Soter.

494. Grypus had been married to Cleopatra, but he was forced to put her away and take Tryphœna her sister; on which the former married Cycizenus, the half brother of Grypus. This young man having been brought up in private, to preserve him from death, because an object of jealousy to Grypus; so that he was under the necessity of fighting for the crown as his only means of safety. But being defeated at Antioch, he fled, leaving Cleopatra, in an asylum. Her sister however would not be satisfied until she was destroyed, although her husband entreated for her life. But her death, which took place in the temple whither she had fled, was not unavenged; for her husband, collecting another army, was more successful in a second battle, in which he obtained the victory, and got Tryphœna into his hands, whom he sacrificed to the ghost of his departed wife; putting her to a cruel death.

495. Grypus and Cycizenus at length divided the Syrian empire between them, the former residing at Antioch; the latter at Damascus.

496. John Hyrcanus, while these disturbances existed in Syria, was increasing in power and wealth. He found, that he had little to fear from either of the kings of Syria, and therefore sent two of his sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus to besiege Samaria. The inhabitants sent for Antiochus Cycizenus, to bring them assistance; who, coming with a great army, was vanquished by them, and

with difficulty, escaped alive.

497. The two brothers, after the gaining of this victory, returned to the siege of Samaria, and pressed it so hard, that the besieged sent a second time to Cyzicenus; but he, not having force enough of his own, sent to Lathyrus king of Egypt, and obtained from him six thousand auxiliaries, much to the dissatisfaction of Cleopatra his mother; for she had then at court, Chelcias and Ananias, the sons of Onias, prime favorites, and she did not wish to disoblige them. These auxiliaries being joined by the Syrians from Damascus, wasted the open country; but at length they were obliged to withdraw; and several Syrian towns fell into the hands of the Jews: and Samaria, after a siege of one year, was obliged to surrender. The city was utterly demolished by Hyrcanus; not out of hatred to the Samaritans, as some have said; for as we have before seen, they were all gone from the place, and its present inhabitants were of Macedonian descent. The siege of Samaria occurred, 109 B. C.

498. John Hyrcanus, now became master of all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, and being freed from all foreign enemies, enjoyed a high decree of prosperity; but in the latter part of his life, met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a sect which had recently sprung up; and were distinguished for their pride, authority, and ostentatious display of strictness in religion. They are now first heard of in history, but they must have been in existence some time before, as they were at this time so numerous and powerful, as to be formidable even to a prince of so decisive a character as John Hyrcanus. They were probably a branch of the people, called Chasidim or Assideans, who rigidly followed the traditions of the fathers; and received their name, Pharisees, from a Hebrew word, which signifies, to separate; on account of their separating themselves from the rest of the people, on pretence of their not being holy enough for their society.

499. As this sect was always held in veneration by the people, on account of their sanctity, Hyrcanus wished to gain them over to his own interests; for he himself had been brought up in their discipline, and professing himself to be of their number, had always patronized them to the utmost of his power. He therefore, invited all the leaders of the sect to a feast, and then addressing them, said, that his purpose ever had been to serve God, and do justly towards man, according to the doctrine of the Pharisees; but knowing the frailty of men, he wished now to hear from them, whether they had observed any thing defective in his conduct, that he might amend it. All united in giving him unqualified praise, except an old austere man, by the name of Eleazar, who sternly said, "If you would approve yourself a just man, quit the high priesthood, and content yourself with the civil government." Upon being asked, why he gave this advice, he said, "Because, we have it from good authority, that your mother was a captive, in consequence of which you are incompetent to hold the office, by the law of Moses."

500. Hyrcanus was much displeased, but receiving it as the ill saying of an individual, he intended to take no further notice of it. But Jonathan, a Sadducee, and an intimate friend, insisted that Eleazar merely expressed the sentiment of the whole sect; and suggested that this could be put to the test, by convening them again, and requiring them to declare what punishment this man deserved, for reviling God's high priest. Hyrcanus pursued this method, and to his astonishment, he heard from them that defamation was not a capital crime, and could only be punished by scourging, or some inferior penalty. Hyrcanus, was so much offended with the whole sect, especially as his mother's fame was called in question, that from that day he forsook them, and

went and joined the Sadducees.

501. Hyrcanus did not long survive this change of sect; for the next year he died, having held the supreme power at Jerusalem, twenty-nine years, after the death of Simon. This event occurred in the year 107 B. C.

502. He built the castle called Baris, on a steep rock, where afterwards all the members of the Asmonean family resided, and where the robes of the high priest were laid up—the same spot on which the castle of Antonia was afterwards erected by Herod, cased with polished marble, so that it was impossible for any one to climb up to the top.

CHAPTER XXII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Hyrcanus succeeded by Aristobulus his son, who forces the Itureans to embrace the Jewish religion, as his father had the Idumeans—slays his brother Antigonus—but repents and dies in great agony—story of Judas the Essene—origin of this sect—Alexander succeeds his brother Aristobulus—siege of Ptolemais—defeat of Alexander by Lathyrus—civil war—Anna the Prophetess—death of Alexander Jan Neus

503. John Hyrcanus, at his death, left five sons; Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander, and Absalom: the name of one of them, the fourth in order, is nowhere mentioned.

504. Aristobulus, being the oldest, succeeded his father, both as high priest and civil ruler; and as soon as he found himself settled in authority, he put a diadem on his head, and assumed the title of king; being the first elevated to this honor after the Babylonish captivity. His mother by the will of Hyrcanus, claimed the sovereignty while she lived; but Aristobulus cast her into prison, and there caused her to be starved to death. His brother Antigonus, was, for a while, his favorite; but his other brothers he shut up in prison, and kept them there as long as he lived.

505. Cleopatra being much displeased with her son Lathyrus, found means to expel him from the throne, and from Egypt; and calling from Cyprus her youngest son Alexander, placed him on the throne; forcing Lathyrus to take Cyprus in place of the kingdom of Egypt.

506. Aristobulus, when settled in his authority at home, made war on the Itureans, and compelled them to embrace the Jewish religion, as Hyrcanus had the Idumeans before. For he required them, either to forsake their country, and seek new habitations, or to become proselytes; and in this manner the Asmonean princes dealt with all the countries which they conquered. Iturea lay to the north east of Judea, and was originally a part of Cœlo-Syria. It seems to have received its name from Hur, one of the sons of Ishmael; who in our English version, is called Jetur; (Genesis 25:15.)

507. Aristobulus, returning home sick from Iturea, left his brother Antigonus with the army, to finish the war, which he had begun. This country is the same which is sometimes called Auranitis.

508. While Aristobulus lay sick, his queen, and some of his courtiers, were continually insinuating things to the disadvantage of Antigonus, his favorite brother. When Antigonus had completed the war, he returned in triumph to Jerusalem, and went immediately to the temple, to pay his devotions there, without putting off his armor, or changing his dress. This was represented to Aristobulus, now sick in bed, as a very suspicious circumstance. On which he sent word to Antigonus to come

to him unarmed; and having stationed soldiers along a subterranean gallery, through which he must pass, he gave them orders, if Antigonus came unarmed, not to interrupt him, but if he came with his armor on, to fall upon him and put him to death. The queen having heard these orders, bribed the messenger to tell him, that the king wished him to come to him completely armed, that the queen might see his new suit of armor, of which she had heard so much. Accordingly, Antigonus presented himself armed, when the guards, agreeably to their orders, fell upon him, and slew him.

509. No sooner was this murder perpetrated, than Aristobulus repented it grievously. His murder of his own mother now also rushing upon his conscience, occasioned such perturbation, that it brought on a vomiting of blood. The servant, in attendance, in carrying out the basin of blood stumbled, and spilled it on the very spot, where Antigonus had been slain: which accident affected him so exceedingly, that he could no longer restrain his feelings, but bitterly accused himself of both these unnatural murders. So great was his agony, that, in conjunction with the disease, it soon brought him to a dreadful and premature death; after having reigned no more than one year.

510. Josephus relates a remarkable story respecting one Judas, an Eessne, which, though it has not a little of the marvellous in its composition, it may not be improper briefly to state. This man, it seems, pretended to be a prophet, and had predicted, that Antigonus should die at the tower of Straton, on that very day on which he returned to Jerusalem; but on seeing him come into the temple he was filled with indignation, thinking that his prophecy would fail of its accomplishment; for Straton's tower was two days journey from Jerusalem, on the sea coast. After the murder of Antigonus, however, he found upon inquiry, that the tower immediately over the spot where he was killed, was called by the same name.

511. This, I believe, is the first mention of the sect of the Essenes, by Josephus. They were devoted to an ascetic life, and inhabited remote and desert places, far from the bustle of worldly commerce, and from the promiscuous intercourse of men. Their origin and history is buried, even in more obscurity than those of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and though largely treated of by Philo, and Josephus in other parts of his work, are not once mentioned in the New Testament. The most probable occasion of this sect was, the long and severe persecutions of the Jews, in consequence of which, many, for the sake of a good conscience, fled far into the recesses of the wilderness, where they devoted themselves to acts of piety and contemplation. Being shut out from the service of the temple and the synagogue, they formed a rule of life, according to which, external ceremonies were little depended on; which mode of religious life, they were so much delighted with, that they continued to pursue the same, after the necessity which first drove them into the wilderness had ceased to exist.

512. Immediately upon the death of Aristobulus, his wife Salome released his three brothers, who had been kept in prison while he lived; and Alexander, surnamed Janneus, the eldest, took the kingdom.

513. His next brother, having made some attempt to supplant him, was put to death; but Absalom being contented to live a private life, enjoyed his favor and protection, and lived for forty years after this; and when Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, he was made a prisoner.

514. The wars between Grypus, who reigned at Antioch, and Cyzicenus who had Damascus as the seat of his kingdom, were incessant. This furnished an opportunity for many towns belonging to the Syrian empire, to declare themselves independent. Others were seized upon by tyrants, who reigned without responsibility to either of the kings of Syria. This occurred in regard to Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, Gaza, Gadara, Straton's Tower, &c.

515. The year 106 B. C., was famous for the birth of two noble Romans, whose names fill a large space in the history of after times. The one was Cn. Pompey, the other Marcus Tullius Cicero.

516. Alexander, as soon as he found himself firmly established in authority, besieged Ptolemais. The inhabitants sent for aid to Lathyrus, now king of Cyprus; but on his arrival, they were as much afraid of him as of the Jews, and refused him admittance into their city; on which, he accepted the invitation of Zoilus the petty tyrant of Gaza, to join him in laying waste the country of Judea. Alexander, now offered Lathyrus a large sum, if he would deliver up Zoilus; to which he consented; but before the treaty was executed, he found that Alexander was not acting with good faith, for he was at the same time treating with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, about driving him out of Palestine. He, therefore, broke off the negociation, and having now determined to do him all the harm he could, left a part of his army to besiege Ptolemais, while with the rest, he invaded the territories of this prince, and took several towns in Galilee, with many captives.

517. Alexander now marched to meet Lathyrus, with an army of fifty thousand men. A great battle was fought between them, near the banks of Jordan; in which Alexander was completely defeated, and lost thirty thousand of his men. Lathyrus pursued the victory to the uttermost; and after the battle, finding the villages full of women and children, he slaughtered them as sheep, and put their limbs into great cauldrons, as if preparing for a feast.

518. The affairs of Alexander, after this defeat, must have been in a ruined condition, had not Cleopatra come to his aid against her own son; for she feared if he conquered Phenicia and Judea, he would become strong enough to recover Egypt. She, therefore, sent an army into Phenicia, under Chilcias and Ananias, the two favorite Jews, already mentioned.

519. Ananias expected to be received into Ptolemais; and being refused, laid siege to the town; while Chilcias pursued Lathyrus into Cœlo-Syria, where he lost his life. Lathyrus now marched his army directly into Egypt, expecting that in the absence of his mother and the best troops, there would be little resistance made. But he was repulsed and driven back to Phenicia, where he took up his winter quarters, at Gaza.

520. Cleopatra continued the siege of Ptolemais until it fell into her hands, after which she would have seized on Alexandria, and brought the country under the Egyptian yoke, had it not been for the sage advice of Ananias; who alleged, that this would prejudice the world against her, and unite all the Jews in the world, in opposition to her. Alexander was, therefore, permitted to return to Jerusalem, in safety.

521. Ptolemy Lathyrus finding it in vain to continue any longer in Palestine, as his mother thwarted all his schemes, returned to Cyprus; but he carried on a negociation with Cyzicenus to aid in recovering Egypt, which becoming known to Cleopatra, she negociated with his rival Grypus; and to engage him to declare war, she gave him her daughter Selene, whom she had taken away from Lathyrus. A new war therefore broke out between the two kings, which prevented the invasion of

Egypt.

522. Ptolemy Alexander, observing how his mother acted towards his brothers, and that nothing could stand before her ambition, fled from Egypt. Nor was it without great solicitation, that he consented to return; for the Egyptians would not permit Cleopatra to exercise the sovereignty in her own name.

523. Alexander, 102 B. C., marched an army beyond Jordan, where he took Gadara and Amathus; but Theodorus, prince of Philadelphia, collecting a large force, fell suddenly on him, overthrew him with the slaughter of ten thousand men, and not only recovered his own treasure, but took all Alexander's baggage.

524. The Pharisees, who had become enemies to all the family of Hyrcanus, were especially inimical to Alexander; and having great influence with the people, soon rendered them disaffected to his government.

525. In the year 97 B. C., Alexander, after a long and destructive siege, took Gaza, which was delivered up to him by treachery. At first, he showed clemency to the vanquished; but when he found the place completely in his power, he let loose his soldiers to plunder and kill, at their own pleasure. This was in resentment for the injury which he had sustained in consequence of the Gazeans calling in Lathyrus to their aid, against him.

526. In this same year 97 B. C., died Grypus king of Syria, by the treachery of one of his dependents, named Heracleon. He left five sons, Seleucus, Antiochus, Philip, Demetrius Eucurus and Antiochus Dionysius.

527. Ptolemy Apion died 96 B. C., and willed his kingdom of Cyrene to the Romans, which they would not receive; but, gave freedom to the people, which, however, only served to bring them under the power of petty tyrants, who seized on particular cities, and subjected them to a more cruel bondage than they had endured before.

528. Cyzicenus, on the death of Grypus, seized on Antioch, and endeavored to make himself sovereign of the whole empire; but Seleucus took possession of many cities, and drew together great forces, to assert his right to his father's dominions.

529. In the year 15 B. C., Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, of whom mention is made, Luke 2:36., was married to her husband, and from this time, lived with him seven years; when, on his death, she became a widow, in which state she continued four-score years.

530. Alexander, while officiating, this year, 95 B. C., at the feast of tabernacles, was openly insulted by the people, who publicly reproached him, calling him slave, and pelting him with citrons, which so enraged him, that he fell upon them with his soldiers, and slew six thousand men. The disaffection of the people and the insult publicly offered, were owing to the instigation of the Pharisees, who could lead the people as they would.

531. In the year 94 B. C., Alexander marched against the Arabians, and brought the inhabitants of Moab and Gilead under his dominions.

532. Seleucus having collected a large force about him, Cyzicenus went out to attack him, but was overthrown in battle, taken prisoner, and put to death. By this event, Seleucus became master of the whole Persian empire, but could not long retain it; for Antiochus Eusebues, the son of Cyzicenus, having collected an army of his father's old soldiers, overthrew Seleucus, who being forced to flee to Mopsuesta, in Cilicia, was there burnt to death by the inhabitants.

533. The brothers of Seleucus, endeavored to avenge his death on the inhabitants of Mopsuesta, but on their return were met by Eusebes; and Antiochus, in attempting to swim the Orontes, was drowned. Philip having escaped, and collected large forces, the contest for the Syrian empire now lay between him and Eusebes.

534. Eusebes, to strengthen himself in the kingdom, married Selene, the widow of Grypus, at which Lathyrus, whose wife she first was, being offended, sent for Demetrius, the fourth son of Grypus, and made him king of Damascus. The contest between Philip and Eusebius, prevented either of them from interposing. When the forces of these rivals came to an engagement, Eusebes was defeated, and was obliged to flee to Parthia.

535. Alexander, ever fond of military expeditions marched into Gaulonitis, a district of country on the east of the lake Gennesareth, and there engaged in battle with Obedas, an Arabian king; by whom he was led into an ambush, and lost most of his men. The Jews, when he returned to Jerusalem, were in rebellion against him. A civil war now ensued, which lasted for six years, by which the country was exceedingly wasted.

536. In the year, 89 B. C., Cleopatra was plotting to put her son Alexander to death, but he being aware of her designs, prevented it, by putting her to death. The Egyptians understanding that she fell by her own son, could not endure his presence among them; and banishing him from the country, recalled Lathyrus, and replaced him on the throne of Egypt. Alexander soon after perished near Cyprus, in a battle at sea.

537. The civil war continued to rage between Alexander and the Jews; and the latter not having command of soldiers and treasures, sent for aid to Demetrius Eucherus; but when he approached, the very people who sent for him, turned against him.

538. In the year 88 B. C., Anna, the prophetess, being left a widow, went into the temple, where she remained day and night, serving God with fasting and prayers, for eighty-four years. The civil war between Alexander and the Jews still raged; and although he was generally successful, he could bring them to no terms.

539. During the year 87 B. C., the civil war raged more violently than ever. In a decisive battle, Alexander inflicted a terrible blow upon his enemies, and shut up those who remained, in Bethsura. In the year 86 B. C., the place was taken. He then carried eight hundred of the principal persons to Jerusalem, where he caused them all to be crucified in one day, and their wives and children to be slain before their eyes, while hanging on the cross. To enjoy this scene the more, he had a feast prepared for himself, his wives, and his concubines, near the place of execution, whence the whole scene was visible. This shocking cruelty obtained for him the name of Thracian. Thus ended this rebellion, which cost the Jews about fifty thousand lives.

540. In the year 84 B. C., Pella, and Dia, beyond Jordan, were taken by Alexander.

541. The Syrians, worn out with the continual wars between the princes of the east and Seleucus, resolved to call in some foreign prince, and place him over them. Accordingly, they sent for Tigranes, king of Armenia, who reigned over Syria eighteen years.

542. In the years 83 and 82 B. C., Alexander Janneus extended his conquests in the country beyond Jordan, taking Gaulana, Seleucia, and the strong fortress of Gamala. After this, he gave himself up to luxury and drunkenness.

543. In the year 81 B. C., Thebes, in Upper Egypt, was taken by Lathyrus, and so ruined and demolished, that it never afterwards made any figure; soon after which, he died, having reigned in all, thirty-six years.

544. He was succeeded by Berenice, his only legitimate child. She was also called Cleopatra, as were all the queens of Egypt; just as all their kings were called Ptolemy.

545. In the year 80 B. C., Alexander, son of him, who murdered his mother, came to Egypt to claim the kingdom, and a compromise was made, by giving him Cleopatra to wife. But in a few days, he put her to death, and reigned alone, forty years.

546. In the year 79 B. C., Alexander Janneus, being affected with a quartan ague, which had hung upon him for a long time, thought he would try the effect of exercise and exertion. He, therefore, marched over Jordan, and besieged Razaba, a castle in the country of Gerasans, where, laboring too hard, he brought on a paroxysm of his disorder, of which he died in the camp.

CHAPTER XXIII("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Alexander bequeaths the kingdom of Judea to Alexandra his wife—counsels her to conciliate the Pharisees—origin of the family of the Herods—disputes about the priesthood—pompey comes into the east—his head quarters at Damascus—the quarrel between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus brought before him—imprudent conduct of Aristobulus—Pompey is received into Jerusalem—enters the sanctuary—places Hyrcanus in the office of high priest—orders the walls of Jerusalem to be demolished—leaves a garrison in the city and departs

547. Alexander left two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but bequeathed the government to his wife Alexandra, with the power to appoint whichever of his sons she pleased, to succeed her.

548. She being with him on this expedition, when she found that he was near his end, was full of apprehensions of the dangers which, surrounded her. But he called her to him, and advised her to conceal his death until the castle was taken; then to march back to Jerusalem, in triumph, and to call together the leaders of the sect of the Pharisees, whose enmity had embittered his life, and to lay his corpse before them, that they might cast it out with indignity, or treat it as they pleased; and to promise them, that she would undertake nothing without their advice. All this she exactly followed, and the effect was what he foresaw. Their hatred for Alexander was turned into veneration, and they became the warm friends of Alexandra.

549. When she had settled herself firmly on the throne, she made her eldest son Hyrcanus, high Priest; and to gratify her new friends, the Pharisees, she repealed the edict of John Hyrcanus, in which he forbade their attention to traditions; and restored them to all their former privileges; and released all that her husband had confined in prison.

550. The Pharisees, however, insisted on having condign punishment inflicted on all who advised Alexander to crucify the eight hundred persons, already mentioned; and on such pretexts, they caused her to gratify their revenge, on all their enemies, but often sorely against her will.

551. In the year 76 B. C., Bithynia became a Roman province, by the bequest of its king Nicomedes. Cyrene, was also reduced to the form of a province, which had been before left to them, in the same manner.

552. The progress of the Romans in the east became more and more rapid. The only king who gave them much serious opposition, was Mithridates, king of Pontus; but it does not lie in our way to give a history of these wars.

553. Alexandra having given herself up to the counsels and government of the Pharisees, all that were known or suspected of advising or aiding the late king in his measures hostile to their sect, were now persecuted with unrelenting severity. They, of the adverse party, seeing no end of this oppression, collected in a body, and with Aristobulus at their head, went to the queen, to remonstrate against these proceedings. If they could not be protected at home, they begged that they might be permitted to leave the country, or might be distributed among the garrisons, where they might be exempt from these cruel persecutions, which they endured for no other reason, but because they were the devoted friends and servants of the late king.

554. The queen pitied them from her heart, but knew not how to relieve them, without bringing on herself the vengeance of the Pharisees, who had the people on their side. She, however, agreed to place them in the garrisons of the fortresses.

555. This year, 72 B. C., was born Herod the Great, who was afterwards king of Judea. His father Antipas was a noble Idumean, and his mother of an illustrious family among the Arabians. The name Antipas was changed to Antipater, to make it more conformable to the usage of the Greeks. This man was governor of Idumea, under Alexander Janneus. As he was an Idumean, he was, of course, brought up in the Jewish religion; for all the Idumeans had embraced Judaism.

556. In the year 70 B. C., died Alexandra, queen of the Jews, in the seventy-third year of her age. She was a woman of great wisdom and clemency; but unhappily was under the necessity of yielding to the Pharisees;—a faction which she had no power to withstand.

557. As soon as Antiochus saw that his mother was past recovery, having resolved to seize the kingdom, he privately withdrew and repaired to the castles, where his father's friends had sought an asylum; and by means of these, all the strong places in the country were soon in his hands.

558. The Pharisees were much disturbed at these proceedings, and as Alexandra was yet alive, though very low, they went to her to get her to say, that Hyrcanus should possess the supreme power; but she told them, that she was not in a condition to decide on such weighty affairs; and having submitted every thing to their management, soon afterwards expired.

559. By the advice and aid of the Pharisees, Hyrcanus raised an army against his brother; when a decisive battle was fought, in which, most of the soldiers of Hyrcanus, going over to Aristobulus, he was obliged to flee to Jerusalem; but soon, almost all his adherents declaring for his brother, he agreed to resign the priesthood and the supreme power, and to lead a private life. Thus ended the tyranny of the Pharisees, which had been exercised over the nation from the death of Alexander

Janneus.

560. Aristobulus now exercised the office of high priest, and of supreme ruler of the nation, for six years and six months; Hyrcanus having been in authority, only three months, after the death of his mother.

561. In the year 66 B. C., Pompey the Great, succeeded Lucullus, in the chief command of the Roman army in Syria. Pompey drew into alliance with him, Phraates, king of Parthia; and made an offer of peace to Mithridates; but he, calculating on the aid and friendship of the Parthian king, declined the overture. But when he understood that Pompey had been beforehand with him, then of his own accord, he proposed to come to terms. Pompey, however, would listen to nothing, but the unconditional surrender of all deserters, and a cessation of all hostilities.

562. Pompey soon conquered both Tigranes and Mithridates, and marched against the Iberians, a northern people, who had never been subdued. After his return, all the Syrian empire on this side of the Euphrates, was reduced into Roman provinces.

563. In the year 65 B. C., a disturbance arose in Judea, through the ambition of Antipater, the father of Herod. He having had his education in the court of Alexander Janneus, ingratiated himself into the favor of Hyrcanus; but when Aristobulus succeeded to the office and power of his brother, all this man's scheme's of advancement were broken. He now saw no way of retrieving his fortune, but by attempting to raise a party in favor of the deposed Hyrcanus. His first step was to negotiate with Aretas, king of Arabia Petroëa, to aid him with troops; and he gathered together many of the scattered Jews, who were ready for an enterprise of this kind. But the greatest difficulty was to excite Hyrcanus himself, who was a man of a weak and quiet spirit.

564. At length, however, he persuaded him, that his life was in danger in Judea; and induced him to flee to the court of Aretas: who in a little time came back with him, accompanied with fifty thousand men. In a battle with Aristobulus, the latter was completely defeated, and was forced to take refuge in the mountain of the temple, where they besieged him.

565. This occurred, during the passover; on which occasion, there not being lambs enough within the wall, Aristobulus bargained with the besiegers for a sufficient number, and let down the money outside the wall: on receiving it, however, they refused to send in the sacrifices.

566. Another impious act of which they were guilty was, their treatment of Onias, a holy man, held in great veneration, because it was believed that by his intercessions, rain had once been obtained in time of drought; him they brought out, and insisted, that he should curse Aristobulus; supposing, that his curses would be as efficacious as his blessing. Upon which he lifted up his hands, and said, "O Lord God, since they who are besieged, are thy priests, and these without are thy people, hear the prayers of neither against the other!" On which, they were so enraged, that they stoned him to death.

567. Aristobulus, now sent to Scaurus, the Roman general, who was at Damascus, and promised him four hundred talents for his aid; Gabinius, also, was offered three hundred talents. Both, then, wrote to Aretas to withdraw from Jerusalem; which he immediately did; and Aristobulus pursued after him, and coming on him unawares, slew a great part of his men, and among the rest, a brother of Antipater, whose name was Cephaleon.

568. About this time, 65 B. C., Pompey came to Damascus, and received rich presents, from most of the kings of the neighboring countries. The ambassadors of Egypt presented him with a crown of Gold, of the value of five thousand pieces of gold, and those from Judea, with a golden vine, of the value of four hundred talents, which was afterwards deposited in the temple of Jupiter, at Rome, and was there inscribed as the gift of Alexander. It is said, that no fewer than twelve kings came in person, to pay their respects to Pompey, while he resided at Damascus.

569. Pompey had a great ambition to extend his conquests as far as the Red Sea. He had, while in Africa and Spain, extended them to the western ocean on both sides of the Mediterranean; and had lately subdued the country to the borders of the Caspian Sea; and he felt a vain ambition to extend his victories, as far as the Red Sea.

570. Having returned to Damascus again, from Pontus, he was waited on by Antipater, from Hyrcanus, and by one Nicodemus, from Aristobulus, each of them soliciting his patronage. Pompey gave them both fair words, and ordered that the two brothers should appear before him. There is reason to believe, however, that Antipater managed his cause with much more address, than the ambassador of Aristobulus.

571. In the year 64 B. C., died Mithridates, king of Pontus, and long the implacable enemy of the Romans. His last effort against them, was an attempt, in imitation of Hannibal, to march an army by land, into Italy; and for this purpose he collected a great multitude of soldiers, and actually set out on his expedition. But his army finding out his purpose, and that a march of more than two thousand miles lay before them, over deserts, mountains, rivers, and through hostile countries, revolted against him, and placed his son Pharnaces, in his stead. Upon this, Mithridates put an end to his life. At first he attempted it by poison, but not succeeding in this, he fell on his sword.

572. Mithridates was one of the most extraordinary men, who has appeared in any age. His natural endowments were very great, and he added all manner of acquired improvements. No learning of these times escaped his attention. Although he had under him nations, who spoke twenty-two different languages, he was able to address them, each in their own tongues. He was, also, a man of great spirit; capable of forming and executing enterprizes of the utmost magnitude and difficulty. And although he was unfortunate in his wars with the Romans; yet if he had lived to execute his last project, he might have proved the most formidable enemy, they ever had.

Cicero, in speaking of him, says, that he was the greatest king, next to Alexander the Great. He was, however, ambitious, voluptuous, and often cruel, even to his own children, wives, and concubines.

573. The cause of the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, was now brought before Pompey, at Damascus, where they both appeared in person, according to his order. Ptolemy being solicitous to prosecute his Arabian war, gave no decision at present; but Aristobulus clearly perceived from what he said; that his cause was not viewed in a favorable light. He, therefore, left the place, unceremoniously, and returning into Judea, collected an army for his defence; by which proceeding, Pompey was much incensed. He marched, however, agreeably to his purpose, into Arabia; took Petrea, and made Aretas the king prisoner, but afterwards released him, on his agreeing to all his terms.

574. On his way back, being informed of the hostile movements of Aristobulus, in Judea, he marched into that country. Aristobulus had shut himself up in a strong fortress, built by his father on the top of a mountain, and called after him, Alexandrion. Pompey surrounded the place, and obliged him to come down; when he agreed to give up all the fortified places in his hands. But no sooner was he free from restraint, than he fled to Jerusalem, whither he was followed by Pompey.

575. When Pompey arrived at Jerusalem, this unsteady man, again came out to meet him, and promised full submission, and a sum of money. Gabinius was sent to receive the money, but he found the gates shut against him, and no money to be had. Pompey not enduring to be thus mocked, cast Aristobulus, whom he had retained with him, into chains, and marched with his whole army directly to Jerusalem.

576. Within the city there were two factions; that of Hyrcanus, and that of Aristobulus, The former were disposed to open the gates to the Romans, and they were the more numerous; but the other party retired into the mountain of the temple; and having cut off all communication with the city, resolved, there to maintain themselves.

577. Pompey having been received into the city by the other party, immediately laid siege to the mount of the temple. Most of the sacerdotal tribe were shut up within the temple; but the greatest part of the people were without. Battering engines were brought from Tyre, and an assault was made on the north side of the temple; and, although; the siege was pressed vigorously by the Romans, the garrison held out for three months; and might have held out much longer, but for the unwillingness of the Jews to work on the Sabbath, which gave a great advantage to the assailants; for, on that day, the Romans would fill up the ditches drawn round the temple for defence, and bring forward their batteries, and place them to the best advantage.

578. During the whole of the siege, the service of the temple was never interrupted; the priests being deterred, neither by the death of their friends or rage of their enemies; and many of them, while officiating at the altar, had their own blood mingled with that of the sacrifices. This unshaken constancy, was greatly admired by Pompey himself, and indeed is scarcely to be paralleled in history.

579. After three months, the temple was taken; that is in the first year of the 179th Olympiad; and on the very day, observed as a fast on account of the capture of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. All those who were considered the prime leaders of this revolt were put to death.

580. Pompey, not contented with viewing the exterior of this sacred edifice, impiously penetrated the interior, not only entering the sanctuary, but into the holy of holies, examined all the arcana of that sacred place; thus inflicting the deepest wound on the feelings of the Jews, who considered this intrusion, as the highest possible profanation. But although he found two thousand talents laid up in the temple, he neither took it away, nor disturbed any thing else belonging to the furniture of the place. And, as if to make amends for what he had done, in entering the temple, he now ordered it to be cleansed, and the divine service to be resumed. But it has been observed, that although successful in all the previous acts of his public life, from this time, no success ever attended him.

581. Having concluded the war, he reinstated Hyrcanus in the office of high priest, and made him also prince of the commonwealth. But the walls of Jerusalem he ordered to be demolished.

Octavius Cesar born—Diodorus Siculus—Alexander son of Aristobulus escapes from Rome—seizes several strong places—Gabinus governor of Syria—Aristobulus himself escapes from Rome, and raises new disturbances in Judea—Crassus visits Jerusalem and robs the temple of its treasures—the judgment of God overtakes him—Battle of Pharsalia—Cesar confirms Hyrcanus in the priesthood—Antipater accompanies Cesar in all his expeditions—his four sons—Herod arraigned for illegally putting certain thieves to death—meditates the destruction of Hyrcanus and the whole Sanhedrim—receives from Sixtus the government of Cœlo-Syria

582. In this same eventful year, 61 B. C., was born, Octavius Cesar, afterwards emperor under the name of Augustus, whose mother was the sister of Julius Cesar.

583. About this same time, 60 B. C., flourished Diodorus Siculus, the famous Greek historian. He was born in Sicily, from which he derives his name. He was thirty years in collecting materials for his history, and in composing the work; and that he might obtain accurate information, he travelled over most of the countries, of whose affairs his history treats. In this very year, he went to Egypt. His Bibliotheca contained forty books, of which only fifteen are now extant. Those which remain, are the five first—and from the tenth to the twentieth; all the rest are lost, except fragments preserved by other authors.

584. In the year 57 B. C., Alexander, the oldest son of Aristobulus, who had been carried to Rome by Pompey, having made his escape, came into Judea, and then collected an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, and seized Alexandrion, Macherus, and several other strong castles, which he garrisoned and fortified; and from thence ravaged all the surrounding country. Hyrcanus being able to oppose no effectual resistance, sent for aid to Gabinus, governor of Syria, the general of the horse under him being the famous Mark Antony. Here, also, the Roman army was joined by Antipater, and other adherents of Hyrcanus. They came to a battle with Alexander, who was completely overthrown; three thousand of his men being slain in battle, and as many taken prisoner. He himself took refuge in the castle, called Alexandrion, where he was besieged by Gabinus. While this siege was being carried on, the Roman general took a progress through the country, and found many of its once famous cities lying in ruins, which he ordered to be rebuilt or repaired.

585. While Gabinus was thus occupied, he met with the mother of Alexander; a woman remarkable for her discretion. She being very solicitous about the safety of her husband Aristobulus, who had been carried to Rome, endeavored, by acts of kindness, to ingratiate herself into the favor of Gabinus, and succeeded to her wishes; for upon her representations, he made peace with Alexander, who surrendered all his castles; which, by her advice, were dismantled or demolished.

586. Gabinus, now went up to Jerusalem, and having settled Hyrcanus in the priesthood, made great alterations in the form of the Jewish commonwealth; and from a monarchy transformed it to an aristocracy.

Hitherto, the government had been managed by a prince, with the aid of the grand council or Sanhedrim, consisting of seventy-two persons, with an inferior court of twenty-three in every considerable town.

587. Instead of this, Gabinius established five independent courts; the first, at Jerusalem; the second, at Jericho; the third, at Gadara; the fourth, at Amathus; and the fifth, at Sepphoris. The tyranny of Alexander Janneus had made the Jews weary of monarchy; and they petitioned Pompey for its abolition, when the trial of the two brothers took place before him, at Damascus; and he so far complied, as to take away the diadem and the name, but left the supreme power, in the hands of Hyrcanus. But now, they renewed their petition to Gabinius, and obtained the change which has been mentioned. But when Julius Cesar afterwards passed through the country, he restored things to their former condition.

588. Towards the close of this year, Aristobulus, who had been led in triumph by Pompey with his son Antigonus, made his escape from Rome, and came into Judea, where he excited new troubles; for, many resorted to his standard, and he seized several fortresses, which he began to fortify; but Gabinius came upon him, and subdued him. He and his son Antigonus were sent back again to Rome. Gabinius, however, in compliance with a promise given to his wife, obtained the release of the latter.

589. In the year 55 B. C., Gabinius, having been called into Egypt to settle the disturbances of that kingdom, Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, excited new troubles in Judea. Having collected a great army, he ravaged the whole country, killing all the Romans he could meet with, and driving the rest to take refuge in Mount Gerizzim, where he besieged them closely. Gabinius, seeing what a force he had collected, thought it best to deal with him by fair means, and sent Antipater with conditions of peace, promising an oblivion of all that was past. But Alexander, confiding in his strength, encountered Gabinius in battle, but was overthrown, with the slaughter of ten thousand of his men. After this victory, Gabinius went to Jerusalem, and regulated every thing according to the wishes of Antipater; and then marched against the Nabetheans, whom he subdued.

590. In the year 54 B. C., Pompey and Crassus being consuls, the latter had Syria and the East, assigned to him. Whereupon, coming into Syria, with an eager desire to amass as much wealth as possible, and hearing of the riches of the temple at Jerusalem, he marched directly thither. At that time, Eleazer a priest, was the treasurer of the temple. Among other precious things under his charge, was a bar of solid gold of immense value, which to conceal he enclosed in a wooden beam, and then placed the beam over the entrance from the holy into the most holy place, and suspended the veil upon it.

591. But when he found Crassus very intent on finding treasure, Eleazer told him that he would discover it to him if he would spare the temple, and its other treasures. This Crassus swore he would religiously perform; but the perfidious, and sacrilegious wretch, no sooner had the beam in possession, than he entered into the temple, and took away the two thousand talents which Pompey had left untouched, and robbed it of other valuable treasures, to the amount of ten thousand talents; by which he thought himself well provided for the Parthian war.

592. But speedy vengeance pursued the rapacious and sacrilegious Crassus; for, being decoyed by the enemy into an unfavorable situation, the Parthians fell upon him, defeated his army, and slew his son, and twenty thousand of his men. Crassus himself, while endeavoring to escape, fell under the conduct of a treacherous guide, and being led by him to Sarinas, the general of the Parthians, was immediately put to death. The Parthians, supposing that there would be nothing to oppose their progress, crossed the Euphrates, and invaded Syria; but here they were met by

Cassius, defeated, and driven back to their own country.

593. In the year 49 B. C., Cesar released Aristobulus from prison, and sent him into Judea, with two legions, to promote his interest there, and in the neighboring countries of Phenicia, Syria, and Arabia. But some of Pompey's friends found means to give him poison on the way, of which he died. Alexander, his son, having been informed of the expected arrival of his father, began to raise forces to join him as soon as he came. Pompey sent orders to Scipio, to put him to death; who, causing him to be apprehended and brought to Antioch, he was there subjected to a formal trial, in which, being condemned, his head was cut off.

594. In the year 48 B. C., the contest between Cesar and Pompey was brought to a decision, by the famous battle of Pharsalia, in Thessaly; in which Pompey was defeated, and obliged to flee to Africa, where he was beheaded.

595. Cesar, having conquered Egypt, passed into Syria, where Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus the late king of the Jews, came to him; and lamenting the death of his father and brother, begged Cesar to have compassion on him; and at the same time, made heavy complaints against Hyrcanus and Antipater. But Antipater being then with Cesar, defended himself and Hyrcanus so much to his satisfaction, that he rejected the accusations of Antigonus, as of a turbulent and seditious person, and decreed, that Hyrcanus should possess not only the priesthood, but the sovereign power, as formerly; and, his descendants after him.

596. Antipater accompanied Cesar in all his expeditions through Syria, and greatly conciliated his favor. When Cesar left this province, Antipater returned to Judea, and regulated every thing to the best advantage for Hyrcanus. He was a man of consummate policy, and by his skilful management had acquired an unbounded influence, not only in Judea, but in Phenicia, Syria, Arabia, &c.

597. Antipater had married a noble Arabian lady, whose name was Cyprus, by whom he had four sons, now grown to mature age. The oldest was called, Phaselus; the second, Herod; the third, Joseph; and the youngest, Pheroras. He had, also, one daughter by the same wife, named Salome, who, as well as her brother Herod, is famous in the history of the following years.

598. Antipater, having acquired such influence, in Judea and the neighboring countries, and being so much in favor with Cesar, was now able to make provision for his own sons. Accordingly, he appointed Phaselus to be governor of Jerusalem, and Herod his second son, to be governor of Galilee; he being then no more than twenty-five years of age. In the printed text of Josephus, it is only fifteen, but this, by a collation of other passages, appears to be a mistake of the copyists.

599. Herod, being a young man of an active disposition, and wishing to signalize himself, made an attack on a horde of thieves, who infested the country; and, having taken their leader Hezekias, with several of his associates, he put them all to death. By this action he gained much applause, even from Sixtus, the governor of the province; but those who were enemies of Antipater, represented to Hyrcanus, that Herod had put these men to death without a legal trial, and obtained from him an order, that Herod should be cited to appear before the Sanhedrim, to answer for his conduct.

600. Herod appeared before this August tribunal clothed in purple, and surrounded by his guard, by which the judges were so intimidated, that not one of them had courage to open his mouth, except an old councillor, by the name of Samias. He first accused Herod of audacity, in appearing as he did, before that court; and then turned his accusation against Hyrcanus the president, and the members of the council, for their want of firmness and dignity; predicting, that this same Herod, should be the means of executing wrath upon the Sanhedrim. Which was actually fulfilled; for, Herod put every member of the Sanhedrim, afterwards, to death, except this same Samias, and one other individual.

601. Hyrcanus did all he could to get Herod cleared, as he had a great partiality for the young man, whose father had been the chief cause of all his power and prosperity. But finding that he could not procure his acquittal, he got the cause adjourned, until the next day; and, in the mean time, advised Herod to leave Jerusalem, which he did, and went to Damascus, where putting himself under the protection of Sixtus Cesar, he set the Sanhedrim at defiance, and refused any more to appear before them.

602. While Herod was with Sixtus, he so ingratiated himself, that he obtained from him the government of Cœlo-Syria. He now raised an army, and marched into Judea, to be revenged on the Sanhedrim, for the indignity offered him, by bringing him to a trial before them. His purpose was to depose Hyrcanus from the priesthood, and cut off the whole Sanhedrim. But his father, and brother Phasael, interposed, and made him desist from his design.

CHAPTER XXV("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

The Julian year—death of Cesar—Malichus, his influence and character—death of Antipater—Battle of Philippi—Antigonus youngest son of Aristobulus claims the kingdom—the Parthians again cross the Euphrates—are hired to invade Judea, to make Antigonus son of Aristobulus, king—his adherents are resisted by Herod and Phasael—civil war within the city of Jerusalem—flight of Herod and death of Phasael

603. In the year 46 B. C., Cesar having returned from his African expedition, undertook, in virtue of his office as Pontifex maximus, to reform the calendar; which he happily effected, by establishing the Julian year, of three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours; or, in actual computation, three years, of three hundred and fifty-five days, and the fourth, of three hundred and sixty-six: which is in use at this time.

604. In the following year, 45 B. C. Julius Cesar was murdered in the Senate house, by a band of conspirators, whose leaders were Brutus and Cassius. Their professed object was to destroy the tyrant, and restore liberty to the Senate and people.

605. Cesar, was a man of very extraordinary abilities, and learning. He was, also, naturally humane, and generous; but he was ambitious, voluptuous, and irreligious.

606. Upon the death of Cesar, the greatest confusion ensued, not only at Rome, but in all the provinces. Of these events, it would here be out of place to give a particular account, except so far as they may be intimately connected with Jewish history.

607. Next to Antipater, Malichus had the chief authority in Judea. They had been long associated in the support of Hyrcanus; but this man now began to act a very wicked and ungrateful part, to his

patron, Antipater. He was not contented to be the second man in the country, but was ambitious to be the first; especially, as he was a native Jew, and Antipater, an Idumean. He, therefore, plotted against the life of Antipater; and when the latter, obtaining some intelligence of his design, was preparing to oppose him, he came to him with so fair a face, and so played the hypocrite, that he removed all suspicion from his mind: nay, when Murcus would have put Malichus to death, he was spared at the intercession of Antipater. But, notwithstanding all this, when he was dining one day with Hyrcanus, Malichus bribed the butler to administer poison to him, of which he died.

608. Malichus now took possession of the power which had been exercised by Antipater; but, the sons of the latter, were not easily to be deceived; and no how disposed to leave their father's death unavenged. Although Malichus denied having had any hand in the death of Antipater, they were convinced of the contrary. Herod was in favor of openly attacking the murderer, at once; but Phasaël recommended a more crafty proceeding, as one less likely to bring on a civil war.

609. In the mean time, the brothers acquainted Cassius, who then had possession of Syria, with the circumstances of Antipater's, death, and obtained from him the liberty of putting the murderer to death, of which order, notice was given to the commanders of the garrison at Tyre. When Cassius had taken Laodicea, all the princes and chief lords of Syria and Palestine came to Tyre, to congratulate him. Hyrcanus and Malichus, were on the road for the same purpose. Herod made a great supper, and on pretence of sending invitations to his guests, informed them of Cassius' orders, and the approach of Malichus; on which, men were sent to meet him; who, according to their orders, fell on Malichus, and slew him. It was ascertained, that he had formed a plot, after getting his son who was at Tyre into his possession, to return to Judea, and excite the Jews to revolt; and while the Romans were busy with their civil wars, to make himself king. But the plot of Herod against him, was better laid, and took complete effect.

610. In the year 42 B. C., was fought the decisive battle at Philippi, in Macedonia, between Octavianus and Antony, on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius, the murderers of Cesar, on the other. In this battle, the latter were overthrown, and their cause ruined; and both Brutus and Cassius were driven to such desperation, that they put an end to their own lives.

611. After Cassius had left Syria, the friends of Malichus raised a great tumult, to revenge his death on the sons of Antipater: and had influence to gain over to their party Hyrcanus, and also Felix the commander of the Roman forces, at Jerusalem. At the same time a brother of Malichus seized the castle of Massada, and several other strong places, in Judea.

612. Herod was, at this time, confined with sickness at Damascus, whither he had gone to see Fabius, the Roman governor. The whole of this storm, therefore, fell on Phasaël, who withstood it successfully: for he drove Felix, and all his party out of Jerusalem. When Herod returned, the brothers were soon able to put down the opposite faction, and recover the strong fortresses.

613. About this time, a marriage took place between Herod and Mariamne, the grand daughter of Hyrcanus, which seemed to reconcile all differences.

614. But this peace was of a short duration. Antigonus, the youngest son of Aristobulus the late king, was made the instrument of the discontented faction at Jerusalem; for his father and older brother being dead, as related above, he claimed the kingdom as his right. In these pretensions, he was supported by Marion king of Tyre, Fabius governor of Damascus, and Ptolemy prince of

Chalcis. The last of these had married the sister of Antigonus.

Coming with a large army, Antigonus invaded Judea, but he had scarcely entered its borders, when Herod encountered and overthrew him, and returned to Jerusalem, in great triumph.

615. In the year 41 B. C., the Parthians again crossed the Euphrates, instigated and led on by some of the adherents of Pompey, who had fled for refuge to the Parthian court. This army was under the conduct of Labianus and Pacorus, who ravaged a large part of Asia Minor, and took Sidon and Ptolemais.

616. By these generals, a large party was sent to invade Judea, for the purpose of making Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, king of that country. They were prevailed on to pursue this course, by Lysanias king of Chalcis, who promised them as a reward, one thousand talents, and five hundred Jewish women, if they would restore Antigonus to his father's kingdom. Antigonus himself, having collected an army of Jews from about Mount Carmel, marched with them into Judea.

617. And having vanquished those who first came against him, pursued them to Jerusalem, where having got within the city, he had many skirmishes with the brothers, Phasaël and Herod; in which, the followers of Antigonus being worsted, retreated within the mount of the temple; and the other party into the palace, which two places became the head quarters of the two parties.

618. Their conflicts continued until the time of the feast of Pentecost, when, numbers of people coming to the city from all parts, some took part with one, and some with the other, until the confusion was so great, that the leaders began to think of some means of putting an end to these troubles. Proposals of peace being made to Antigonus, he received them hypocritically, offering to refer the dispute to the Parthian general, whom Pacorus, according to agreement, had sent after him. By this stratagem, the Parthian who was the cup-bearer of Pacorus, was introduced into the city, and lodged with five hundred of his horse within the walls. Here he played his game so artfully, that he persuaded Phasaël to take Hyrcanus with him, and go to Barzapharnes; who then governed Syria, under Pacorus. Herod had no confidence in the Parthians, and remonstrated against the course which his brother had determined to pursue.

619. When Phasaël and Hyrcanus came to Galilee, they were met by a guard from Barzapharnes, and the cup-bearer returned to Jerusalem. They were, at first, treated with a show of kindness, until it was supposed, that the Parthian general had time to reach Jerusalem and seize Herod, when they were both put in chains.

620. But Herod, aware of the danger, fled from Jerusalem with his family and treasures, and seized the fortress of Massada, on the west side of the Dead Sea, where he left his family, and went to Arabia, to solicit assistance of Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas. But Malchus, though under great obligations to Herod for services performed, ungratefully refused to receive or entertain him. He then directed his course towards Egypt, but before he arrived, he heard of the death of his brother Phasaël. For the Parthians, when they found Herod gone, made Antigonus king, and delivered up Phasaël and Hyrcanus into his hands. The former, knowing that his death was determined on, beat out his own brains against the wall. The life of Hyrcanus was spared, but to render him incapable of officiating as high priest, they cut off both his ears; and then delivered him to the Parthians, who carried him with them into the east.

Herod obtains the favor of Antony—and is solemnly appointed king of Judea—is successful against his enemies—Antony sends him two legions to reduce Jerusalem, still in the possession of Antigonus—Herod goes to Samosata to meet Antony—returns to Judea with fresh forces—his brother Joseph slain in an expedition against Jericho—Herod lays siege to Jerusalem—Mariamne the wife of Herod—Jerusalem taken and given up to pillage—abject spirit of Antigonus

621. Herod, upon hearing of the death of his brother, did not return, but went on to Pelusium, and thence to Alexandria. Not meeting with any promise of effectual succour in Egypt, he sailed by way of Rhodes, to Rome, where he made his complaint and application to Antony, beseeching him, by the friendship which subsisted between him and his father, to pity the distracted and miserable condition of Judea.

622. Antony, in consideration of the promise of a very large sum of money, entered with much zeal into the interests of Herod, and obtained for him much more than he expected. For he thought of nothing more than succeeding to the power which his father exercised under Hyrcanus. But Anthony, first securing the influence of Octavianus, in favor of the measure, had Herod introduced to the Senate, with a full exhibition of the merits of his family, towards the Roman people; on which, he was recognized as king of Judea, by the unanimous vote of the Senate, and Antigonus was declared to be an enemy to the Roman people. Herod was then conducted to the capitol, with Antony on one side, and Octavianus on the other, where he was solemnly inaugurated into his new office, according to the Roman usage. And this act of the Senate was laid up among the archives of the State.

623. Herod, having met with such success at Rome, hastened back to Judea. This whole transaction, by which he was solemnly advanced to the royal dignity, occupied no more than seven days. Indeed, his whole journey, both by sea and land, from the time he left Judea, until his return to Ptolemais, occupied only three months.

624. His first object, after his return, was to relieve his wife, mother, sister, and other friends, who were shut up in the castle of Massada, and had been besieged by Antigonus ever since his departure. They were now reduced to such distress, for want of water that his brother Joseph, who had been left in command of the place, had formed the purpose of breaking through the besiegers, and escaping to Malchus, king of Arabia, who, he heard, was now much better disposed to lend them aid, than when applied to by Herod. But the night before he had designed to carry his purpose into effect, there fell such plentiful showers of rain, as filled all their cisterns; so that they were able to hold out, until Herod came to their relief.

625. Herod had no small difficulty in collecting a sufficient force to meet the besieging array. He received all into his service, whom he could enlist, whether Jews or foreigners: but his principal reliance was on Ventidius and Silo, Roman generals, who were then in Palestine, with a considerable force. These, however, did him as much harm as good; for having come into Judea to obtain money, they were ready to help him who would pay them best. And, indeed, they received money from both parties, and so managed, as to give little real assistance to either.

626. Herod, however, finally succeeded in reducing Galilee, and, after a siege of considerable length, took Joppa. Having delivered his family and friends from their unpleasant situation in

Massada, he placed them in Samaria, and sent his brother Joseph into Idumea, to secure that region in his interests.

627. At this time Galilee, was infested with multitudes of robbers, to suppress whom, Herod now addressed himself. With some difficulty he succeeded in vanquishing a large body of them who advanced to meet his army, and compelled them to cross the Jordan. It was some time, however, before the country was entirely freed from these banditti.

628. Jerusalem, and many other places, still continued in the possession of Antigonus; and the war between him and Herod still went on. To aid the latter, Antony sent Macheras with two legions and one thousand horse, who approaching the walls of Jerusalem; for the purpose of conferring with Antigonus, was beaten back by the archers and slingers, on the rampart; by which he was so enraged, that on his retreat from the place, he killed all the Jews he could lay hands on. Among them, many of Herods friends were cut off; on account of which, he went directly to make complaint to Antony; but Macheras overtook him, and so explained and apologized, that Herod agreed to think no more of the affair.

629. Still, however, he prosecuted his journey to visit Antony, who was then at Samosata; who received him with distinguished honor. While there, Herod rendered signal service in carrying on the siege of the place.

630. While Herod was absent, his brother Joseph, neglecting the orders which he had received, made an expedition against Jericho, with such forces as he was able to bring together. Being circumvented by the enemy, he was there slain, and most of his men cut to pieces. In consequence of this disaster, many in Idumea and Galilee, revolted from Herod.

631. The intelligence of these unfortunate events reached Herod at Daphne, on his way home, and hastened his return. Coming to Mount Libanus, he there raised eight hundred men; and with these, and one Roman cohort, marched to Ptolemais, and proceeded to subdue those who had revolted in Galilee. Then marching to Jerusalem to avenge his brother's death, he was encountered by the friends of Antigonus, and defeated, being himself wounded in the conflict. But soon rallying, he collected more soldiers, and fought another battle with the flower of the troops of Antigonus, under the command of Pappus, and entirely overthrew them; Pappus himself being among the slain. Had it not been winter, he might have marched directly to Jerusalem and taken that place.

632. Early the next year, 38 B. C., Herod took the field, with a great army, and proceeded directly to Jerusalem, where he commenced a regular siege of the place. While the necessary works were carrying on, he went to Samaria, and consummated his marriage with Mariamne, who had been betrothed to him, four years before.

633. Mariamne was the daughter of Alexander the son of king Aristobulus, by Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus the second. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and great virtue, and accomplished above any woman of her time. Herod, in selecting her for a wife, was influenced not merely by affection, but by political motives; for he thought, that by an alliance with the Asmonean family, so highly venerated by the Jews, he would gain a great influence over that people.

634. After the return of Herod from Samaria, the siege was prosecuted with uncommon vigor; for the governor of Syria came to his assistance with a large number of soldiers. The whole force engaged in the siege was no less than eleven legions and six thousand horse, besides the Syrian auxiliaries.

635. But the city held out until the next year, which was 37 B. C., when many breaches being made in the walls, the assailants entered, and exasperated by the length of the siege, and the hardships which they had endured, filled the whole town with blood and devastation. Herod did all he could to prevent this, but without effect, as Sosius the governor of Syria, encouraged the soldiers in these lawless and cruel proceedings. At length, when remonstrance failed to put a stop to the utter devastation of the city, Herod redeemed it from further spoliation, by the promise of a large sum of money.

636. Antigonus, seeing that all was lost, surrendered himself to Sosius, and in a very abject manner, cast himself at his feet; which, instead of moving the compassion of, this stern Roman, only provoked his contempt; for he ever afterwards called him Antigona. It was, at first, designed to preserve him to grace the triumph of Antony; but Herod wishing to remove all danger of new disturbances from the claims of this last male of the Asmonean family, never ceased to petition Antony, to have him put to death; which was accordingly done, by the hands of the common executioner, without the least regard to his royal dignity.

CHAPTER XXVII("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \ "Annals_contents-")

Herod established on the throne of Judea—destroys the whole Sanhedrim except two—Hillel and Shammai—their distinguished descendents—Simon—Gamaliel—Judah Hakkadosh—scholars of Hillel—Chaldee paraphrases—their high estimation among the Jews—Jonathan Ben Uzziel and Onkelos

637. Herod was now in full possession of the kingdom of Judea. But as he had made his way to the throne through much blood; so now, when seated on it, he found it necessary to resort to the sword, to subdue the obstinacy of the leaders of the opposite faction, who would not consent to submit to his authority. Of this number was the whole Sanhedrim, the grand council of the nation, every one of whom he put to death, as was before mentioned, except Sameas and Pollio. During the whole siege, these two had declared in favor of receiving Herod as their king, alleging, that God in displeasure for their sins, had decreed to give them up to the government of this man, as a punishment. The others, on the contrary, went about the city, encouraging the people, and assuring them that God would certainly protect his temple. On which account, Herod put them all to death; remembering also, the affront which they had put upon him, when they cited him before them, as a criminal. It is remarkable, however, that he spared Sameas, who had so boldly denounced him on that occasion; and who was of all the most vehement, in requiring his condemnation.

638. These two men are very famous among the Mishnical doctors of the Jews, and in the rabbinical writings, are known by the names of Hillel and Shammai. Of the Sanhedrim, which was now formed, Hillel was made the president, and Shammai the vice-president. The former is called Pollio, by Josephus, and was one of the most eminent men, for learning and authority, who ever appeared in the Jewish nation. The Jewish writers, with one consent, concede to him the highest

place, in the knowledge of the Jewish law and traditions. For forty years he was president of the Sanhedrim, and acquired higher reputation for the justice and wisdom of his decisions, than any one who had occupied that high seat of judgment, since the days of Simon the Just.

639. The posterity of this eminent doctor were also famous for a long time. It is said, that his descendents occupied the same high office for ten generations.

640. Simeon, his son, is supposed to have been the very person, who in the temple, took our blessed Saviour in his arms; Luke 2:25-35.

641. The third in descent, was, Gamaliel, who presided in the Sanhedrim, when Peter and the other apostles were called before that council; (Acts 5:34;) and was the distinguished master at whose feet the apostle Paul was brought up. (Acts 22:3.) In the Jewish writings he is called Gamaliel the Old, because he lived to extreme old age; his death occurring only, eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

642. Next to Gamaliel, was Simon, the second of that name. He perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.

643. The fifth in descent, was Gamaliel the second.

644. To him succeeded, Simeon the third.

645. Then we come to Judah Hakkadosh, or Judah the Holy, who composed the Mishna, the great body of Jewish Traditionary Law, which forms the text of the Talmud.

646. After Judah Hakkadosh, we have, in regular succession, the names of Gamaliel the third, Hillel, and Gemaricus, all lineal descendents of the Hillel, of whom we are now speaking.

647. Hillel was born and brought up in Babylonia, where he resided until the fortieth year of his life. After that, he came to Jerusalem and betook himself to the study of the law, in which he became so eminent, that when eighty years of age, he was made president of the Sanhedrim, in which office he continued for forty years more, so that he lived to the great age of one hundred and twenty years.

648. When Hillel was first made president of the Sanhedrim, one Menahem, was the vice-president; a leading man among the Essenes. Josephus says, that he had the spirit of prophecy, of which he gives the following instance. One day, meeting with Herod among his school-fellows, he saluted him by saying "Hail, king of the Jews!" and laying his hand on his shoulder, foretold, that, one day he should be advanced to that dignity. When Herod was actually made king, remembering this prediction, he sent for Menahem and asked him whether he should reign as many as ten years. He is said to have answered, "Yea ten, twenty, thirty years," and then paused, because Herod did not wish to inquire further.

649. Shammai, who is called Sameas by Josephus, was next to Hillel in reputation, as a Mishnical doctor. He had been the disciple of Hillel; but when appointed vice-president of the Sanhedrim he did not always concur with his old master, in opinion. These differences of opinion, between the masters, caused great disputes and dissensions among their scholars; which sometimes arose to such a height, as to cause the shedding of blood. But, finally, the school of Hillel prevailed over

that of Shammai. The tempers of these eminent men were diverse; for while Hillel was of a mild and peaceable disposition, Shammai was of an irascible and fiery spirit.

650. Hillel, it is said, bred up no less than one thousand scholars in the knowledge of the Law; of whom eighty were of the first distinction. Of these, the Jewish writers say, that thirty were so eminent, as to be worthy that the divine glory should rest on them, as it did on Moses; and thirty, for whom the sun might have stood still, as it did for Joshua.

651. The most eminent of them all, however, was Jonathan Ben Uzziel, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on the Prophets, who was contemporary with Onkelos, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on the Law. Whether Onkelos was also a scholar of Hillel, we are nowhere informed.

652. These paraphrases, are translations of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, from the Hebrew, into the language of the Chaldeans, which was used through Assyria, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine. They were called Targums, which means versions, or translations.

653. As was before mentioned, they had their origin, after the return of the Jews from captivity, when the common people, and especially the youth, not being familiar with the Hebrew, needed a version in the vulgar tongue, which was Chaldee.

654. These versions were at first made by learned men verbally; but in process of time, when Synagogues multiplied, it became expedient to have them in writing, that they might be used, when there were none sufficiently learned to render the Hebrew, with correctness, into the vernacular dialect.

655. There are now extant a number of paraphrases, by different hands, and composed in different ages. The principal are, The Paraphrase of Onkelos on the Law;—That of Jonathan on the Prophets—Another on the Law ascribed also to Jonathan—The Jerusalem Targum, on the Law—The Targum on the Megilloth; that is, on the five small books, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and the Lamentations. There are, moreover, two other paraphrases on the book of Esther. Next, we have the Targum of one-eyed Joseph, on the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job—And an anonymous Targum, on the books of Chronicles.

656. These versions are of little value, except the paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, which are very important; especially, in teaching us how the ancient Jews interpreted the Scriptures which relate to the Messiah.

657. That the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan were composed a short time before the birth of Christ, is the opinion of both Jewish and Christian writers; and is strongly confirmed by internal evidence. The only reason for supposing that they were of a later date, is the fact, that they seem to have been entirely unknown to Origen, Jerome, and the other Christian fathers. But if these men did not understand the Chaldee language, they, of course, could not be acquainted with these paraphrases; and they might have been composed and principally used in Babylonia; which supposition well corresponds with the language in which they were written; which is rather the eastern, than the western Aramean.

658. These versions are held in the highest esteem by the Jews, and, therefore, furnish the best weapons for carrying on the controversy with them. They are, undoubtedly, the oldest Jewish

writings extant, with the exception of the Scriptures; unless we reckon the Greek version of the Old Testament, as a Jewish composition.

CHAPTER XXVIII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Ananias made high priest by Herod in the place of Antigonus deceased—Hyrchanus, a captive among the Parthians, is treated with favor—his desire to return, and Herod's reasons for wishing the same—Alexandra the mother of Aristobulus and Mariamne his sister, dissatisfied that he was passed over when Ananias was exalted to be high priest—Herod causes Aristobulus to be drowned—Cleopatra visits Jerusalem—her manners so licentious that even Herod is disgusted—great earthquake in Judea—Antony entirely defeated at Actium—Herod now seeks to conciliate the favor of the conqueror, and succeeds—Mariamne manifests the utmost hatred of Herod, on account of hearing that in case of his death, he had ordered her to be killed, lest she should be enjoyed by another—suspecting that his uncle Joseph had communicated his secret, he became furious with jealousy, and put both him and her to death—immediately he was seized with intolerable remorse, and fell sick—becomes more severe—is instigated to acts of cruelty by Alexandra and others—conspiracy against his life

659. Herod, on the death of Antigonus, made Ananelus high priest, in his stead. He was an obscure priest, residing in Babylonia; but being well known to Herod, and of the pontifical family, he sent for him, and put him into this office. He seems to have chosen, an obscure man, that there might be no collision between the sacerdotal and royal dignity.

660. Hyrcanus, who had been carried away by the Parthians, still lived, and was treated with much kindness by Phraates the king, who, when he understood his former dignity, released him from his chains, and allowed him full liberty to live among the Jews who resided in that country. For, at this time, there were more Jews in Babylonia, and other countries beyond the Euphrates, than in Judea.

661. Hyrcanus, on hearing that Herod was made king of the Jews, expressed a strong desire to return; for as he had, in one instance saved Herod's life, he expected to be treated kindly.

662. Herod was no less solicitous for the return of Hyrcanus, but for a very different reason. He wished to get the old man into his power, that he might make away with the only survivor of the Asmonean family, who could have any claim to the throne of Judea. He, therefore, sent a special embassy to Seleucia, with the double object of getting Phraates to give him up, and of persuading Hyrcanus to come. In both, they were successful, and the aged man, contrary to the advice of his best friends, returned again to the land of his nativity.

663. In making Ananelus high priest, Herod had passed by Aristobulus, the son of Alexander, to whom, by right of succession it belonged. This produced, no small disturbance in his own family; for, Alexandra the mother of Aristobulus, and Mariamne his sister, could not bear to see an obscure stranger exalted to that office, while the rightful heir was overlooked.

664. These two ladies not only teased Herod, continually, respecting the matter, but began to intrigue with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, for the advancement of Aristobulus. The king, therefore, to make peace at home, resolved to gratify them; so, deposing Ananelus, he put Aristobulus in his room, a youth only seventeen years old.

665. But Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus, being an ambitious woman, knew that her son had just as much right to the kingdom as he had to the priesthood; and, therefore, began to intrigue further with Cleopatra, for this end also. Herod confined her to the palace, and set spies over her; but she contrived a method of escape, and set off with her son to the court of Cleopatra. Herod after letting her proceed some distance, sent and brought her back.

666. Aristobulus now became more and more the object of the king's jealousy. At one of the great festivals, when he officiated at the altar in his pontifical robes, the people were struck with admiration at the beauty and gracefulness of the young high priest, and their mouths were full of his praises.

667. Herod could endure this no longer; he determined, therefore, to put an end to one who gave him so much uneasiness. He invited him, with this view, to a feast at Jericho, where the young man was enticed to go out to bathe, with a number of others. They, by the direction of Herod, held him under the water until he was drowned; and then it was pretended that his death was accidental. Herod himself put on mourning, and affected the deepest grief, for the loss of the high priest. But his hypocrisy was not concealed, and he was abhorred by the people, on account of this cruel act. As to Alexandra, she was inconsolable, and probably would not have survived her beloved son, had it not been for the desire of revenge which now took full possession of her breast.

668. This murder of Aristobulus took place in the year 34 B. C. Alexandra acquainted Cleopatra, by letter, with the circumstances of her son's death, and fully engaged her interest in opposition to Herod. Antony being then very much under the influence, of Cleopatra, was easily induced to cite Herod to answer for his conduct, in relation to this matter. But when Antony came into Syria, Herod so mollified him, that he dropped the proceedings altogether.

669. While Herod was gone to wait on Antony, he left Mariamne in the care of his uncle Joseph, who had married his sister Salome. Fearing lest, if any thing should happen to him, Mariamne would fall into the power of Antony, who already seemed to be in love with her, from the report of her beauty, he ordered Joseph, as soon as he was dead, immediately to kill his wife also.

670. This secret Joseph, inadvertently let out, one day, when expatiating on the greatness of Herod's love to her. On Herod's return, she reproached him with it, which threw him into a transport of passion; being persuaded, that nothing but an illicit connexion with Joseph, (of which she had been accused by Salome,) could have extorted such a secret, he drew his dagger, and was about to plunge it in her bosom; but his love for her unnerved his arm.

671. But, immediately turning his vengeance on Joseph and Alexandra, he put the first to death without allowing him even a hearing; and throwing the latter into chains, shut her up in prison.

672. Cleopatra, having accompanied her paramour Antony, as far as the Euphrates, visited Jerusalem on her way home, where she was splendidly entertained by Herod; but her manners were so voluptuous, and even licentious, that Herod himself was exceedingly disgusted with her.

673. While she was in his power, he once thought of making away with her, both on account of her former machinations against his kingdom, and out of fear of what she might still continue to effect against him; but he was restrained by a fear of Antony's displeasure.

674. Herod, being of a suspicious and jealous temper, resolved to select some strong place, and fortify it, to the utmost. The tower of Massada seemed to suit his purpose best. He, therefore, furnished it with arms for ten thousand men, that, in all events, he might have a place of refuge for himself.

675. As Antony had promised several kingdoms to Cleopatra, among which was that of Malchus, in Arabia, Herod was directed to make war with him. In this expedition, he, at first, gained a complete victory; but in a second engagement, he was defeated, and scarcely escaped with the fragments of his army.

676. In the year 31 B. C., there occurred an earthquake, which shook the whole land of Judea, in a more terrible manner than was ever experienced before. No less than thirty thousand persons were killed by this convulsion of nature. Herod was so much affected with this heavy disaster, that he sent to solicit peace with the Arabians; but they, having heard that the rum from the earthquake was much greater than it really was, put the ambassadors to death, and invaded Judea, expecting to meet with no resistance. But Herod's soldiers happened to be abroad when the earthquake occurred, so that they remained uninjured, and now collecting them together, he fell upon the Arabian army, and having killed five thousand men, besieged the rest in their camp. Being there distressed for want of water, they ventured another battle, in which he slew seven thousand of them, and took the rest prisoners. The Arabians, in their turn, were now forced to sue for peace, and were glad to accept whatever terms Herod chose to prescribe.

677. Antony, having been entirely defeated by Octavianus, in the battle at Actium, fled to Egypt, where he again gave himself up to the charms of Cleopatra. Herod perceiving that he could depend no longer on his protection, began to think of conciliating Octavius. But still indulging his suspicions of the aged Hyrcanus, who was now resident at Jerusalem, he pretended to discover a plot to render assistance to Malchus king of Arabia, on which he immediately had the old man put to death, though now in his eightieth year.

678. Herod, intent on securing the favor of Octavianus, if possible, shut up Mariamne and Alexandra her mother, in the fortress of Alexandrion, under a strong guard, and having placed his own mother and sister in the strong fortress of Massada, set off to pay his respects to Octavianus.

679. Herod, in his address to Cesar, spoke with such ingenuousness, in acknowledging every thing which he had done in opposition to him from friendship to Antony, that he won him over, to his interests: Cesar, therefore, confirmed him in his kingdom, and caused him to resume the diadem, which he had laid down, at his feet. Herod, upon this, made him very rich presents, which he had brought with him for the purpose.

680. Herod was now in high spirits on account of his unexpected success, in obtaining all he wished from Octavianus, and returned to Judea to communicate his good fortune to his family and friends. But his beloved wife, Mariamne, received him, with the utmost aversion, and gave herself up to sighs and groans. The reason of this strange behaviour was, that she had, by some means, learned, that he had again given orders, that in case of his death, she should immediately be put to death. He had also given orders, that Alexandra her mother should also be put to death; and that his brother Pheroras should inherit the kingdom.

681. Octavianus having conquered Antony at Actium, pursued him into Egypt. On his way, he stopped at Ptolemais, where Herod met him, and gave him and his army a most splendid entertainment; and besides which, he presented Octavianus with eight hundred talents, by which munificent hospitality, he greatly conciliated the friendship of the conqueror.

682. Antony having been defeated on all sides, and all his attempts to obtain peace proving ineffectual, in despair of ever retrieving his affairs, he fell upon his sword, and left the world to his rival.

683. As soon as Herod heard of his death, he hastened to Egypt to pay his respects to the conqueror, by whom he was received with signal kindness and honor. He accompanied him on his return as far as Antioch, and received from him several grants, by which his power and kingdom were enlarged considerably.

684. On the return of Herod from this visit to Egypt, he found his domestic troubles increased rather than diminished. Mariamne still expressed for him the utmost abhorrence, and upbraided him on account of her father, grandfather, brother, and uncle, all of whom he had put to death; but she concealed the true reason of her excessive displeasure, out of regard to the life of Sohemus, from whom she had received the secret.

685. At length, Herod losing all patience, endeavored to extort from her attendants, by the rack, the secret cause of her grief and anger, but he could only learn, that it was owing to something communicated by Sohemus, that she was so exceedingly disturbed. The king then suspected that his secret orders, in case of his own death, had been betrayed; and, as before, in the case of Joseph, that this never would have been done, unless there had existed an illicit intercourse between them. He was now so fired with jealousy, that he immediately put this man to death, and then forming a court of his own dependents, for the trial of Mariamne, she was, as a matter of course, condemned to die.

686. It was not, at first, intended to carry the sentence into execution, but merely to shut her up in one of the strong fortresses. The jealous tyrant, however, fearing some insurrection of the people, was induced to precipitate the execution. Mariamne suffered death with unshaken fortitude. She was a truly magnanimous and virtuous woman; of greater beauty and accomplishments than any other of the age in which she lived.

687. As she was led to execution, her mother Alexandra, reproached her in the most cruel manner, for treating an excellent husband with so much unkindness; but all this was hypocrisy, to save her own life, for she had reason to fear, that her time would come next.

688. No sooner was Mariamne executed, than the grief and remorse of Herod became intolerable. He found no rest, day nor night. Wherever he went, the image of Mariamne haunted him, and filled him with the bitterest reflexions; until, at length, he became subject to fits of temporary madness.

689. Immediately, after the execution of the queen, a greivous pestilence occurred, which carried off great numbers, both of the common people, and the nobility. This, all considered as a just judgment of God upon the wicked king. Herod's disorder of mind was increased by this calamity; so that not knowing what to do with himself, he gave up all care of the public business, and retired to Samaria, where he fell into a grievous sickness.

690. When, with much difficulty he was recovered, and had returned to Jerusalem, he was observed to be more disposed to acts of cruelty, than before, which continued to be his disposition to the end of life.

691. While Herod lay sick, at Samaria, Alexandra, expecting that he would die, began to intrigue for the supreme power. To accomplish her purpose, she negotiated with the governors of the strong fortresses, in Jerusalem. The pretext which she used in these negotiations was, that she wished to secure the government for Herod's children, by Mariamne. These officers, however, immediately communicated the whole matter to Herod, who sent orders to have her put to death. This happened in the year 28 B. C.

692. In the year 26 B. C., Salome, Herod's sister, whose first husband was Joseph, and who afterwards married Costobarus, an Idumean, having become weary of her husband, gave him a bill of divorcement, contrary to the usage of the Jews, which permits a husband to divorce his wife, but not a wife her husband. But by the authority of Herod, the transaction was sanctioned.

693. Salome having now returned to her brother, to render herself agreeable to him, pretended to reveal a conspiracy, which had been entered into by her late husband, with several other distinguished men of Idumea, against his government. To gain the more credit to her story, she informed him, where Costobarus had concealed the sons of Babas, whom Herod had directed him to put to death. On sending to the place, this accounts was verified; which induced Herod to believe all that she said, respecting the conspiracy. He, therefore, gave orders, that all who were accused by Salome, should be put to death.

694. Having now cut off all the branches of the Asmonean family, and all that favored their pretensions, Herod thought that he might, without danger, make some innovations on the usages of the Jews. He, therefore, erected at Jerusalem, a theatre, and an amphi-theatre, and in honor of Octavianus, (now the emperor Augustus,) celebrated games and exhibited shows. These things, however, were exceedingly offensive to the Jews.

695. This led ten persons among them, to form a conspiracy against the king, who by his spies, obtained some knowledge of the plot; so that when these men came to the theatre, with daggers under their garments, they were seized, and put to death, with the most exquisite torments. Nor, did he cease to make inquiry, until he had discovered every one of the conspirators, and put them all to death.

CHAPTER XXIX("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Divine judgments on the land—Herod erects a stately palace on Mount Zion—erects another palace on a beautiful hill seven miles from Jerusalem—Aristobulus and Alexander, sons of Mariamne, sent to Rome for education—Herod repairs to Mytilene, to visit Agrippa—Augustus himself visits the east—is waited on by Herod—all accusations against him turn out to his benefit—undertakes to rebuild the temple—the work commenced just forty six years before Christ's first Passover

696. Herod was moved by his dread of conspiracies, to fortify other strong places besides those in Jerusalem; and selected Samaria as a suitable site for one. The place was now reduced very low, having been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, as before related. It was, indeed, no more than a small

village, when Herod undertook its restoration. When it was rebuilt, he named it Sebaste, in honor of Augustus; Sebastos in Greek, being of the same import, as augustus in Latin. In this place, he colonized six thousand people, collected from all parts: among whom he divided the circumjacent country; which being fertile, the town soon became rich and populous.

697. In the thirteenth year of the reign of Herod, great calamities fell on the people of Judea; for a long drought produced a famine; and the famine a pestilence, which swept away multitudes of people. On this occasion, Herod did a very popular and praiseworthy action. He melted down the plate of his palace—his treasury being empty—and turning it into money, sent to Egypt for corn; by which means so great an abundance was brought into Judea, that they were able to send a supply to the Syrians, who were suffering under the same calamity.

698. The flocks of Judea, having also been cut off by the drought, and there being a want of wool for the clothing of the inhabitants, Herod took care to have a sufficient supply imported from foreign countries. By these acts of generosity and sound policy, he greatly won upon the affections of the people; and among the surrounding nations acquired the reputation of a wise and generous prince. But he could not long refrain from acts of cruelty, which sullied the fame of all his good deeds.

699. Herod being now at peace with all the surrounding nations, and the country being in a prosperous state, he resolved to build a stately palace on Mount Zion, the highest part of Jerusalem. This edifice he made of such size and magnificence, that in appearance, it rivalled the temple. Within, he prepared two apartments, very large and sumptuous; the one of which he named Cesareum, in honor of Augustus, and the other Agrippeum, in honor of Cesar's chief favorite.

700. There was, at this time, in Jerusalem, a young lady of exceeding great beauty, named Mariamne, the daughter of one Simon, a common priest. Her, Herod married; and to exalt her family, made her father, high priest; turning out Jesus the son of Phebes, to make room for him.

701. Herod having a passion for building, or finding in this occupation some relief to the troubles of his mind, engaged in another expensive work. He erected a palace about seven miles from Jerusalem, where he had obtained a victory over the Parthians, when his affairs were in a very critical situation. This palace was built on the summit of a beautiful hill, which had a regular declivity on all sides, and commanded an extensive and delightful prospect of the surrounding country. This palace he called Herodium, after his own name.

702. When this work was finished, Herod went on to build a city at the place on the sea coast, called Straton's Tower. This city he named Cesarea, after the emperor: and on it he spent much time and expense. Before this time, the harbour was very dangerous, so that no ship could ride safely in it, when the wind was S. W.; but by running a mole, or breakwater, in a circular form around the harbor, to the S. W., he made it safe and commodious, and sufficiently capacious for a large fleet. The expense of this work alone was immense; for the stones used in its construction, were brought from a great distance and were of almost incredible dimensions; some of them being fifty feet long and eighteen broad, and nine in thickness. The foundation of this mole was laid in the sea, at the depth of twenty fathoms. Herod was occupied twelve years, before he completed all his works at Cesarea.

703. Alexander and Aristobulus, the sons of Herod by Mariamne, being now of sufficient age, were sent to Rome to be educated. They were committed to the particular care of Pollio, an intimate friend; but Augustus, as a special mark of his friendship for the father, took the sons into his own palace, where apartments were prepared for them.

704. To give further evidence of his attachment to Herod, he gave him the privilege of choosing his own successor, from among his sons; and added to his kingdom, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batania.

705. When Agrippa was sent by Augustus to the east, he made Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, his chief residence. As soon as Herod heard of his arrival in the east, he set off to pay him a visit, and renew their former friendship. Soon after his departure, the Gadarenes, at the instigation of one Zenodorus, a farmer of the revenues, came to Agrippa with complaints against Herod; but he would not listen to them, and to gratify his friend, threw the accusers into chains, and sent them to Herod, who, in order to conciliate them, set them free.

706. In the year 21 B. C., Augustus himself, made a progress through the east. When he arrived at Antioch, Herod visited him, and was, as usual, received with every kindness. But his old enemy Zenodorus, hoping to be more successful with Augustus than he had been with Agrippa, brought new charges against Herod in the name of the Gadarenes, accusing him of rapine, tyranny and sacrilege.

707. These accusations so far influenced the emperor, that he appointed a day for Herod to appear and vindicate himself; but when his accusers observed the tenderness and partiality, with which he was treated, they gave up their cause as desperate; and the following night, several of them put an end to their lives; among whom was Zenodorus. This was construed by Augustus, as very favorable to the character of Herod. He, therefore, added to his dominions the Tetrarchy, which had been possessed by Zenodorus, and joined him in commission with the governor of Syria, as his procurator, in that province. He also gave Herod's brother Pheroras, a tetrarchy in those parts.

708. As an acknowledgment of all these favors, Herod built near the mountain Panias, from which the Jordan issues, an elegant palace of white marble.

709. On his return to Jerusalem, Herod found the people much dissatisfied, on account of his various innovations on their religion and laws, in compliance with the customs of the Greeks and Romans. To prevent the evils which seemed to threaten him, he, in the first place, forbade all clubs and meetings where many persons convened, and had spies in all parts to bring him intelligence of all that was said and done.

710. He also purposed to require an oath of fidelity from all his subjects; but Hillel and Shammai, with all their followers, and all who belonged to the sects of the Pharisees and Essenes, refusing to take it, he was obliged to relinquish the design.

711. In the year 19 B. C., Herod formed the project of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, by which he promised himself that he should not only conciliate the Jewish nation, but raise for himself a lasting and honorable monument.

712. The second temple was, originally, greatly inferior to that of Solomon; and, in the course of five hundred years, had suffered exceedingly, not only from slow decay by the lapse of time, but more especially, from the almost perpetual wars which had been carried on; in which it was always the last refuge of those pressed by a superior force.

713. His purpose was, to take down the whole edifice and build it anew, with the best materials. He, therefore, convened a general assembly of the people, and laid before them his plan; but they were alarmed at his proposal; fearing, lest when he had pulled down the old edifice, something might occur to prevent the erection of another.

714. To quiet their fears, therefore, he promised, that he would not begin to take down the old temple, until all his materials for the new were prepared, and on the ground. Accordingly, he set himself to work, to make all manner of preparations for this great work; employing, for the purpose, a thousand wagons, for carrying the stones and timber, ten thousand artificers, to fit and prepare these materials, and a thousand priests, skilled in architecture, to take the supervision, of the whole work.

715. By these exertions, in two years, having got all things ready for the building, he began to pull down the old edifice, to the very foundations. The proposal of Herod to rebuild the temple, was made, in the latter part of the eighteenth year of Herod's reign, 18 B. C.

716. In the year 17 B. C., all the preparations being completed, the erection of the new edifice was begun, just forty and six years before the first passover of Christ's personal ministry, to which reference is had, in John 2:20, "Forty and six years was this temple in building;" for, although, in nine years and a half, it was so far finished as to be fit for the public service, the work was carried on, until sometime after the public ministry of our Saviour, when eighteen thousand workmen were dismissed, at one time.

CHAPTER XXX("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Herod visits his sons at Rome—attends the Olympic games on his way—is received with honor by Augustus—brings his sons back to Jerusalem—the rebuilding of the temple is driven on—imprudent speeches of Herod's sons, Alexander and Aristobulus—domestic troubles of Herod increase—becomes more suspicious—the young men, his sons, continue to indulge in rash speeches—Archelaus king of Cappadocia and father-in-law to Alexander, comes to Jerusalem—Herod's expedition to Arabia—difference between him and his sons increases—Augustus recommends a council—Herod accuses his sons, and the judges pronounce sentence of condemnation against them—Herod causes this sentence to be carried into execution at Sebaste, by strangulation

717. The next year, 16 B. C., Herod made a visit to Rome to pay his respects to Augustus, and to see his two sons, who were there pursuing their education. On his way he attended the Olympic games, on the 191st Olympiad, at which he presided; when finding that these games had much declined in their reputation, in consequence of the poverty of the Elians, which prevented them from keeping them up in their former splendor, he settled a permanent revenue upon them; in honor of which munificence they appointed him perpetual president of the games, as long as he should live.

718. On his arrival at Rome, he was received with great honor and kindness by Augustus; and having received his sons, whose education was now completed in the best manner, he returned with them into Judea; soon after which he provided suitable wives, for both of them; marrying Alexander to Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia: and Aristobulus to Berenice, the daughter of his own sister, Salome.

719. These young men, by the comeliness of their persons, the agreeableness of their manners, and their other amiable qualities, were the admiration of the Jews. But the intriguing Salome pursued them, with the envy and jealousy, which she had always entertained towards their mother Mariamne.

720. In the rebuilding of the temple, those parts where divine service was celebrated, were first finished. The sanctuary and holy of holies, together with the porch, were completed, in one year and a half after the work was commenced; that there might be as little interruption in the public service, as possible. But, even during this period, the daily service was constantly performed in the court, where the altar of burnt-offerings was situated.

721. 13 B. C., Alexander and Aristobulus, having now resided with their father three years, after their return from Rome, fell under his grievous displeasure. The cause was this. The young men let fall many rash words, expressing strong resentments against those who had occasioned the death of their mother. Salome and Pheroras, having been the chief advisers of this measure, began to be alarmed; and in their own defence, laid plots for the ruin of the young princes.

722. All these rash speeches of Alexander and Aristobulus, were carried to Herod, by his brother and sister, and represented in the strongest colours, with insinuations that they were all directed against his life. And to facilitate the design, these crafty courtiers engaged persons to draw them into free discussion, and provoke them to say, what otherwise would never have been uttered.

723. Herod was so much affected by these representations, that to humble the young princes, he sent for his oldest son Antipater, by his first wife Doris; but as she was divorced, when Mariamne was espoused, her son was educated in private. But, now, his father placed him over these two brothers; which had no other effect, than to exasperate them the more.

724. The Jews of Asia Minor and Cyrene, having suffered much oppression from the heathen inhabitants of the countries, where they resided, who would not, permit them to live according to their own laws and religion, and deprived them of the privileges formerly enjoyed, sent an embassy to Augustus, to make their complaint, and pray for redress. Accordingly, an edict was made in their favor, by which all that they desired was granted to them.

725. Domestic troubles continued to increase in the family of Herod. Salome, Pheroras, and Antipater, were unwearied in their efforts to fill the king's mind with suspicions and prejudices, against his two young sons; until, at length, they so far accomplished their purpose, that an open breach took place between them and their father. By their malicious artifices, these enemies so filled the old man's mind with suspicion and fear, that he was unable to sleep, or obtain rest of any kind. To make discoveries, he put all their confidants to the rack; and some, to obtain relief, would say any thing, which they supposed would have that effect.

726. Some of their extorted confessions bearing hard on Alexander the eldest son, he was cast into prison. On which, becoming desperate, he determined to create as much vexation as possible to his father; and sent him papers, in which he confessed a plot, which never had any existence; in which he named Salome and Pheroras, and two of the confidential ministers of Herod, as being his accomplices.

727. This had the effect of driving the old tyrant almost to distraction. He now suspected every body, and knew not whom to trust. He raged like a madman, against all around him; tortured some upon the rack, and put others to death; so that his palace was little better than a slaughter house.

728. Just at this crisis, 8 B. C., Archelaus king of Cappadocia, and father-in-law of Alexander, came, on a visit to Jerusalem. Hearing the accusations against his son-in-law, he affected to be even more violent in his rage against him, than Herod himself; and threatened to take away his daughter from him, which after a while had the effect of making Herod his advocate. Upon observing this temper, in the old man, he was soon able to bring about a reconciliation between him and his son.

729. Herod was very sensible of the kindness conferred on him by Archelaus, and in acknowledgment of the favor, he gave him very valuable presents; and when he returned, accompanied him as far as Antioch, where he reconciled him to Titus Volumnius the Roman governor of Syria, with whom Archelaus had had a difference.

730. A reconciliation having taken place between Herod and his sons, he thought it necessary to pay another visit to Rome, to inform Augustus of the improved state of his domestic affairs; he having before informed him, by letter, of the breach between him and his sons; and having accused them to the emperor of many high crimes and treasonable practices, against him.

731. While he was absent, the thieves of Trachonitis returned to their old trade, and ravaged all the country of Cœlo-Syria, and Judea, which was accessible to them. When, as before related, Herod had driven these banditti, out of his territories, about forty of the ring-leaders fled into Arabia Petrea, when Sylleus, the governor of that country not only received them, but granted them a strong fortress, called Repta. When Herod went on his last journey to Rome, they invaded Judea and Cœlo-Syria, and ravaged the country in a distressing manner. Sylleus, the governor, felt no disposition to discourage these depredations, for he cherished a mortal hatred to Herod, because he had refused to let him have his sister Salome, as a wife, unless he would consent to be circumcised, and become a Jew.

732. Herod, on his return, finding the country much injured, by the incursion of this band of robbers; and not having it in his power to punish the perpetrators of the mischief, determined to wreak his vengeance upon their friends and relatives, in Trachonitis. This exasperated them so much that they made new inroads into his territory, and wasted the country more than ever.

733. When the principal buildings connected with the temple were finished, after nine years and a half, from the commencement of the work, Herod appointed a day for its solemn dedication; which falling on the anniversary of his being made king, augmented the pomp and solemnity of the celebration.

734. To put a stop to the incursion of the robbers, who infected the country, Herod applied to Saturninus and Volumnius, the Roman governors of Syria, and lodged a complaint against Sylleus for harboring them. He also sued him for a debt of sixty talents which he had borrowed from himself. To answer to these charges, Sylleus was obliged to appear at Berytus, before the governors; and Herod having made good his allegations, Sylleus, to get clear, bound himself by oath, within thirty days, to pay the money, and deliver up all fugitives. But when the day came, he performed neither of these engagements, but went to Rome, to complain to Cesar.

735. Herod now obtained permission from Saturninus and Volumnius, to do himself justice. He, therefore, marched into Arabia, and destroyed Repta, and slew as many of the robbers, as fell into his hands; then returned without injuring the country, but not without leaving three thousand men in Idumea, to prevent the further incursion of the thieves.

736. Sylleus, now at Rome, having received an account of these transactions, went to Augustus, with a doleful account of the injustice of this invasion, and greatly exaggerating every thing, he so represented the affair, that the emperor was much displeased, and wrote Herod a sharp letter of reproof, and for some time, he was actually out of favor with the emperor. Nor was he restored to favor soon.

737. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, began, this year, 7 B. C., to write his Roman history, which he finished in twenty books, continued to the time of the first Punic war, at which point the history of Polybius commences. But of these twenty books, only eleven are extant. The work is written in Greek, and is the fullest and most accurate history of the Roman affairs in existence. He was twenty-two years collecting materials at Rome.

738. The next year, 6 B. C., the quarrel between Herod and his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, was revived. This, combined with the defeat of his Idumean guards by the Arabians, and the loss of the favor of Augustus, fell heavily on the old man. To conciliate the emperor, he sent two embassies to Rome, neither of which was admitted to an audience. He, therefore, sent a third, and employed in it Nicolas Damascus. Augustus now wrote him a kind letter, and condoling with him on account of his domestic troubles, gave him leave to proceed against his sons, as he should judge best. And as to Sylleus, Augustus ordered him to return to Arabia, and pay his debt to Herod, after which he commanded that he should be put to death.

739. To adjust the difference between Herod and his sons, Augustus directed that a council should meet at Berytus, consisting of the governors of the neighboring provinces, together with Archelaus king of Cappadocia, and other friends of distinction; who should have power to hear and determine the whole matter.

740. Herod, immediately summoned this council to meet at the place appointed, calling thither, Saturninus and Volumnius, governors of Syria, and all others mentioned by Augustus, except Archelaus, whom he considered too nearly related to one of the parties, to be an impartial umpire.

741. Before this tribunal, Herod personally appeared as the accuser of his two unfortunate sons; and laid so many things to their charge, and urged his suit with so much vehemence, that the majority of the court were influenced to pass a judgment of condemnation against the princes, leaving the execution of the sentence to their father.

742. Herod, in pursuance of this sentence, sent Alexander and Aristobulus to Sebaste, and caused them to be strangled. Thus did these two promising young men come to a premature end, through the envy and malice of an intriguing woman. No doubt they acted imprudently, and in resentment for their mother's death, uttered many rash speeches. Nay, when exasperated by persecution and false accusations, it is probable, that they were precipitated into crimes of deeper dye. But no one can read the history of their tragical end, without lamenting their unfortunate connexion with a court, in which deceit and craft had such a predominant influence.

CHAPTER XXXI("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Antipater conspires against the life of his father—Pheroras displeases his brother by refusing one of his daughters, and marrying a maid-servant—he joins the plot of Antipater—The Temple of Janus, at Rome, closed—the Angel Gabriel sent to Mary at Nazareth—birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem—the registration which called them thither—Luke and Josephus reconciled—visit of the Magians—massacre of the infants—Herod causes his son Antipater to be put to death—gives orders to slay all the eminent men of the country, that there might be mourning at his own death, which he perceived was near—death of Herod—his family and descendents—division of the kingdom among his sons

743. About this time, Zacharias beheld the vision in the temple, as he there officiated in his course, which is recorded in the first chapter of the gospel of Luke.

744. Antipater, the oldest son of Herod, who was of a cruel, crafty, and ambitious temper, seeing nothing now in the way of his ascending the throne but his fathers life, conspired with Pheroras, to put the old man out of the way, by poison.

745. Herod, it is true, had always acted the part of an affectionate brother to Pheroras; but of late, circumstances had occurred, to alienate them from each other. Herod wished his brother to marry one of his daughters, by Mariamne; but he having fallen in love with a maid servant, for her sake rejected the offer of the king's daughter, which gave great offence. Herod then gave his daughter in marriage to a son of his older brother Phasaël. But having another daughter, he offered her to Pheroras, if he would divorce his ignoble wife, which he promised with an oath, that he would do; but when the time arrived, he again refused.

746. There was another thing which widened the breach between the two brothers. The whole nation of the Jews were required to take an oath of allegiance to Augustus, and to the king. This, the Pharisees, as before, to the number of seven thousand, absolutely refused, from conscientious motives; believing it to be unlawful to swear allegiance to any foreign prince. To punish their contumacy, Herod imposed a pecuniary mulct on the whole body; which sum the wife of Pheroras, on account of her attachment to this sect, paid down for them. The Pharisees were so much delighted with this act of generosity, that they willingly received, and gave circulation to, a pretended prophecy, which some visionary had uttered, that the kingdom would be transferred from the family of Herod, to the descendents of Pheroras, by this woman.

747. This report having reached the ears of Herod, he was so exasperated, that he put several of the Pharisees to death. Then, convening a council, he laid open before them the whole affair, and peremptorily required, that Pheroras should immediately put away this woman, or never expect to be treated by him as a brother, any more. To which Pheroras replied, that nothing should induce

him to part with his beloved wife; that he would rather die than be separated from her.

748. Herod, greatly resenting this obstinacy, forbade Pheroras to enter his house, and commanded Antipater, and all the other members of his family to have no manner of intercourse with him, or his wife. This rough treatment prepared Pheroras to listen to the plot of Antipater, to take off the old king by poison.

749. Antipater, to avoid all suspicion, managed to have himself called to Rome, to wait upon Augustus; and Pheroras gladly complied with the king's commands to leave Jerusalem, and go to his tetrarchy; swearing, that he would never return as long as Herod lived.

750. This resolution he kept; for, although he was sent for by his brother when he was sick, he would not come; yet, when he was taken ill, Herod visited him and treated him very kindly. After the death of Pheroras, some of his servants accused his wife to Herod, of poisoning him. This led to a strict inquiry, which resulted in the discovery of the plot, in which he and Antipater had been engaged against the king's life. It appeared, that Antipater had got a friend, in Alexandria, to prepare the poison, whence it was brought to Jerusalem to Pheroras, who had agreed to administer it to his brother.

751. The wife of Pheroras, on being questioned by the king, confirmed the whole matter; but said, that after his kind visit to Pheroras, he changed his mind, and commanded her to throw the poison in the fire, which she did in his presence, except a small quantity, which she reserved for her own use, if she should need it. The whole testimony went to show, that Antipater, after procuring the death of his two brothers, had now laid a most wicked plot for the poisoning of his father.

752. The temple of Janus, at Rome, was closed this year. The custom was, to keep the gates open in time of war, and to shut them in time of peace. They had been closed before only four times since the building of the city. The first time was in the reign of Numa; the second, after the end of the first Punic war; the third, after Augustus had vanquished Antony; the fourth, when Augustus returned to Rome from the conquest of the Cantabrians.

753. In this same year, the most memorable in the annals of man, the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to Zacharias in the temple, was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to Mary, a virgin, of the house of David, lately espoused to Joseph, of the same lineage, to declare to her, the good tidings, that, of her should be born, the Son of God; and accordingly, being overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, she conceived and brought forth a son, who was, Christ the Saviour of the world.

754. Joseph and Mary, having their residence at Nazareth, were providentially called to Bethlehem of Judea, by the following circumstances. It was customary, in the Roman empire, to take a survey, or assessment of all persons and estates, every fifth year. In taking this account, a register was made, of all sorts of persons, women and children, as well as men; with the ages, occupations, and estates of each. Augustus was the first who extended this survey, or registration, to the provinces. During his long reign, he caused it to be executed in all the provinces, three times.

755. Such a registration, was at this time going on throughout the Roman empire. The decree requiring it was issued in the year 8 B. C.; but, as our present era begins four years later than the birth of Christ, the date of this decree was only three or four years before he was actually born.

During these years, it had been going forward in Coëlo-Syria, Phenicia, and Judea, until this year, when it extended to Bethlehem.

756. Joseph and Mary, belonging to the family of David, whose city was Bethlehem, were required to attend there, to be registered with the other branches of that family. While they were there, on this occasion, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born in that place, according to the prophecy of Micah, c. 5:2. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

757. It need excite no surprize, that we have allowed three years for the execution of this decree, since it is known, that it was always committed to the governors of the provinces, and they were not always expeditious. To perform such a work, in the whole province of Syria, when the survey was required to be so particular, both as to persons and estates, would take much time. Joab was nine months and twenty days, in taking a census of ten tribes of Israel, and only reckoned the men fit for war. When William the Conqueror had a survey made of England—that recorded in Dooms-day book—it occupied six years.

758. But, although the object of this registration, was, for the purpose of laying taxes, no taxes were collected at the time, nor until twelve years afterwards, when Archelaus was banished, and a Roman procurator put in his place. The procurator, under whom this taxing actually took place, was P. S. Quirinius, called by the evangelist, Cyrenius, who was at that time governor of Syria.

759. A correct understanding of this matter will easily reconcile Luke with Josephus. Thus, in the first verse of the second chapter of Luke, it is said, "that in those days there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," or rather, should be assessed or registered, in order to be taxed. Then, in the second verse, it is said, "And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." That is, the decree took effect, and the taxing was first actually made several years afterward, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; for when Christ was born, Cyrenius never had been governor of Syria.

760. In this same year, the fourth before the vulgar christian era, certain wise men, of the Magian sect, came from the east, under the guidance of a star, and worshipped the infant Messiah, at Bethlehem.

761. Soon after this, Herod put all the children at Bethlehem to death, who were under two years of age. Macrobius, a writer of the fifth century, says, that one of Herod's own children was of this number, and that Augustus when he heard it said, "that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son;" but the story is not probable. The sarcasm of Augustus was probably uttered, upon hearing of his having put to death his three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater.

762. For, Antipater, having returned from Rome without knowing that his wicked plot was discovered, was immediately arrested, and being brought before Q. Varus, the new governor of Syria, was convicted of the crime of treasonably designing the death of his father; on which he was condemned, and the sentence being approved by Augustus, was put to death.

763. Herod lived only five days after the execution of his son. He died in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign.

764. Knowing that he was detested by the Jews, and that the report of his death would be a matter of rejoicing to the people, he formed a project, perhaps, the wickedest, that ever entered into the mind of man. Having summoned all the most eminent men in his kingdom, to attend him at Jericho, where he then lay, on pain of death. As soon as they arrived, he ordered them to be shut up in the circus; and then sending for Salome his sister, and her husband Alexas, he gave command, that as soon as he was dead, they should send the soldiers to put them all to death; for this, said he, will provide mourners for my funeral throughout Judea.

765. But wicked as Salome and her husband were, they would not fulfil their promises, in executing an order of such unprecedented cruelty; though, perhaps, they were restrained by a fear of the people, rather than by any aversion to the commission of such a crime.

766. After the death of Herod, therefore, all these men were set free. The enormous wickedness of this last act of the tyrant's life, seems to remove all objection that might arise in the minds of any, against the account of the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, on the ground that no one could be guilty of such cruelty.

767. The disease with which this wicked tyrant was carried out of the world, was attended with such circumstances, as led all the people to believe, that the just vengeance of heaven was pursuing him. Josephus, and after him, Eusebius, give the following account, "Herod's disease grew yet more and more grievously violent; God exacting this vengeance on him, as the punishment of the many great enormities, of which he had been guilty. He had a slow fever, which inwardly consumed him. His appetite was voracious and insatiable. His bowels were ulcerated, especially the colon, which occasioned grievous pains. His feet were swollen, and oozed out a fetid humor. An ulcer broke out in the lower parts of his belly, which bred worms and lice, abundantly. His breath was short, and the smell fetid. He had also a troublesome flux of rheum, with asthmatic difficulty of breathing; and the termination of life was at length produced by convulsions of the whole body." His pains were terrible to the very last moment.

768. Herod married nine wives, by whom he had several children. Three of his sons, as we have seen, he put to death. Of his other children, it will only be necessary to mention those, who are noticed in Scripture.

769. By his wife Malthace, he had Archelaus and Herod Antipas; by Cleopatra, Philip; and by Mariamne, Herod Philip.

770. His son Aristobulus, whom he put to death, was married to Berenice, by whom he had Agrippa, commonly called, Herod Agrippa; the same who put James the apostle to death, and was smitten of God at Cesarea, for his impious pride. Herodias was also the daughter of the same parents. She was first married to her uncle, Herod Philip, but eloped from him, and became the wife of Herod Antipas.

771. By her first husband, she had Salome, who went with her, and was the damsel, whose dancing pleased Herod so exceedingly, and occasioned the death of John the Baptist.

772. To Agrippa, mentioned above, there was born a son, also named Agrippa, and two daughters, Drusilla and Berenice. Before these Paul pleaded his cause. (Acts 25:26.) Drusilla was married to Felix the procurator or governor of Judea.

773. Herod distributed his dominions among his sons, above mentioned, as follows; Archelaus was left heir to the kingdom of Judea; Herod Antipas had the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea; and Philip, Auranitis, Trachonitis, Paneas, and Batanea.

CHAPTER XXXII("tw:///self?tid=21&popup=0" \ "Annals_contents-")

Joseph returns from Egypt—vulgar era—Archelaus goes to Rome and is deposed—Cyrenius governor of Syria—the Jews resist the taxation by the Romans—Annas appointed high priest by the Romans—death of Augustus

774. After the death of Herod, Joseph being warned by an angel in a dream, arose, and took the young child and his mother, and returned from Egypt into the land of Israel: but when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father, he went to Galilee, and again resided at Nazareth, with Mary his wife. There Jesus abode until he entered on his public ministry.

775. The christian era, which is now in common use, by the mistake of Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced it in the sixth century, commences four years later than the real time of the birth of Christ. If christians had, from the beginning, used this era, there could have been no mistake in the case; but as the birth of our Saviour was not used as an era for chronological purposes, for more than five hundred years, it is not strange that a mistake of a few years should have occurred. Some indeed, make the difference only two years, but most of the learned follow Usher, who makes it four.

776. Archelaus, who succeeded his father in the kingdom, conducted himself in a manner so tyrannical, that ambassadors were sent to Rome, both from the Jews and Samaritans, to complain of his mal-administration. In consequence of these accusations he was cited by Augustus to appear before him and answer for his conduct.

777. When Archelaus went to Rome, Herod Antipas did the same; and also Salome, Herod's sister. The object of Herod was to solicit the kingdom for himself, in which he had the interest of the rest of the family on his side; for Archelaus was held in detestation by all.

After Archelaus had left Judea, with the leave of Varus the procurator, an embassy of fifty of the chief men of Jerusalem went to Rome, to petition Augustus, to permit them to live according to their own laws, under a Roman governor.

778. When he arrived, not being able to justify himself, before the emperor; but being found guilty of all that was charged against him, he was deposed from his kingdom, had all his goods confiscated, and was himself banished to Vienne, in Gaul. The duration of his reign in Judea was only ten years.

779. After the deposition of Archelaus, Augustus appointed Cyrenius (Quirinius) to be governor of Syria; and sent with him Coponius a Roman knight, to be procurator of Judea, under the authority of Cyrenius; Judea being a part of the province of Syria.

780. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they seized on the goods of Archelaus, and changed the civil government of the Jews. The power of life and death was now taken from the Jews and assumed by the officers of the emperor; and taxes were paid directly into the treasury of the Romans, which was never done before.

781. The raising of these taxes caused great disturbances among the Jews. Some thought, that they were under obligations to serve no king but God: most believed, that it was wrong for the Jews to be subject to any foreign power.

782. Those who made opposition on the first ground, were fanatical and seditious men, who were led on by one Judas of Galilee, a very turbulent man, of whom mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles; (Acts 5:37) but he was soon cut off, and all his followers dispersed.

783. They who resisted on the latter ground, were a more formidable body, and included the whole sect of the Pharisees. Their opinions were received by the mass of the people. And hence we may learn the reason, why the Publicans, or tax-gatherers, were so odious to the Pharisees.

784. While Cyrenius was at Jerusalem, among other important changes, he removed Jaazar from being high priest, and appointed Annas the son of Seth, as his successor.

785. In the same year, our Lord and Saviour being now twelve years of age, came up to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary, and entered the temple, where the doctors of the Law were convened, heard their discourses, and engaged in the discussion of important points with them, so that all who heard him were astonished.

786. In the year 10, of the vulgar era, Coponius was recalled from being procurator of Judea, and Marcus Ambivius was put in his place. In this year, also, died Salome, the sister of Herod, whose crafty and malicious intrigues had been the occasion of unspeakable evil to her brother's family.

787. A. D. 12. Augustus, now old, associated Tiberius with him in the empire. From this date, his reign is reckoned by Luke, where he speaks of the "fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar;" Luke 3:1.

788. Judea was now destined to a very frequent change of masters; for in A. D. 13, Ambivius was succeeded in his office of procurator, by Annius Rufus.

789. A. D. 14. Augustus Cesar departed this life, after he had nearly attained the age of seventy-six years. The length of his reign was fifty-six years, reckoning from the time of his first consulship; but if we reckon from the victory of Actium, it was forty-four years. He ended his days at Nola, in Campania, not far from Rome.

790. The whole power of the empire now devolved on Tiberius, who had been made a partner with his father, before his death. He was at this time fifty-five years of age, and reigned twenty-two years and a half.

CHAPTER XXXIII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Procuratorship of Valerius Gratus—Annas removed from the office of high priest and Ismael substituted—Eleazer son of Annas is put in his place—and the next year Gratus removes him, and substitutes Simon son of Cannith—Caiaphas—Gratus recalled and succeeded by Pontius Pilate—preaching of John the Baptist—baptism of Christ—death of John—public ministry of Christ—death of Christ—his resurrection and ascension—Pilate's account of Christ, sent to the emperor—Pilate removed by Vitellius, governor of Syria, and sent to Rome—whence he was banished to Gaul—Tiberius dies, and is succeeded by Caius Caligula

791. A. D. 15, Valerius Gratus was sent into Judea, by Tiberius, to be procurator, in which office he continued, eleven years.

792. A. D. 23, Valerius Gratus removed Annas from the office of high priest, and substituted in his place Ismael the son of Fabus. Annas held the office, fifteen years.

793. But the very next year, A. D. 24, becoming dissatisfied with Ismael, he deposed him, and put in his place, Eleazer, the son of Annas, whom he had deprived of the office.

794. The year following, A. D. 25, the capricious Gratus removed Eleazar, and put Simon the son of Cannith in the office.

795. A. D. 26, Simon was displaced, to make way for Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, who had been deposed.

796. These are the persons spoken of in the gospels, who had the chief concern in the prosecution of our Saviour. And the facts mentioned above, will serve to explain several things in the sacred history. Caiaphas is said to have been the high priest for that year, as if the office had been an annual one; whereas, it was for life, by the law, if the person did not become disqualified; but, we see, from the preceding history, that for a number of years, no one person had, in fact, filled the place for more than a year.

797. A. D. 26, Valerius Gratus was recalled, and Pontius Pilate sent to be procurator of Judea; a man ready for every evil work. Philo Judeus charges him with selling justice, and giving any sentence for money; also, of cruelty, rapine, murder, and injuries of every sort.

798. In this year, A. D. 26, according to the vulgar era, John the Baptist began to preach in the wilderness of Judea. This was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. He continued his ministry for about three years and a half.

799. When John was engaged in his public ministry, preaching repentance, and baptising the people, and announcing that the Messiah's reign was near at hand; Jesus Christ came forth from his retirement, at Nazareth, and presented himself to John for baptism. At first, this good man scrupled to perform the rite, but immediately complied, when he heard the reason assigned by Jesus for desiring it.

800. When Jesus was baptized in Jordan, the heavens were opened, and a voice was heard from heaven saying, "this is my beloved son;" and the Holy Ghost descended as a dove, and rested on him.

801. John knew the divine character of Jesus, and was therefore willing to see all men flocking after him, though his own popularity was thereby diminished. He pointed him out to his own disciples as the Messiah, and corrected their wrong feelings flowing from attachment to himself.

802. Jesus now entered on the public exercise of his ministry, in which he labored incessantly, until the day of his death.

803. John, while preaching in Galilee, fell under the notice of Herod the tetrarch, who was pleased to hear his discourses, and so much influenced by them, as to make a partial reformation in his conduct. But on John's faithfully reproving him for taking his brother's wife, he was so much

offended, that he cast him into prison, Herodias was urgent to have him put to death, which Herod declined, more for fear of the people, than from any higher motives.

804. But on Herod's birth day, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, so delighted him by her dancing, that he made her a promise, confirmed with an oath, to give her what she should ask. The girl, instructed by her mother, demanded the head of John; which the king, though reluctantly, commanded to be brought to her in a dish.

805. The history of the evangelist respecting Herod Antipas is corroborated by Josephus, who says, "About this time there happened to be a difference between Aretas king of Petræa and Herod, upon this occasion. Herod the tetrarch, had married the daughter of Aretas; but in a journey which he took to Rome, he made a visit to his brother Herod (Philip.) Here, falling in love with Herodias, his brother's wife, he ventured to make her proposals of marriage. She consented, and agreed, that when he was returned from Rome, she would go and live with him; and he promised to put away the daughter of Aretas."

Josephus also informs us, that Herodias had a daughter by her first husband, whose name was Salome.

Josephus, moreover, represents Herodias to have been a woman of great ambition, and one, who had much influence over Herod; for by her persuasions he was induced to go to Rome, to solicit his brother's crown.

806. The defeat which Herod met with in his war with Aretas, the father of his former wife, is represented by Josephus, as a judgment of God upon him, for what he had done to John, called the Baptist; for, says he, "Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both towards one another and towards God, and so to come to baptism." Josephus, indeed, while he states the fact, seems not to have been informed of the true cause of John's death; but supposes that it was owing to Herod's jealousy of John's popularity, and influence with the people; which might put it in his power to excite them to revolt.

807. The only mention which the Jewish historian makes of Jesus Christ, is in the following remarkable passage. "Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him, both many of the Jews and of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first, did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again, the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and many other things, concerning him. And the sect of Christians, so named from him, is not extinct at this day." Most modern critics, it is true, have pronounced this passage an interpolation, and contend, that it was never written by Josephus; but no convincing arguments have been adduced to prove that it is spurious.

808. Jesus Christ having spent about three years and a half, in his public ministry, during which time he performed innumerable miracles, was apprehended by the malice of his enemies; and after being subjected to much injustice, reproach, and cruel treatment, was condemned to be crucified. Which painful punishment, he, accordingly, endured, in circumstances of great ignominy.

809. At his death, many prodigies occurred; a particular account of which is given in the gospels.

810. On the third day, he arose again, and appeared unto his disciples; and for forty days conversed frequently with them, and permitted them, by their sense of feeling, as well as of sight and hearing, to be fully satisfied of the reality of his resurrection.

811. Having finished giving his disciples those instructions, which he deemed it necessary to communicate in person, he ascended to heaven, in their sight, from Mount Olivet, while in the act of blessing them.

812. Before he left them he promised to send the Holy Ghost, or Paraglete, to teach and comfort them; which promise was fulfilled at the feast of Pentecost, about ten days after his ascension; when this divine Instructor came upon them, and furnished them with all the wisdom, strength, and miraculous endowments, necessary for the accomplishment of the great and arduous work for which they were commissioned.

813. Pilate sent to the emperor, according to the usage, in such cases, an account of the character and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, which was extant, and appealed to, in the second century. But this document is now lost.

814. Vitellius, being now governor of Syria, the Samaritans, who had been treated with severity by Pilate, on account of an impostor who arose among them, sent an embassy to the governor, complaining of his tyrannical conduct. The consequence was, that Vitellius removed him from his office, and ordered him to Rome to answer for his conduct, appointing Marcellus to be procurator in his place. This was about the year A. D. 37.

815. In the following year, A. D. 38, Tiberius died, and was succeeded in the government, by Caius Caligula, before whom the cause of Pilate came; and who banished him to Vienne in Gaul, where it is said he put an end to his life.

CHAPTER XXXIV("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Preaching of the apostles—martyrdom of Stephen and ensuing persecution—conversion of Paul—Caiaphas removed from the high priesthood by Vitellius, and Ananas substituted—Agrippa acquires the supreme power of Judea—Herod Antipas banished to Gaul—embassy from Alexandria to Rome—Philo Judeus—Caius succeeded by Claudius—Theophilus removed from the priesthood, and Simon put in his place—Petronius, governor of Syria, succeeded by Marsus—Agrippa, zealous for the Jewish religion, but severe towards the Christians—remarkable death of Agrippa—his character and successors

816. After the apostles of Jesus began to preach his resurrection, an attempt was made to suppress them by force, but this proved ineffectual. A violent persecution, however, was carried on against the disciples, in which Stephen was condemned to death by the Sanhedrim, and stoned. It would seem, from this fact, that when this event occurred, there was no Roman governor or procurator at Jerusalem; or the Sanhedrim would not, in contempt of his authority, have dared to inflict capital punishment on any one. It is probable, therefore, that the martyrdom of Stephen took place after Pilate was removed, and before another had succeeded him.

817. The persecution, after the death of Stephen, became very hot; chiefly through the zeal of a young Pharisee, whose name was Saul. He was one of the Sanhedrim who gave his vote for the death of this proto-martyr, and superintended his execution. Being determined to extirpate the

rising sect, he went from place to place, apprehending men and women, and committing them to prison. But finding that many fled, and that Damascus was a place of refuge for them, he obtained a commission from the high priest, and a guard to proceed to that place, to bring bound to Jerusalem, all that he should find, who were followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

818. But before he reached the place, while journeying, about noon, he was overwhelmed with a blaze of light, surpassing the light of mid-day, and by terror, or some irresistible power, being struck to the ground, he heard a person speaking to him, and in the midst of the light saw near to him, the very Jesus whom he was persecuting.

819. The young man, when he arose, was blind, and was led into Damascus, where he remained blind, neither eating nor drinking, for three days; when a disciple, being divinely directed, came to him, and instructed him in the doctrines of Christ, and then baptized him.

820. From this time to the close of life, Saul, afterwards called Paul, was a most zealous, able, and successful propagator of the faith of Jesus.

821. About A. D. 39, Vitellius, the governor of Syria, paid a visit to Jerusalem, and bestowed on the Jews many favors and immunities. One method which Herod had devised of governing that turbulent people, was, to keep in his possession the costly robes which were worn on solemn occasions, by the high priest. They were preserved in the castle of Antonia, which he had built, and continued in the possession of his successors in power, until this visit of Vitellius, at the passover, when they were given into the possession of the Jews.

822. Vitellius, on some complaint against Caiaphas, deprived him of his office, and made Jonathan the son of Annas, or Ananas, high priest in his stead, and then returned home.

823. For some time after this, the Christian churches seem to have been undisturbed by persecution; and to have increased in numbers very rapidly.

824. Soon after the events above related, we find Judea under the power of Herod Agrippa. He was the son of Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod by Mariamne, whom his father put to death. Few men ever experienced greater vicissitudes of fortune, than this Herod. Josephus gives a detailed account of his adventures, which our limits do not permit us to repeat. Suffice it to say, that after suffering innumerable disappointments and disasters, and being for two years imprisoned by Tiberius, he was not only released by Caligula, but received from him the gift of a golden chain; and a diadem. He was first made king of Lysanias, Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, and Batanea.

825. This success of Agrippa, in obtaining the title of king, so excited the envy and inflamed the ambition of Herodias, that she would not suffer Herod Antipas, her husband, to rest, until he should also go to Rome, to seek for himself a kingdom. But the event was very different from their wishes and expectations, for as soon as Herod Agrippa heard of their visit to Rome, he wrote to Caius Caligula, that Antipas had held secret communications with the Parthians, and had collected vast military stores. Upon this, the emperor, instead of making him a king, banished him to Lyons, whither Herodias went with him. His tetrarchy was now added to the dominions of Herod Agrippa.

826. About this time, A. D. 41, the famous embassy from Alexandria to Rome, composed both of Jews and Greeks, took place. The celebrated Philo, went as the principal of the Jewish

ambassadors; and one Apion, at the head of the Greeks; of all which, Philo and Josephus have given a detailed account. The dissension between them principally related to the refusal of the Jews to worship the image of the emperor.

827. Caligula now recalled Vitellius from the government of Syria, and appointed Petronius to succeed him. At the same time he sent express orders, that the emperor's image should be set up in the temple, at Jerusalem. To enforce this order, Petronius came to Ptolemais with an army, where he was met by many thousand Jews, who expressed their determination never to submit to such a profanation. But by the intercession of king Agrippa, who was then at Rome, the order was countermanded. When he heard of the resistance of the Jews, however, he was greatly enraged, and wrote an angry letter to Petronius, whom he suspected of acting in concert with the Jews. This year, A. D. 41, Caligula was assassinated.

828. Claudius Drusus succeeded Caius Caligula, as emperor of Rome. By his advancement, Herod Agrippa was promoted to be king of Samaria and Judea, in addition to his former dominions; and, moreover, he manifested his particular friendship, for him by having him appointed one of the consuls of Rome. To Herod, the brother of Agrippa, Claudius also gave the little kingdom of Chalcis.

829. The Jews, who had been much oppressed under the government of the cruel Caligula, were greatly favored by Claudius; who permitted them, every where, to live agreeably to their own law; and put the Jews of Alexandria in possession of their former privileges.

830. A. D. 42, Agrippa returned to Jerusalem, to take possession of his newly acquired dominion, on which occasion, he offered many sacrifices of thanksgiving, and, as a memorial, suspended in the temple the golden chain, which he had received from Caligula, when released from prison.

831. At this time, Theophilus officiated as high priest of the Jews; but soon after, Agrippa removed him from office, and substituted in his place, Simon Cantharus, the son of Simon Boethus. The year following, however, he offered the place to Jonathan, who declined it, but recommended his brother Matthias, on whom the office was conferred.

832. About this time, A. D. 42 or 43, Petronius was recalled from the government of Syria, and was succeeded by Marsus. He was far less favorable to the Jews than his predecessor, and when Agrippa undertook to raise and strengthen the walls around a part of the city, which had been recently built; Marsus interposed, and represented the undertaking to the emperor, as dangerous to the Roman empire, and obtained an edict forbidding the further progress of the work.

833. Agrippa was much attached to the Jewish nation, and strict in his observance of all religious ceremonies of the law. Josephus says of him, "That he was of a mild and gentle disposition, and good to all men; beneficent to strangers; but especially kind to the Jews, with whom he sympathized in all their troubles." His residence, after he became king of Judea, was almost constantly at Jerusalem, where he practised the Jewish ceremonies, and did not let a day pass, without worshipping God, according to the law of Moses.

834. It may seem to be inconsistent with the character here given of Agrippa, that he should carry on a cruel persecution against the inoffensive Christians, of which Luke gives the following account. "Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands, to vex certain of the

church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword, and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also.” (Acts 12:1-3.) But we have seen, that this prince was superstitiously attached to all the Jewish ceremonies, and that he made it a primary object to please the nation, in his whole administration; and as they could not be more gratified by any thing than the death of the leading teachers in the Christian church, he was induced to pursue a course, in regard to this matter, not altogether consonant with his general character. Luke, in the passage quoted, adverts to the true motive of his conduct, when he says, because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also. But his design against the life of Peter was frustrated by a miraculous interposition. An angel was sent to release him from his confinement.

835. Whatever the character of Herod Agrippa might have been in other respects, he seems to have been a very vain-glorious person. There is a remarkable coincidence between the narratives of Luke and Josephus, in regard to the circumstances of the death of this prince. Luke says, “And he went down from Judea to Cesarea and there abode. And upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration to them. And the people gave a shout, saying, it is the voice of a god and not of a man; and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.”

836. The words of Josephus are these: “Having now reigned three whole years over Judea, he went to the city Cesarea, formerly called Straton’s Tower. Here he celebrated shows, in honor of Cesar. On this occasion, there was a vast resort of persons of rank and distinction from all parts of the country. On the second day of the shows, early in the morning, he came into the theatre, dressed in a robe of silver, of most curious workmanship. The rays of the rising sun, reflected from so splendid a garb, gave him a majestic and awful appearance. In a short time they began, in several parts of the theatre, flattering acclamations, which proved pernicious to him. They called him a god, and entreated him to be propitious to them; saying, ‘Hitherto we have respected you as a man, but now we acknowledge you to be more than mortal.’ The king neither reprov’d these persons, nor rejected the impious flattery. Soon after this, casting his eyes upwards, he saw an owl, sitting on a cord over his head. He perceived it to be a messenger of evil to him, as it had been before of his prosperity, and was struck with the deepest concern. Immediately after this, he was seized with pains in his bowels, extremely violent from the first. Then turning himself to his friends, he spoke to them in this manner: ‘I, your god, am required to leave this world; fate instantly refuting these false applauses bestowed upon me. I who have been called immortal, am hurried away to death. But God’s appointment must be submitted to.’ While he was speaking, his pains became more violent; he was carried, therefore, with all haste to his palace. His pains continuing to increase, he expired in five days time, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, &c.”

837. Agrippa left behind him one son, also named, Agrippa, about seventeen years of age, and three daughters. One of these Berenice, was married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her father’s brother; the other two, Mariamne and Drusilla, were unmarried, at the time of their father’s death. Of the youngest of these, Drusilla, some notice will be taken in this history hereafter, as she is particularly noticed on the Acts of the Apostles.

CHAPTER XXXV("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Fadus made procurator of Judea—dearth in the reign of Claudius—proselytes to Judaism—false Messiah—Fadus recalled, and succeeded by Tiberius Alexander—Herod king of Chalcis displaced Joseph the son of Camus from the high priesthood, and substituted Ananias the son of Nebedeus—Tiberius Alexander recalled, and Cumanus appointed to succeed him—commotions at Jerusalem—dispute between the Galileans and Samaritans—Cumanus recalled and Felix appointed procurator—tumultuous conduct of the jews—death of Claudius—succeeded by Nero—anarchical state of Judea, during the procuratorsip of Felix—is succeeded by Festus—both reside at Cesarea—Festus dies—is succeeded by Albinus—state of society more and more disordered—Ananus made high priest—Cestius Gallus visits Jerusalem

838. After the death of Agrippa, A. D. 45, Fadus was appointed procurator of Judea. Claudius would have given the kingdom to the son of his friend, but was dissuaded from it on account of his youth. A contention soon arose between this officer and the Jews, respecting the pontifical vestments, which he ordered to be deposited, as formerly, in the castle of Antonia. This was by direction of the emperor. And when the Jews proved refractory, Cassius Longinus, who had been sent to Syria in the place of Marsus, came with an army to enforce the emperor's edict; but the Jews prevailed on him to wait until they could petition the emperor; who was induced by the intercession of Herod king of Chalcis, to relinquish his purpose. Claudius then appointed this Herod to preside over the temple, and select the high priests. He removed Cantharus from office, and appointed Joseph son of Camus, to succeed him.

839. In the Acts, we read, that "a prophet, named Agabus stood up, and signified by the spirit, that there should be a great dearth, throughout all the world, which, says Luke, came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar." Now, during the reign of Claudius, there were no less than four times of famine. The one, referred to above, occurred while Fadus was procurator at Judea, and was the last of the four; for it extended to the reign of Tiberius.

840. About this time, the Jews received some proselytes to their religion, of rather an extraordinary character for rank, who proved themselves to be very sincere converts, by their munificence to the Jewish nation; especially in the time of the forementioned famine. The persons to whom I refer, were Helena, queen of Adiabene, in Mesopotamia, and her son Izates. At the time when this dearth occurred, Helena was at Jerusalem, and supplied the people with large quantities of provisions; and Izates sent them, at the same time, large sums of money. These royal personages had built, near Jerusalem, a sepulchre of magnificent workmanship, in which, after their death, they were interred.

841. While Fadus was procurator of Judea, a false Messiah made his appearance, who deluded great multitudes of people, and persuaded them to follow him to Jordan, where he promised, that he would divide the waters, and lead them over on dry ground. But while this multitude was on their way, they were overtaken by a troop of Roman cavalry, sent after them by Fadus. The impostor was brought back and beheaded, and all his followers were dispersed. Josephus calls this impostor Theudas, but from what Gamaliel said in the Jewish Sanhedrim, (Acts 5:36) it appears, that Theudas was before Judas the Gaulonite, and was accompanied by only four hundred men, who all forsook him. Probably, therefore, Josephus was mistaken about the name; unless,—which is not improbable,—there were two of the same name.

842. A. D. 46, Fadus was recalled, and a man of Jewish origin, by the name of Tiberius Alexander, was made procurator of Judea.

843. A. D. 47, Herod, king of Chalcis, having received authority from the emperor to appoint the high priest at Jerusalem, A. D. 47, displaced Joseph, the son of Camus, and gave the office to Ananias, the son of Nebedeus. This was among his last acts; for he died shortly after, and his kingdom was given to Claudius Agrippa, the son of king Agrippa, with the same authority over the temple and priesthood, which had been possessed by Herod, king of Chalcis.

844. In the same year, A. D. 47, Claudius recalled Tiberius Alexander, and appointed V. Cumanus, to be procurator in his stead.

845. The following year, A. D. 48, during the celebration of the passover, a cohort of Roman soldiers were stationed before the gates of the temple to preserve order. But one of the soldiers, by an indecent action, so provoked the Jews, who were going up to the temple to worship, that some rash young men assaulted the soldiers with stones. Cumanus, at first, endeavored to allay the irritation of the populace; but failing in this, he summoned the soldiers into the castle of Antonia, by which the Jews understood, that he was about to make an attack on the temple. So great a panic seized the multitude, who were within the walls, that when a violent rush took place to escape through the gates, more than a thousand of them were crushed to death.

846. Another tumult took place, in consequence of the impious conduct of a Roman soldier; who, having seized a copy of the law tore it in pieces, with insulting and blasphemous language. A complaint was made to Cumanus; who, seeing no other method of appeasing the people, ordered the offending soldier to be beheaded.

847. The commotions among the people, increased every day. A dispute now arose between the Galileans and the Samaritans, on account of a murder committed on a Jew, in one of the Samaritan villages. The Roman officer refusing to do them justice, the Jews undertook to revenge themselves, by invading and plundering the Samaritan territory; but, Cumanus coming on them with his cavalry, soon dispersed them. Many, however, about this time, joined themselves to troops of robbers, and by their predatory incursions, greatly disturbed the peace of the country.

848. H. Quadratus had been made governor of Syria, in the place of Longinus; and he being now at Tyre, complaints were made to him, both by the Jews and Samaritans. He determined, therefore, to come to Judea, and examine into the affair for himself. At first, he felt disposed to condemn the Samaritans, but on learning that the Jews had acted in a rebellious manner, in defiance of the Roman authority, he ordered such of them as Ananus had taken, to be crucified. He, moreover, put to death a leading man whose name was Doras, and several others; and sent the high priests Jonathan and Ananus the president of the temple in chains, to Rome. Finally, he ordered all parties, and the procurator himself, to go to Italy, and submit their cause to the emperor; and then returned to Antioch.

849. When the cause came before the emperor, the Jews had justice done them, through the influence of Agrippa, who was then at Rome. The Samaritans were condemned, and three of their leaders ordered to be executed. The Roman tribune, who had been guilty of exciting the disturbance, was ordered to be sent back to Jerusalem, and to be dragged through the streets, and then beheaded. Cumanus himself, also, was recalled.

850. A. D. 53, Felix a freed-man, was appointed procurator of Judea, and continued in office a number of years.

851. Agrippa seems to have been as much a favorite of Augustus, as his father; for in place of his little kingdom of Chalcis, he gave him the tetrarchy which had belonged to Philip, the son of Herod the Great.

852. Drusilla, the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa, was given by her brother in marriage to Azizus, king of Emesa, who, to obtain her, had submitted to circumcision. But Felix, who had already two wives, became enamoured of her; and by means of one Simon a sorcerer, made her offers of marriage, and gained her consent.

853. Although Claudius showed himself, favorable to the Jews, so many tumults were raised by them, in the city of Rome, that he published an edict, that they should all leave the city, which, however, was never fully executed. He, however, strictly forbade all public meetings among them.

854. During all this period, the Romans made no distinction between Jews and Christians; for the latter were considered as merely a new sect among the Jews. They, therefore, fell under the operation of all edicts which related to the Jews. Accordingly, we read in the Acts (18) that "A certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately had come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome."

855. Claudius the emperor died A. D. 55 or 56, and was succeeded by Nero, the son of his wife Agrippina, by her former husband. Nero was a cruel tyrant when in power, although he appeared to be mild and amiable in private life. Soon after his accession to the throne, he put several persons to death, to gratify his own malignant temper; and among the rest, Agrippina his own mother, to whom he owed the possession of the empire.

856. Agrippa, however, shared the favor of Nero as he had done that of his predecessor; for he increased his dominions, by the addition of the cities of Tarichœa, Tiberias, Abila, and Julias, with the territories which appertained to them.

857. At the time when Felix arrived in Judea, the country was almost in a state of anarchy. The curse of God seemed evidently to be brooding over that ill-fated nation. The whole land was infested with robbers, and swarmed with impostors. About this time, also, arose the Sicarii, a desperate set of assassins, who received their name from a short sword or dagger which they carried under their outward garment. These men, by mingling with the crowd, would suddenly strike their victim, and then concealing their weapon, hide themselves among the multitude.

858. Felix employed these men to put Jonathan the high priest out of the way; for by his intrusion as an adviser, he had become troublesome to the procurator. Jonathan, having had a chief influence in getting Felix appointed to this office, thought that he had a right to exercise a good deal of freedom in advising and admonishing him. But he dearly paid for his officiousness; for Felix was not a man that could endure reproof.

859. Among the many sorcerers, jugglers, and other impostors, who appeared about this time, there was an Egyptian Jew, who drew after him thirty thousand persons, whom he led to the Mount of Olives, promising that he would cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall down, at his word; but Felix fell upon the deluded multitude, and slew about four hundred of them; and took two

thousand prisoners. The impostor himself, made his escape. Many other impostors led their followers out into the wilderness, where they promised that they would show great signs and miracles; but Felix showed no mercy to such men, and caused many of them to be put to death. The Jew above mentioned, is probably the man to whom Lysias, the captain of the temple, had reference, when he said to Paul, (Acts 21:38) "Art thou not that Egyptian which before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness, four thousand men, that were murderers."

860. Felix, as well as his successors, resided at Cesarea. We find, therefore, (Acts 23:23-35) that the captain of the temple, Claudius Lysias, when he had learned, that a conspiracy was formed by about forty Jews to kill Paul, sent him off by night, escorted by a strong guard, to Felix the governor, at Cesarea. Here he was kept in confinement during the remaining time of Felix's administration, which was two whole years; but liberty was given for his friends to visit him.

861. On a certain occasion, Felix and his wife Drusilla, already mentioned, heard Paul preach; and the effect of his discourse, "while he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment," was such, that Felix trembled, and seems to have interrupted the apostle, not wishing to hear any more about those matters, at that time; but promising, that when he should have a convenient season, he would call for him. And he did frequently send for Paul, and converse with him; but his object was to obtain money for his release; thinking, probably, that some of his friends would be willing to pay a large sum for his ransom.

862. This history of Luke is corroborated fully by Josephus; and in some important particulars, by Tacitus. The marriage of Felix to Drusilla, a Jewess, is particularly mentioned by the Jewish historian, who relates that she was the most beautiful woman of her time, and had been married to Azizus, the king of Emesa, but was seduced by means of one Simon, a Jew of Cyprus, to forsake her husband and become the wife of Felix. Tacitus says, "That, while Felix was procurator of Judea, he acted in a very arbitrary manner, and scrupled no kind of injustice." When Felix returned to Rome, the Jews forwarded complaints against him to Nero, on account of his cruelty and injustice, while procurator of Judea.

863. The conduct of Felix towards Paul, was very reprehensible. When he vacated his office, he left him a prisoner; for no other reason, but because he wished to gratify the Jews. The words of Luke are, "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

864. The exact year in which Festus came into office, is not easily ascertained: but it must have been, between A. D. 57, and A. D. 60. That he was the successor of Felix as procurator, is often asserted by Josephus. Soon after his arrival in Judea, he visited Jerusalem, where the Jews renewed their accusations against Paul, and requested, that he might be brought up to Jerusalem for his trial. But Paul, knowing the malice and treachery of the Jews, in order to avoid this, made use of his privilege as a Roman citizen, to appeal to Cesar; on which, Festus, after consultation with his council, resolved to send him to Rome.

865. Soon after this, Festus received a visit from king Agrippa and his sister Berenice. These being Jews, Festus, sensible of his ignorance of Jewish customs, was desirous that they should hear Paul, and then advise him what he should write to the emperor respecting him. Agrippa expressed a strong desire to have an opportunity of hearing the defence of a man, who had

become so famous by his preaching and his sufferings. Accordingly, on a day appointed, Festus, Agrippa, Berenice, and the chief captains and principal men of Cesarea, came with great pomp into the hall of audience; where, Paul was brought before them, chained; and on receiving permission from Agrippa, entered on his defence, in which he gave a succinct account of his life, and especially of his miraculous conversion. At the close of his oration, he made a solemn appeal to the conscience of Agrippa, as a Jew who believed in the prophecies, and extorted from him that remarkable expression of his feelings, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

866. During the administration of Festus, the state of society among the Jews rather grew worse than better.

867. Agrippa having, as was before mentioned, the presidency of the temple, produced a great excitement, by adding to the palace of Herod, a high building, which overlooked the whole city, and gave him the opportunity of seeing what was going on within the enclosure of the temple. To prevent this, the Jews built a high wall between that and the temple, which entirely intercepted the view from Agrippa's tower. Agrippa, backed by the authority of Festus, gave orders that this wall should be taken down: but the chief men of Jerusalem urged, that they might be permitted to lay the whole matter before the emperor. Nero, influenced, it is said, by his wife Poppea, who is thought to have been a secret proselyte, gave permission for the wall to stand. But, for some reason, he detained all the members of the embassy sent to him on this occasion, among whom was Ismael the high priest. That office being then left vacant, Agrippa, by the authority vested in him, appointed Joseph Cabi, the son of Simon, to fill the place.

868. After the death of Festus, which occurred about A. D. 63, Albinus was appointed procurator of Judea. He was no better a man than his predecessors; for he was in the habit of compromising with the robbers seized by public authority, for a sum of money. The number of robbers and sicarii, was greatly increased, about this time, by the dismissal of eighteen thousand laborers from the temple; that work being now entirely finished. These men, thus turned adrift, and having no regular occupation, betook themselves very generally to unlawful means of procuring a subsistence. Every day, therefore, the state of society became more disorderly and miserable. In fact, nearly all the bonds of civil society seemed to be severed. Albinus was not wanting in severity against the disturbers of the peace; except when they could gratify his avarice by a round sum of money; so that many of the ring-leaders escaped punishment, and no salutary purpose was answered by the executions which took place.

869. Just before the arrival of Albinus in Judea, Agrippa had given the office of high priest to Ananus, the son of the former priest of that name. He was a zealous Sadducee, and according to the spirit of his sect, was severe in executing punishments upon delinquents. When he first entered on his office Festus was dead, but his successor was not yet arrived. In this interregnum, Josephus informs us, "that he assembled the Sanhedrim and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ, and whose name was James, and some others; and having accused them before this tribunal, as violators of the law, he delivered them to be stoned;" Of this proceeding most of the Jews disapproved, and begged of Agrippa to write to the high priest, and forbid his acting in so unjustifiable a manner. And some of them went to meet Albinus, who was on his way to Judea; and by their representations induced him to send a threatening letter to Ananus. Agrippa found it necessary to dismiss him from office, a few months after he had been made high

priest, and appointed Jesus son of Damneus, his successor.

870. Gessius Florus succeeded Albinus, as procurator of Judea, A. D. 65. This man was of a more detestable character than any of his predecessors. The Jews thought Albinus a very bad man; but in comparison with Florus, they called him good. Florus was rapacious and cruel, and his avarice insatiable. He was openly the patron of the bands of robbers, in whose wicked gains he shared. No wonder then that robbers increased, until their oppression became so intolerable, that many Jews emigrated from their own country, and went to reside in foreign lands; The revolt of the Jews is less wonderful, when we reflect on the distracted and desperate condition of the nation. They were now ripening fast, for those dreadful calamities, which were preparing to burst upon them.

871. Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, visited Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and to form some estimate of the number of persons collected at Jerusalem, on this festival, he ordered the number of lambs used on the occasion, to be counted. They were found to be two hundred and fifty-six thousand; but this number, Josephus thinks falls short of the truth, which he supposes was not less than three hundred thousand. Now, if we reckon ten persons to every lamb, for small households united in this festival—the number of Jews at Jerusalem, during that passover, will be three millions.

CHAPTER XXXVI("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Rome set on fire by Nero—disturbances at Cesarea—Florus, the procurator, excites insurrection—his cruelty—the Jews complain to Agrippa—Eleazar son of the high priest, and master of the temple, persuades the priests to reject all pagan sacrifices—dreadful commotions in Judea, and massacres in the temple—Cestius Gallus marches an army towards Jerusalem—the Jews assembled at the Feast of Tabernacles, furiously rush on the hostile army, and slay five hundred men—Agrippa interposes—persuades the Jews to make peace—but in vain—Gallus brings back his army to the gates of Jerusalem—retires again to Scopus—is attacked in the defile of an ambuscade, and flies with a few hundred men—Josephus, the historian, appointed to the command of Galilee and Gamala—Nero sends Vaspasian to Judea—he first subdues Galilee—bands of robbers infest the country—the Zealots—parties in Jerusalem—cruelties perpetrated

872. In the year A. D. 65, the city of Rome was burnt; set on fire by Nero himself, as all believed, but laid to the charge of the hated and persecuted Christians; who were subjected to the most horrid cruelties, and torturing deaths, as if they had indeed been the perpetrators of this enormous crime.

873. A. D. 66, disturbances took place at Cesarea in consequence of an imperial edict, which gave to the Syrian and Greek inhabitants of the place, a rank above the Jewish citizens. The spirit of hostility between the parties began to grow hot. Occasions of dispute were not wanting. A Greek, in building his house, nearly closed the entrance into the Jewish Synagogue; and on the Sabbath, to insult the Jewish worship, began to sacrifice birds on an earthen vessel, near the door of the Synagogue. The parties became exceedingly exasperated against each other, and were just ready to break out into acts of hostility. The master of horse came forward to quell the tumult; but was driven back by the Greeks. The Jews now carried away their sacred books from the Synagogue, and made their complaint to the procurator, who was then at Sebaste; but Florus put the embassy,

consisting of twelve distinguished men, in prison; alleging, as a reason, the removal of their sacred books from Cesarea.

874. It seems evidently to have been the wish of Florus to excite insurrection, by goading the Jews to desperation. He demanded a large sum of money to be paid to him out of the treasury, at Jerusalem, and when this produced a tumult, and called forth bitter reproaches against the rapacity of the procurator, he came in person, accompanied by a body of soldiers, horse and foot. The people came out to receive him with the usual marks of external respect; but he drove them back.

875. He now demanded, that all who had joined in the tumult and reproaches against him, should be given up, and would hear no apology, but gave orders to his soldiers to plunder the upper market. In the execution of these orders, they were guilty of great disorders, and some massacres. Peaceable citizens were dragged before Florus, and among the rest, some of the chiefs of the Publicans, who held the rank of Roman knights, and who, after being scourged, were crucified.

876. The next day, Florus ordered the Jews to go out of the city and meet with the usual shout of joy and respect, two cohorts of soldiers, who had been ordered from Cesarea; but he sent secret orders to these soldiers to receive them with insult; and if they showed any dissatisfaction, to fall upon them. The result was, that many were wounded, and others crushed to death, in the crowd.

877. His next attempt was to press into the temple with his soldiers, but the Jews offered so determined a resistance, that the Romans were repulsed, and forced to take refuge in the castle. The Jews, now, the more effectually to prevent the Romans from entering into the temple, broke down the covered way which led from the castle Antonia, to the temple.

878. Florus, after these commotions, returned to Cesarea; leaving only one company of soldiers at Jerusalem. But he sent an account of these disturbances to Cestius Gallus; and the principal Jews with Berenice, forwarded their account, in which they complained grievously of the unreasonable and cruel conduct of the procurator.

879. Cestius, while he ordered an army to be in readiness, sent a confidential messenger to see what the existing state of affairs was. This man met Agrippa, on his return from Egypt, at Jamnia, and both together went to Jerusalem, where they were met by the people with loud complaints against Florus. But they received Agrippa with joy, and treated the message of Gallus with respect. Nay; when Agrippa, in an oration, urged them to obedience, they promised acquiescence, and paid up their arrears of taxes to the Romans, and built up the portico which they had recently demolished. But, afterwards, when Agrippa exhorted them to remain obedient to Florus, until another should be sent, they were so enraged, that they drove him with stones, out of the city.

880. Eleazar the son of the high priest Ananus, being now the president of the temple, rashly persuaded the priests to reject all sacrifices, which came from Pagans; so that the sacrifices offered by the emperor, were henceforth discontinued. The orderly part of the inhabitants now sent to Florus and Agrippa, for a body of soldiers, to preserve order. The former gave them no answer, but Agrippa, who now resided at Cesarea, sent them a force of three thousand horse. With these, the party in favor of obedience, took possession of the upper city, while the temple and lower town remained under the power of the factions. These men were actuated by an insane and fiery zeal, and would not so much as suffer the other party to enter the temple, for worship. Skirmishes daily

took place between them; and the revolters, aided by the Sicarii, actually broke into the upper city, and set fire to the palace of king Agrippa; and the next day made an attack on the castle of Antonia, which they took, and put the Roman garrison to the sword.

881. The strong fortress of Masada had been, some time before this, surprized by a band of robbers, and the Roman garrison put to the sword. At this time, many Jews of distinction had fled for refuge to the castle of Herod, where they defended themselves bravely against the revolters. Among these was, Menahem, the son of the notorious Judas of Galilee; who, going to Masada, broke open the armoury, and obtained arms for a set of robbers and desperadoes, with whom, returning to the castle at Jerusalem, he proclaimed himself king; and took the command of its defence. The besieged, at length, begged permission to depart, which was granted to all except the Romans.

882. The next day, Ananus was found dead in the palace; and his brother Hezekiah was also put to death by the robbers. Soon after this, Menahem was slain in the temple, with most of his followers, by Eleazar and his party.

883. During this year, A. D. 66, the whole Jewish nation was in a state of terrible commotion. At Jerusalem, the factious Jews who continued to besiege the Romans in the castle, were guilty of a horrible act of treachery and cruelty; for having promised safety to the besieged, if they would lay down their arms, they, nevertheless, massacred every one of them.

884. On the same day, all the Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea were massacred by the Greeks; and this served as a signal for an insurrection of the two parties, in opposition to each other. In all the cities, where there was a mixed population, there was no safety for any man, but in the strength of his own party.

885. At the same time, the Jews of Alexandria, were attacked, and all, who could not make their escape, were put to death. Fifty thousand Jews, are said to have been slain there, in one day.

886. Cestius Gallus, to quell the spirit of insurrection which had made its appearance in Palestine, marched an army thither, and invaded Galilee, sacked many cities, and slew thousands of Jews. Having apparently reduced the rebellious to subjection, near the close of the year, he marched his army towards Jerusalem, and encamped within a few miles of the city.

887. The Jews were, at this time, assembled from all parts, at Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. When the multitude heard of the approach of the hostile army, they siezed such arms as they could get, and rushed forth with incredible fury on the Sabbath, and killed above five hundred of the enemy, while they suffered the loss of only a few men. And the Romans were again attacked on their retreat, by Simon Gioras, and suffered considerable loss.

888. Agrippa now interposed, and sent two ambassadors to persuade the Jews to peace, and to offer them an amnesty for the past; but such was their inconsiderate fury, that they fell upon these messengers of peace, and murdered them.

889. Cestius Gallus now came back with his army, to Jerusalem, and having waited in vain for three days, to receive proposals of peace, proceeded to obtain possession of two of the northern districts of the city, and drive the rebels into the inner city. He then attacked the upper city; and for five days the most strenuous efforts were used to gain possession of the wall, but they were

unsuccessful.

890. Cestius then formed a testudo,* and was about setting the gates on fire, under the cover of this defence, on which many of the rebels fled from the city, and the peaceable inhabitants invited him to enter. But distrusting the apparent friendship of the inhabitants, he marched his army back to Scopas, which encouraged the rebels, to attack him on his way, so that it was with difficulty he reached his entrenchments that night, and made his way the next day, to Gabao.

891. After remaining at this place a few days, Cestius endeavored to draw off his army to Antipatris, but the robbers and rebels increasing in number and confidence, not only pursued him, but way-laid him in the defiles of the mountains, and so obstructed his course, that he left the main body and the military engines, and fled by night with a few hundred men.

892. The state of things became now so distracted and desperate at Jerusalem, as Josephus informs us, that the more prudent citizens left the city. No doubt he has reference to the departure of the whole body of Christians, who agreeably to the warning of their Master (Matthew 24:15-20) fled from the city, and went over Jordan, wherever they could find a secure abode; but the largest body took up their residence at Pella.

893. The rebels, after the defeat of Cestius, were so elated, that they thought of nothing but resistance, and constrained all the peaceable inhabitants to join with them. Ananus the high priest, and Joseph the son of Gorian, were appointed commanders. Eleazar, on account of his rash and arbitrary disposition, had no office in the new arrangement of government; but having appropriated to himself a large part of the spoils taken from Cestius, he was able by his largesses to gain over the populace to his interest.

894. As resistance were fully determined on, generals, or prefects were appointed for every district of the country. Among these we recognize Flavius Josephus, the historian, who has handed down to us an account of these events. To him was assigned for his command, Galilee and Gamala.

895. Having repaired to Galilee, he began by appointing a council of seventy, to manage all important civil affairs; and in every city, seven judges, to attend to matters of less importance. He took care to fortify all the towns which were capable of standing a siege; and by his industry and address, soon collected an army of one hundred thousand men. But notwithstanding this formidable force, which he took care to have organized and disciplined after the Roman manner, such was the spirit of turbulence and revolt among his soldiers, that his own life was often in jeopardy. It was with much difficulty that he escaped the machinations of John of Gischalus, a very crafty leader of banditti.

896. Ananus the high priest finding that all prospect of peace was gone, endeavored to put Jerusalem into a state of defence. As Simon of Gioras was committing great devastation with his band of lawless followers, he sent an army against him. But Simon fled to Masada, which had now become a mere den of thieves.

897. Nero, on hearing of these commotions in Judea, was greatly displeased with the governor of Syria, to whose negligence he attributed all these misfortunes. To put a stop to the growing evil, he commissioned Vespasian, who had just returned from a victorious campaign against the Germans and Britons, to take the command in Syria. He also sent Titus, the son of Vespasian, to

Alexandria, with orders to transport into Judea two Roman legions which were stationed there.

898. The Jews, in the mean time, made an attempt to take the strong city of Askelon, but were repulsed with the loss of ten thousand men. A second attempt was not more successful; for falling into an ambush, they lost eight thousand men, and the remainder took refuge in the town of Bezedel, which the Romans set on fire, and they perished in the flames.

899. A. D. 67, Vespasian arrived at Ptolemais accompanied by Agrippa, and having collected troops from all the Roman stations in the surrounding country, and being joined by his son Titus, with the two legions from Egypt, he found himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand effective men.

900. Vespasian first turned his course to Galilee, where Josephus commanded. The inhabitants were at once filled with consternation, and most of the soldiers of Josephus forsook him and fled.

901. As many Jews had taken refuge in Jotapata, one of the strongest places in Galilee, Josephus threw himself, with the few men whom he had left, into that city. Vespasian soon appeared before the place, with his army, and commenced a regular siege. Josephus and the garrison made a brave defence, but after enduring a siege of forty seven days, the place was taken.

902. Forty thousand Jews were slain during the siege, and the city was utterly demolished. Josephus, with forty other Jews, concealed himself in a cave; but they were betrayed by a woman, who knew their place of refuge. The Romans entreated him to yield, and promised to spare his life, but his companions would not permit him to surrender. At the suggestion of Josephus, it was agreed, that they should by lot, destroy one another; but after all were slain except Josephus and one other, they surrendered themselves to the Romans. At first, Josephus was put in chains, but after he had predicted, that Vespasian would be exalted to the imperial throne, he was treated with kindness and respect.

903. While the siege of Jotapata was in progress, Trajan and Titus assailed the town of Joppa, in the vicinity, where twenty thousand men were slain, and none left but women and children.

904. The winter having now commenced, Vespasian marched back to Ptolemais, and sent two legions to Cesarea, and two to Scythopolis. Having visited Cesarea Philippi, in the kingdom of Agrippa, he and his army were splendidly entertained by that prince, for twenty days.

905. The remaining cities of Galilee were next reduced. The only place, which made much resistance, was Gamala, on the sea of Gennesareth, and situated on the top of a precipitous mountain, accessible only on one side. After Agrippa had besieged this place for seven months, Vespasian sat down before it, and pitched his camp on the accessible side. Agrippa, while summoning the town to surrender, was wounded by a sling, and repulsed. When a breach was at length, made in the walls, and the Romans attempted to enter, most of the assailants were slain; and Vespasian himself was once so surrounded by the enemy, that he escaped with much difficulty. At last, many made their escape by clambering down the rocks or creeping through the sewers. But one of the towers having been undermined fell, and a way was opened for the entrance of the Romans. The Jews now fled to the citadel, but this was scaled, and all the inhabitants put to the sword, women and children not excepted.

906. The fortress on Mount Tabor was soon reduced, but the town of Gischala, held by John the leader of a band of robbers, was among the last in Galilee which yielded. John at length left it, after which the people willingly admitted Titus.

John of Gischala, being now obliged to relinquish his strong hold, went directly to Jerusalem, and though he concealed as much as he could, the disastrous state of affairs in Galilee, enough was known to produce deep depression in the inhabitants of that place.

907. At this time, the companies of robbers spread alarm and devastation through the country. Many of these freebooters, having taken refuge in the city of Jerusalem, began to carry on the same trade there. For a while, by their violence and their numbers, they carried all before them, and meeting with no resistance, proceeded with still increasing audacity, until they set aside the most sacred rights and institutions. They made one Phannias high priest, who, although of the sacerdotal race, had been bred to labor in the field, and knew nothing of the duties of his office.

908. These men gave themselves the name of Zealots, and to secure themselves from any attack, withdrew to the temple and occupied it as their citadel. At length, Ananus Gorion, the son of Joseph, and Simon the son of Gamaliel, succeeded in persuading the people to resist. But before they could arm themselves completely, they were attacked by the Zealots, and an obstinate battle was fought, in which many were killed and wounded on both sides. These conflicts afterwards became matters of almost daily occurrence, and generally the Zealots had the advantage.

909. On one occasion however, Ananus, succeeded in driving them in, and followed so closely, that he entered the outer gates of the temple with his men. On this, the Zealots retreated to the inner temple, whither Ananus, through reference, would not follow them. But he introduced, within the outer wall of the temple, a guard of six thousand men, who were periodically relieved by others.

910. John of Gischala was secretly in league with the Zealots, but openly professed himself on the side of Ananus. Some suspicion of his fidelity having arisen, he purged himself by a solemn oath, by which Ananus was so completely deceived, that he sent him with proposals of peace to the Zealots, when he took the opportunity of advising them to call to their aid, the Idumeans. In a short time, several thousands of these people presented themselves at the gates of Jerusalem, but were refused admittance, on which they encamped without the walls.

911. While things were in this posture, a very stormy night occurred, in which there was much wind and thunder as well as rain. In the middle of the night, the Zealots passed the guard in the temple, without being noticed, and found means to open the gates of the temple. Then proceeding to the gates of the city, they let in the Idumeans, and conducted them to the court of the temple, where they fell on the guard, who were totally unprepared for such an attack. The noise soon awakened the inhabitants of the city, but as no timely assistance could be afforded to the men shut up in the temple, they were nearly all cut off. The Idumeans and Zealots then attacked the inhabitants, and slew many of them, among whom, was Ananus the high priest, whose body was found in the morning.

912. The loss of this man, at this time, was irreparable, for he was a friend of peace, and by degrees, was gaining an influence over the minds of the people favorable to peace; so that Josephus expresses it as his opinion, that if he had lived, a reconciliation with the Romans would

have been brought about. But Providence had other things in view, for this devoted people.

913. Great cruelties were now exercised by the Zealots and their auxiliaries, on the citizens. They endeavored first to make them join their party, and those who refused, were massacred, scourged, or imprisoned in the temple.

914. Many now sought refuge among the Romans, who looked on with pleasure, to see their enemies destroying one another. But all who were taken in an attempt to fly were immediately put to death by the Jews.

915. In the midst of this confusion, John of Gischala, a brave and sagacious, but wicked man, watched his opportunity for making himself master of the city, but met with determined opposition. His adherents and opposers, however, divided the citizens into two factions, between whom there were many bloody conflicts.

916. While these things were transacted within the city, the state of affairs, in the country, was very little better; for, the Sicarii increased daily, and laid the country waste, sometimes, even massacring the people of whole villages.

917. One thing which proved, that the protection of God was departed from the nation, was, that, now when the males went up to Jerusalem to the solemn feasts, these robbers and murderers, attacked the towns, killed the women and children, and carried off the property, a thing unknown in all the former history of this people; for God had promised to restrain their enemies at such times.

918. When Vespasian heard of the wretched condition of Jerusalem, he wished to march his army immediately to the place; but not thinking it proper to leave towns unsubdued in his rear, he set himself with vigor, to reduce the country to subjection. Placidius was sent against Perea, where the Jews made an obstinate resistance. At Jericho, a battle was fought on the banks of the Jordan; when multitudes of the wretched Jews were driven into the river and drowned; twelve thousand were slain in the field, and several thousand taken prisoners. The other towns then submitted. This was A. D. 68.

919. A. D. 69, Vespasian had subdued all the region of Judea round about Jerusalem; so that the communication between the city and country was cut off, and the Zealots prevented those within, who desired it, from joining the Romans. It was now the intention of the Roman general to invest the city of Jerusalem and bring the war to a conclusion; but the intelligence from Italy perplexed him. First, he heard that Vindex had rebelled in Gaul; next, that Nero was dead, and that Galba was proclaimed emperor by the army in Spain; then, that Galba, after a reign of seven months, had been murdered; and that Otho had been declared emperor. Being greatly interested in these revolutions, he deferred the siege of Jerusalem, and waited at Cesarea for further intelligence.

920. This short respite given by the Romans, only rendered the situation of the Jews more wretched; for without and within the walls, all was disorder and mutual conflict.

921. Simon son of Gioras, a man of desperate courage, had joined himself to the robbers of Masada, and by his bold exploits became so famous, that multitudes flocked to his standard. He had now at his command an army of forty thousand men. This daring robber extended his depredations far and wide, until he came into Judea. The Zealots sent out an army against him, but they were defeated, and driven back to Jerusalem, while Simon himself came up to the very

walls, and, by his violence and threats, filled the Zealots with dismay.

922. Simon now returned to Idumea, and carried on his work of murder and robbery. The Idumeans fled to Jerusalem, and he pursued them to the very walls.

923. Within the city, the Zealots, and especially John the Gischalite and his party, were guilty of unheard of wickedness. All laws, human and divine, were trampled under foot. To plunder and murder the rich, and to ravish the women, were occurrences of every day. Josephus says that "the whole city was one great brothel, a horrid den of thieves, and a hateful cave of murderers."

924. The Idumeans, after entering the city, this second time, attached themselves to the party opposed to John and the Zealots, and by them many of the latter were slain. They plundered the palace which John had made the depository of his treasures.

925. Upon this, the Zealots, scattered through the different parts of the city, united their forces to make an attack on the Idumeans and the people. These, doubting their own strength to resist the force of their enemies, now opened their gates to Simon and his men, who, coming in, closely besieged John in the temple.

CHAPTER XXXVII("tw://[self]?tid=21&popup=0" \l "Annals_contents-")

Vespasians preparations for carrying on the war—state of parties in Jerusalem—Titus marches his army to Jerusalem and commences the siege—great multitudes of people within the walls—external part of the city taken by Titus—great efforts made to bring the Jews to terms, but in vain—Castle of Antonia demolished—a lady eats her own child in the famine—the temple is set on fire and destroyed, contrary to the wishes and orders of Titus—the walls thrown down, and the site of the temple ploughed over—dreadful infatuation of the Jewish nation—their restoration clearly predicted

926. Before the close of this year, A. D. 69, Vespasian received intelligence, that the German legions had raised Vitellius to the throne of the empire. At this, he and his whole army were much dissatisfied. After some consultation, therefore, they proclaimed Vespasian emperor of Rome, and entreated him to uphold the sinking empire. From entreaties they proceeded to threats, declaring, that they would put him to death, if he refused to accept the honor.

927. Vespasian first wrote to Tiberius Alexander, in Egypt, continuing him in his office, and engaging him to secure the fidelity of the two legions, stationed there. The news of his advancement spread rapidly; and before he left Berytus, many ambassadors waited on him, to congratulate him.

928. In the meantime, Vitellius was defeated, at Cremona, by Priscus; and Sabinus had taken possession of the capitol at Rome, in the name of Vespasian. Vitellius was murdered in the streets of Rome; and Mucianus, sent with an army by Vespasian, having arrived at Rome, Vespasian was universally acknowledged emperor. Vespasian was at Alexandria, when this pleasing intelligence reached him. He, therefore, sent his son Titus back to Judea, to finish the war, and set sail himself for Rome, immediately, although it was in the midst of winter.

929. A. D. 70. At the commencement of this year, a third party arose in Jerusalem, under the conduct of Eleazar the son of Simon, of whom some account has been already given. He, being

jealous of John's power, formed a party, and took possession of the inner temple. Thus, John had to contend with Simon, who had possession of a large part of the city, and at the same time with Eleazar, who had shut himself up in the inner temple.

930. By the continual conflicts between John and Simon, the whole of that part of the city which was adjacent to the temple, was laid waste, and the houses burnt, by which, vast quantities of provisions were consumed. And often the streets were covered with the dead bodies of the slain, which lay there unburied. Nor could any one escape, for the gates were carefully watched, and even the appearance of discontent exposed a man to death, as a friend to the Romans.

931. A. D. 71, Titus, now marched his army from Cesarea towards Jerusalem, and encamped about thirty furlongs from the city. He then rode, with a few hundred horse, to reconnoitre the situation of the town, and to see whether the Jews within were at all disposed to yield. But when he came near, the rebels rushed out, and separated him from the main body of his party, so that he had no way of escape but to break through his enemies, which, at great risk he accomplished.

932. He now moved forward two legions, within seven furlongs of the city, and formed a line of intrenchments behind them. The legion from Jericho, he stationed on the Mount of Olives, six furlongs from Jerusalem, and began a line of circumvallation. But now, the three parties in Jerusalem, seeing the enemy at the door, united their forces, and sallied out against the legion on the Mount of Olives. These sallies were made very frequently, and in one of them, Titus was again in imminent danger of his life.

933. But this union of parties in the city, did not last long. As Eleazar opened the gates of the temple to all who came to worship, John sent in some of his party, with their weapons concealed under their garments. These fell upon the Zealots of Eleazar's party, and a bloody massacre ensued. Thus, John made himself master of the whole temple; and there remained now but the two parties of John and Simon.

934. Titus now summoned the city to surrender, but on receiving no favorable answer, he levelled the land from Scopas, where his camp was, up near to the city, cutting down all the trees, and removing the gardens. The Jews now made a sally on the Romans with considerable success; but Titus advanced his army within two furlongs of the city, and stationed some of his best soldiers, near the walls.

935. It was now the season of the passover, and vast multitudes of the Jews were collected within the walls of the city.

936. As to the forces within the city, Simon had two thousand men, and five thousand Idumeans, and held possession of the upper and lower city. John had six thousand men, with twenty-five hundred Zealots, and had also possession of the temple, and such parts as were fully commanded by it.

937. Titus was now prepared to make an assault on the outer wall. But before the attack commenced, Flavius Josephus was sent to make peace, but the only answer returned, was a shower of arrows, which wounded a Roman officer, who accompanied him.

938. Mounts were now raised near the walls, in erecting which, the soldiers were protected by their military engines. On these mounts three moveable towers were erected, and the battering rams

were brought to bear on the walls, in three several places. These tremendous engines, produced such terror in the city, that the two parties again united and made a desperate sally, to set the machines on fire, but many of the Jews were taken, and crucified before the city. One of the moveable towers fell, but it caused no obstruction to the progress of the siege.

939. The battering rams soon made a breach in the wall, through which, the Romans rushed into the new city, and took possession of it, on the fourteenth day of the siege. They then demolished a great part of the outer wall, and the Jews retired within the second wall.

940. The Roman camp was now removed within the outer wall, and an assault made on the second wall; and in five days, a practical breach was effected. The Jews made a brave resistance, so that for three days, the Romans were unable to enter the breach; or, as often as they entered, were repulsed. The Romans, therefore, did what Titus had at first resolved not to do. They demolished almost the whole of the second wall.

941. Titus, having now obtained possession of the interior part of the city, gave his soldiers a respite of four days, suspending operations, in hopes that the Jews would surrender; for he knew that they began to be sorely pressed with famine.

942. But finding no desire of peace among them, he prepared to make an assault on the castle of Antonia, and pressed on the siege with vigor. Being very solicitous to preserve the city from total destruction, he sent Josephus again to persuade the Jews to make peace; but they treated the offer with scorn. Some found means of escaping from the city, whom Titus permitted to pass through his camp, and go wherever they would.

943. The famine, within the city, now increased every day, and the robbers began, in search of food, to break into the houses of the citizens, exercising horrid cruelties on those who were unable to supply them; supposing that they had concealed their provisions in some secret place. The rich were often prosecuted on false accusations, merely for the purpose of getting possession of their wealth; for there was no difficulty in finding false witnesses to swear to any charge. The state of morals was probably never worse among any people on earth, than it was at this time in Jerusalem. It is the remark of Josephus, that "a race of men so abandoned as those who then had possession of the city, never appeared on earth; and that Titus was compelled by their abominable excesses, to destroy the city."

944. Multitudes of unhappy wretches, pressed with hunger, ventured out of the city in search of food, most of whom fell into the hands of the Romans; by whom they were commonly crucified, in some conspicuous place. Five hundred were often thus executed in one day; but the leaders within the city persuaded the people, that those numerous executions were of the deserters who left the city to join the Roman camp. Titus cut off the hands of some of the prisoners to inform the people, that no deserters would be punished, but only such as were made prisoners of war. At the same time, he sent a message to Simon and John, exhorting them not to destroy the city by their obstinacy, but to preserve their own lives and those of their fellow citizens. To which, from the walls they returned a taunting answer, saying, that they cared not for their own lives, nor for their country.

945. Preparations being now made for an assault on the tower of Antonia, by three mounts reared in the most convenient points, John, the leader of the Zealots, dug a mine under one of these

towers, and overthrew it; and Simon sallied out and set fire to the towers and machines on the other two. Nay, these daring men pursued the Romans into their very camp.

946. Titus now built a wall round the whole circumference of the city, that those within, being those completely blocked up, might be compelled by famine to surrender. This wall, thirty-nine furlongs in the extent of its circuit, was supplied with thirteen towers, and was finished in ten days.

947. The distresses of the famine now became dreadful, beyond conception. At first, the dead were buried at the public expence; but after a while the dead bodies were thrown over the wall, as it was found impossible to bury them all. And all parties within, were so much weakened by the famine, that they could make no more sallies to obstruct the besiegers.

948. Titus, pitying the wretched condition of those pent up in the inner city, determined once more to renew his attack on the castle of Antonia; and for that purpose brought wood, which could no longer be had near the city, from a distance of ninety furlongs. But the distress of the famine produced no effect on the tyranny of Simon. He now put to death Matthias the high priest, who had let him in the city; and also to his three sons, besides the high priest Ananias, and fifteen others of the first distinction.

949. Judas, an officer who had the command of a tower, with ten other men of distinction, had, on account of the intolerable cruelty of Simon, resolved to surrender the city to the Romans; but while they delayed through distrust of the enemy's sincerity, Simon came upon the conspirators, and cut them all off.

950. Titus being still unwilling to abandon the hope of preserving the city, and especially the temple, sent Josephus a third time, to endeavor to persuade his countrymen to make peace. But he was now more roughly handled than on any former occasion; for as he was going round the walls, he was wounded in the head with a stone, by which he was knocked down senseless to the ground; nor was it without great difficulty, that the Romans could rescue him from the Jews, who made a great effort to seize, and drag him into the city.

951. As it was found that some of the Jews, to conceal their gold, had swallowed it, the Syrians and Arabs, cut open in one night two thousand living deserters, to search for money in their bowels. This cruel practice Titus prohibited, on pain of death, as its continuance would have stopped entirely all desertions from the city.

952. The number of dead bodies carried through a single gate, in one month, was declared by Manneus, who fled to the Romans, to be one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight; besides those buried by their relatives. The whole number of dead bodies carried out during the siege, was stated by some deserters, to be six hundred thousand. The number buried elsewhere, could not be ascertained. After the famine came to the worst, however, they were not carried out at all, but were heaped up in ditches and corners, which produced an intolerable stench.

953. On the third day of July, a part of the wall of the town of Antonia was thrown down by the battering rams; but the Jews had constructed an interior wall, in an attempt to scale which, the Romans were repulsed. About three o'clock in the night, however, the guards marched up to the town in silence, slew the Jewish sentinels, and immediately blew their trumpets; on which, the

Jewish guard fled, supposing that the whole Roman army was upon them.

954. Titus brought up his army as soon as possible, and entered into the court of the temple, when an obstinate battle was fought, which continued from three o'clock till noon, next day. But the Romans were at length compelled to withdraw from the temple, and be contented for the present, with the conquest of Antonia.

955. Orders were now given by the Roman general, for the complete demolition of this castle, that he might have the more room to station his army, in their assault upon the temple.

956. When Titus heard, that the daily service of the altar had ceased, he sent Josephus again to hold a conference with John, and ascertain whether he would be willing to agree to some terms, which might preserve the temple from destruction, offering to permit the daily service to be continued by men of his own selection. But John declared that the temple could never be taken, and would enter into no accommodation. Titus himself now most earnestly addressed the Jews, entreating them to preserve their beautiful temple—Josephus acting as interpreter—but it was all ineffectual. The Zealots attributed this moderation to mere cowardice.

957. Titus, therefore, brought up his army, and at three o'clock in the morning, the temple was attacked. The Jewish guards were found at their posts, and soon sounded an alarm; but the night was so dark, that the Jews were unable to distinguish friends from foes, and actually slew many of their own men. This the Romans avoided by their watchword. The battle, thus commenced; lasted till noon, without any decisive advantage, on either side.

958. In seven days, the castle of Antonia was demolished, and on the space where it had stood, four mounts were reared before the temple. These mounts were designed to bring the battering rams to bear upon the buildings, on the northern side of the temple, to which buildings, the Jews themselves set fire.

959. The sufferings, by the famine, were extreme. The people devoured any thing which they could lay hold of; even their girdles, shoes, and the leather of their shields.

960. A woman whose name was Mary, of a respectable family in the country, having been often plundered by the robbers, had taken refuge in Jerusalem. Being destitute of food, and without means of obtaining any, she roasted her own infant child, and having eaten part of it, reserved the remainder for another occasion, when the soldiers allured by the smell, rushed into the house, and demanded food. She boldly declared what she had done, and showed them the half of the child which was left. This horrid transaction was soon known through the city, and in the camp of Titus, who protested that these miseries were not owing to him.

961. Early in August, the battering rams were brought to bear upon the temple, and were plied for several days, without making any sensible impression. Next, an attempt was made to undermine the northern gate of the temple, but it was unsuccessful; as was also the attempt to scale the cloisters with ladders; for the Jews fought so bravely, that they repulsed the Romans, and got possession of one of their standards.

962. Titus, having relinquished the hope of preserving the temple, now gave orders to set the gates on fire. By this means, the flames spread into some of the contiguous buildings. The fire continued to rage the whole day, for the Jews made no effort to extinguish it. On the next day,

however, it was extinguished, by the order of Titus.

963. A counsel was now called to deliberate whether the temple should be destroyed. Some were in favor of its destruction, in order to guard against future rebellions of the Jews; but Titus persisted in his resolution. to preserve this splendid edifice. He accordingly issued an order, that the sanctuary should not be injured.

964. Titus now resolved to storm the temple with his whole army; but while he was preparing for the assault, the Jews made several sallies from the eastern gate. The Romans, in driving them back, on one of these occasions, penetrated after them into the interior of the temple, when a Roman soldier seized a fire brand, and threw it through a window or small door into a passage, which led to the apartments on the north side of the sanctuary. From this place, the flames soon burst out. When Titus heard of it, he hastened to arrest the progress of the flames; but could not command the attention of his men, who were engaged in conflict with the Jews; and even the soldiers who followed him disregarded his commands; and instead of extinguishing, did what they could to increase the conflagration.

965. The battle now raged around the altar, streams of blood flowed into the outer court, and the surrounding space was covered with dead bodies.

966. Titus now went with his chief officers into the sanctuary, and into the most holy place, and then made one more attempt to have the fire extinguished, but with as small success as before. The soldiers appeared to be actuated by a sort of fury, and applied firebrands, to every combustible part. Finding it impossible to save the temple, Titus retired from the scene.

967. The chambers of the inner court were now consumed, and all the rest of the edifice, except the buildings on the east and south, which were afterwards destroyed.

968. About six thousand persons, mostly women and children, were burnt in the temple, who, trusting to the predictions of a false prophet, that God would work a miracle for their deliverance, went into the temple, and there remained until it was destroyed. According to the testimony of Josephus, there were then many false prophets, employed by the leaders, to deceive the people.

969. The gold taken by the Roman soldiers, in and about the temple, was in such abundance, that its value for a time, was not more than one half of what it had previously been.

970. The lower city was now fully in possession of the Romans, by whom it was burnt as far as the pool of Siloam. The Zealots, therefore, were compelled to retreat to the upper city, where they were closely besieged, and whence they had no opportunity of making their escape.

971. New mounts were now raised, and the machines of war were brought into play; and early in the month of September, the upper city, after a feeble, but desperate resistance, fell into the hands of the Romans. Very little mercy was shown to the vanquished. They were slaughtered in heaps, in every street and house, and multitudes of dead bodies were found in the houses of those who had died with famine, as well as in the vaults and common sewers.

972. When Titus surveyed the city, he expressed great astonishment at the strength of its fortifications, and exclaimed that it was surely God himself who expelled the Jews from fortifications, from which they never could have been driven by man.

973. The captives were very numerous. The handsomest were selected for the triumph. A large number were presented by Titus to the theatres of the provinces, but the majority were sent into Egypt to be sold as slaves.

974. John, the leader of the Zealots, was found almost dead with hunger, in one of the vaults. He begged for his life, which was granted; but he was kept in chains until his death.

975. The Romans now set themselves to destroy the walls, and all that remained of the city. Josephus says expressly, that the ground was levelled, as though no buildings had ever stood upon it. Three of the highest of the towers and a part of the western wall were kept standing, as a monument to future ages, of the ancient splendor of the city.

976. The tenth legion was left as a garrison, and the other soldiers were all sent away.

977. The obstinancy of the resistance of the Jews has been sometimes attributed to an expectation of assistance from their brethren in Babylonia, but was really owing to fanatical infatuation.

978. During the siege, ninety-seven thousand became captives, and eleven hundred thousand perished. For the siege took place, at a time when the city was full of strangers, in attendance on the passover, and of refugees from the surrounding country.

979. Titus proceeded from Jerusalem to Cesarea on the coast, where he left part of his army. He then visited Cesarea Philippi, where he celebrated games; and, for the amusement of the people, caused many of the Jewish captives to be cast to the wild beasts, and many more, to kill one another, in the show of gladiators.

980. He exhibited the same cruel spectacle at Cesarea on the sea-coast, and at Berytus; at the former of which places, he celebrated the birthday of his brother, and at the latter that of his father.

981. The fate of John, the leader of the Zealots, has been mentioned. At the close of the siege, Simon was not found, but after the removal of the Roman army, he came forth like a spectre, from one of the vaults, where he had concealed himself, until his provisions were exhausted. Having surrendered himself to the governor of the place, he was sent in chains to Titus, at Cesarea, who directed him to be reserved to grace his triumph.

982. The same infatuation, which brought destruction on the Jews of Palestine, seems to have infatuated those who dwelt in other countries. In Egypt and Cyrene, particularly, they exposed themselves by their madness, to the same destruction which had so awfully overtaken their brethren in Judea. Their temple in Egypt, was destroyed by order of Vespasian, after it had stood three hundred and forty-three years.

983. The same reckless fury seems to have actuated the relicts of this nation, for several ages. In the reign of Trajan, and of Adrian, they were guilty of great disorders, and rose in insurrection against the Roman government, which occasioned the destruction of multitudes of this devoted people. Nor was this all. To this very day, they have been driven from country to country, every where oppressed and persecuted—no where finding rest, and never able to collect into a body, or to gain any permanent residence of their own—yet preserved in existence as a distinct people, retaining their national characteristics, and their own religious customs, without mingling with the

people among whom they dwell.

984. Thus do they stand, a monument of God's displeasure against their nation's sin, in rejecting and crucifying the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and of the truth of divine revelation, by the fulfilment of numerous prophecies, which foretold their future condition.

985. Still, however, they are preserved in mercy, as well as judgment. For it is clear from prophecy, that as a nation, they will be restored to the privileges of the church from which, for so long a time they have been cut off by unbelief. For a season, until the time appointed, God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that in the day of visitation, he may have mercy on all. "So all Israel shall be saved."

S. Biographical Sketches of the Founder, and Principal Alumni of the Log College.....

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

of the

FOUNDER, AND PRINCIPAL ALUMNI

of the

LOG COLLEGE

together with an account of the revivals of religion, under their ministry.

COLLECTED AND EDITED

by

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DEDICATION

To the Reverend Presbytery of New Brunswick.

Dear Brethren,

There is a propriety in dedicating this book to you, as it owes its existence to your appointment of the author to deliver a centenary discourse on the 8th of August, 1838. A copy of this discourse you were pleased to ask for publication, a compliance with which the preacher respectfully declined, because he found that all the facts and documents relative to the origin of the New Brunswick Presbytery could not be included in a single discourse: but he determined to make use of such materials as he possessed, or could obtain, to form a small volume, and lay it before your reverend body. This purpose, he has been enabled, imperfectly, to carry into effect; and he now solicits your candid and favourable attention to a work, which is intended to give the people of the present age, an opportunity of seeing what the state of things in this region was, a hundred years ago. As most of those connected with the New Brunswick Presbytery, in its earliest days, were

educated at Mr. Tennent's School, at Neshaminy, commonly called the Log College, to give some appearance of unity to the work, the history contained in it, is connected with this humble, but useful Institution. And as the time when this Presbytery had its origin was a period favoured with remarkable revivals of religion; and the men, who then composed this presbtery, eminent instruments, in carrying forward this good work; it was judged to be expedient to give as distinct and full an account of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, in those days, as could now be obtained. And as narratives were written by those most intimately conversant with this great revival, which were printed in books now rarely to be met with; it was thought best, to rescue these documents from oblivion, and give them unaltered, in the very words of the original writers. The editor cannot but think that the biographical sketches here given from authentic authorities, will be acceptable to the present members of the Presbytery of New Brunswick; and he is persuaded, that the congregations in which the displays of divine grace were so wonderful, a century past, will be benefited by a perusal of the narratives here given. Many pious people among us, are not aware that the ground on which they tread has, as it were, been hallowed by the footsteps of the Almighty. And who knows, but that prayers then offered in faith, remain yet to be answered? The author would only observe further, that he has no pecuniary interest in the sale of the work; but all the profits of this edition—if any should accrue—are devoted to assist the funds of the Mount Lucas Orphan and Guardian Institute: which being the only institution in the state, which proposes to make provision for the helpless orphan, ought not to be suffered to languish or die, for want of support; and such an institution should not be viewed with indifference by the New Brunswick Presbytery. If no other motive will induce the members to be active in giving circulation to this volume, he hopes this will not be without its influence. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." "In as much as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." God is the Father of the fatherless, and would have his ministers attentive to the poor and afflicted.

I am with sincere regard, Your brother in the gospel of Christ,

A. A.

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THE LOG COLLEGE

Association gives interest to places—Log College—Name—Site—Size—Utter Desolation—Country around—Dr. James P. Wilson—Relic—Suggestion of a monument—Importance of the Institution:

By association, objects which have nothing interesting in themselves, acquire an importance, by reason of the persons or things which they constantly suggest to our minds. The rock of Plymouth has nothing in it which renders it intrinsically superior to thousands of other rocks in the country; and the site of Jamestown, has nothing but its interesting associations, to engage the attention of any one. But these spots, as being the first habitations of the European settlers, in this part of the new world, are invested with an interest which is felt by all; and this interest, instead of growing weaker by the lapse of time, gathers new strength, every year. Indeed, it is only a recent thing, that the public attention has been particularly called to these objects. And though there may be an excess in the emotions cherished by some, and an affectation of lively interest in others; yet, it cannot be doubted, that there is a foundation in human nature for the interest which is excited by particular objects, places, and scenes. And the more intimately these associations are related to religion, the deeper and more permanent the feeling becomes. By the abuse of this principle much superstition has been generated; but the moderate and judicious use of it may, undoubtedly, be conducive to piety. Sacred, or holy places, figure largely in all false systems of religion; and under the old dispensation, the people of God were encouraged to reverence those places where the worship of God was appointed to be celebrated. Under the gospel dispensation, it is true, we have no holy places or houses, to which the worship of God is confined; but in every place, whether by sea or land; whether in the grove, on the mountain top, or in the open field, or the lonely vale, God may be worshipped. Yet, who does not entertain peculiar feelings of interest in relation to those places, where Christ was born—where he was brought up—where he preached and wrought miracles—but, especially, where he suffered and died, and where he was buried and arose again—and where he ascended to heaven, in the presence of his disciples? This feeling is natural, and associated with love to Christ, but it readily becomes excessive, and degenerates into superstition. There never was a book in which there is so little to foster superstition, as the Bible. We never there read of the apostles, when they came up to Jerusalem, resorting to any of these places, or expressing the smallest degree of veneration for them. The natural tendency of the human mind seems to have been counteracted, for the very purpose of preventing superstition; just as the natural passions of the evangelists seem to have been restrained, in writing the gospels. Of late, considerable curiosity has been manifested to ascertain the place where the first Presbyterian church, in this country, was formed; and the history of the first Presbyterian preacher who came to America, which had sunk into oblivion, has, of late, been brought prominently into view. Such researches, when unaccompanied with boasting and vainglory, are laudable. And to gratify a similar curiosity, in regard to the first literary institution, above common schools, in the bounds of the Presbyterian church, this small book has been compiled. That institution, we believe, was, what has received the name of, THE LOG COLLEGE. The reason of the epithet prefixed to the word "college," might be obscure to an European; but in this country, where log-cabins are so numerous, will be intelligible to all classes of readers. This edifice, which was made of logs, cut out of the woods, probably, from the very spot where the house was erected,

was situated in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, about twenty-eight miles north of Philadelphia. The Log College has long since disappeared; so that although the site on which it stood is well known to many in the vicinity, there is not a vestige of it remaining on the ground; and no appearance which would indicate that a house ever stood there. The fact is, that some owner of the property, never dreaming that there was any thing sacred in the logs of this humble edifice, had them carried away and applied to some ignoble purpose on the farm, where they have rotted away like common timber, from which, if any of them remain, they can no longer be distinguished. But that some small relic of this venerable building might be preserved, the late Presbyterian minister of the place, Rev. Robert B. Belville, some years ago, rescued from the common ruin so much of one of these logs, as enabled him, by paring off the decayed parts, to reduce it to something of the form of a walking staff; which as a token of respect, and for safe keeping, he presented to one of the oldest Professors* of the Theological Seminary, at Princeton, N. J., in whose possession it now remains, and who will, it is hoped, before he leaves the world, deposit it in the cabinet of curiosities, which has been formed, in connexion with the Theological Seminary. The site of the Log College is about a mile from that part of Neshaminy creek, where the Presbyterian church has long stood. The ground near and around it, lies handsomely to the eye; and the more distant prospect is very beautiful; for while there is a considerable extent of fertile, well cultivated land, nearly level, the view is bounded, to the north and west, by a range of hills, which have a very pleasing appearance.

It may not be improper to observe, that the late Rev. James P. Wilson, D. D., long, the learned and admired pastor of the First Presbyterian church, in Philadelphia, was so pleased with the scenery and circumstances of this neighbourhood, that he purchased a small farm, which is, I believe, as near to the site of the Log College as any other dwelling, except the one on the farm on which it was built. To this farm he retired when no longer able, through bodily weakness, to fulfil the arduous duties of the pastoral office. And here, in calm serenity, he spent the last years of his life. And, as we are informed, one of his sons still occupies the house, and is the pastor of one part of the now divided congregation of Neshaminy.

If I were fond of projects, I would propose, that a monument be erected to the Founder of the Log College on the very site where the building stood, if the land could be purchased; but at any rate, a stone with an inscription might be permanently fixed on, or near the ground. The tradition respecting this humble institution of learning, exists, not only in the neighbourhood, but has been extended far to the south and west. The first Presbyterian ministers, in this country, were nearly all men of liberal education. Some had received their education in the universities of Scotland; some in Ireland; and others at one of the New England colleges. And though there existed such a destitution of ministers in this new country, they never thought of introducing any man into the ministry, who had not received a college or university education; except in very extraordinary cases; of which, I believe, we have but one instance in the early history of the Presbyterian church. This was the case of a Welshman by the name of Evans, who, living in a place called the Welsh Tract, where the people had no public means of grace, began to speak to them of the things of God, on the Sabbath, and at other times; and his labours were so acceptable and useful, that the presbytery, after a full trial of his abilities, licensed him to preach, and afterwards ordained him to the whole work of the ministry. There is, indeed, another case that may possibly fall into this class. "The people of Cape May were without a pastor; Mr. Bradner, a candidate for the ministry, was

willing to serve them, but had no authority to preach. In this emergency, three of the nearest ministers, Messrs. Davis, Hampton, and Henry, on their own responsibility, examined and licensed him.* But as he was before a candidate, and a Scotchman, there is a strong probability that he was a liberally educated man.

There seems to be no written record of the existence of such an edifice as that which we are describing by any contemporary writer, exceptin the journal of Rev. George Whitefield, the celebrated evangelist, who traversed this country, several times; preaching, every where, with a popularity and success, which have never been equalled by any other. It will be proper, therefore, to extract the paragraph which relates to this subject; as he gives the dimensions of the building, and expressly says that it had obtained the name of “the college.” “The place,” says he, “wherein the young men study now, is in contempt called, the college. It is a log house, about twenty foot long, and near as many broad; and to me it seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets; for their habitations were mean; and that they sought not great things for themselves is plain, from those passages of scripture, wherein we are told, that each of them took them a beam to build them a house: and that at the feast of the sons of the prophets, one of them put on the pot, whilst the others went to fetch some herbs out of the field. All that we can say of most of our universities is, they are glorious without. From this despised place, seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have lately been sent forth; more are almost ready to be sent, and the foundation is now laying for the instruction of many others.” The Journal from which the preceding extract is taken, was printed in Philadelphia, by Benjamin Franklin, the same year in which Mr. Whitefield visited the Log College. From this testimony it appears, that the name college, was given to the building out of contempt, by its enemies: but in this, as in many other things, that which is lightly esteemed among men, is precious in the sight of the Lord. Though as poor a house as perhaps was ever erected for the purpose of giving a liberal education, it was in a noble sense, a college; a fountain, from which, as we shall see hereafter, proceeded streams of blessings to the church. We shall again have occasion to advert to Mr. Whitefield’s Journal, when we come to speak of the founder of this college; but we shall now proceed to finish what we have to say respecting the site and the building. When the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States, determined, in the year 1811, to establish a Theological Seminary, for the more thorough training of her candidates for the sacred office, there was much diversity of opinion respecting the most eligible site for the institution. Between Princeton, N.J., and Chambersburg, Pa., the chief competition existed; but there were a few persons, who were strongly in favour of placing it on the very site of the Log College. The Rev. Nathaniel Irwin, then pastor of the church at Neshaminy, and a man of profound understanding, was earnestly desirous that it should be planted on the ground, where a building had once stood, to which the Presbyterian church owes so much. And to manifest his sincerity and zeal, Mr. Irwin left, in his will, a considerable bequest* to the seminary, on condition that it should be ultimately located on this site.

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II("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \ "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

MEMOIR OF REV. WM. TENNENT, SEN.

Rev. Wm. Tennent, sen.—A minister of the Irish Episcopal church—Emigrates with his family to America—Applies for admission into the synod and is received—Settles permanently at

Neshaminy—Erects the Log College—Visits Whitefield, and is visited by him—His character and death.

We come now to give some account of the founder of the Log College. The Rev. William Tennent, sen., was a native of Ireland, where he was brought up and received a liberal education; but at what college, or university, is not known. It is probable, however, that he obtained his learning at Trinity College, Dublin, as he belonged originally to the Episcopal Church of Ireland, in which he took orders. After entering the holy ministry, he acted as chaplain to an Irish nobleman. But there is no evidence that he was ever settled over a parish in that country; the reason assigned, by the author of the Memoir of Wm. Tennent, jr., was that he could not conscientiously conform to the terms imposed on the clergy of that kingdom. He remained in Ireland until he was past middle age. The truth is, that very little is known of Mr. Tennent, until he arrived in America. From Dr. Elias Boudinot, who was very intimate with the whole family, we learn, that Mr. Tennent, in Ireland, became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Kennedy, a distinguished Presbyterian preacher, who having suffered persecution in his own country, exercised his ministry in Holland, with great success. The only other notice of this zealous and evangelical preacher which has been found is, in the "Vindication" of the Rev. Samuel Blair, in which, speaking of the objections made to the revival, he says, "Several have very sufficiently answered the objections against the work itself, as Mr. Edwards in New England, Mr. Dickinson in New Jersey, Mr. Finley in Pennsylvania, Mr. Robe and Mr. Webster in Scotland, and Mr. Kennedy in Holland." He then remarks, that Mr. Kennedy had published Mr. Edwards' "Narrative," with attestations from Scotland, translated by him into the Dutch language. It would be very desirable to obtain some further information of this Mr. Kennedy, who is spoken of as a man of like spirit with Edwards, and Dickinson, and Robe, and Webster, and Finley. But, probably, there remains no earthly record of his labours, his sufferings, and successes.* Our attention has been directed to this man, not merely because Mr. Tennent became acquainted with him, but especially, because he married his daughter, who was the mother of his four sons, and emigrated with him to America. And it is exceedingly probable, that from this man Mr. Tennent imbibed his love of the Presbyterian system. Mr. Tennent's oldest son, was no doubt called after his grandfather Kennedy, whose name was, Gilbert. In the Memoir of William Tennent, jr. it is said, that his father arrived in America, in the year 1718; but in the sketch of the life of Gilbert Tennent, in the Assembly's Magazine, for May, 1805, "that he came over in 1716," which last, is believed to be the more accurate statement. Upon his arrival, he settled first in the state of New York, where he resided for some time at East Chester; and then at Bedford. Not long after his immigration to America, Mr. Tennent applied to the synod of Philadelphia, to be received, as a minister, into their connexion. The synod did not act hastily in this affair, but after full deliberation, agreed to receive Mr. Tennent as a member of their body. Before doing this, however, they required him to lay before them, in writing, the reasons which had induced him to separate himself from the Episcopal Church. And these reasons were ordered to be entered on record. The minute of the synod, as found in the printed book of records of the Presbyterian church, is as follows: "Mr. William Tennent's affair being transmitted by the committee [of overtures] to the Synod, was by them fully considered, being well satisfied with his credentials, and the testimony of some brethren here present; as also, they were satisfied with the material reasons which he offered concerning his dissenting from the established church of Ireland; being put to a vote of the synod, it was carried in the affirmative to admit him as a member of the synod. Ordered, that his reasons be inserted on the synod book *ad futuram rei memoriam*. The synod also ordered, that the moderator

should give him a serious exhortation to continue steadfast in his now holy profession;—which was done.” This transaction took place on the 17th day of September, 1718: it is probable, however, that Mr. Tennent’s application was first made to the synod, the previous year; although nothing appears on the records relative to this matter. But in the short account of the Rev. William Tennent, sen., in the Assembly’s Magazine, it is stated, that after some delay” he was received. And the minute recited above, seems to speak of it as a thing before under consideration; for it would be very abrupt and unusual, to speak of a first application in the language here used—“Mr. Tennent’s affair,” &c., without any notice of any application made by him. It is probable that the application to synod was made in the year 1717, which was the next year after his arrival.

Whether Mr. Tennent had the pastoral care of a church in the state of New York, does not appear; but about the year 1721, he received an invitation to settle at Bensalem, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, to which place he removed his family, and continued to supply that small Presbyterian congregation, until the year 1726, when he received a call to the Presbyterian church at Neshaminy, in the same county. In this place, he continued the remainder of his life. And here, within a few steps of his own dwelling, he erected the building which has already been described; which though humble and even despicable in its external appearance, was an institution of unspeakable importance to the Presbyterian church, in this country.

It may be proper to remark, in this place, that from all the accounts which we have, it appears, that at this time, the state of vital piety was very low in the Presbyterian church in America. And the same was true of the churches in New England. And this was remarkably the fact in regard to Great Britain. The ministers composing the Presbyterian church, in this country, were sound in the faith, and strongly attached to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as were also their people; and there were no diversities or contentions among them respecting the doctrines of the gospel; but as to the vital power of godliness, there is reason to believe, that it was little known or spoken of. Revivals of religion were nowhere heard of, and an orthodox creed, and a decent external conduct were the only points on which inquiry was made, when persons were admitted to the communion of the church. Indeed, it was very much a matter of course for all who had been baptised in infancy, to be received into full communion at the proper age, without exhibiting or possessing any satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, by the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit. And the habit of the preachers was, to address their people as though they were all pious, and only needing instruction and confirmation. It was not a common thing to denounce the terrors of a violated law, and to insist on the absolute necessity of regeneration. Under such a state of things, it is easy to conceive, that in a short time vital piety may have almost deserted the church, and that formality and “dead orthodoxy” be all that was left of religion. And nothing is more certain, than that when people have sunk into this deplorable state, they will be disposed to manifest strong opposition to faithful, pointed preaching; and will be apt to view every appearance of revival with an unfavourable eye. Accordingly, when God raised up preachers, animated with a burning zeal, who laboured faithfully to convince their hearers of their ruined condition, and of the necessity of a thorough conversion from sin, the opposition to them, both in Great Britain and this country, was violent. The gospel, among people in such a condition, is sure to produce strife and division, between those who fall under its influence, and those whose carnal minds urge them to oppose it. It was in such a state of the church that Mr. Tennent came to this country. What his own course of religious experience had been, we have no information; but he seems to have imbibed a

warm, evangelical spirit, and to have been, in this country, distinguished for his zeal and efforts in promoting vital piety. When Mr. Whitefield first visited Philadelphia, Mr. Tennent lost no time in calling upon him. Though he lived nearly thirty miles from Philadelphia, yet no sooner did he hear of the arrival of this evangelical and successful preacher, than taking with him some of his pious friends, he repaired to the city, and from Mr. Whitefield's Journal, we learn, that the visit was very acceptable to him; for he says, "At my return home, [from visiting a family] was much comforted by the coming of one Mr. Tennent, an old gray-headed disciple and soldier of Jesus Christ. He keeps an academy about twenty miles from Philadelphia, and has been blessed with four gracious sons, three of which have been, and still continue to be, eminently useful in the church of Christ. He brought three pious souls along with him, and rejoiced me by letting me know how they had been spoken evil of for their Master's sake. He is a great friend of Mr. Erskine, of Scotland; and as far as I can learn, both he and his sons, are secretly despised by the generality of the synod, as Mr. Erskine and his friends are hated by the judicatories of Edinburgh, and as the Methodist preachers (as they are called) are, by their brethren in England." This testimony of Mr. Whitefield goes to show, that the course pursued by old Mr. Tennent and his sons, was different from that of the other ministers of the synod, to whom he stood in the same relation, as Whitefield, Wesley, and their coadjutors, to the great body of the clergy in England. Mr. Whitefield, on his return from New York, went to Neshaminy, and spent some days with Mr. Tennent.

Here again we are glad to have the opportunity of using the very words of Mr. Whitefield.

"Nov. 22. [1739.] Set out for Neshaminy, (twenty miles distant from Trent Town,) where old Mr. Tennent lives, and keeps an academy, and where I was to preach, to day, according to appointment. About 12 [o'clock] we came thither, and found about three thousand people gathered together, in the meeting-house yard. Mr. William Tennent, [jr.] an eminent servant of Jesus Christ, because we staid beyond the time appointed, was preaching to them. When I came up, he soon stopt; sung a psalm, and then I began to speak, as the Lord gave me utterance. At first, the people seemed unaffected, but in the midst of my discourse, the power of the Lord Jesus came upon me, and I felt such a struggling within myself for the people, as I scarce ever felt before. The hearers began to be melted down immediately, and to cry much; and we had good reason to hope the Lord intended good for many. After I had finished, Mr. Gilbert Tennent gave a word of exhortation, to confirm what had been delivered. At the end of his discourse, we sung a psalm, and dismissed the people with a blessing, O that the people may say amen to it! After our exercises were over we went to old Mr. Tennent's, who entertained us like one of the ancient patriarchs. His wife, to me seemed like Elizabeth, and he like Zachary; both, as far as I can learn, walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. Though God was pleased to humble my soul, so that I was obliged to retire for a while; yet we had sweet communion with each other, and spent the evening in concerting what measures had best be taken, for promoting our dear Lord's kingdom. It happened very providentially, that Mr. Tennent and his brethren are appointed to be a presbytery, by the synod, so that they intend bringing up gracious youths, and sending them out from time to time, into the Lord's vineyard. The place, wherein the young men study now is, in contempt, called, the college, &c. Friday, Nov. 23, parted with dear Mr. Tennent, and his other worthy fellow-labourers; but promised to remember each other publicly in our prayers." From the preceding extract we learn, that Mr. Tennent was a man of congenial spirit with Mr. Whitefield, and that he was held in high esteem by this distinguished preacher and devoted servant of God. Of

scarcely any other minister, of any denomination, does he make so honourable a mention, and to no other in this region, did he pay so respectful an attention. It is certain, from the foregoing account, that Mr. Tennent was distinguished among his brethren, as the open and zealous friend of vital piety, and of revivals of religion. The character of his public preaching is nowhere given, and we are left to infer it from his character; or rather from the character of his pupils, of whom an account will be given, hereafter. As a classical scholar, there can be no doubt of his eminence. The late Hon. Elias Boudinot, LL. D., who knew him well, says, "that he was well skilled in the Latin language, that he could speak and converse in it with as much facility, as in his vernacular tongue, and also, that he was a proficient in the other ancient languages. In confirmation of what he says about his skill in the Latin language, he relates, that at the next meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia after his reception, he delivered before that body, an elegant Latin oration. The writer of a sketch of the life of the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, inserted in the May number of the Assembly's Magazine, for the year 1805, says, respecting the Rev. William Tennent, sen.: "He was eminent as a classical scholar. His attainments in science are not so well known; but there is reason to believe they were not so great as his skill in language. His general character appears to have been that of a man of great integrity, simplicity, industry, and piety."

Mr. Tennent was, by his position at Neshaminy, a member of the presbytery of Philadelphia; but when the division of the synod took place, he attached himself to the New Brunswick presbytery, to which his sons Gilbert and William belonged.

It appears from the published records of the synod of Philadelphia, that in the year 1737, a complaint was made to the synod, by a part of the congregation of Neshaminy, against the Rev. William Tennent, their pastor; and also an answer to the same, from another part of the said congregation. Both of these papers were read, article by article, and both parties heard at length what they had to say. Mr. Thomson was directed to prepare a minute which should express the mind of the synod, in relation to this matter; which being done, was adopted, viz. "That the reasons advanced by the disaffected party of that congregation, in justification of their non-compliance with the synod's judgment in relation to them, last year, and their desire to be freed from Mr. Tennent as their pastor, are utterly insufficient, being founded (as appears to us), partly upon ignorance and mistake, and partly (as we fear) upon prejudice. It is therefore ordered, that the moderator recommend it to said people to lay aside such groundless dissatisfactions and return to their duty, which they have too long strayed from; otherwise the synod will be bound to treat them as disorderly." This minute was unanimously approved. The matter referred to, as having been before the synod the preceding year, was, that though Mr. Tennent had so long acted as the pastor of the church at Neshaminy, he had never been formally installed. In regard to which, the synod had come to the following judgment: "That it appears evident to the synod, that Mr. Tennent having in all respects acted and been esteemed, and looked upon, not only by the synod, but by the congregation of Neshaminy, and particularly by the appellants themselves, as the minister and pastor of the people of Neshaminy, that he is still to be esteemed as the pastor of that people, notwithstanding the want of a formal instalment among them," For some time before his death his health was so feeble, that he was unable to perform the duties of the pastoral office, and his pulpit was supplied by the presbytery. In the year 1742, we find the following minute on the records of the presbytery. "Mr. William Tennent, sen., gave into presbytery a paper, setting forth his inability, by reason of advanced age, to discharge the work of the ministry unto the congregation of

Neshaminy, over which, for divers years past, he has been overseer—desiring the presbytery to grant to said congregation of Neshaminy, such supplies as they can.” We find his name enrolled among the members of the New Brunswick presbytery, in the following year, (1743) and in the same year, he is mentioned as present when the presbytery met to ordain Mr. Beatty as his successor. It is evident from this, that he had resigned his charge, for Mr. Beatty is not said to have been ordained as his colleague. This seems to have been the last meeting of presbytery which he ever attended. His connexion with the congregation was, no doubt, dissolved at the time when he presented the paper stating his inability to fulfil the duties of a pastor; for, in the same year, a call was presented to Mr. William Robinson, which he declined; and after this, in 1743. Mr. Beatty, having accepted the call of the people, was ordained their pastor, in the month of October.

It is stated, in the sketch of the life of Gilbert Tennent in the Assembly's Magazine, that the Rev. William Tennent, sen. died in the year 1743; but this is not correct; for we find a record in the minutes of the New Brunswick presbytery, for the year 1746, of the following import: “It is reported to the presbytery that Mr. William Tennent, sen. deceased, since our last.”*

He died at his own house, in Neshaminy, and came to the grave in a good old age, like a shock of corn fully ripe. He was buried in the Presbyterian burying ground, where his tomb may be yet seen.

Mr. Tennent, as far as we know, never published any thing. We have, therefore, no means of ascertaining his abilities as a writer; but the benefit he conferred on the church by his school can never be forgotten. The Presbyterian church is probably not more indebted for her prosperity, and for the evangelical spirit which has generally pervaded her body, to any individual, than to the elder Tennent. Some men accomplish much more by those whom they educate, than by their own personal labours. This should be an encouragement to such ministers as are obliged to resort to teaching for their own support. If they are so favoured as to be the means of bringing forward a few pious youth, and preparing them for the ministry, they may do more good than if their whole lives had been spent in doing nothing else but preaching the Gospel. And it is good policy for Presbyterian ministers to establish schools, in their charges, wherever they are needed. And this they may do, without subjecting themselves to the drudgery of teaching, all the time. Pious young men might be found, to whom such a situation would be a favour. And such institutions are often necessary to enable a minister to educate his own sons. When the means of acquiring a liberal education are brought to the doors of the people, many will avail themselves of the privilege, who would never have thought of going abroad for the same purpose. The truth of this remark has been verified in almost every place where a good school has been established.

It is to be regretted that our materials for a memoir of the Founder of the Log College are so scanty; but his usefulness must be estimated by the character of his pupils, of some of whom we shall have it in our power to give a more particular account; and to this part of our work we shall now address ourselves.

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III("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

MEMOIR OF REV. GILBERT TENNENT

Gilbert Tennent—Birth—Education—Conversion—Licensure—Character by Dr. Finley—By Mr. Prince—By Mr. Whitefield—Visit to Boston—Success of his ministry in New England, and in other places.

Having, in the preceding chapter, given some account of the founder of this literary institution, let us now attend to the character of some of its principal pupils. The surest criterion, by which to judge of the character of any school, is to observe the attainments and habits of those educated in it. And judging by this rule, a very high place must be assigned to the Log College, notwithstanding its diminutive and mean external appearance. And what was before said should be remembered, that this was the first seminary in which young men were trained for the gospel ministry, within the limits of the Presbyterian church. Before this school was opened, if a young man wished to become a minister in the Presbyterian church, he must either repair to one of the New England colleges, or go to Europe. It is morally certain, therefore, that few, if any of those who were brought forward to the work, could ever have reached the ministry had it not been for this school. Accordingly, we find, that for a considerable time, nearly all the ministers composing the synod, were either from Great Britain, Ireland, or New England, except those who proceeded from this school. And of what character and abilities these were, we shall soon see. The first on the list of students, in this school, was, no doubt, Mr. Tennent's oldest son, Gilbert. For though he had finished his education before the Log College was built, yet he received no other education than what he gained under the tuition of his father; and may therefore without impropriety be classed among the pupils of the institution.

Gilbert Tennent, the oldest son of the Rev. William Tennent, sen., was born in the county of Armagh, Ireland, April 5, in the year 1703, and was, therefore, thirteen or fourteen years of age, when his father immigrated to this country. In setting up this school, no doubt, the father had a regard to the education of his four sons. Men who have themselves profited by education, and have become learned, cannot but feel a lively interest in the education of their children; and this motive has had its influence in the institution of numerous classical schools, in this country, besides the Log College. Judging by the result, however, all have reason to conclude, that in the mind of this good man, the education of his sons was viewed as subordinate to the prosperity of the church; for every one of them became ministers of the gospel, and some of them ranked among the most distinguished, who have ever laboured in the Presbyterian church.

Gilbert Tennent, as has been remarked, received his education under the paternal roof, before this school was opened; for at this time he was twenty-one or twenty-two years of age; and was soon able to be an assistant to his father in teaching the other students. And when we consider the eminence to which he rose as a preacher, and as a writer, we need no other proof of the talents and skill of his reverend tutor.

Gilbert Tennent's first religious impressions of any permanency, were experienced when he was about fourteen years of age. His serious concern about his salvation continued for several years before his mind was established in comfort and peace. During this period, he was often in great agony of spirit; until at last, it pleased God to give him "the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." While he remained in the anxious state of mind, which has been referred to, beside his other studies, he pursued a course of theological reading; but living under the habitual impression that his spiritual condition was not good, he durst not think of entering the holy ministry.

He, therefore, commenced the study of medicine, which he prosecuted for the space of a year. But about this time, it pleased God to reveal himself to him with so much clearness and comfort, that all his doubts and sorrows, and fears were dispelled; and the Sun of Righteousness arose upon him with healing under his wings. And no sooner was he satisfied of his saving interest in Christ, than he felt himself called to seek the ministry, which he had before been deterred from thinking of. And here it may be proper to remark, that, often, when God intends a man for eminent usefulness in the ministry, he leads him through deep waters, and causes him to drink freely of the cup of spiritual sorrow, that he may be prepared, by a long course of afflictive experiences, to sympathize with tempted and desponding believers, and may learn how to administer to them that consolation by which his own heart was at last comforted. Of this, religious biography furnishes many instructive examples. After due preparation and study, Mr. Gilbert Tennent presented himself as a candidate, to the presbytery of Philadelphia, of which his father was a member. Having passed the usual trials before the presbytery, to their great approbation, he received a license to preach, in May, 1726. This was the very year in which the Log College was opened; and as we learn from the documents to which we have had access, that he was an usher, or assistant to his father in the school, it seems altogether probable that he continued with his father in the school for one year, at least; for by the Presbyterial Records it appears, that he was not ordained and settled as a pastor, until the autumn of the year 1727. This then, is the only period in which he could have been a tutor in the Log College; for it was not in existence until 1726, and after he was ordained, he was the regular pastor of an important church in another state; for he was called to take charge of the Presbyterian congregation in the city of New Brunswick, New Jersey. Before Gilbert Tennent settled at New Brunswick, he preached several Sabbaths, in Newcastle, on the Delaware, and received a call from the Presbyterian congregation in that place; which, however, he did not accept. From his first entrance on the public work of the ministry, the preaching of Gilbert Tennent was very popular and attractive, with all classes of hearers. He possessed uncommon advantages as a preacher. In person, he was taller than the common stature, and well proportioned in every respect. His aspect was grave and venerable, and his address prepossessing. His voice was clear and commanding, and his manner in the pulpit was exceedingly earnest, and impressive. His reasoning powers, also, were strong, and his language often nervous, and, indeed, sublime. No one could hear him without being convinced that he was deeply in earnest. His style was copious, and sometimes elegant. Indeed, in the vigour of his age, few preachers could equal him. In the sermon preached at the funeral of Mr Tennent by Dr. Finley, he describes his character, as follows: "In his manners, at first view, he seemed distant and reserved; yet, upon nearer acquaintance, he was ever found affable, condescending, and communicative. And what greatly endeared his conversation was, an openness and undisguised honesty; at the greatest remove from artifice and dissimulation, which were the abhorrence of his soul, while he lived. Besides, he was tender, loving, and compassionate; kind and agreeable in every relation; an assured friend to such as he esteemed worthy of his regards; and a common patron to all whom he apprehended were injured or distressed. He was of a truly public spirit, and seemed to feel the various cases of mankind in general: but sensibly partook of all the good or ill that befell his country. He needed no other motive to exert himself, than only to be persuaded that the matter in question was an important public good; and in such cases, he was much regarded, not only because of his known integrity, but his generous and catholic disposition. For although he was a great lover of truth, and very zealous for its propagation; yet he was so far above a narrow, party spirit, that he loved and

honoured all who seemed to have 'the root of the matter in them,' and made it their business to promote the essentials of religion, though they were, in various points, opposed to his own sentiments. He was, moreover, an example of great fortitude, and unshaken resolution. Whatever appeared to him subservient to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, the salvation of souls, or the common good of mankind, he pursued with spirit; and what he did, he did with his might. If the end seemed to be attainable, great obstructions and difficulties in the way, were so far from dispiriting, that they animated him in his efforts: nor would he give up the point, while one glimpse of hope remained. Hence, he accomplished many important matters, which one less determined and enterprising, would presently have relinquished as desperate. He would go through honour and dishonour, through 'evil report and good report'; and though he had sensibility with respect to his character, as well as other men; yet, if preserving it, seemed at any time to require the omission of duty, or sinful compliances, he readily determined to expose himself to all risks; and if adhering to the will of God should be accounted 'vile,' he resolved that he would be 'yet more vile.'

"A great part of his life was a scene of unremitted labour. He studied hard, travelled much, and preached often, while his health and other circumstances permitted. He was 'instant in season and out of season': always about his Master's business. They who have journeyed or been often with him in company, could not but observe his constant endeavours to do good by his conversation; to introduce some convincing or edifying topics; and his watching for proper opportunities for speaking for God. And very faithful was he in warning sinners of their danger, and persuading them to seek salvation in earnest. Thus, he showed how much religion was his element, and promoting it the delightful business of his life. How benevolent towards mankind he was, and how precious immortal souls were in his esteem, were evident from this, that every advantage accruing to them he reckoned clear gain to himself; nor were they 'who divide the spoil,' ever more joyful than I have known him to be, on occasion of the hopeful conversion of sinners, whether by his own, or the ministry of others. And, often, has his 'soul wept in secret places, for the pride' and obstinacy of those who refused to be reclaimed.

"His great reading, with his various and long experience of the workings of both grace and corruption in the heart, made him a wise and skilful casuist, who could resolve perplexing exercises of mind with clearness, [and enabled] him to comfort with those consolations, wherewith he in like cases had been comforted of God.

"He was a faithful attendant on the judicatories of the church, as was natural for one so anxiously concerned for the interest of religion, as he was. And having observed the effects of a lax and negligent government in some churches, he became a more strenuous assertor of due and strict discipline. But above all other things, the purity of the ministry was his care; and, therefore, at the hazard of the displeasure of many, and in the face of reproach, he zealously urged every scriptural method by which carnal and earthly-minded men might be kept from entering it, and men of piety and zeal, as well as learning, introduced.

"As Mr. Tennent's preaching was very alarming and awakening to careless sinners; so it was much blessed to this end, wherever he preached. And it was not only rendered effectual in producing conviction of sin, and exciting desires to flee from the wrath to come, but also to comfort mourners in Zion, and to encourage the timid and self-diffident. "The atoning blood of the

Redeemer, that only sovereign balsam, was applied to their recent or festering wounds. For while, at one time, when he thundered the terrors of the law, the heavens seemed to gather blackness, and a tempest of wrath appeared ready to be hurled on the heads of the guilty; at other times, when he exhibited the riches of the grace and provisions of the gospel, the heavens seemed to smile, the clouds were dispelled, and the sky became serene. The almighty God was shown to be their refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms. Then his exhilarating words dropped upon them as the dew." The preceding full length portrait is, with some slight alterations in the language, from the pen of one well qualified to judge in such matters, and who by a long and intimate acquaintance, had the best opportunities of knowing the true character of the man which he undertakes to describe. The Rev. Dr. Finley, president of New Jersey College, the author of the foregoing sketch, was himself one of the alumni of the Log College. It is possible, however, that the cordial friendship which he had long cherished for Gilbert Tennent, and the early admiration which he felt for his talents and virtues, might insensibly lead him to give rather too high a colouring to the portraiture which he has delineated. One thing is apparent to all who attentively consider what Dr. Finley has written, that however just the prominent traits may be, the shading which more or less belongs to every human character, is wanting. Undoubtedly, Gilbert Tennent had his imperfections, and they were sometimes sufficiently visible. But, on the whole, it must be confessed, that he was a very eminent minister of Jesus Christ, and was made the instrument of performing a great work, in his day. His memory ought to be precious in the Presbyterian church. Dr. Finley says, "that the seals of his ministry in New Brunswick and parts adjacent, where he first exercised his ministry, were numerous. Many have I known, in those, and other parts where he only preached occasionally, whose piety was unquestioned, who owned him for their spiritual father: and many I have heard of in different places."

Though Dr. Finley's description of the character of Gilbert Tennent is full, it will be satisfactory to have the testimony of some other distinguished persons respecting him. The Rev. Mr. Prince, a pious and learned minister of Boston, speaks of Mr. Tennent in the following terms. "In private conversation, I found him to be a man of considerable parts and learning; free, gentle, and condescending, and from his own various experience, his reading the most eminent writers on experimental divinity, as well as the scriptures, and from his conversing with many who had been awakened by his ministry, in New Jersey, he seemed to have as deep an acquaintance with the experimental part of religion, as any I have conversed with. And his preaching was as searching and rousing, as ever I heard."—"He seemed to have such a lively view of the divine Majesty—of the spirituality, purity, extensiveness, and strictness of the law, with his glorious holiness, and displeasure at sin; his justice, truth, and power, in punishing the damned, that the very terrors of God seemed to rise in his mind afresh, when he displayed and brandished them in the eyes of unreconciled sinners." And the same writer speaks of his remarkable discrimination and skill in detecting hypocrites, "and laying open their many vain and secret refuges, counterfeit resemblances, their delusive hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction."

It will be gratifying to learn what Mr. Whitefield's opinion was of the subject of this memoir. And this we have given very freely and fully, in his Journal, to which reference has already been made. "Nov. 13, [1739]. Left Trenton about six in the morning, had a sweet and pleasant journey, and reached Brunswick, about thirty miles distant, about one o'clock. Here we were much refreshed with the company of Mr. Gilbert Tennent, an eminent dissenting minister, about forty years of age,

son to that good old man who came to see me on Saturday, at Philadelphia. God, I find, has been pleased greatly to bless his labours. He and his associates, are now the burning and shining lights of this part of America. He recounted to me many remarkable effusions of the Blessed Spirit, which have been sent down among them. And one may judge of their being true and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, because they are every where spoken evil of, by natural men. The devil and carnal ministers rage horribly against them. Several pious souls came to see me at his house, with whom I took sweet counsel." "Wednesday, Nov. 14. Set out early from Brunswick, with my dear fellow-travellers, and my worthy brother and fellow-labourer, Mr. Tennent. As we passed along, we spent our time most agreeably in telling what God had done for our souls."

Upon their arrival at New York, Mr. Whitefield goes on to say, "I went to the meeting house to hear Mr. Gilbert Tennent preach, and never before, heard I such a searching sermon. He went to the bottom, indeed, and did not daub with untempered mortar. He convinced me more and more, that we can preach the gospel of Christ no further than we have experienced the power of it in our own hearts. Being deeply convicted of sin, and being from time to time driven from his false bottom and dependencies, by God's Holy Spirit, at his first conversion, he has learned experimentally to dissect the heart of the natural man. Hypocrites must either soon be converted or enraged, at his preaching. He is 'a son of thunder,' and does not regard the face of man. He is deeply sensible of the deadness and formality of the Christian church, in these parts, and has given noble testimonies against it." A higher testimony, and from higher authority could not be given, upon earth. It is doubtful whether Mr. Whitefield has ever expressed so high an opinion of any other preacher, of any denomination. Indeed, it is probable, that he never met with a man of a more perfectly congenial spirit with his own. As Mr. Whitefield was doubtless honoured to be the instrument of the conversion of more souls than any other preacher of his age, or perhaps of any age, since that of the apostle Paul; so Mr. Tennent, among orthodox preachers, undoubtedly deserves to be placed next to him, both in the abundance of his labours, and the wonderful success which attended his ministry. When in the year 1740, Mr. Whitefield returned from Boston, he persuaded and urged Mr. Gilbert Tennent, to make a preaching tour through New England, as far as Boston, to water the good seed which he had there sown by his preaching, on his late visit. At that time, there was but little intercourse between the middle and eastern colonies; and no ecclesiastical connexion between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. Mr. Whitefield's preaching, attended by the mighty power of God, not only was the means of the conviction and conversion of many of his hearers; but he also excited a host of enemies, who pursued him with unrelenting hostility; and among his opposers were reckoned, both in this country and in Great Britain, the majority of the clergy and of professors of religion. Thus verifying the words of our Lord, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also." Mr. Tennent must have been inflamed with a very ardent zeal, situated as he was, the pastor of a church, and the father of a family, to set off in the depth of winter, to preach to a strange people, among whom he probably had not a single acquaintance, either among the clergy or the laity. But invincible resolution, was a prominent trait in his character. Mr. Whitefield made no journeys without several attendants; men who cheerfully ministered unto him, as did Timothy, and Luke, and Silas, and Mark and others, to Paul. But Mr. Tennent appears, to have gone on this self-denying and evangelical tour, alone. He was influenced by no curiosity to see a country not before visited; nor could he have had any secular motive to induce him to perform so laborious a service, as that in which he now engaged. As Mr. Whitefield's preaching had enkindled

a considerable flame in Boston, Mr. Tennent directed his course immediately to that city; where he arrived on the 13th of December, 1740; and here he continued for nearly three months, preaching almost every day, with extraordinary power and success. There were, however, there, many who were ready to welcome him; and several of the excellent ministers of the town cordially received this zealous preacher, and opened their pulpits—and, indeed, some of them, gave them up to him, while he continued in the place. Among those who received him joyfully, was the Rev. Mr. Prince, the author of “The Christian History,” from whose pen we are favoured with an account of Mr. Tennent’s manner of preaching, during his ministry in Boston. “It was,” says he, “both terrible and searching. It was for matter, justly terrible, as he, according to the inspired oracles, exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law-threatenings, truth, power, and majesty of God, and his anger with rebellious, impenitent, and Christless sinners: the awful danger they were in every moment of being struck down to hell, and damned forever, with the amazing miseries of that place of torment. By his arousing and scriptural preaching, deep and pungent convictions were wrought in the minds of many hundreds of persons, in that town; and the same effect was produced in several scores, in the neighbouring congregations. And now, was such a time as we never knew. The Rev. Mr. Cooper was wont to say, that more came to him in one week, in deep concern, than in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry. I can say also the same, as to the numbers who repaired to me.” “By a letter of Mr. Cooper—one of the evangelical ministers of Boston—to a friend in Scotland, it appears, he had had about six hundred different persons to visit him on the concerns of their souls, in three month’s time. And Mr. Webb—another of the pious Boston ministers—informs me, he has had, in the same space, above a thousand.” But it will be satisfactory to hear Mr. Tennent’s own account of this visit; which is found in a letter addressed to Mr. Whitefield, by whose urgent entreaty he was persuaded to undertake the journey. This letter has been preserved in that excellent book, “Gillies’s Historical Collections,” of which there certainly ought to be a new edition, as copies of the work, are becoming very scarce.

“Very dear brother, In my return home, I have been preaching daily; ordinarily, three times in a day, and sometimes, oftener: and, through pure grace, I have met with success much exceeding my expectations. In the town of Boston, there were many hundreds, if not thousands, as some have judged, under soul-concern. When I left the place, many children were deeply affected about their souls, and several had received consolation. Some aged persons in church-communion, and some open opposers, were convinced. Divers of the young and middle aged were converted, and several negroes. The concern was rather more general at Charlestown. Multitudes were awakened, and several had received great consolation; especially among the young people, children, and negroes. In Cambridge, also, in the town and in the college, the shaking among the dry bones was general, and several of the students have received consolation.” He then proceeds to name more than twenty towns to which the revival had extended; and in most of which he had preached on his return home. “In New Haven,” says he, “the concern was general, both in the college, and in the town. About thirty students came on foot, ten miles, to hear the word of God. And at Milford, the concern was general. I believe, by a moderate calculation, divers thousands have been awakened. Glory to God on high! I thank you sir, that you did excite me to this journey. I have had good information, that on Long Island, God has blessed my poor labours, on my pass to New England. The work of God spreads more and more. My brother William has had remarkable success, this winter, at Burlington. Mr. John Cross has had remarkable success at Staten Island; and many, I hear, have been awakened by the labours of Mr. Robinson, in New York government.

Mr. Mills has had remarkable success in Connecticut, particularly at New Haven. And I hear that Mr. Blair has had remarkable success, in Pennsylvania.” On the subject of this great revival, which extended from Massachusetts to Georgia, the ministers of the synod were greatly divided. For while some approved the work, and were principal instruments in promoting it, a majority considered it an ebullition of enthusiasm, which tended neither to the glory of God, nor to the real benefit of immortal souls. And concerning Mr. Whitefield and his preaching, there was an entire dissension. And this difference, relating to the great and vital interests of religion, produced exasperation. The friends of the revival considered all who opposed it, as setting themselves in opposition to a glorious work of God’s grace, and they could not but view all who openly spoke against the revival, or opposed it in any way, to be the enemies of God. Hence, they too hastily took up the opinion, that all those ministers who disapproved the work, were unconverted men; that they were mere formalists, and knew nothing of the vital power of religion; but trusted to a mere profession of orthodoxy, and that if in words they did not deny the truths of God, they did, in fact: and though they might acknowledge the truth in theory, it was with them a “dead orthodoxy,” which they held in unrighteousness. On the other hand, the opposers of the revival, blamed the kind of preaching which the revivalists adopted; especially, the dwelling so much damned. They charged the leaders in the revival with on the terrors of the law, and the torments of the encouraging enthusiastic raptures, and making religion to consist too much in strong emotion, and violent excitement, attended often with bodily affections. They were also greatly offended with the harsh, uncharitable spirit with which they were denounced and misrepresented, by the preachers on the other side; and their opposition to no one, unless Mr. Whitefield be an exception, was greater than to Mr. Gilbert Tennent. Indeed, all must acknowledge, that among the friends and promoters of the revival, he stood pre-eminent; and in the harshness of his censures, and the severity of his denunciation, he went far before all his brethren. It cannot be doubted that before the commencement of this extraordinary revival of religion, the Presbyterian church in America, was in a most deplorable state of deadness and formality; and that the necessity of a change of heart was very little inculcated from the pulpit, or understood by the people. Here it may be remarked, that the founder of the Log College, and all the pupils of that school were warm friends of the revival, and exerted themselves with all their might to promote the good work.

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Rev. Gilbert Tennent’s Contest with the synod—Severity of his censures—New Brunswick presbytery protest against the synod’s act—Violate it—Are excluded irregularly from the synod—Form a separate Body—Judgment of their conduct.

We come now to a period of Gilbert Tennent’s life, in which he was called to act a very conspicuous part in the affairs of the Presbyterian church. A great schism took place in the synod, in bringing about which, it must be admitted, he had his full share. It took place, indeed, by the expulsion of himself, and the other members of the New Brunswick presbytery, from the synod: but he had provoked his opponents by one of the most severely abusive sermons which was ever penned, called, “The Nottingham Sermon,” because it was preached at that place. And in the protests which he and Mr. Samuel Blair presented to the synod, in 1740, the majority of the members of the synod were exhibited in a very unenviable light. Mr. Gilbert Tennent felt himself called in providence to attempt to arouse the Presbyterian church from its profound sleep of carnal

security, and to bring about a reformation in the body; but the majority of the clergy were opposed to his measures, and disparaged what had already been done. He seems, therefore, to have considered them as the enemies of the spiritual kingdom of Christ; and that it was his duty, in imitation of Christ and the ancient prophets, in the plainest and most solemn manner, to denounce, and expose their hypocrisy, as did our Lord that of the Pharisees. But here he made a grand mistake. He could not read the hearts of his opponents, and, therefore, had no authority to pronounce a sentence of condemnation on them. He should have remembered that precept of our Lord, "Judge not that ye be not judged." A difference of opinion from him respecting the true nature of the revival, and concerning Mr. Whitefield's character, furnished no sufficient ground for him to censure and denounce them, as he did: and, especially, as a part of them, at least, were excellent men, and sound and judicious theologians. They were not the enemies of vital godliness, but were opposed to what they apprehended to be spurious religion. We may now see that they erred in their judgment, and pursued a course which was very injurious to the people under their care and that they committed a great fault in opposing a glorious work of God on account of some irregularities which accompanied it. One of the greatest causes of complaint against Mr. Gilbert Tennent and his "New-light" brethren was, that in violation of order and propriety, they passed beyond the bounds of their own presbytery, and intruded into congregations under the care of other ministers. This, these brethren attempted to justify by the sound maxim, employed by the apostles, when forbidden to preach by the Jewish rulers, 'that we should obey God rather than man.' But it may well be doubted, whether, in the circumstances in which they were placed, the maxim was applicable. The ministers into whose congregations they intruded, belonged to the same synod with themselves, and had as good a right to judge what was right and expedient, as the "New Side" ministers.

We think, therefore, that Mr. Tennent was much to be blamed for the course which he pursued, in this controversy with the synod; especially, in the harshness, censoriousness, and bitterness which he manifested towards them; particularly, in the sermon before mentioned; and that his course can by no means be justified. He does, indeed, appear in a very unamiable light, and as exceedingly deficient in the meekness and charity of the gospel, in this whole controversy. He, doubtless, believed that he was doing God service, and that duty required him to pursue the course and manifest the spirit which he did. And after the separation had taken place, and the heat of the controversy had cooled, he seems to have been sensible that he had not done justice to the majority of the synod; for he wrote and published a large pamphlet called "The Pacificator," in which he strongly pleads for peace, and a re-union of the separated parts of the Presbyterian church. This desirable event was, after a division which lasted seventeen years, and after long negotiation, accomplished; and Mr. Gilbert Tennent entered cordially into the measure. Whatever mistakes he fell into arose from error of judgment, in regard to duty. He was, doubtless, actuated by a sincere and glowing zeal for the honour of the Redeemer, and the salvation of souls. Like the sun, he was a burning and a shining light; but like that luminary, had some dark spots, which, in some measure, marred the beauty and symmetry of his otherwise estimable character. His natural disposition appears to have been severe, and uncompromising; and he gave strong evidence of being very tenacious of all his opinions; and not very tolerant of those who dissented from his views, as appears by the controversy which he had with the Rev. Mr. Cowell, of Trenton; and which he brought before the synod. But with all his faults he was an extraordinary man, raised up by Providence to accomplish a great work. We, of the Presbyterian Church, are more indebted to

the men of the Log College for our evangelical views, and for our revivals of religion, than we are aware of. By their exertions, and the blessing of God on their preaching, a new spirit was infused into the Presbyterian body; and their views and sentiments respecting experimental religion, have prevailed more and more; until at last, opposition to genuine revivals of religion, is almost unknown in our church. It is not my purpose to enter into the ecclesiastical transactions in which Mr. Tennent acted an important part, any further than is necessary to form a judgment of his Christian and ministerial character. They who desire to see a lucid view of the ecclesiastical transactions of that period, are referred to Dr. Hodge's "Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church;" or they may go to the fountain head, by consulting the "Records of the Transactions of the Synod," recently given to the public, by the "Board of Publication."

We have seen that a great schism was produced in the Presbyterian body, by a difference of opinion among the ministers of the synod, respecting the great revival which pervaded many of the churches. But though this was the proximate cause of the division, by those who attentively consider the history of that time, and especially the "Records" of the synod itself, it will be seen, that this event was actually produced by the Log College. At first view, this will seem very improbable, but when all the documents are read, and all the circumstances of the church weighed and compared, it will appear exceedingly probable, that the erection of this school of the prophets was, innocently, the cause of the breach which took place in 1741. Here it will be necessary to enter somewhat minutely into a consideration of the condition of the church, prior to the commencement of the revival. A liberal education was from the beginning, considered an indispensable qualification for the gospel ministry in the Presbyterian church. The usual evidence of having received such an education was, a diploma from some college or university, in Europe or America. The Presbyterian ministers, before the erection of the Log College, had, nearly all, received such an education. We know of but one exception, and that was Mr. Evans, whose case has already been mentioned. There existed no college in any of the middle states, where young men seeking the ministry, could obtain the requisite learning. Until this school was instituted, no young man could enter the Presbyterian ministry, without going to Scotland or New England for his education; and this amounted pretty nearly to closing the door against all candidates who were brought up in the Presbyterian church; for very few, in those days, could bear the expense of acquiring a liberal education, by going to any college or university, on this or the other side of the Atlantic. The church, therefore, had to depend for a supply of ministers on immigrat on from Scotland, Ireland, or New England. Most of those who came to settle in the Presbyterian church, came from Ireland; except that those presbyteries which bordered on New England, received a supply of ministers from that region. It must be evident, at once, that this condition of the church was very unfavourable to her prosperity; for often, those who came across the ocean, were not men of the best character. They were often mere adventurers, and sometimes had crossed the Atlantic to escape from the censure incurred by their misconduct; and it was exceedingly difficult, in those days, to ascertain the true character of a foreigner, coming here as a minister of the gospel; for though such men commonly exhibited ample testimonials from abroad, too often these were forged. Several instances of this very thing have occurred. And as the ministers who came in from New England were all brought up Congregationalists, and had habits and customs, not congenial with those of Scottish Presbyterians, their accession to the body had a tendency to produce confusion and strife. The sons of the pilgrims and the descendants of Scottish Presbyterians, though holding substantially the same creed, have never readily amalgamated into

one uniform mass: but the habits and prejudices of each have been preserved, and kept the people distinct for several generations, though living contiguously to each other. There seemed, therefore, to be an urgent necessity for some seminary to be erected within the limits of the Presbyterian church, where young men might be educated for the ministry. It is indeed wonderful, that the synod had not paid earlier attention to this subject, as being essential to the prosperity of the church. But as far as appears, no classical school had been erected in any part of the synod, until the Rev. William Tennent connected himself with the Presbyterian church, and set up a school at his own door, in Neshaminy. It is probable, that Mr. Gilbert Tennent was the first candidate licensed in the Presbyterian church, who was educated within its limits. And as he was thirteen or fourteen years of age, when his father arrived, it is probable, that his classical education was commenced before he left Ireland; though the principal part of his education must have been acquired here; and no doubt, under the paternal roof. And although we have connected Mr. G. Tennent with the Log College, it must be in the character of a teacher, rather than a student; for in the very year in which his father removed to Neshaminy, he was licensed to preach. This was the year 1726.

Though Gilbert Tennent had received no diploma from any college; yet he passed his trials before the mother presbytery of Philadelphia, with great credit to himself, and much to the satisfaction of the presbytery. It was now seen, that young men could be well prepared for the ministry at home, without going to distant colleges. And as Mr. William Tennent, the father, had been, as far as is known, the sole instructor of his son, who as soon as licensed, attracted public attention, and was seen to be an able preacher, the conclusion was easily drawn, that he would be an excellent person to train up young men for the ministry. But though the thing appeared thus to many plain and pious people; others were apprehensive, that by educating young men in this way, the literary qualifications of candidates would necessarily be greatly diminished. The school, however, went on prosperously, and a number of young men, who had the ministry in view, resorted to the Log College, to pursue their education; and here they were not only taught the classics; but studied divinity also; so that this institution was a theological seminary, as well as a college. How many years they were occupied with these studies, does not appear; but a number of persons educated in this school were licensed by the presbyteries, after undergoing such trials as were usually prescribed to candidates, in Scotland and Ireland. And some of them, as we shall see, became eminent in the church, and were much distinguished as powerful and evangelical preachers. Still the impression existed, and grew stronger, that this course of instruction was not sufficient. To men educated in the universities of Europe, furnished with so many professors, and other advantages, it seemed preposterous to suppose, that a man could acquire adequate learning for the ministry, in this little, paltry log-cabin; and instructed, principally, by one teacher. They began, therefore, in the synod, to talk of establishing a synodical school, and to express dissatisfaction with the course of study in the Log College, as it was contemptuously called. None doubted of old Mr. Tennent's classical scholarship; but it was believed that his proficiency in the arts and sciences was by no means equal to his classical learning. And as young men were still entering the church from this school, the synod adopted a rule, that no presbytery should license any young man until he had passed an examination on his literary course, before a committee of synod. Two large committees, one for the northern part of the synod, and the other for the south, were appointed, before whom young men were to appear and submit to an examination. This rule gave great dissatisfaction to the Tennents and their friends; for they perceived, at once, that this rule was

intended to bear on the students of the Log College, and they believed it to be a high-handed measure, entirely inconsistent with the rights of presbyteries, who, as they had the power of ordaining ministers, ought to possess the power of judging of their qualifications. And what rendered the measure more odious to them, they had just succeeded in getting a presbytery set off, in New Jersey, which included most of the friends of the Log College. Their object in getting this presbytery erected, as they confessed to Mr. Whitefield, was, that they might license such young men as they deemed properly qualified for the office; and, in their opinion, fervent piety was the first and principal qualification; though they believed a classical education necessary; yet it seems that they lightly esteemed some parts of learning, which the other members of the synod thought requisite. And while they were blamed for being too lax in their demands of a knowledge of literature and science, they seriously charged the majority of the synod with neglecting to make a thorough examination into the piety of their candidates. And on several occasions, Mr. Gilbert Tennent brought this matter before the synod, and obtained from them some formal resolutions, in favour of inquiring carefully into the personal piety of the candidates. And when the order was passed, rendering it necessary for candidates to appear before a committee of the synod, Mr. Gilbert Tennent and his friends entered their protest against the regulation. But to be more exact in regard to this first measure, which divided the synod into two parties, it will be proper to observe, that the regulation adopted in the year 1738, was occasioned by an overture from the presbytery of Lewes, in which they say, "That this part of the world, where God has ordered our lot, labours under grievous disadvantage for want of the opportunities of universities, and professors skilled in the several branches of useful learning; and that many students from Europe, are especially cramped in prosecuting their studies; their parents removing to these colonies before they have an opportunity of attending the college, after having spent some years at the grammar school; and that many persons, born in this country, groan under the same pressure, whose circumstances are not able to support them to spend a course of years in the European or New England colleges, which discourages much, and must be a detriment to our church, for we know that natural parts, however great and promising, for want of being well improved, must be marred in their usefulness, and cannot be so extensively serviceable to the public; and that want paves the way for ignorance, and this for a formidable train of sad consequences. To prevent this evil, it is humbly proposed, as a remedy, that every student, with approbation not pursuing the usual courses, in some of the New England or European colleges approved by public authority, shall, before he be encouraged by any presbytery for the sacred work of the ministry, apply himself to this synod, and that they appoint a committee of their members, yearly, whom they know to be well skilled in the several branches of philosophy, divinity, and the languages, to examine such students, in this place, and finding them well accomplished in these several parts of learning, shall allow them a public testimony from the synod, which, till better provision be made, will, in some measure, answer the design of taking a degree in college. And, for the encouragement of students, let this be done without putting them to further expenses than attending. And let it be an objection against none where they have studied, or what books; but let all encouragement be only according to merit, &c." The synod, by a great majority, approved the overture, and proceeded to appoint two committees, the one for the region north of Philadelphia, and the other for the country south of that city.

It does not appear that any dissent or protest was entered on the minutes at the time, but the next year, the presbytery of New Brunswick sent up a remonstrance. The paper containing the objections to the act of the synod of the preceeding year, is not on the records; but the synod upon

hearing it, agreed to re-consider the subject, and after due deliberation, resolved to substitute the following, instead of the act complained of. "It being the first article in our excellent Directory for the examination of the candidates for the sacred ministry, that they be inquired of, what degrees they have taken in the university, &c. And it being oftentimes impracticable for us, in these remote parts of the earth to obtain an answer to these questions, of those who propose themselves to examination, many of our candidates not having enjoyed the advantage of a university education, and it being our desire to come to the nearest conformity to the incomparable prescriptions of the Directory, that our circumstances will admit of, and after long deliberation of the most proper expedients to comply with the intentions of the Directory, where we cannot exactly fulfil the letter of it: the synod agree and determine, that every person who proposes himself to trial, as a candidate for the ministry, and who has not a diploma, or the usual certificates from an European or New England university, shall be examined by the whole synod, or its commission, as to these preparatory studies, which we generally pass through at the college; and if they find him qualified, they shall give him a certificate, which shall be received by our respective presbyteries, as equivalent to a diploma, or certificate from the college, &c." But, this form of the act was no more acceptable to the New Brunswick presbytery than the former; the next day, therefore, they entered a protest against the said act. This protest was signed by the four Tennents, Samuel Blair, and Eleazer Wales, ministers, and by four elders. The synod, it appears, were determined to bring the pupils of the Log College, under their own examination, before they would suffer any more of them to be received as members of the synod, or to preach as candidates in the churches. And the friends of this institution were exceedingly averse to having their young men examined by the synod; either, because they were conscious that they would be found defective in some of the branches usually pursued in the college course, or, because they were of opinion that the major part of the synod were prejudiced against this humble institution, and against all who were connected with it. Probably, both these considerations had their weight, in leading them to oppose so strenuously a measure, which to us seems reasonable and necessary, to guard the ministry against the intrusion of unqualified candidates. For, it appears, that this examination, by the synod, was not intended to interfere with the right of presbyteries to examine their candidates; but to be a substitute for a diploma, which the Directory seemed to require. For when a young man presented his certificate to a presbytery, if, upon examination, they were not satisfied, they could reject him notwithstanding his certificate. But the fact was, that the New Brunswick presbytery had already committed themselves. At their very first meeting, in August 1738, they took on trial a certain Mr. Rowland, one of the scholars of the Log College, in direct violation of the act of the synod. And after the synod had re-considered the matter, and re-enacted the same thing, in different words, this presbytery proceeded with the trials of Mr. Rowland, and licensed him to preach the gospel. And, not long afterwards, ordained him. The synod refused to recognise Mr. Rowland as a member of their body; for, though they did not deny that by the act of the presbytery he was a real minister; yet, they alleged, that they had a right to determine who should and who should not become members of their own body. Henceforth, the parties became much exasperated against each other. The friends of the Log College saw, that the act of the synod was directed against that institution, for there was no other school at that time, in the bounds of the synod, where young men were trained for the ministry. And this was not all. The act implied a reflection on all those who had before entered the ministry from this school. And the majority of synod were grievously offended, that one of their presbyteries, and one too just created, should so disregard the authority

of the supreme judicatory of the church, as to act in open defiance of an act formed after much discussion and deliberation, in the synod,

One thing necessary to be known, in order to form an impartial judgment respecting the dispute which arose in the synod, but which cannot at this distance of time be accurately ascertained, is, what sort of education was actually received at this famous institution. Was it as solid and thorough as could be obtained within the limits of the Presbyterian church? If so, even if compared with that which was given in the universities of Europe, it was in some parts defective, this was no good reason why the institution should be frowned upon, by the synod. Instead of this, they ought to have recognised and cherished it, and should have endeavoured to raise it higher, and to enlarge its advantages. As far as we have observed, this school, although already it had produced a number of distinguished preachers, is never once mentioned in the minutes of the synod; except in their letter to President Clapp, of which further notice will be taken. It is true, that most of the members of synod had enjoyed the advantages of an university education, in Europe or New England; and it cannot be supposed that equal advantages could be had in the little Log Cabin at Neshaminy. But it is a well known fact, that men's eminence in learning, does not always correspond with the privileges enjoyed. If we compare Gilbert Tennent, Samuel Blair, Samuel Finley, William Tennent, jr., and John Blair, with an equal number of their opposers, they certainly will not suffer in public opinion, by the comparison. And one advantage they possessed who were educated in the Log College, that the spirit of piety seems to have been nourished in that institution. All, as far as we can learn, who proceeded from this school, were men of sound orthodoxy, evangelical spirit, glowing zeal, and in labours very abundant. They had, we have reason to believe, the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and without the advantages which others enjoyed, they became "burning and shining lights." They were the friends and promoters of revivals of religion, which their censurers bitterly opposed. Still, we do not justify their irregular and insubordinate acts. Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair were men of invincible firmness—a firmness, bordering on obstinacy. They were the leaders in this warfare. They saw a great harvest before them, and the Lord seemed to attend their labours every where with a blessing, and they were led to think, that mere forms of order, and regulations of ecclesiastical bodies were of trivial importance, compared with the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. They felt, as did the apostles, and first reformers, that they were called to go every where preaching the gospel, without regard to prescribed limits of presbyteries or congregations; especially, as they observed, that many pastors neglected to inculcate on their hearers, the necessity of a change of heart, and that the people were as really perishing for lack of knowledge, as they were under Jewish or Popish instructors. They felt themselves bound, therefore, to preach far and wide, wherever the people would hear them; and although there was irregularity in this, judging by human and ecclesiastical rules; yet I doubt not, that in the main, their zealous and exhausting labours have met with a large reward. Weak enthusiasts, or fierce fanatics may abuse the principle on which they acted; but the same thing occurred at the time of the blessed reformation from popery. We must not neglect to do all the good we can because some may pervert our example, to sanction their own lawless proceedings.

I cannot express how much the Presbyterian church, in these United States, is indebted to the labours of this very corps, who studied successfully the sacred oracles in the Log College; or more probably, under the beautiful groves which shaded the banks of the Neshaminy. There they

studied, and there they prayed. But I do not mean to justify all that was done by these zealous men. As was admitted before, they did not act towards their brethren in the ministry, with brotherly affection, and Christian meekness. Gilbert Tennent indulged himself in very unwarrantable language in speaking of men clothed with the same office as himself, and members of the same synod. Nothing could have justified his treatment of them, unless he had been inspired to know that they were a set of hypocrites, or, unless their lives had been wicked, or their faith heretical; none of which things were alleged against them. But while it is admitted, that Mr. Gilbert Tennent was a principal instrument in provoking a majority of the synod to excise the New Brunswick presbytery, it does not appear, that either he, or his friends wished to bring about a separation in the church. Their object was to produce a reformation, if possible, among the ministers, and in the churches under the care of the synod; though it must be acknowledged, that their zeal led them to make use of unjustifiable means to accomplish the desired end. It need not, therefore, be a matter of surprise, that Gilbert Tennent was among the first to seek a reconciliation and re-union of the parties. To promote this object, he wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled, "The Pacificator," in which he reasons strongly in favour of peace and union. Between the contending parties, there existed, really, no difference on doctrinal points; except that the New Side were blamed for dwelling too much on the terrors of the law, and insisting too strongly on the necessity of legal conviction for sin. And on church government there was scarcely a shade of difference. The members of the New Brunswick presbytery were disposed to consider presbyteries, as the origin of ecclesiastical power; while the majority of the synod probably thought, that all the power of the church was concentrated in the synod, then the supreme judicatory. And the same difference of opinion still exists in the Presbyterian Church, for while some are of opinion, that synods and General Assemblies possess limited powers, defined by the constitution of the church, and that all ecclesiastical power emanates from the presbyteries, which they consider the essential body in our church government; there are others, who consider the synod in no other light than a larger presbytery; and the General Assembly, as it were, a universal presbytery, possessing all the powers of the inferior judicatories. Whichever of these be the more correct theory of our Presbyterian church government, the presbytery of New Brunswick has always been firm in maintaining the rights of presbyteries against the encroachments of the higher judicatories. And, certainly, our higher judicatories were constituted by the junction of presbyteries. In Scotland, the General Assembly existed before there were either presbyteries or synods, and all church power descended from that body; but not so with us, where presbyteries first existed, of which the higher judicatories were formed.

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V("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \ "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

Mr. Gilbert Tennent removes to Philadelphia to be the pastor of the Second Presbyterian church.—Mission to Great Britain for the College of New Jersey—Exertions to get a commodious church erected—His Sickness and Death—Eulogy on his character—His Publications.

The preaching of Mr. Whitefield, in Philadelphia, was the means of the conversion of many souls. A number of these, with others who agreed with them in sentiment, and were admirers of Mr. Whitefield's preaching, and friends of the revival, had formed a new Presbyterian congregation, in that city. And being desirous to obtain a pastor of like views and sentiments with themselves, and one possessed of talents and eloquence suited to such a station, turned their eyes upon the Rev.

Gilbert Tennent. Their call to him was presented in May, 1743, just two years after the rupture of the synod, which took place, in the same city. Mr. Tennent did not hesitate to accept this call, as he saw that the sphere of his influence would be greatly enlarged. He was, therefore, regularly released from his pastoral charge in New Brunswick, where he had preached for sixteen years. In the important station, on which he now entered, he continued to exercise his ministry with great fidelity and diligence, for twenty years. During this whole period, comprehending more than one half of his ministerial life, he seems to have lived in peace with all men. The fiery edge of his zeal had worn off, and he had found by experience, that neither people nor ministers were ever rendered better by vituperative attacks from the pulpit, or the press. During the whole of the latter part of his life, Mr. Gilbert Tennent, as far as has come to our knowledge, never had any controversy with any of his brethren, but seems to have conducted himself in a friendly, and peaceable manner, toward all men. From this it would seem, that he was not of a quarrelsome or litigious spirit. And it may hence be fairly inferred, that the warm controversies in which he engaged with his brethren of the synod of Philadelphia, were entered into conscientiously, and on principle. And we have no doubt, that in this whole concern, he was, at the time, fully persuaded, that he was doing God service, and performing a painful duty toward his opposing brethren, which he could not with a good conscience omit. But as was before said, we are of opinion that he was mistaken and proceeded on an erroneous principle; and there is good reason to think, that he was of the same opinion himself, in this latter part of his life. The only interruption of his pastoral labours, in Philadelphia, was occasioned by a mission to Great Britain, in conjunction with the Rev. Samuel Davies, of Virginia, for the College of New Jersey. At the request of the Trustees of New Jersey College, the Synod of New York appointed these two gentlemen, to cross the Atlantic, to solicit funds for the College. The mission was, in a good degree, successful; but of this our only account is found in the diary of the Rev. Mr. Davies. It does not appear, that Mr. Tennent ever kept any journal, or diary, at home or abroad. From Mr. Davies's journal we learn, that he and Mr. Tennent went on board a vessel bound for London, Nov. 17, 1753, and on the next day, set sail. They arrived in London, on the 25th of December, and were well received. We are unable to give any account of Mr. Tennent's preaching and its effects on the people whom he addressed, for he and Mr. Davies seem to have been separated from each other, for the most part. But in regard to the direct object of their mission, he says, under date of April 7, 1754, "We have had most surprising success in our mission; which, notwithstanding the languor of my nature, I cannot review without passionate emotions. From the best information of our friends, and our own observation on our arrival here, we could not raise our hopes above £300, but we have already got about £1200. Our friends in America cannot hear the news with the same surprise, as they do not know the difficulties we have had to encounter with; but to me it appears the most signal interposition of Providence, I ever saw."

While Mr. Gilbert Tennent was in Great Britain, a friend to the conversion of the Indians, put into his hands, two hundred pounds sterling, to be made use of by the synod of New York, in sending missionaries to these heathen tribes. This seems to have excited, for a time, a considerable missionary spirit among the ministers in connexion with this synod. Several pastors, who had charges, went on temporary missions; and Mr. John Brainerd devoted himself wholly to the work, among the tribes who reside in New Jersey.

John Brainerd was the brother of David, whose devoted missionary life is so well known, and has had so powerful an effect in exciting the missionary spirit. His brother succeeded him, supported by the same society in Scotland, which had supported himself. But after some time he relinquished the missionary work and accepted a pastoral charge in the town of Newark, New Jersey. The contribution from Scotland was now withdrawn, as there was no missionary among the Indians. But when Mr. Tennent returned with the aforementioned sum, appropriated to this object, the synod of New York, renewed their missionary enterprise: and as the very name of Brainerd was precious to the Indians of New Jersey, Mr. John Brainerd by the advice of the synod, resigned his charge and returned to the Indians.

“The Rev. Messrs. Tennent and Davies, when in Great Britain, received from various persons, in London, the sum of £298 17s. ‘for the education of such youth for the ministry of the gospel, in the College of New Jersey, as are unable to defray the expenses of their education; who appear upon proper examination to be of promising genius, Calvinistic principles, and in the judgment of charity, experimentally acquainted with the work of saving grace, and to have distinguished zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men.’ The annual interest of the aforesaid sum only was to be appropriated. To this sum was added by another donor, £10 7s. 6d., making the whole of this charitable fund to be £307 4s. 6d.

“The money aforesaid was, by Messrs. Tennent and Davies put into the hands of the Trustees of New Jersey College, to be applied to the education of such youth, of the character above mentioned, as shall be examined and approved by the synod of New York, (or by what name soever, that body of men may be hereafter called) and by them recommended to the trustees of said college, and to be divided among such youths, in proportion as said synod shall think fit.” To the above sums, fifty pounds sterling were added, by an individual, making the whole sum £357 4s. 6d.* A report has attained some currency, that Mr. Tennent and Mr. Davies did not perfectly harmonize, when on this mission; but though it is possible that some coolness may have arisen between these eminent ministers, there is not any written document where we have seen the least hint of any difference. And from the suavity of Mr. Davies’s disposition, and the perfect politeness of his manners, we cannot think that there is any foundation for the report. The men, it is true, in natural disposition, were not altogether congenial; for while the manners of one were polished and calculated to please, it is probable, those of the other were rough, blunt, and not at all courtly. We shall therefore, dismiss this report as one of the thousands which have no probable foundation. No doubt, Mr. Davies carried off the palm, as to popularity, in London, and other places; and if Mr. Tennent was at all susceptible of the feelings of envy, which are very natural to the human heart, and the remains of which are often found lurking in the hearts of ministers, as well as others, he might have felt badly in finding himself eclipsed by a much younger man. But as was said, we have no right to charge him with any such feeling, and we are confident, that Mr. Davies’s treatment of him, must have been uniformly respectful and affectionate; for it was so to everybody.

After Mr. Tennent’s settlement in Philadelphia, he exerted himself with great energy, and perseverance, to get a good house of worship erected for the congregation which he served. Indeed, at that time, the building of such an edifice as that which by his indefatigable exertions was erected at the northeast corner, at the intersection of Mulberry and Third streets, for the second Presbyterian church, in Philadelphia, was a great work. Very few of the Presbyterian denomination then, possessed much wealth. Mr. Tennent not only obtained nearly all the subscriptions for the

building, but actually superintended the work, in person, and assiduously watched over it, from its commencement to its completion. After some time, the congregation added a handsome steeple to the building.

Such men as Mr. Gilbert Tennent always appear greatest in times of excitement, and stirring activity. It may well be doubted, whether his preaching was as awakening and impressive, after his removal to Philadelphia, as it was before. Some change in his views and feelings, as to the best method of promoting religion had taken place, it would be very natural to suppose. The warmth of his religious feelings had in some measure cooled, and the violence of his zeal had, by time and experience, been mitigated. From this time he seems to have gone along as quietly as other ministers around him. We thus judge, because we have never heard of any remarkable effects of his preaching, after his settlement in Philadelphia. There is another thing which ought not to be overlooked. In a great city, the hearers are more fastidious than in the country, and will not tolerate so much liberty of digression, and so frequent departures from good taste and correct composition. Before Mr. Gilbert Tennent went to Philadelphia, though, doubtless, he studied his sermons carefully, and digested his matter under a sufficient variety of heads, yet he preached without having written his discourses, and like all ardent preachers, gave himself great indulgence, in pursuing any new train of ideas which was presented during the time of preaching. But when settled in a great city, he thought it necessary, for the sake of correctness, to write his sermons, and read them from the pulpit. This circumstance alone, probably, produced a great alteration in his mode of preaching. Many men who preach admirably when free to follow the thoughts which they have arranged, or to pursue such as spring up at the time, when confined to a discourse written in the study, appear to be very much cramped, and lose much of their vivacity and natural eloquence. The writer once conversed with a plain and pious man, who in early life being apprenticed to a trade in Philadelphia, attended Mr. Tennent's ministry. We asked him respecting his manner of preaching. He answered simply, "that Mr. Tennent was never worth any thing after he came to Philadelphia;" "for," said he, "he took to, reading his sermons, and lost all his animation." This testimony came from a class not sufficiently considered, when the best mode of preaching is under consideration. Our reference is too much to the taste of men of cultivated minds, who form but a small part of any congregation; and even these, when pious, are better pleased with blundering simplicity joined with animation, than with cold accuracy, when the most solemn truths are delivered without emotion.

Mr. Tennent, however, though he probably lost a considerable portion of his early vehemence and impressiveness; yet composed discourses, sound and instructive. This will appear more clearly when we come to speak of his writings. The interest of Mr. Gilbert Tennent in revivals, and his joy at the conversion of sinners, continued unabated. For in March 1757, an extraordinary revival of religion occurred in the New Jersey college, concerning which he thus speaks in the preface to one of his volumes of sermons: "In March last, I received a letter from the College of New Jersey, informing me of an extraordinary appearance of the Divine power and presence there, and requesting I would come and see. With this kind motion I gladly complied; and having been there some time, had all the evidence of the aforesaid report, which could be in reason desired." He then inserts a letter from his brother William, giving a particular account of the nature and progress of the work; which was addressed to the Rev. Dr. Finley, and the autograph of which the writer has seen. This letter shall be given entire, when we come to give an account of the life of the Rev.

William Tennent, jr. For about three years before his death, Mr. Tennent became very infirm; so that he was unable to go through the duties which devolved upon him as the pastor of a large city congregation. In December 1762, the congregation got leave to present a call to the Rev. George Duffield, D. D., then of Carlisle, to be a co-pastor with Mr. Tennent. This call Dr. Duffield declined to accept; and the congregation remained without another pastor, until Mr. Tennent's death; which event occurred in the year 1764, in the sixty-second year of his age. Of the circumstances of his death, Dr. Finley, in his funeral sermon, says but little. In the general, he informs us, that, "as he lived to the Lord, so death was his unspeakable gain. And his being conscious of it made him ardently wish for the pleasing hour, when he should enter into the joy of his Lord." ... "He had an habitual unshaken assurance of his interest in redeeming love, for the space of more than forty years; but eight days before his death, he got a more clear and affecting sense of it still. And though he lamented that he had done so little for God, and that his life had been comparatively unprofitable; yet he triumphed in the grace of Jesus Christ, who had pardoned all his sins; and said his assurance of salvation was built on the scriptures, and was more sure than the sun and moon." His congregation placed a monumental stone over his remains, in the middle aisle of the church in which he had so long preached. The inscription on this stone was written by his friend Dr. Finley, in classic Latin. When this church was remodelled, his remains and those of Dr. Finley also, were removed to the public cemetery of the Second Presbyterian Church, between Mulberry and Cherry streets.

After Mr. Tennent's death, there was an eulogy on his character, published in Philadelphia, by a young gentleman of that city, from which some extracts will be made, as serving to show in what estimation he was held in the place where he spent more than twenty years of his life. We expect, in discourses of this kind, some exaggeration; but as this eulogy was addressed to the public, who were well acquainted with the person eulogized, it must have a general foundation of truth; and the reader, by making an allowance for the strong expressions of the partial writer, may form a pretty correct opinion of the true character of the person celebrated.

After an introduction, this writer goes on to say: "He whose memory these pages are intended to celebrate, was distinguished in a very remarkable manner, by his eminent endowments of mind; a love of learning that nothing could abate; an intense application, that no recreations could divert. And his great proficiency in the several branches of literature, while the powers of his soul were but just opening, raised the expectations of all that knew him. And what recommended these amiable accomplishments was, that they were early adorned with the charms of Divine grace. It was his study to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. And as he often inculcated the necessity and manifold advantages of early piety, so he might with propriety have added his own experience of them, as an inducement to the votaries of gayety and pleasure to embrace the pleasures that flow from true religion. He had no sooner experienced what it was to pass from death unto life, and from a state of nature to a state of grace, than he formed a resolution of spending his time, his talents, and his all, in the service of God, in his sanctuary; previously to the accomplishment of which design, he devoted himself wholly to the study of the sacred scriptures, and his own heart, and not merely to a dry system of speculative notions. He was too sensible of the importance of that arduous office, to rush into it without suitable preparation. He knew too well the worth of precious immortal souls to recommend any other foundation for the hopes of their future happiness, than what he was well assured would stand the test of beating rains and

descending showers.... The manner in which he usually preached, and the indifference with which he treated all secular advantages, abundantly evinced, that neither a love of popular applause, nor a desire of promoting his own affluence and ease, could have been any inducement to him to assume the holy function. But, on the contrary, an ardent love to God, and a desire to advance his glory in the world, by proclaiming pardon and reconciliation through the atoning blood of his crucified Son, were his only motives for the choice of that noble, disinterested profession. As he entered into the ministry in the prime of life, when his bodily constitution was in its full vigour, he devoted his juvenile strength and ardour of mind to the service of the church, at a time when their exertion was of the greatest importance. Few that knew Mr. Tennent in that season of life, can speak of him without some pleasing emotions. The good old puritan spirit that had for a series of years been asleep, seemed to revive and blaze forth in him with a genuine lustre. He was, indeed, like the harbinger of his Master, 'a burning and a shining light,' in the church. His undissembled piety, his fervent zeal, his pungency of address, and his indefatigable assiduity in the performance of every ministerial duty, were remarkably eminent. He might truly be styled a 'Boanerges.' As he knew the composition and make of the human heart; so he knew how to speak to it; and all his discourses were aimed at the fountain of impurity and sin. He knew that a reformation that did not take its rise in the heart, could not be of long continuance, or pleasing in the sight of God; and, therefore, he always strove to convince his hearers, that a thorough renovation of it was necessary to salvation."

"As his presence was venerable, and his voice commanding, so his very appearance in the pulpit, filled the minds of his hearers with a kind of religious awe.... The thunderings and mighty vociferations of Mount Sinai seemed to roar from the sacred desk, when he denounced the wrath of God against him that transgressed but once God's law, which he knew to be spiritual, and that nothing but a perfect obedience—which man in his fallen state is unable to perform—would satisfy its demands. Hence, he made it his constant practice to sound the alarm of God's curse abiding on the whole human race; and that to doom man to everlasting misery would be highly consistent with the mercy and justice of Jehovah. But while he enforced the truth of inspiration, 'that in Adam all die,' he was no less warm in proclaiming, 'that in Christ all shall be made alive.' And as he knew how to wound, so he knew how to pour the oil of consolation on the bleeding conscience. The blood of Jesus, that sacred healing balm, was his grand catholicon for sin-sick souls. This only was what he recommended as sufficient to procure ease to the trembling sinner; with the love of God to man, in pouring so much Deity on guilty dust—in sending his darling Son into the world, to redeem a race of rebel sinners, by bearing on the accursed tree, the heavy punishment due to man's enormous crimes, in order to translate him to the regions of eternal joy.

"The beginning of his ministry was employed in long and tedious itinerations. And wherever he had a prospect of doing good, however remote the place might be from his friends, and however repugnant to his own ease, he needed no other inducement, but cheerfully undertook the pleasing task.

"Fatigues and toils from which even worldly men, in the prosecution of an earthly good shrink back, he joyfully engaged in; and with a degree of perseverance peculiar to himself, bravely overcame those difficulties, which to some minds appeared insurmountable.... It pleased God, in a very gracious manner, to crown his labours with success. The energy of the divine Spirit accompanied his ministrations. Wherever he went the kingdom of Satan trembled; the desolate

and solitary places bloomed like a rose before him; and he became the happy instrument of turning many from the error of their ways to the living God.

“His knowledge in divinity, in which he made great proficiency, was entirely derived from the Bible; and whatever truth it enforced as duty, he inculcated; his arguments for the one, and motives for the other, were all taken from those inspired pages, which he prized above all human writings, and valued as the charter by which he possessed the hope, and ere long expected the full enjoyment of a blessed eternity.

“Sensible how much man is dependent upon God for every blessing he enjoys, and that the best way to keep the flame of devotion alive in his own soul, was to maintain a constant intercourse with heaven, he made prayer his chief and most delightful employment. This was the very breath of his soul.... His manner of praying was such as evidenced it to be not the mere language of the passions, but a rational, solemn, and animated address to the Great Father of spirits.

“After having laboured for many years, with much success, in New Brunswick, where he was settled; by the advice of his brethren, he accepted an urgent call from the Second Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, while the society was in its infant state; and continued to exercise his pastoral function there for upwards of twenty years, with a degree of watchfulness and fidelity, scarcely to be paralleled. He considered himself as the shepherd of his flock, and made it his practice to lead them to the green pastures and living fountains of salvation, with the care of one that knew he must render an account at the last day. Nay, he considered himself the father of his people, and as his beloved children he counselled, warned and reproved them, with all the tenderness and solicitude of a father’s heart. He was, indeed, a faithful watchman, that never failed to give warning of impending danger. The rich and the poor, the black and white had equally free access to his person, and ever found him ready to hear their complaints and solve their doubts.”

“What he preached in the pulpit, his life preached out of it. His disposition—naturally calm—was still more sweetened with that holy temper which the gospel of Christ inspires. A genuine serenity and cheerfulness dwelt upon his countenance, which he never failed to diffuse on all around him. He was charitable to the poor; kind to all men; a lover of all that loved the Lord Jesus, whatever mode of worship they professed; and much beloved in all the tender endearments of domestic life, as a husband, a father, a master, and a friend.

“There is nothing in this world, methinks, more grand or illustrious, than the old age of a man who has devoted his whole time, and spent his whole life in promoting the spiritual interests of his fellow creatures.... The review of his life fills his soul with a pleasure, which none but such as experience it can conceive. Whilst he sees no ill-spent time to sting his conscience with remorse, nor feels any attachment to the transitory things of this world, he beholds a calm haven prepared for his repose, where the storms and billows of affliction can reach him no more.... In this light should we contemplate Mr. Tennent. His soul, like the setting sun, broke through the clouds of infirmity. There was a dignity and grandeur in his old age. Wisdom bloomed upon his silver locks; and while the cold hand of time snowed upon his locks, his heart glowed with redoubled love for the church.... Nor more dreadful to the man of ease in his possessions is the approach of the king of terrors, than he was welcome to this eminent servant of God. Every symptom of his approaching dissolution, instead of filling his soul with alarms, rather filled him with comfort, and

made him impatiently long for the kind stroke that should dismiss his soul.' After having borne a long and tedious illness with the most invincible fortitude and resignation, the friendly messenger at last, came with the joyful summons.... And with full confidence in the merits and atonement of his dear Redeemer, he gently fell asleep. The following is the most accurate list of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's works, which the author has been able to collect.

1. In the year 1735, Mr. Tennent published his "Solemn Warning to the secure World, From the God of Terrible Majesty; or, the Presumptuous Sinner Detected, his Pleas Considered, and his Doom Displayed." This volume was printed in Boston.
2. Sermons on Sacramental Occasions, by Divers Authors. A small duodecimo volume.—The sermons are all by Mr. Gilbert Tennent, except two; one, by his brother William, and the other, by the Rev. Samuel Blair. It would seem, that at the time when this volume was published, no books were printed either in New York or Philadelphia; for the manuscript was sent to Boston, and printed there, in the year 1739.
3. Two sermons of the Rev. John Tennent, with a Preface, containing a memoir of him, to which is added, "An Expostulatory Address to Saints and Sinners," by Gilbert Tennent. Printed in Boston, in the year 1735.
4. His next Publication was, probably, his famous "Nottingham Sermon," in which he lashed his brethren of the synod so severely, that it had much influence in leading to the separation which soon followed.
5. "The Examiner Examined" was written in the year 1740, and is an answer to a pamphlet written against him, by an anonymous author, after his visit to New England.
6. "The Pacificator," a large pamphlet, the object of which was to bring about a re-union of the dissentient parties, in the Presbyterian church.
7. In the year 1744, Mr. G. Tennent published, in Philadelphia, a small quarto volume of sermons, twenty-three in number. These Discourses appear to have been the commencement of a body of Divinity. The subjects treated are, "The Chief End of Man—The Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures—The Being and Attributes of God, and the Trinity." Preached in Philadelphia, in 1743.
8. In the year 1749, Mr. G. Tennent, published two sermons, preached at Burlington, N. J., On a day of Public Fasting. They are dedicated to Governor Belcher. The Texts are Matthew 6:16-18, and Jonah 3:8.
9. In 1758, Mr. Gilbert Tennent published a volume of sermons, entitled, "Sermons on Important Subjects, Adapted to the Perilous State of the British Nation," Lately Preached in Philadelphia, by Gilbert Tennent, A. M.

We do not know where Mr. Tennent obtained his degree of Master of Arts. It would be natural to suppose that it was conferred by the Trustees of the College of New Jersey; but his name is not on the catalogue; while we find there the names of some of his contemporaries, who received honorary degrees. As he was a Trustee of New Jersey college, it is probable that this honour was conferred on him by Yale or Harvard, or possibly, from one of the Scotch universities.

10. In 1756, Mr. Tennent published a Funeral sermon, occasioned by the death of Captain William Grant. Preached in Philadelphia.

11. The last Publication of Mr. G. Tennent, was "A Sermon on the Nature of Religious Zeal Its excellency and Importance opened and urged." Preached in Philadelphia, Jan. 27, 1760. The style of these several publications is very diverse; as they were composed at different periods of Mr. Tennent's life, on different subjects, and in different circumstances. In all his writings perspicuity and force are manifest characteristics of his style; but there is a great want of simplicity and ease. Throughout the whole, the doctrines inculcated are rigidly orthodox, according to the Westminster Confession. In his didactic discourses, he shows himself not only to be a profound thinker, but a well-read theologian; and often quotes the standard Latin writers of systematic theology, as one who had been accustomed to read them. While he manifests an ardent zeal in defence of the 'doctrines of grace,' he never loses sight of the importance of experimental religion and practical godliness. In conformity with the custom of the age, he too much abounds in divisions and subdivisions; and is too fond of technical words and phrases. His practical discourses, however, are often both pungent and searching.

It is somewhat remarkable, that while so many old authors have been republished, in our day, none of the writings of Gilbert Tennent have ever passed to a second edition. The author is disposed to make a selection from his works, if he had encouragement, that we might not only have a sketch of the lives of the divines of the Log College, but a specimen of their theology.

("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")CHAPTER VI("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

Mr. Gilbert Tennent's letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince, containing many interesting particulars of the state of religion in New Brunswick, and vicinity; and also in Philadelphia, and various other places.

The preceding memoir of Gilbert Tennent was drawn up before the writer met with the following letter from his own pen, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston, and published in his "Christian History," dated August 24, 1744, soon after Mr. Tennent had removed to Philadelphia. This letter sheds a satisfactory light on several parts of Mr. Tennent's life, which all other accounts leave in obscurity, as for example, the success of his ministry in New Brunswick, while the pastor of that church; and also in Staten Island, where he had a congregation, to which his labours appear to have been blessed. It is a sad evidence of the retrograde march of Presbyterianism in some parts of our country, that after the lapse of a complete century, there is not a vestige of a Presbyterian congregation in that Island; nor has there been, within the memory of any person living.

Such parts of Mr. Tennent's letter as have no bearing on his own life, have been omitted, but we have retained much the larger part, and in his own language.

Extracts from the Letter of the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, published in the Christian History, of the latter.

"I am glad it pleased the sovereign God to make my poor labours of any service among you. I desire ever to bless his name for that undeserved mercy. I am thankful for the Christian History, and well pleased with the design and management of the work. I hope it will be a means in God's

hand of conveying with honour to posterity, a memorial of the late blessed revival of religion, which has been so virulently opposed by many." Here he introduces a long extract from a public attestation to the reality of the work of grace, in the late revival, which was prefixed to Mr. Dickinson's "Display of Special Grace." This public testimony was subscribed by Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent, Samuel Blair, Richard Treat, Samuel Finley, and John Blair. Some parts of this paper, will not be out of place here, as, no doubt, it was drawn up by Gilbert Tennent.

"If any should inquire, what we mean by the work of God, we think the judicious author of the following dialogue (Mr. Dickinson) has given a plain and pertinent answer, to which we give our approbation. 'A work of conviction and conversion spread not long since in many places of these provinces, with such power and progress, as even silenced for a time the most malignant opposers. They were either afraid or ashamed openly to contradict such astonishing displays of the divine Almightyness, in alarming multitudes of secure sinners out of their fatal stupor, and exciting in them the utmost solicitude about the everlasting concerns of their souls; many of whom gave us a rational and scriptural account of their distress, and afterwards of their deliverance from it, agreeable to the method of the gospel of Christ. Their comforts as well as their sorrows appeared, by all the evidence we can have of such things, to be agreeable to scripture and reason....

"It is shocking to think that any should dare to oppose a work attended with such commanding evidence as has been among us. We would beseech all such solemnly to answer the following paragraph of the Rev. Mr. Robe, minister of the gospel in Kilsyth, Scotland, in his preface to his "Narrative," which is as follows: 'I seriously beg of any who are prejudiced against this dispensation of God's extraordinary grace, and look upon it as a delusion, that they will show themselves so charitable, as to direct me and other ministers, what we shall answer distressed persons of all ages, who come to us crying bitterly that they are undone, because of unbelief and other sins—'What shall we do to be saved?' And as a young girl about twelve, who had been in distress for some time called upon me in the house where I was, and asked me with great sedateness, 'What shall I do to get Christ?' shall we tell them that they are not Christless, and are not unconverted, when we evidently see many of them to be such? Shall we tell them that their fears of the wrath of God is all but delusion, and that it is no such a dreadful thing that they need to be much afraid of it? Shall we tell persons lamenting their cursing and swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and other immoralities, that it is the devil that now makes them see these evils to be offensive to God, and destructive to their souls? Shall we tell them, who, under the greatest uneasiness, inquire of us what they shall do to get an interest and faith in Jesus Christ, that Satan is deluding them, when they have, or show any concern this way? In fine, shall we pray, and recommend it to them to pray to God, to deliver them from such delusions? It would be worse than devilish to treat the Lord's sighing and groaning prisoners at this rate; and yet such treatment is a natural consequence of reckoning this the work of the devil, and a delusion.'

"I may add, that both our presbyteries of New Brunswick and Newcastle, have, in their declaration of May 26, 1743, printed at Philadelphia, manifested their cordial concurrence with the protestation of the presbytery of New York, in which are these words, viz.: 'We protest against all those passages which have been published in these parts which seem to reflect on the work of divine power and grace, which has been carrying on in so wonderful a manner in many of our congregations; and declare to all the world, that we look upon it to be the indispensable duty of all

our ministers, to encourage that glorious work, with their most faithful and diligent endeavours.' ” This public protestation was signed by Jonathan Dickinson, Ebenezer Pemberton, Daniel Elmore, Silas Leonard, John Pierson, Simon Horton, and Azariah Horton, ministers; and by Nathaniel Hazard, Timothy Whitehead, and David Whitehead, elders. Now, the concurrence of the presbyteries of New Brunswick, and Newcastle, with the aforesaid Protest, is expressed in the following words, in the 5th page of their Declaration: “With this Protestation of our reverend and other brethren, we heartily agree.” And in the 13th page, they declare, “that they could not come into a state of settled constant communion with such as had protested against them, until they received competent satisfaction; especially concerning their opposition to, and reflections upon the work of God’s grace, and success of the gospel in the land.

“I trust I may say to the glory of God’s grace, that it pleased the most high God to let me see considerable success, in the places where I laboured statedly, many years before I came hither.

“The labours of the Rev. Mr. Frelinghuysen, a Dutch Calvinist minister, were much blessed to the people of New Brunswick and places adjacent; especially, about the time of his coming among them, which was about twenty-four years ago.

“When I came there, which was about seven years after, I had the pleasure of seeing much of the fruits of his ministry: divers of his hearers with whom I had the opportunity of conversing, appeared to be converted persons, by their soundness in principle, Christian experience, and pious practice; and these persons declared, that the ministrations of the aforesaid gentleman were the means thereof. This, together with a kind letter which he sent me, respecting the dividing the word aright, and giving to every man his portion in due season, through the divine blessing, excited me to greater earnestness in ministerial labours. I began to be very much distressed about my want of success; for I know not for half a year or more after I came to New Brunswick, that any one was converted by my labours; although several persons were at times affected transiently. “It pleased God, about that time, to afflict me with sickness, by which I had affecting views of eternity. I was then exceedingly grieved I had done so little for God, and was very desirous to live one half year more, if it was his will, that I might stand upon the stage of the world, as it were, and plead more faithfully for his cause, and take more earnest pains for the salvation of souls. The secure state of the world appeared to me in a very affecting light; and one thing among others, pressed me sore, that I had spent so much time in conversing about trifles, which might have been spent in examining people’s states, and persuading them to turn unto God. I therefore prayed to God that he would be pleased to give me one half year more, and I was determined to promote his kingdom with all my might, and at all adventures. This petition God was pleased to grant manifold, and to enable me to keep my resolution in some measure.

“After I was raised up to health, I examined many about the grounds of their hope of salvation, which I found in most to be nothing but as the sand. With such I was enabled to deal faithfully and earnestly, in warning them of their danger, and urging them to seek converting grace. By this method many were awakened out of their security, and of these, divers were to all appearance effectually converted; but some that I spoke plainly to were prejudiced. And here I would have it observed, that as soon as an effectual door was opened, I found many adversaries, and my character was covered with unjust reproaches, which through divine goodness did not discourage me in my work. I did then preach much on original sin, repentance, the nature and necessity of

conversion, in a close, examinatory, and distinguishing way: labouring, in the mean time, to sound the trumpet of God's judgments, and alarm the secure by the terrors of the Lord, as well as to affect them with other topics of persuasion: which method was sealed by the Holy Spirit, in the conviction and conversion of a considerable number of persons, at various times, and in different places, in that part of the country, as appeared by their acquaintance with experimental religion, and good conversation.

"I may further observe, that frequently at sacramental seasons, in New Brunswick, there have been signal displays of the divine power and presence. Divers have been convinced of sin, by the sermons there preached, some converted, and many much affected with the love of God in Jesus Christ. O the sweet meltings that I have seen on such occasions, among many! New Brunswick did then look like a field the Lord had blessed. It was like a little Jerusalem, to which the scattered tribes with eager haste repaired at sacramental solemnities; and there they fed on the fatness of God's house, and drank of the rivers of his pleasures. But alas! the scene is now altered!

"While I lived in the place aforesaid, I do not remember, that there was any great ingathering of souls at any one time; but, through mercy, there were frequently gleanings of a few here and there, which in the whole were a considerable number. But having never taken a written account of them I cannot offer any precise conjecture at their number, and shall therefore, leave it to be determined at the judgment-day. But at Staten Island, one of the places where I statedly laboured, there was, about fifteen or sixteen years ago, a more general concern about the affairs of salvation, which hopefully issued in the conversion of a pretty many. Once in the time of a sermon from Amos 6:7, before which the people were generally secure, the Spirit of God was suddenly poured out on the assembly; the people were generally affected about the state of their souls; and some to that degree, that they fell upon their knees in the time of the sermon, in order to pray to God for pardoning mercy. Many went weeping home from the sermon; and then the general inquiry was, 'what must I do to be saved?' I may further observe, that some few of those that I hope were converted in the places aforesaid, were compelled to cry out in the public assembly, both under the impressions of terror and love. During the late revival of religion, New Brunswick felt some drops of the spreading rain, but no general shower.

"As to Philadelphia, where by the Providence of God, I now labour statedly, many have been hopefully converted here during the display of God's grace in this land. The Rev. Mr. Whitefield was the instrument God was pleased to improve, principally in the awakening and conversion of sinners here; yet the labours of others have been attended with some success. This town, by all that I can learn was in deep security, generally, before Mr. Whitefield came among them, but his preaching was so blessed, that a great number were brought under a religious concern about the salvation of their souls; multitudes were "inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, weeping as they went." Some years since, there were so many under soul-sickness in this place, that my feet were pained in walking from place to place to see them. And there was then such an eagerness to hear religious discourse, that when they saw me going to a house they would flock to it; and under what was spoken, they were sometimes generally, and to all appearance, deeply affected. And thus it was in more public assemblies; there were sometimes, general meltings. And though several persons have lost their religious impressions, and "returned with the dog to his vomit;" and some others have fallen into erroneous sentiments, yet God has preserved many from those evils, who give a rational and scriptural account of their conversion, and crown the same by

their practice. Neither is it strange that some should be carried away here, by the fair speeches and cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive; seeing that the greater part in this place, have never had the advantage of a strict religious education, and, therefore, were never well fixed in the thorough knowledge of a consistent system of principles. None that I know of in this town, that were well acquainted with the doctrines of religion in their connexion, and established in them, have been turned aside by the tempests and tricks of errorists.

“The last Sabbath in May last, I gave the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the first time that it was dispensed to the society to which I belong—considered as a society. The number of communicants was above one hundred and forty. Those persons I examined about their gracious state, as well as doctrinal knowledge; and upon trial, almost all of them gave scriptural and satisfactory account of the ground of their hope. Now the chief of these, according to their own account, have been brought to Christ during the late revival of religion. And there are divers other persons, who in a judgment of charity, have got saving benefit during the late marvellous manifestation of God’s grace, who do not join in communion with us.

“Though there is in many, a considerable decay as to their liveliness and affectionateness in religion, yet through divine goodness, they grow more humble and merciful; and it is evident by their conversation, that the general bent of their heart is for God. Since I have come here, my labours seem to be chiefly serviceable to instruct, and establish the great truths of religion, and to comfort pious people. There have been but a few instances of conviction and conversion in this town that I know of.

“In some places of this province, some years ago, particularly in Nottingham, Fag’s Manor, Whiteclay Creek, Neshaminy, and elsewhere, there have been such general lamentations in the time of preaching, that the speaker’s voice has been almost drowned with the cries of the distressed, even after they have been entreated again and again to restrain themselves; yea, and sometimes when the speaker discoursed in a gospel strain, divers persons in this province have fallen down to the ground in the time of sermon, as though they were stabbed with a sword. And what though some have lost their impressions, and relapsed into their sordid impieties, this is no more than what the scriptures inform us did happen in the apostolic times; yet it is well known that many of them—so far as we are capable of judging by men’s speech and practice—have been brought to a sound conversion.

“I think it needless here to offer a reply to the cavils of opposers, which are as numerous as insidious and impertinent. But though I must say, that mine eyes and ears have seen and heard so much of the appearance and fruits of the late revival of religion, that I must reject religion altogether, and turn infidel, if I should dispute and oppose the same. May it please the gracious God to pardon those unhappy men who have set themselves in opposition to the work of the most high God, and painted it in black and odious colours, and let them see their sin and danger before it be too late.

“Dear Sir, I did not think when I began to write, to offer any more than our Prefatory Attestation; but being urged to mention something of what I have seen and heard, and finding a pleasure in the subject, I have added, with the strictest regard to truth and soberness, these few hasty hints, concerning some matters of fact, which I know to be true; and shall leave to your discretion to do with them, as you shall see meet.

"I am Sir, Yours, &c., "Gilbert Tennent.

"August 24, 1744.'

CHAPTER VII("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

THE NEW LONDON SCHOOL

Synod of Philadelphia establish a School—Located at New London—Mr. Alison the first Teacher—Negociation with Yale College—Letter to President Clapp—Synod of N. Y. form the enterprise of establishing a college—Log College the germ of New Jersey College.

As we have given a brief history of the Log College, the first school erected within the bounds of the Presbyterian church in this country, it will not be considered an unsuitable digression, to say something of another school, which was established by the synod of Philadelphia, after the rupture, which has been described, took place. The want of an institution of classical and scientific education was deeply felt; but what course to pursue, was a problem not easy to be solved. The Log College had been in successful operation about fifteen years before the exclusion of the New Brunswick presbytery; but it appears, from the statement of the last chapter, that it had never given general satisfaction to the synod. And now this school and all its friends and supporters were separated from the synod; so that the need of a school, where candidates might obtain, at least, the ground-work of a liberal education, was felt to be urgent. This matter, therefore, became the subject of frequent deliberation and mutual consultation among the ministers. A public meeting was at length agreed upon, and the business was entered upon in good earnest. The presbyteries of Philadelphia, Newcastle, and Donegal, appointed certain of their members to meet in the Great Valley, Nov. 16, 1743, to take into consideration the subject of a plan for educating young men for the holy ministry. After conference and deliberation, they resolved, that this business could not be properly managed unless the synod would undertake it; they, therefore, referred the further consideration of the subject to that reverend body; but agreed that in the mean time, a school should be opened for the education of youth. When this matter, the ensuing year, was brought before the synod, they adopted the plan as their own, and took the school under their care; and agreed upon the following plan for carrying it on.

1. That there be a school kept open where all persons who please, may send their children, and be there instructed gratis in the languages, philosophy, and divinity.
2. In order to carry on this design, it is agreed, that every congregation under our care, be applied to for yearly contributions, more or less, as they can afford, and as God may incline them to contribute, until Providence open the door for our supporting the school in some other way.
3. That if any thing can be spared besides what is required to support a master and tutor, that it be employed by the trustees, in buying books and other necessities for said school, and for the benefit of it, as the trustees shall see proper.

"And Mr. Alison is chosen master of said school, and has the privilege of choosing an usher, under him, to assist him; and the said Mr. Alison is exempted from all public business, save only attending church judicatories, and what concerns his particular pastoral charge. And the synod agree to allow Mr. Alison twenty pounds per annum, and the usher fifteen pounds." They then proceeded to appoint from their own body, trustees for the management of the affairs of the

school. To these trustees it belonged, to visit the school, and direct the whole course of instruction, and to report to the synod the condition of the school. (See Records of the Presbyterian Church. p. 174.) From what is here stated it appears, that Mr. Alison was the pastor of a church, and consequently the school was situated in his own vicinity. Where he received his education is not known to the writer, but it seems probable that he came over a probationer; for we have an account of his ordination in the records referred to above, but no account of his license. Doubtless he stood very high as a scholar in the opinion of the synod; and from the tradition which has come down respecting him, he was a very accomplished man. The estimation in which he was held as a scholar may be also inferred from the fact, that he was invited to take charge of an academy, instituted in Philadelphia, over which he presided for many years. The synod of Philadelphia had now a school under their own care, and an able teacher; but as they had manifested so great a reluctance to receive the pupils of Mr. Tennent's school, without a better education than could be afforded by a grammar-school, they could not for consistency's sake, be satisfied with the course of instruction in their own school, where there were no more professors than in the Log College. They, therefore, thought of a plan of sending their young men, for a short period, to Yale College, to receive a diploma, if they could make an arrangement with the faculty and trustees of the college, that would suit them. Messrs. Andrews and Cross were appointed to write a letter to the president and corporation of the aforesaid college. This letter is not on record; neither is President Clapp's answer. But on receiving his letter, they appointed a large committee to prepare a letter in answer, which is preserved in the Records of the Church (pp. 185, 186, 187.) This letter has been several times referred to, and is an important document to cast light on the affairs of the church, at that time, and before the schism. Several things stated as facts, in this narrative, depend for their authority, on this letter. It will be proper, therefore, to lay a considerable part of it before the reader. It serves to show what views the synod entertained of the Log College; and what steps they had taken to establish a school under the superintendence of the synod. As we have neither the letter written by the synod to President Clapp, nor his answer, the precise nature of the application made, cannot now be ascertained, but from the reply to President Clapp's letter, which is on record, we may learn, generally, what the request or proposal was, which they made. In this letter, dated May 30, 1746, they express their thanks to the president and fellows of Yale College, for considering their request and expressing a readiness to promote the interests of learning and religion in the Presbyterian church. It appears, however, that President Clapp wished for more particular information respecting the synodical school, and also the present state of the synod. In answer to his inquiries, they say: "Some years ago our synod found the interest of Christ's kingdom likely to suffer in these parts, for want of a college for the education of young men. And our supplies from Europe, or New England, were few in proportion to the numerous vacancies in our growing settlements. Mr. William Tennent set up a school among us, where some were educated, and afterwards admitted to the ministry, without sufficient qualifications, as was judged by many of the synod. And what made the matter look worse, those that were educated in this private way, denied the usefulness of some parts of learning that we thought very necessary. It was therefore agreed to try to institute a college, and apply to our friends in Britain, Ireland, and New England, to assist us. We wrote to the Association of Boston on this head, and had a very favourable answer. But when we were thus projecting our plan, and appointing commissioners to Britain, &c., to promote the thing, the war with Spain was proclaimed, which put a stop to our proceedings then. The synod then came to a public agreement to take all private schools where

young men were educated for the ministry, so far under their care, as to appoint a committee of our synod to examine all such as had not obtained degrees in the European or New England colleges, and give them certificates, if they were found qualified, which was to serve our presbyteries, instead of a college diploma, till better provision could be made. Mr. Gilbert Tennent cried out that this was to prevent his father's school from training gracious men for the ministry; and he, and some of his adherents, protested against it, and counteracted this our public agreement; admitting men to the ministry, which were judged unfit for that office; which course they persisted in, though admonished and reprov'd by us, for such unwarrantable proceedings. While these debates subsisted, Mr. Whitefield came into the country, whom they drew into their party, to encourage divisions. And they and he, have been the sad instruments of dividing our churches. And by his interest, Mr. Gilbert Tennent grew hardy enough to tell our synod he would oppose their design of getting assistance to erect a college, wherever we should make application, and would maintain young men at his father's school, in opposition to us. This, with his and his adherents divisive practices, obliged the synod to exclude him and others of his stamp, from their communion. In this situation our affairs grew worse; for our vacancies were numerous, and we found it hard, in such troubles, to engage gentlemen from New England or Europe to come among us, such as our best friends in those places could recommend as steadfast in the faith, and men of parts and education. Upon this, the synod erected a school in 1744. It was agreed, that the said school should be opened under the inspection of the synod, where the languages, philosophy, and divinity, should be taught, gratis, to all that should comply with the regulations of the school, being persons of good character and behaviour. They appointed a master and a tutor for this business, who were to be paid by such contributions as the synod could obtain for this purpose; and agreed from year to year, to appoint trustees, to meet, twice a year, to inspect the master's diligence and method of teaching; and direct what authors are chiefly to be read in the several branches of learning; to examine the scholars as to their proficiency and good conduct; and apply the money procured to such uses as they judge proper; and who order all affairs relating to the school. And the trustees are yearly to be accountable to the synod, and to make report of their proceedings, and state of the school. And it is agreed, that after the said scholars pass the course of study prescribed them, they shall be publicly examined by the said trustees, and such ministers as the synod shall think fit to appoint."

We are not informed that this negotiation with the president of Yale College, resulted in anything practical. It does not appear that the synod ever sent any of their young men to Yale College, to finish their education. Indeed, the necessity for such a measure, soon passed away, as the College of New Jersey, in a short time after this, was instituted, and rapidly rose into credit. And Dr. Alison, the principal of their school at New London, in Delaware, was invited to Philadelphia, to take charge of an academy which a number of gentlemen had erected in that city. And it was not long before this academy was constituted a college, in which Dr. Alison was appointed the vice-provost, and professor of Moral Philosophy. To this institution the young men belonging to the synod of Philadelphia, directed their attention, and here they commonly finished their education. But after the union of the two synods, in 1758, candidates from all the presbyteries were accustomed to resort to New Jersey college; especially, after Dr. Witherspoon became the president.

Mr. Alison's departure from the synod's school at New London, seems to have been its death-blow. From the Records of the synod of Philadelphia, it appears, that Dr. Alison relinquished his station without receiving the approbation, either of the presbytery of Newcastle, of which he was a member, or of the synod. His course was viewed as irregular, by the synod; but they were well satisfied with the thing itself; and when they met, a reference from the presbytery of Newcastle was laid before them, relative to this matter, when the following minute was adopted, and placed on record, viz.: "The synod having deliberately considered the affair of Mr. Alison's removal to Philadelphia, referred to them by the presbytery of Newcastle, judge, that the method he used is contrary to the Presbyterian plan. Yet, considering the circumstances which urged him to take the method he used, were very pressing; and that it was indeed almost impracticable to him to apply for the consent of presbytery or synod, in the orderly way; and further, being persuaded that Mr. Alison's being employed in such a station in the academy, has a favourable aspect in several respects, and a very probable tendency not only to promote the good of the public, but also of the church, as he may be serviceable to the interests thereof, in teaching philosophy and divinity, as far as his obligations to the academy will permit; we judge that his proceedings in said affair, are in a great measure excusable. Withal, the synod advises, that for the future, its members be very cautious, and guard against such proceedings as are contrary to our known and approved methods, in such cases." As we are not aware, that any memoir of Dr. Francis Alison has been published; and as he was one of the most accomplished scholars, who has adorned the Presbyterian Church, in these United States, it seems desirable to preserve his memory from utter oblivion, by giving a large extract from the funeral sermon, preached on occasion of his death, by his friend and successor, the Rev. John Ewing, D. D. Dr. Alison died Nov. 29, 1777, in Philadelphia, where he had long resided.

"This discourse administers comfort and consolation under the loss of our pious friends and relations, who have died the death of the righteous, and had a just foundation to entertain the hope of a glorious immortality. Whatever reasons we have to mourn under the loss we sustain, by being deprived of their counsel, their prayers, or their conversation; yet we have no reason to be grieved on account of the exchange they have made, of a world of sin and sorrow for joys inconceivable and full of glory. They have fought the good fight of faith; they have finished their course; they are discharged from the Christian warfare, and are exalted to an unfading crown of righteousness and glory. These considerations afford consolation to the church of God, and to all its members, when those who were stationed by its glorious head, as watchmen upon her walls, are removed by death; and particularly under the heavy stroke which the interests of religion and learning this day feels in America, by the much lamented death of the Rev. Dr. Francis Alison.

"However the partialities of friendship for the deceased have carried funeral eulogies to a very exceptionable and unjustifiable length, on many occasions; yet I am persuaded, that you will readily acknowledge, that there is but little danger of an extreme of this kind in paying this tribute to the memory of a man, whose private virtues commanded the esteem of all that knew him, and whose extensive public usefulness had erected a lasting monument to his praise. To be silent on this occasion, would argue an unpardonable insensibility to the interests of religion and learning, and would be an instance of injustice to the man, who, for more than forty years, has supported the ministerial character with dignity and reputation, and to whom America is greatly indebted for that diffusion of light and knowledge, and that spirit of liberty and inquiry, which this day places

many of her sons upon a level with those of the oldest nations of Europe. All who knew him acknowledge, that he was frank, open, and ingenuous in his natural temper; warm and zealous in his friendships; catholic and enlarged in his sentiments; a friend to civil and religious liberty; abhorring the intolerant spirit of persecution, bigotry, and superstition, together with all the arts of dishonesty and deceit. His humanity and compassion led him to spare no pains nor trouble in relieving and assisting the poor and distressed, by his advice and influence, or by his own private liberality; and he has left behind him a lasting testimony of the extensive benevolence of his heart in planning, erecting, and nursing, with constant attention and tenderness, the charitable scheme of the widows' fund, by which many helpless orphans and destitute widows have been seasonably relieved and supported; and will, we trust, continue to be relieved and supported so long as the synod of New York and Philadelphia shall exist.

"Blessed with a clear understanding, and an extensive liberal education; thirsting for knowledge, and indefatigable in study through the whole of his useful life, he acquired an unusual fund of learning and knowledge, which rendered his conversation remarkably instructive, and abundantly qualified him for the sacred work of the ministry, and the painful instruction of youth in the college. He was truly a scribe well instructed into the kingdom of heaven, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, for he rightly divided the word of truth, and was peculiarly skilful in giving to every one his portion in due season. In his public exhibitions, he was warm, animated, plain, practical, argumentative, and pathetic; and he has left a testimony in the consciences of thousands, who attended upon his ministry, that he was willing to spend and be spent to promote their salvation, and that he failed not to declare to them the whole counsel of God, while he endeavoured to save himself and those that heard him. And we have reason to hope, that the bountiful Redeemer, whom he served in his spirit, has greatly honoured him by making him instrumental in the salvation of many, who shall be the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord. His solicitude for the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and his desires to engage young men in the sacred work of the ministry, and to promote the public happiness, by the diffusion of religious liberty and learning through the once untutored wilds of America, induced him to open a public school in New London, about thirty-six years ago, at which time, there was scarcely a shadow of learning in the middle states: and he generously instructed all that came to him without fee or reward; accounting himself amply paid by the propagation of that spirit of inquiry, that thirst for learning, and those generous and public-spirited attempts to found and establish colleges in the states, which we now see.

"Animated by a laudable spirit, and a generous concern for the public good, some gentlemen in this city erected an academy here about thirty years ago, and invited him to take the instruction and oversight of it. They pursued the same benevolent design until a college was afterwards added, in which he was constituted vice-provost, and professor of moral philosophy. In this laborious employment he has ever since acquitted himself with distinguished honour, fidelity, and success, to the extensive dissemination of that public spirit which was so early raised, and so successfully cultivated, by this faithful and industrious servant of the public. And to the spreading influence of those numerous gentlemen who have received the first rudiments of their education from him, we cannot but attribute, in a great measure, those pleasing prospects which we now entertain, of seeing the sacred lamp of science burning with a brighter flame, and scattering its invigorating rays over the unexplored deserts of this extensive continent, until the whole world be involved in the united blaze of knowledge, liberty, and religion. In short, he was 'a burning and a

shining light,' and one of the brightest luminaries that ever shone on this western world.

"He is now discharged from the labours of mortality, and is gone, we trust, to receive the approbation of that compassionate Redeemer, whom he so faithfully served. For he often expressed his hopes in the mercy of God unto eternal life, and told me but a few days ago, 'that he had no doubt but that according to the tenor of the gospel covenant, he would obtain the pardon of his sins through the great Redeemer of mankind, and enjoy an eternity of rest and glory in the presence of God.' It was this comfortable prospect that animated him to uncommon fidelity and industry in all the duties of life, and enabled him to bear the lingering dissolution of his body with patience and resignation, until he fell asleep in Jesus.

"Let us, then, who survive our friends, endeavour to be followers of them who by faith and patience have inherited the promises. Let the solemnities of this mournful day, in which an afflicted family, the college in this city, the congregation in which he so long laboured in word and in doctrine, the church of Christ, and the community at large have felt a painful wound, teach us to live the life of the righteous, that we may also have hopes of the divine approbation at our death. Let those virtues and graces, which shone with a distinguished lustre in the private life and the public conduct of our departed friend, engage us all who have in one way or other enjoyed the benefit of his pious and useful labours, to remember him who has spoken to us the word of God, and considering the issue of his conversation, imitate his faith. That gracious God who has told us that the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, expects that they should concur in accomplishing that comfortable promise, and not counteract it by burying their eminent virtues in an ungrateful oblivion. Let us so remember them as that we may feel their constraining efficacy to excite in us a laudable emulation.

"And now, my friends, let me close the present address with a word to you who have long enjoyed his ministerial labours. You are now deprived of an opportunity of hearing the word of God from his mouth; of listening to his warm and pathetic entreaties to be reconciled to God through a Redeemer; of joining with him in ardent supplications to the throne of grace; and of receiving any further instructions from his labours among you. We cannot but trust, that some of you will have reason to bless God eternally, that he has, in his wise providence, placed you under his ministry, while our solicitude for your salvation makes us fear that others of you may yet remain barren and unfruitful under all the cultivation of divine grace by the hand of this faithful watchman in Israel. You are, therefore, this day addressed by this mournful dispensation of divine providence, and called to make a solemn pause, and to consider what improvement you have made of his labours. To recollect the compassionate warnings he has given you of your danger, the warm exhortations he has made with you, and the strong cries he has often raised to the God of mercy for your salvation. And, if you have any grateful remembrance of his pious and useful labours, let me exhort and entreat you to discover it by a constant and careful attendance upon the means of grace with which you are yet favoured. These are appointed to bring you to God and to glory, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and all the first-born sons of glory above. It is not long before you shall be deprived of all these golden opportunities to secure your eternal salvation; and let this awakening consideration excite us so to speak, and you to hear the word of God, that our mutual account at the bar of our Judge may be joyful."

Though the New Brunswick presbytery and its adherents, were in a minority at the time of their exclusion from the synod of Philadelphia; yet the whole of the New York presbytery were absent, on that occasion, and for several years afterwards, remonstrated against the act by which these brethren, without any trial, were cut off from the body; and when they could not prevail with the synod of Philadelphia to receive these excluded brethren again into their fellowship, this whole presbytery withdrew from the synod, and attached themselves to the excised body, and with them formed a new synod, which took the name of, The Synod of New York. And in a short time they considerably outnumbered the old synod. The Log College still existed, but it was manifestly on the decline. The venerable founder became infirm, so that he could not perform his pastoral duties; of course he was no longer capable of paying much attention to the school. In these circumstances, the necessity of another institution, of a higher character, became urgent. A variety of circumstances combined to render the time auspicious for the establishment of a college, under the patronage of the synod. Accordingly, by the pious zeal and energetic action of Governor Belcher, with the cordial co-operation of the synod of New York, a charter was obtained from the king of Great Britain, as ample in its privileges as could be desired. Just as the Log College expired, the College of New Jersey sprang into existence. The friends and patrons of the former, became the principal supporters and trustees of the latter. Thus it may with truth be said, that the Log College was the germ from which proceeded the flourishing College of New Jersey. While the synod of Philadelphia were labouring to establish a school for training young men at New London, the synod of New York were exerting themselves to erect a college which should stand upon a level with any other institution in the country. Messrs. Dickinson and Burr, the first pastor of the Presbyterian church in Elizabethtown, and the last, in Newark, took the lead in this enterprise. Both these distinguished divines were graduates of Yale College; but just at this time, their minds probably experienced some alienation from their alma mater, on account of the harsh treatment which Mr. David Brainerd had received from the officers of that college. For he had been expelled merely for a harsh word, spoken in a private company, and overheard by a student who happened to be passing the door, who knew not to whom it referred. But the persons present, contrary to every rule of propriety, were forced by the faculty, to testify to whom reference was had. Mr. Brainerd, at the time of his expulsion, was a member of the Junior Class. Having applied to the presbytery of New York, he was taken under their care, and having manifested a strong desire to go and preach the gospel to the heathen in our land, the Commissioners appointed by the Society in Scotland, to employ a missionary to the Indians, selected Mr. Brainerd. It appears, that President Clapp, in his letter to the synod of Philadelphia, complained of the New York presbytery for receiving under their care, persons who had left the college, under censure; where the reference was undoubtedly to David Brainerd. A strong desire was now felt both by Mr. Brainerd and his friends, to get the stigma removed from his character. And to effect this, the Commissioners who had employed Mr. Brainerd, deputed the Rev. Mr. Burr, one of their number, to go to New Haven, at the commencement, when his class were about to be graduated, to endeavour to have him restored. Jonathan Edwards, also, who then became acquainted with Mr. Brainerd, and formed a strong attachment to him, used all his influence to accomplish the object; but their efforts were ineffectual. The faculty of the college remained inflexible, or as it may more properly be termed, obstinate. They did offer, that if he would return and remain another year in college, without giving offence, they would then give him his degree. But this could not be done without disconcerting the whole plan of the mission for which he was engaged, and in which he

became so eminently successful.* The attachment of all the members of the New York synod to Mr. Brainerd was warm, and deservedly so. This affair, it is very probable, quickened the zeal of these excellent men to get up a college of their own. Some years ago, the writer heard the relict of the late Dr. Scott, of New Brunswick, say, that when she was a little girl, she heard the Rev. Mr. Burr declare in her father's house, in Newark, "if it had not been for the treatment received by Mr. Brainerd at Yale, New Jersey college would never have been erected." How many influences are made to combine and operate, when Providence has the design of giving existence to an institution which has affected, and will still affect the happiness of thousands!

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VIII("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOHN TENNENT

Birth—Religious Exercises and Conversion—Entrance into the ministry—Settlement at Freehold, Monmouth County—Great Success—Early Death.

Although John Tennent was younger than his brother William, being the third son of the Rev. William Tennent, Sen.; yet, on several accounts, it seems expedient to place the short memoir of him, before that of his elder brother. It would seem from all that we can learn respecting these men, that John was licensed to preach the gospel before William. This was probably owing to the fact, that William Tennent, jr. suffered much loss of time by severe sickness, as will hereafter appear. Or, it may have been the case, that William was engaged longer than his brother, in assisting his father in teaching, in the Log College. But, whatever may have been the case, it is certain, that the Rev. John Tennent was settled in the ministry, some years before his brother; and that the Rev. William Tennent was not settled as a pastor, until after the death of his brother John, when he became his successor in the church at Freehold, as will appear when we give a memoir of him; and it is principally on this account that we place John, foremost. The third son of the Rev. William Tennent, sen., was born in the county of Armagh, in Ireland, in the year 1707, Nov. 12, and was therefore only nine years of age when his father came to America. The whole of his education he obtained under the paternal roof, and in the Log College, which his father had founded at Neshaminy. Of his conversion to God, we have an interesting narrative, from the pen of his brother Gilbert, written after his death, and prefixed to some of his sermons, which were published in a pamphlet after his decease.

"His conviction of his sin, danger, and misery, was the most violent in degree, of any I ever saw. For several days and nights together, he was made to cry out in the most dolorous and affecting manner, almost every moment. The words which he used in his soul-agony were these, 'O my bloody, lost soul! What shall I do? Have mercy on me, O God, for Christ's sake.' Sometimes, he was brought to the very brink of despair, and would conclude, 'surely God would never have mercy on such a great sinner as he was.' And yet his life was unstained with those scandalous extravagances, by which too many in their youth are ensnared. His natural predominant sin was rash anger; and the worst I ever knew him guilty of, was, some indecent haste in this way, on account of which he was afterwards exceedingly humbled, and against which he became very watchful. His passionateness cost him many a deep sob, heavy groan, and salt tear. After it pleased God to confer his grace upon him, he was remarkably altered in this particular, and gained in a great measure, an ascendancy over his besetting sin. Whilst under conviction, his distress

was such as to induce him to make an open confession of his sins to almost all that came near him, and also to beg their prayers in his behalf, at a throne of grace. And this he did in the most earnest, and beseeching manner. His dolorous groans, and vehement importunity were such, as greatly to affect even strangers who came to see him. And he earnestly and frequently begged of God, that He would humble him to the dust, and beneath the dust.

“One morning, about break of day, after great wrestling through the night and day preceding, he took occasion to speak as surprisingly as ever I heard any mortal, about the morning star, longing and praying that the blessed Jesus, the true, the bright, the beautiful morning Star, who brought the light and day into a dark world, would appear in mercy to his poor soul. And then, at the rising of the sun, he entreated that the Sun of righteousness might shine upon his disconsolate, dejected, wretched soul, with beams of mercy and salvation. His heart appeared to be sick, sore-sick, with panting after Christ; so as to be ready to burst in pieces. I have through the riches of free grace been favoured with the sight of many a convinced sinner, but never did I behold any other in such a rack of acute and continued anguish, under the dismal apprehensions of impending ruin and endless misery, from the vengeance of a just and holy God.

“Perceiving such evident signs of deep conviction, humiliation, and earnest desire, I offered to him for his comfort all the most encouraging invitations and promises, adapted to his case; and sometimes endeavoured to persuade him that he had an interest in these promises, since God had wrought in him those conditions on which the blessings were suspended. But although this would sometimes yield him a temporary relief; yet in a little while he would break forth again with the most doleful lamentations; complaining that no promise in the book of God belonged to him; and denying that any of those conditions to which the promises were made, had been wrought in him. The truth is, his wound was so deep that none but God’s arm could heal it. But it pleased God, after an agony almost uninterrupted for four days and four nights, during which he cried out incessantly as described above, that he would make his consolations as eminent and conspicuous as his convictions had been severe. It is worthy of remark, that for some time before it pleased the Almighty to shed abroad the beams of his love and mercy on his soul, he was much exercised with sorrowful and piercing reflections on account of his hypocrisy. He judged himself to be at pharisee and a hypocrite, for crying out as he had done; and yet the sharpness of his inward pain was such, that he could not prevent it, therefore, he would have all people out of the room, that he might pray and mourn, alone.

“One morning, when I went to see him, I perceived a great alteration in his countenance; for he, that an hour before had looked like a condemned man going to be put to some cruel death, now appeared with a cheerful, gladsome countenance, and spoke to me in these words, ‘O brother, the Lord Jesus has come in mercy to my soul. I was begging for a crumb of mercy with the dogs, and Christ has told me that he will give me a crumb.’ Then he desired me to thank God in prayer, which I did more than once. He also requested me to praise God by singing part of a psalm, which I complied with, and sang the 34th. It was, indeed, surprising to hear this person singing the praises of God with more clearness, energy, and joy, than any of the spectators who had crowded in, on this extraordinary and solemn occasion. And that, especially, when it is considered, that now it was ten o’clock in the forenoon, whereas, at three o’clock in the same morning, he was speechless for some minutes, and thought by all present to be expiring, in death. The consolations of God had such an influence upon him, that about an hour or two afterwards, he walked about thirty rods to

see his brother William, who was then extremely sick, nigh unto death, and thought by most to be past all human hope of recovery. He said, he must see his brother, to tell him what God had done for his soul, that he might praise God on his account before he died. And when he entered the room where his brother was lying, his joy appeared to overflow, and he addressed him in the following words: 'O brother, the Lord has looked with pity on my soul. Let the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that in them is, praise God.!' But being exposed too soon to the cool air, he fell into a fever, and then called in question that eminent discovery of God's love, which he had experienced. But it was not long before he was again comforted; and from this time, a great change in his conversation was manifest. And while he experienced many seasons of the sealing of God's covenant love; yet in the intervals, he was often dejected, and distressed with doubts and fears, respecting his own State.

"He gave the best evidence of a change of heart in the conscientious and diligent performance of all Christian duties; even of those most opposite to our corrupt nature, such as secret prayer and fasting. He was a tender-hearted courteous relative, and of a very sympathetic spirit. His respectful and affectionate treatment of his reverend and aged father and his kind mother, merits an honourable mention. His great soul disdained any thing that was mean, and inclined him to the most noble and generous actions that were within his power.

"He was endowed by his Creator with a natural quickness of apprehension, copiousness of fancy, and fluency of expression, which served to qualify him eminently for the office of a preacher. He had made no contemptible progress in the learned languages, and also in philosophical and theological studies; but he particularly excelled in the polemical and casuistical branches of divinity. He was well known to be an expert disputant and casuist; but that which crowned his other attainments, and made them appear with beauty and lustre, was, his unfeigned and eminent piety.

"His attainments in the Christian graces were eminently conspicuous in the following particulars. First, his humility. He was wont to speak of himself in the most abasing terms; saying, that he thought himself one of the worst creatures the creation bore. And on his dying bed he desired his relations to forbear any funeral encomiums upon him, when he was gone; for he declared with vehemence that he was not worthy of them. When admitted to preach, he would often, in his private studies, take the Bible in his hand, and would walk up and down the room weeping and mourning, that although there was a treasury of precious truth contained in that blessed book, he understood so little of them. A sense of the greatness of the ministerial work, and of his ignorance and unfitness for it, was often a very oppressive burden to him. It was a striking evidence of the low opinion which he entertained of himself, that he never could be persuaded that a holy God would bless the labours of a person every way so mean and so unworthy as he felt himself to be. And when informed that certain persons had been convinced under his ministry, he could not for some time believe that the work was genuine, until further conviction was afforded, by bright and incontestable evidences.

"His love to Christ was manifest to all who had the opportunity of hearing his earnest and importunate prayers. Indeed, Christ and him crucified was the end at which he aimed, the sacred centre in which all the lines of his life terminated. Christ was the object of his supreme love, and highest admiration.

“He possessed also a flaming zeal for the establishment and promotion of the Messiah’s kingdom. It was his oft repeated petition, that God would make him serviceable to his church; and that he would not suffer him to live merely to devour the alms of the church, but that he would rather remove him to himself, before he became useless.” When Mr. John Tennent had finished his preparatory studies in the Log College, he presented himself to the presbytery of Philadelphia; and after passing with credit the usual trials he was licensed to preach the gospel.

Soon after Mr. Tennent’s licensure, he visited the congregation of Freehold, in the county of Monmouth, New Jersey; which was now without a pastor. This congregation owed its origin to some Scotch people who were cast on the Jersey shore; the vessel Caledonia, in which they sailed, having been stranded on our coast. These people, being thus by the Providence of God cast upon this land, determined to take up their abode in the country, near to the place where they reached the shore; and being Presbyterians, they were not content to live without the ordinances of public worship, according to the creed and usages of the church of Scotland. They, accordingly, set about building a house of worship; which was situated a few miles east of the present church of Freehold; where the remains of the old building, and a grave-yard, are yet to be seen. For some time, this congregation was supplied by the Rev. Joseph Morgan; but he having left them early in the year 1730, they invited young Mr. Tennent to preach to them, as a candidate. Being a young man of uncommon modesty and humility, he was very reluctant to go; and even after he had consented to visit them, as his brother William, in his letter to Mr. Prince of Boston, informs us, he regretted the engagement very much; for it seemed to him, that they were a people whom God had given up for the abuse of the gospel. But though he went under this cloud of discouragement, his first labours among this people were remarkably blessed. On his first visit, he preached four or five Sabbaths, and found stirred up among the people a serious disposition to attend to the concerns of their souls, and to search the scriptures to see whether the things which they heard from the pulpit were so. And he was assisted to preach with so much freedom, that he told his brother William, that he was fully persuaded, that Christ Jesus had a large harvest to bring home, there; and though they were a poor broken people; yet if they called him he would go to them, though he should be under the necessity of begging his bread. On the 15th of April, 1730, they assembled and gave him an unanimous call, which he accepted, and was ordained, November 19th of the same year.

“His labours in this congregation,” according to his brother Gilbert, “were attended with three notable qualities, prudence, diligence, and success.” Though the time was short which he was permitted to remain among them, yet his labours were abundant. His race was swift and vehement; and his heart was so fixed on the work of God, that he could not be persuaded to desist from his public labours, even when his body was emaciated, and debilitated by a consumptive disease; and when, in the judgment of physicians, it was prejudicial to his broken constitution.

“In his public discourses, not to mention the justness of his method, the beauty of his style, and the fluency of his expression, by which he chained his not unwilling hearers to his lips, he was very awakening and terrible to unbelievers, in denouncing, and describing with the most vehement pathos and awful solemnity, the terrors of an offended Deity, the threats of a broken law, and the miseries of a sinful state. And this subject he insisted much upon, because, he with many others, found it the most effectual and successful means to alarm secure sinners. He used a close, distinguishing, and detecting method, in the application of his sermons; which, with his pungent

mode of expression, was very piercing and solemn. But, as Dr. Watts observes of Mr. Gouge, he knew the pity of Emanuel's heart, as well as the terrors of Jehovah's hand." He was as tender and compassionate in his addresses to gracious souls, as faithful to brandish and apply the law's lancet to the secure: and he was as willing to do the one as the other. But indeed he was very cautious of misapplying the different portions of the word to his hearers; or of setting before them only a common mess, and leaving it to them to divide among themselves, as their fancy and humour directed them; for he well knew that was the bane of preaching.

"Once more; he was a successful preacher. When he was under trials for the ministry, he was much exercised with doubts, difficulties, and distresses about his call to this great and awful trust; but it pleased God to dissipate these clouds, and to afford to his perplexed and anxious mind abundant satisfaction respecting this matter, by the numerous seals which crowned his public labours: for as the famous Rutherford says, 'it is not probable that God would seal a blank.' It may truly be said of him, that he gained more poor sinners to Christ, in that little compass of time which he had to improve in the ministerial work, which was about three and a half years, than many in the space of twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years. Many souls have, and will have reason, through eternity, to bless God that ever they saw him. But though he was thus honoured with the smiles of heaven upon his labours; and though favoured with the kind regards of a loving and generous people, who had it been possible would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him; so that no minister before was ever the object of a more respectful regard and sympathy; yet was he far from being exalted in his own mind, but through grace retained a just, grateful, and humble sense of God's distinguishing goodness, and his own unworthiness.

"As he drew nearer to his end, his love for his people, and concern for their welfare increased. He would often express himself to one of his brothers" in such language as the following, 'I am grieved for my people, for I fear they will be left to wander as sheep without a shepherd; or get one that will pull down what I have poorly endeavoured to build up.' His brother, who watched with him in his sickness, has frequently overheard him in the deep silence of the night, wrestling with God by prayer, with sobs and tears, for his people. Yea, when so reduced by consumption that he could scarce walk alone, he bore the pains of this lingering disease with unbroken patience, and silent submission to his Father's pleasure, until it pleased God to open a door of escape to his captive soul, through the ruins of his decayed frame.

"On Saturday evening—the last evening of his life—he was seized with a violent pang of death which was thought by his attendants to be the last; from which unexpectedly recovering, and observing a confusion among them, he addressed one, whom he saw uncommonly affected, with a cheerful countenance, in the following words, 'I would not have you think the worse of the ways of holiness, because you see me in such agonies of distress, for I know there is a crown of glory in heaven for me, which I shall shortly wear.' Afterwards, in the night, he often prayed, 'Come Lord Jesus!—O Jesus, why dost thou linger?' Some time before day, he repeated with humble confidence the last words of David, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.'—2 Samuel 23:5.

"About the break of day, he called his brother William to prayer, and earnestly desired him to implore Heaven for his speedy removal, for, he said, he longed to be gone. About eight or nine

o'clock of the next day, which was the Sabbath, his desire was granted; when it pleased his Master to translate him to that great assembly of the just, 'the church of the firstborn, there to celebrate an eternal Sabbath, in praises and songs of triumph.

"A few minutes before he expired, holding his brother William by the hand, he broke out into the following rapturous expressions; 'Farewell, my brethren, farewell father and mother; farewell world, with all thy vain delights. Welcome, God and Father—welcome, sweet Lord Jesus! Welcome death—welcome eternity. Amen! Then, with a low voice, he said, 'Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus!' And so he fell asleep in Christ, and obtained an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour."

He was buried in the grave-yard near to the church, where he preached, and where his tombstone may yet be seen. The Rev. Jonathan Dickinson, of Elizabethtown, composed for his tomb-stone, the following epitaph:

"Who quick grew old in learning, virtue, grace,
Quick finished, well-yielded to death's embrace:
Whose mouldered dust, this cabinet contains,
Whose soul triumphant, with bright seraphs reigns;
Waiting the time' till heaven's bright concave flame,
And the last trump repairs his ruined frame."

Much praise cannot be awarded to the poetry of the foregoing epitaph, but it serves to show in what estimation Mr. Tennent was held, by one of the most eminent theologians of his day. His death occurred on the 23d day of April, 1732, in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

Mr. Gilbert Tennent, with the memoir of his brother John, published also one of his sermons. The subject is "Regeneration;" and is treated in a clear, discriminating manner. As far as can be judged from the accounts which have come down to us, respecting this young pastor, and from the aforesaid discourse, there is reason to conclude, that both in piety and talents, he was not inferior to any one of his brothers; and that if he had lived to the usual period of human life, he would have been "a burning and a shining light" in the church. The people of his charge were greatly attached to him, and exceedingly lamented his death. There is still extant, the fragment of an old manuscript book, kept by the session of his church, in which is contained the following entry:

"A mournful providence and cause of great humiliation to this poor congregation, to be bereaved, in the flower of youth, of the most laborious, successful, well-qualified, and pious pastor, this age afforded; though but a youth of twenty-four years five months and eleven days." In this record, he is called, "the reverend and dear Mr. John Tennent."

It may be gratifying to some to know the names of some of the principal families which constituted the congregation of Freehold, which have been taken from the record before mentioned. Among them we find Ker, Craig, Forman, Anderson, New-all, Gordon, Lloyd, Crawford, Henderson, Robinson, Rhea, Watson, Wilson, Campbell, Covenhoven, Little, Cumming, English, &c.

REV. WM. TENNENT'S LETTER

The Rev. William Tennent's Letter, to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, giving the character of the revival in Freehold, N. J.

The following letter is introduced here, because it gives an account of the fruits of the ministry of the Rev. John Tennent. It is given literally from Prince's Christian History.

"Freehold, October 11th, 1744.

"Rev. and Dear Sir,

"I desire to notice thankfully the late rich display of our glorious Emanuel's grace, in subduing by his word and Spirit, multitudes of sinners to himself, both in this and other lands. O may he go on 'conquering and to conquer,' until he has subdued all things unto himself! Neither can I think but that the writing of a history of the great things our Lord has done among us, has a tendency to, and will by the blessing of God upon it, excite generations yet unborn to praise his glorious name, and thereby his honour will be advanced, and his triumphs increased! Most gladly, therefore, do I comply with your request, and herewith send such an account as I can, of what the Lord has done among us. But herein, as I must be very general, having never made any memorandums in writing of the Lord's work here, so I trust I shall be strictly true, for the Lord hates a false witness.

"This place lies southwest from New York, and is distant from it about fifty miles. It was the first, in the East Jersey, on the west side of the Raritan River, which was settled with a gospel ministry. This was owing, under God, to the agency of some Scotch people, that came to it; among whom there was none so painful in this blessed undertaking, as one Walter Ker, who in the year 1685, for his faithful and conscientious adherence to God and his truth, as professed by the Church of Scotland, was there apprehended, and sent into this country, under a sentence of perpetual banishment. By which it appears, that the devil and his instruments lost their aim in sending him from home; where it is unlikely he could ever have been so serviceable to Christ's kingdom as he has been here. He is yet alive; and blessed be God, he is flourishing in his old age, being in his 88th year.

"But to return; the public means of grace dispensed here, were at first, for a season, too much like a miscarrying womb and dry breasts; so that the major part of the congregation could not be said to have so much as a name to live. Family prayer was unpractised by all, a very few excepted; ignorance so overshadowed their minds, that the doctrine of the new birth when clearly explained and powerfully pressed upon them, as absolutely necessary to salvation (by that faithful preacher of God's word, Mr. Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, a Low Dutch minister, and some other English ministers who were occasionally here,) was made a common game of; so that not only the preachers, but professors of that truth, were called in derision new-born, and looked upon as holders forth of some new and false doctrine. And, indeed, their practice was as bad as their principles, viz. loose and profane.

"In the year 1729, their minister removed from them, and they were so grievously divided among themselves, that it appeared improbable they would ever agree in the settlement of another. In this miserable, helpless, and almost hopeless condition, they lay, and few among them had either eyes

to see, or hearts to bewail their woful, wretched circumstances. Thus they seemed to be cast out, as the prophet Ezekiel represents it in the 16th chapter of his book, and the 5th verse. But the Lord who is rich in mercy, of his unexpected and unmerited love, passed by them lying in their blood, and said unto many of them since that day, Live; and live they shall to all eternity.

“About this time, my dear brother John (who is now with Jesus) was licensed as a candidate for the sacred ministry: a youth, whom the Author of every good gift had uncommonly furnished for that important trust. To him application was made by some of the congregation, intreating that he would supply them for a time; to which, with the leave of the presbytery, he consented. But ere he went, he often told me, that he was heartily sorry he had engaged to go among them; for it seemed to him that they were a people whom God had given up for their abuse of the gospel. But the Lord’s thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways; for when he had preached four or five Sabbaths in the place, which was the whole time he tarried among them at first, the Lord so blessed his labours, engaging people to attend to the things which were spoken, and in stirring them up to search the scriptures whether these things were so or not, and withal enabling him to preach to them with such uncommon freedom and earnestness, that he told me he was fully persuaded Christ Jesus had a large harvest to bring home there; so that, though they were a poor broken people, yet if they called him he would settle among them, albeit he should be put to beg his bread by so doing. April the 15th, 1730, the congregation unanimously called him; which he accepting of, was ordained the 19th of November following, and continued with them until April 23d, 1732, and was then translated to glory.

“During his short time, his labours were greatly blessed; so that the place of public worship was usually crowded with people of all ranks and orders, as well as professions, that obtained in that part of the country, and they seemed to hear, generally, as for their lives: yea, such as were wont to go to those places for their diversion, viz. to hear news or speak to their tradesmen, &c., even on the Lord’s day, as they themselves have since confessed, were taken in the gospel net. A solemn awe of God’s majesty possessed many, so that they behaved themselves as at his bar, while in his house. Many tears were usually shed when he preached, and sometimes the body of the congregation was moved or affected. I can say, and let the Lord alone have the glory of it, that I have seen both minister and people wet with their tears, as with a bedewing rain. It was no uncommon thing to see persons in the time of hearing, sobbing as if their hearts would break, but without any public outcry; and some have been carried out of the assembly (being overcome) as if they had been dead.

“Religion was then the general subject of discourse, though they did not all approve of the power of it. The holy Bible was searched by people on both sides of the question, and knowledge surprizingly increased. The terror of God fell generally upon the inhabitants of this place; so that wickedness as ashamed in a great measure hid itself; frolicking, dancing, horse-racing, with other profane meetings were broken up. Some of the jolly companions of both sexes, were constrained by their consciences to meet together, the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, to confess privately their abominations before God, and beg the pardon of them.

“Before my brother’s death, by reason of his bodily weakness, and inability on that account to officiate publicly, I preached here about six months. In which time, many came inquiring what they should do to be saved, and some to tell what the Lord had done for their souls. But the blessing on

his labours to the conviction and conversion of souls, was more discernible some months after his death, than any time in his life; almost in every neighbourhood—I cannot say in every house—there were sin-sick souls, longing for and seeking after the dear physician, Jesus Christ: several of whom, I no ways doubt have, since that time, sincerely closed with him, and are healed; glory, glory to his holy name be given, for ever and ever, Amen!

“Sometime after my brother’s decease, the congregation called me to labour among them, statedly; which I accepted, and was ordained, October the 25th, 1733. Thus my Lord sent me to reap that on which I had bestowed but little labour. May this consideration be blessed to make me thankful and humble, while I live.

“I must further declare to the honour of God that he has not yet left us, although awfully provoked by our crying crimes; but ever since that more remarkable outpouring of his Spirit has continued to bless his own ordinances, to the conviction, conversion and consolation, of precious souls: so that every year, some, more or less have been in a judgment of charity added (savingly,) to his mystical body: to his holy name be all the glory. In the mean time, I would have it observed, that two or three years last past, have afforded fewer instances of this kind, than formerly. However, through grace some have been lately awakened who are even now seeking Jesus sorrowing. What the number is of those who have tasted the sweet fruits of the Redeemer’s purchase in a saving manner, in this congregation, I cannot tell: it is my comfort that the Lord will reckon them; for he knows who are his: and indeed none but the omniscient God is equal to the difficult province of determining certainly concerning the internal states of men. Yet I may be bold to say, that to all appearance, both old and young, males and females, have been renewed; though none so young as I have heard of in some other places. Some negroes, I trust, are made free in Christ; and more seem to be unfeignedly seeking after it. But after all that the Lord has been pleased to do among us, I am persuaded that the greater number, by far, are yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. This makes me sometimes ready to wish, that I had in the wilderness the lodging-place of a wayfaring-man, that I might leave my people and go from them; or rather that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for them! Such as have been converted were every one of them prepared for it by a sharp law-work of conviction, discovering to them in a heart-affecting manner, their sinfulness both by nature and practise, as well as their liableness to damnation for their original and actual transgressions. Neither could they see any way in themselves by which they could escape the divine vengeance; for that their whole life past, was not only a continued act of rebellion against God, but their present endeavours to better it, such as prayers, &c. were so imperfect, that they could not endure them, and much less, they concluded, would a holy God. They all confessed the justice of God in their eternal perdition; and thus have been shut up to the blessed necessity of seeking relief by faith in Christ alone. It would be endless to mention the evils they complained of; viz. ignorance, unbelief, hardness of heart, hatred against God, his laws, and people worldliness, wandering of heart in duty, pride, sensuality, sloth, &c. With what grief, shame and self-loathing have I heard them bewail their loss of time, and neglect of the great gospel salvation. Those that were communicants before their awakening, have with trembling declared that their unworthy partaking grieved them more than anything ever they did; for hereby they had as it were murdered the Lord. It is almost incredible to relate, the indignation that such awakened sinners expressed against themselves, on the account of their sinfulness. They looked upon themselves to be mere monsters of nature, and that none

were worse if any so bad. Others signified that they could not find their pictures out of hell, and that they were just fit companions for the damned, and none else. Let it be here noted, that some who have expressed themselves in the manner I have mentioned, were before taken for believers both by themselves and others, being sober and regular in their walk.

“The sorrows of the convinced, were not all alike, either in degree or continuance. Some have not thought it possible for them to be saved, if God would vindicate the honour of his justice; but these thoughts continued not long at a time, blessed be God. Others thought it was possible, but not very probable, because of their vileness. The greatest degree of hope which any had, under a conviction that issued well, was a maybe; ‘peradventure, or maybe, God will have mercy on me,’ said the sinner. Some, in coming to Jesus, have been much rent with blasphemous and other horrible temptations, which have turned their moisture into the drought of summer; who now through pure grace serve God, without such distractions, in gladness and singleness of heart. The conviction of some has been instantaneous; by the Holy Spirit’s applying the law to the conscience, and discovering to the eye of the understanding, as it were, all their heart deceits very speedily; by which they have been stabbed as with a sword. But the conviction of others, has been in a more progressive way. They have had discovered to them, one abomination after another, in life; and from thence were led to behold the fountain of all corruption in the heart; and thus they were constrained to despair of life by the law, and consequently to flee to Jesus as the only door of hope, and so rest entirely on his merit for salvation.

“After the aforesaid sorrowful exercises, such as were reconciled to God have been blessed with the Spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, Abba, Father. But some have had greater degrees of consolation than others, in proportion to the clearness of the evidences of their sonship. The Lord has drawn some out of the horrible pit of distress and darkness, and brought them into the light of his countenance. He has filled their hearts with joy, and their mouths with praises; yea, given them the full assurance of faith. Others have been brought to peace in believing; but have not had so great a plerophory of joy; yet they go on in a religious course, trusting in the Lord. The way they have been comforted is either by the application of some particular promise of holy scripture, or by a soul-affecting view of the way of salvation by Christ, as free, without money and without price. They were enabled to behold the valuable mercies of the covenant of grace, freely tendered to the vilest transgressors, that were poor in their own eyes, sin-sick, weary and wounded, together with the ability and willingness of the Lord Jesus to relieve them from all the evils, they either feared or felt. With this way of salvation their souls were well pleased, and thereupon, have ventured their case into his hands, expecting help from him only; who has given them both peace and rest; yea, filled some of them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I remember not of any that received their first comforts otherwise. Some few have retained their confidence in God ever since, without any considerable questionings of their state, although they have not always tasted the comforts of it. But the most, by far, have questioned all, and doubted it was a delusion. This I suppose is generally owing to the remains of corruption, which blot the evidences of grace in good men, so that they can hardly read them; and particularly, to the awful sin of unbelief; together with the prevalence of a legal spirit, which presses them to perfect holiness on pain of death, and because they cannot obtain that, they conclude they are unsanctified, and have no right to Christ. I might add the ignorance of mortification; they seem to think that in the justified, sin is killed in its being, as well as governing power; and, therefore, because they feel their old sins sometimes stirring in

them, they conclude that all is wrong; nay, although they hate the doctrine of perfection as held by some, yet because they are not perfect they think they have no grace. But however distressing it is to them to feel their imperfections, it helps to persuade me that they are regenerate; else it would not be so; sin would not be their chief burden, in a general way.

“However, our Lord who comforts those that are cast down, even the wonderful Counsellor, teaches them, that he not only saves those who have been sinners before conversion, but even such as after it, find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, which too often causes them to do the things they would not; and enables them to reflect upon what they have and do daily experience, and compare it with the evidences of grace in the word of God. The blessed God does likewise give them renewed tastes of his love, even after missteps; and thus they are established in faith and hope, so that they have a prevailing persuasion of their interest in Christ; except it be in times of desertion and temptation, with which some are more exercised than others, for reasons best known to a sovereign God.

“Doubtless, Sir, you will desire to know, what effects this work produces on the minds and manners of its subjects. I answer, they are not only made to know, but heartily to approve of the great doctrines of the gospel, which they were before either ignorant of or averse to, (at least some of them) so that they do harmonize sweetly in exalting free, special, and sovereign grace, through the Redeemer Jesus Christ; being willing to glory only in the Lord, who has loved them and given himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour.

“I cannot express, with what satisfaction I have heard them speak of the new covenant method of salvation. They have spoken with such affection and clearness, as I have thought was sufficient to convince an atheist, that the Lord was their Teacher. The alteration in some, from almost gross ignorance to such clear gospel light, and in others from such corrupt principles, as the Papists and Quakers hold, to the believing acknowledgment of the truth, none but he that made the understanding could effect. They approve of the law of God after the inward man, as holy, just, and good, and prize it above gold, yea, much fine gold. They judge it their duty as well as privilege to wait on God in all the ordinances of his own institution, although they expect to merit nothing thereby. A reverence for God’s commanding authority, and gratitude for his love, conspire to incite and constrain them, to a willing, unfeigned, universal and unfainting obedience to his laws: yet they declare that in everything they come sadly short of what they ought to do, and bitterly bewail their defects. But blessed be God, they are not discouraged in their endeavours to reach forward, if by any means they may apprehend that for which they are apprehended of God; and in all things they acknowledge that they ought to look to Jesus as the author and finisher of faith, whose alone it is to work all good in them and for them, to whom be glory for ever. They are not unmolested in their way by enemies, both from within and from without. Yet, they profess that the comforts which they receive do more than compensate all their labour, were there no good to be expected hereafter: and surely, as the psalmist observes, ‘in keeping God’s commands there is a great reward.’ But to proceed:

“They have not all made alike proficiency in the Christian course; neither are they all equal in religious endeavours; nor any at all times alike lively. They are sometimes obstructed in their religious progress by coldness and deadness; but this the blessed Jesus removes at times, by the influence of his Holy Spirit; then, O then, their hearts are enlarged, and they run the sweet way of

God's commandments with alacrity and delight, they love all such as they have reason to think, from their principles, experience, and practice, are truly godly, though they differ from them in sentiment in lesser things, and look on them to be the excellent of the earth. They rejoice in Zion's prosperity; glorifying God on that account, and feel a sympathy in her sorrows. They do prefer one another before themselves, in love; except, under temptation, which they are ready to confess and bewail, when they are themselves; generally accounting that they are the meanest of the family of God, and unworthy of the blessing; yea, the most so of any living, all things considered. In a word, the sapless formalist is become spiritual in his conversation; the proud and haughty are made humble and affable; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate; the swearer honours that venerable name he was wont to profane, and blesses, instead of cursing; the Sabbath-breaker is brought to be a strict observer of holy time; the worldling now seeks treasures in the heavens; the extortioner now deals justly; and the formerly malicious, forgive injuries; the prayerless are earnest and incessant in acts of devotion; and the sneaking self-seeker, endeavours the advancement of God's glory, and the salvation of immortal souls.

"Through God's mercy we have been quite free from enthusiasm; our people have followed the holy law of God, the sure word of prophecy, and not the impulses of their own minds. There have not been that I know of, among us, any visions, except such as are by faith, namely, clear and affecting views of the new and living way to the Father through his dear Son Jesus Christ: nor any revelations but what have been long since written in the sacred volume: nor any trances but such as all men now living shall meet with, for it is appointed for all men once to die.

"It may not be amiss to inform you, that many who have been awakened, and seemed for a time to set out for Zion, are turned back. Yea, of those who have been esteemed converts, some have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; though, glory to God, there have not been many such; yet some of them who have thus awfully apostatized, were highly esteemed in the church. By this, our good and gracious God has given check to too high an esteem of our own judgment, concerning the spiritual states of others, (an evil which is too common among young converts) and awfully warned all that stand, to take heed lest they fall. Many, I have cause to fear, have been hardened in their impieties and unreasonable prejudices against vital religion, by the backslidings of some professors. 'Wo to the world, because of offences!' But in the mean time, blessed be God, Wisdom is and will be justified of her children.

"This, Sir, is as particular an account, as I can at present give of the Lord's work, in this place. If my Lord will accept it as a testimony for him, it will be a greater honour than ever I deserved. I need your prayers, and earnestly desire them. O beg of God, that I may be faithful to the death, and wise to win souls. I am with all due respects, yours in the dearest Jesus,

WM. TENNENT."

"ATTESTATION to the preceding Account by the Ruling Elders and Deacons of the Congregation of Freehold.

"We the subscribers, Ruling Elders and Deacons of the Presbyterian congregation of Freehold, having had perfect knowledge of the circumstances of this place, some of us from the first settling of it, and others of a long time, do give our testimony to the truth in general, of the above letter of our Rev. pastor. May the Lord make the same of use for the carrying on his glorious work begun in

these lands, and make the name of the dearest Jesus glorious from the rising to the setting sun.

Walter Ker,

David Rhea,

William Ker,

Robert Cumming,

John Henderson,

Samuel Ker.

Freehold, in New Jersey, October 11th, 1744."

CHAPTER X("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

MEMOIR OF THE REV. WILLIAM TENNENT, JR.

Preliminary Remarks—Mr. Tennent's birth and education—sickness, apparent death, and recovery—State of his mind during his trance—Settlement and ordination as successor to his brother at Freehold—Marriage—Character as a pastor and success in the ministry—Trial for Perjury—Extraordinary means of deliverance—The close of life.

The following memoir of the Rev. William Tennent, jr., was originally published in "The Assembly's Missionary Magazine," in the year 1806; and although it was not accompanied with the author's name, it was well understood to be from the pen of the Hon. Elias Boudinot, LL.D., who was particularly acquainted with all the members of this remarkable family. But although Dr. Boudinot prepared this memoir for the press, the greater part of the narrative was written, at his request, by the late Dr. Henderson, of Freehold, one of the elders of the Freehold church, and a man distinguished for his piety, integrity, veracity, and patriotism. This original manuscript is now in the possession of the compiler of this volume. From it we learn, that the history of Mr. Tennent's trial, which occurred soon after his settlement in the ministry, and when Dr. Henderson was too young to be a competent witness, was received from his father, who was then an elder in the church of Freehold, of which Mr. William Tennent was the pastor. There can be no doubt about the authenticity of the facts here stated, however they may be accounted for. The writer has heard the same facts from elderly persons, who never had seen this published account; and they were so public, that they were generally known, not only to the people of this part of the country, but they were currently reported and fully believed, in other states. The writer has heard them, familiarly talked of in Virginia, from his childhood. It is a matter of some regret that the record of this trial cannot be found, yet papers have been discovered among the archives of the state, in which reference is made to this transaction. The following is the narrative.

"Among the duties which every generation owes to those who are to succeed it, we may reckon the careful delineation of the characters of those whose example deserves, and may invite imitation. Example speaks louder than precept, and living practical religion has a much greater effect on mankind than argument or eloquence. Hence, the lives of pious men become the most important sources of instruction and warning to posterity; while their exemplary conduct affords the best commentary on the religion they professed. But when such men have been remarkably

favoured of God, with unusual degrees of light and knowledge, and have been honoured by the special and extraordinary influences of his Holy Spirit, and by the most manifest and wonderful interpositions of divine Providence in their behalf, it becomes a duty of more than common obligation, to hand down to posterity the principal events of their lives, together with such useful inferences as they naturally suggest. A neglect of this duty, even by persons who may be conscious of the want of abilities necessary for the complete biographer, is greatly culpable; for, if the strictest attention be paid to the truth of the facts related, and all exaggeration or partial representation be carefully avoided, the want of other furniture can be no excuse for burying in oblivion that conduct which, if known, might edify and benefit the world.

“The writer of these memoirs has difficulties of a peculiar kind to encounter, in attempting to sketch the life of that modest, humble, and worthy man, whose actions, exercises, and sentiments he wishes to record. Worldly men, who are emulous to transmit their names to following ages, take care to leave such materials for the future historian, as may secure the celebrity which they seek. But the humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose sole aim is the glory of God, in the welfare of immortal souls, goes on, from day to day, as seeing Him who is invisible, careful to approve himself only to the Searcher of hearts, regardless of worldly fame or distinction, and leaving it to his heavenly Father to reward him openly, in the day of final account. The writer of such a man’s life, must principally rely on a personal acquaintance with him, and the communications of his intimate friends, for the information which shall be imparted to the public. In these circumstances it is peculiarly embarrassing, if some of the facts to be recorded are of such a nature, that it is most desirable to have their authenticity so fully established, that incredulity shall be confounded, and the sneer of the sceptical and profane lose its effect. But the writer of the following narrative, though placed in these circumstances, and having such facts to detail, has nevertheless determined to proceed. He has refreshed and corrected his own recollection, by the most careful inquiries that he could possibly make of others, until he is well assured, that what he shall state is incontestable truth. From the very nature of several things of which an account will be given, they do not indeed admit of any other direct testimony than that of the remarkable man to whom they relate. But if there ever was a person who deserved to be believed unreservedly on his own word, it was he. He possessed an integrity of soul and a soundness of judgment, which did actually secure him an unlimited confidence from all who knew him. Every species of deception, falsehood, and exaggeration he abhorred and scorned. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. With such materials, then, as have been mentioned, and for a work of such character as has been hinted, the writer has undertaken his task. He has undertaken what he would most gladly have resigned to an abler hand; but from which, as no other offered, he dared not withhold his own. He could wish that speculative and even unbelieving minds might be instructed and convinced by these memoirs. But his principal object, and that in which he trusts he shall not be entirely disappointed, is to direct, assist, and comfort pious souls, groaning under the pressure of the calamities which they often have to endure in their pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world.”

“The Rev. Wm. Tennent, of Freehold, New Jersey, was the second son of the Rev. Wm. Tennent, sen., and was born on the 3d day of June, 1705, in the county of Armagh, in Ireland, and was just turned of thirteen years when he arrived in America. He applied himself with much zeal and industry to his studies, and made great proficiency in the languages, particularly in the Latin. Being

early impressed with a deep sense of divine things, he soon determined to follow the example of his father and elder brother, by devoting himself to the service of God in the ministry of the gospel. His brother Gilbert being called to the pastoral charge of the church at New Brunswick, in New Jersey, and making a very considerable figure as a useful and popular preacher, William determined, as he had completed his course in the languages, to study divinity under his brother. Accordingly, he left his father's house, with his consent, and by his advice, and went to New Brunswick. At his departure from home, which was considered as his setting out in life, his father addressed him with great affection, commending him to the favour and protection of that God, from whom he himself had received so much mercy, and who had directed him in all his migrations. He gave him a small sum of money, as the amount of all he could do for him, telling him that if he behaved well and did his duty, this was an ample provision for him; and if he should act otherwise, and prove ungrateful to a kind and gracious God, it was too much and more than he deserved. Thus, with a pittance, and the blessing of a pious and affectionate parent, of more consequence than thousands of pounds, the young student set out in the world.

"After a regular course of study in theology, Mr. Tennent was preparing for his examination by the presbytery as a candidate for the gospel ministry. His intense application affected his health, and brought on a pain in his breast, and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at length was like a living skeleton. His life was now threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young gentleman who was attached to him by the strictest and warmest friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little hope of life was left. In this situation, his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing, one morning, with his brother, in Latin, on the state of his soul when he fainted and died away. After the usual time, he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighbourhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day. In the evening, his physician and friend returned from a ride in the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavoured to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hand into warm water, to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people who had been invited to the funeral should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discoloured, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed; and all probable means were used to discover symptoms of returning life. But the third day arrived, and no hopes were entertained of success, but by the doctor, who never left him night nor day. The people were again invited, and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected, and at last confined his request for delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered that the tongue was much swollen, and threatened to crack. He was endeavouring to soften it, by some emollient ointment put upon it with a feather, when the brother came in, about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing for an attempt to feed him, manifested some resentment, and in a spirited tone, said, 'It is shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse;' and insisted, with earnestness, that the funeral should immediately proceed. At this critical and important moment, the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into apparent death. This put an end to all thoughts of

burying him, and every effort was again employed in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In about an hour, the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body, and again all appearance of animation vanished. In another hour, life seemed to return with more power, and a complete revival took place, to the great joy of the family and friends, and to the no small astonishment and conviction of very many who had been ridiculing the idea of restoring to life, a dead body.

“Mr. Tennent continued in so weak and low a state for six weeks, that great doubts were entertained of his final recovery. However, after that period he recovered much faster, but it was about twelve months before he was completely restored. After he was able to walk the room, and to take notice of what passed around him, on a Sunday afternoon, his sister, who had staid from church to attend him, was reading in the Bible, when he took notice of it, and asked her what she had in her hand. She answered that she was reading the Bible. He replied, ‘What is the Bible? I know not what you mean.’ This affected the sister so much that she burst into tears, and informed him, that he was once well acquainted with it. On her reporting this to the brother, when he returned, Mr. Tennent was found, upon examination, to be totally ignorant of every transaction of his life previous to his sickness. He could not read a single word, neither did he seem to have any idea of what it meant. As soon as he became capable of attention, he was taught to read and write, as children are usually taught, and afterwards began to learn the Latin language under the tuition of his brother. One day, as he was reciting a lesson in Cornelius Nepos, he suddenly started, clapped his hand to his head, as if something had hurt him, and made a pause. His brother asking him what was the matter, he said, that he felt a sudden shock in his head, and it now seemed to him as if he had read that book before. By degrees, his recollection was restored, and he could speak the Latin as fluently as before his sickness. His memory so completely revived, that he gained a perfect knowledge of the past transactions of his life, as if no difficulty had previously occurred. This event, at the time, made a considerable noise, and afforded, not only matter of serious contemplation to the devout Christian, especially when connected with what follows in this narration, but furnished a subject of deep investigation and learned inquiry to the real philosopher and curious anatomist.

“The writer of these memoirs was greatly interested by these uncommon events; and, on a favourable occasion, earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a minute account of what his views and apprehensions were, while he lay in this extraordinary state of suspended animation. He discovered great reluctance to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings, at this time; but, being importunately urged to do it, he at length consented, and proceeded with a solemnity not to be described.

“ ‘While I was conversing with my brother,’ said he, ‘on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an instant, in another state of existence, under the direction of a superior being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change, and thought,—Well, blessed be God! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings, surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hallelujahs of thanksgiving and praise, with

unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable and full of glory. I then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng. On which he tapped me on the shoulder, and said, 'You must return to the earth.' This seemed like a sword through my heart. In an instant, I recollect to have seen my brother standing before me, disputing with the doctor. The three days during which I had appeared lifeless, seemed to me not more than ten or twenty minutes. The idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble, gave me such a shock, that I fainted repeatedly.' He added, 'Such was the effect on my mind of what I had seen and heard, that if it be possible for a human being to live entirely above the world and the things of it for some time afterwards, I was that person. The ravishing sounds of the songs and hallelujahs that I heard, and the very words uttered, were not out of my ears, when awake, for at least three years. All the kingdoms of the earth were in my sight as nothing and vanity; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory, that nothing, which did not, in some measure, relate to it, could command my serious attention.'*

"It is not surprising, that after so affecting an account, strong solicitude should have been felt for further information as to the words, or at least the subjects of praise and adoration, which Mr. Tennent had heard. But when he was requested to communicate these, he gave a decided negative, adding, 'You will know them, with many other particulars, hereafter, as you will find the whole among my papers;' alluding to his intention of leaving the writer hereof his executor, which precluded any further solicitation.*

"The pious and candid reader is left to his own reflections on this very extraordinary occurrence. The facts have been stated, and they are unquestionable. The writer will only ask, whether it be contrary to revealed truth or to reason, to believe, that in every age of the world, instances like that which is here recorded, have occurred, to furnish living testimony of the reality of the invisible world, and of the infinite importance of eternal concerns?

"As soon as circumstances would permit, Mr. Tennent was licensed, and began to preach the everlasting gospel with great zeal and success. The death of his brother John, who had been some time settled as minister of the Presbyterian church at Freehold, in the county of Monmouth, New Jersey, left that congregation in a destitute state. They had experienced so much spiritual benefit from the indefatigable labours and pious zeal, of this able minister of Jesus Christ, that they soon turned their attention to his brother, who was received on trial, and after one year, was found to be no unworthy successor to so excellent a predecessor. In October, 1733, Mr. Tennent was regularly ordained their pastor, and continued so through the whole of a pretty long life; one of the best proofs of ministerial fidelity.

Although his salary was small, (it is thought under £100,) yet the glebe belonging to the church was an excellent plantation, on which he lived, and which, with care and good farming, was capable of maintaining a family with comfort. But his inattention to the things of this world was so great, that he left the management of his temporal concerns wholly to a faithful servant, in whom he placed great confidence. After a short time, he found his worldly affairs were becoming embarrassed. His steward reported to him that he was in debt to the merchant between 20l. and 30l., and he knew of no means of payment, as the crops had fallen short. Mr. Tennent mentioned this to an intimate friend, a merchant of New York, who was on a visit at his house. His friend told him, that this mode of life would not do, that he must get a wife, to attend to his temporal affairs, and to comfort his leisure hours by conjugal endearments. He smiled at the idea, and assured him

it never could be the case, unless some friend would provide one for him, for he knew not how to go about it. His friend told him he was ready to undertake the business; that he had a sister-in-law, an excellent woman, of great piety, a widow, of his own age, and one peculiarly suited in all respects to his character and circumstances. In short, that she was every thing he ought to look for; and if he would go with him to New York the next day, he would settle the negotiation for him. To this he soon assented. The next evening found him in that city, and before noon the day after, he was introduced to Mrs. Noble. He was much pleased with her appearance; and, when left alone with her, abruptly told her, that he supposed her brother had informed her of his errand; that neither his time nor inclination would suffer him to use much ceremony; but that if she approved the measure, he would attend his charge on the next Sabbath, and return on Monday, be married, and immediately take her home. The lady, with some hesitation and difficulty, at last consented, being convinced that his situation and circumstances rendered it proper. Thus, in one week, she found herself mistress of his house. She proved a most invaluable treasure to him, more than answering every thing said of her by an affectionate brother. She took the care of his temporal concerns upon her, extricated him from debt, and, by a happy union of prudence and economy, so managed all his worldly business, that in a few years his circumstances became easy and comfortable. In a word, in her was literally fulfilled the declaration of Solomon, that 'a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, and that her price is far above rubies.' Besides several children who died in infancy, he had by her, three sons, who attained the age of manhood; John, who studied physic, and died in the West Indies when about thirty-three years of age; William, a man of superior character, and minister of the Independent church in Charleston, South Carolina, who died the latter end of September, or beginning of October, a. d. 1777, about thirty-seven years old; and Gilbert, who also practised physic, and died at Freehold, before his father, aged twenty eight years. Few parents could boast three sons of a more manly or handsome appearance; and the father gave them the most liberal education that the country could afford.

"Mr. Tennent's inattention to earthly things continued till his eldest son was about three years old, when he led him out into the fields on a Lord's day, after public worship. The design of the walk was for religious meditation. As he went along, accidentally casting his eye on the child, a thought suddenly struck him, and he asked himself this question: 'should God in his providence take me hence, what would become of this child and his mother, for whom I have never taken any personal care to make provision? How can I answer this negligence to God and to them?' The impropriety of his inattention to the relative duties of life, which God had called him to; and the consideration of the sacred declaration, 'that he who does not provide for his own household, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,' had such an impressive effect on his mind, that it almost deprived him of his senses. He saw his conduct, which before he thought arose entirely from a deep sense of divine things, in a point of light in which he never before had viewed it. He immediately attempted to return home, but so great was his distress, that it was with difficulty he could get along; till, all at once, he was relieved by as suddenly recurring to that text of scripture, which came into his mind with extraordinary force, 'but unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance, the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance.' Such, however, was the effect of this unexpected scene on Mr. Tennent's mind and judgment, that ever afterwards he prudently attended to the temporal business of life, still, however, in perfect subordination to the great things of eternity; and became fully convinced that God was to be faithfully served, as well by discharging relative duties in his love and fear, as by the more immediate acts of devotion. He clearly

perceived, that every duty had its proper time and place, as well as motive; that we had a right, and were called of God, to eat and drink, and to be properly clothed; and of course that care should be taken to procure those things, provided that all be done to the glory of God. In the duties of a gospel minister, however, especially as they related to his pastoral charge, he still engaged with the utmost zeal and faithfulness; and was esteemed by all ranks and degrees, as far as his labours extended, as a fervent, useful, and successful preacher of the gospel.

“His judgment of mankind was such as to give him a marked superiority, in this respect, over his contemporaries, and greatly aided him in his ministerial functions. He was scarcely ever mistaken in the character of a man with whom he conversed, though it was but for a few hours. He had an independent mind, which was seldom satisfied on important subjects without the best evidence that was to be had. His manner was remarkably impressive; and his sermons, although seldom polished, were generally delivered with such indescribable power, that he was truly an able and a successful minister of the New Testament. He could say things from the pulpit, which if said by almost any other man, would have been thought a violation of propriety. But by him they were delivered in a manner so peculiar to himself, and so extremely impressive, that they seldom failed to please and to instruct. As an instance of this the following anecdote is given, of the truth of which the writer was a witness.

“Mr. Tennent was passing through a town in the state of New Jersey, in which he was a stranger, and had never preached, and stopping at a friend’s house to dine, was informed, that it was a day of fasting and prayer in the congregation, on account of a very remarkable and severe drought, which threatened the most dangerous consequences to the fruits of the earth. His friend had just returned from church, and the intermission was but half an hour. Mr. Tennent was requested to preach, and with great difficulty consented, as he wished to proceed on his journey. At church, the people were surprised to see a preacher, wholly unknown to them, and entirely unexpected, ascend the pulpit. His whole appearance, being in a travelling dress, covered with dust, wearing an old fashioned large wig, discoloured like his clothes, and a long meagre visage, engaged their attention, and excited their curiosity. On his rising up, instead of beginning to pray, as was the usual practice, he looked around the congregation, with a piercing eye and earnest attention, and after a minute’s profound silence, he addressed them with great solemnity in the following words: ‘My beloved brethren! I am told you have come here to-day to fast and pray; a very good work indeed, provided you have come with a sincere desire to glorify God thereby. But if your design is merely to comply with a customary practice, or with the wish of your church officers, you are guilty of the greatest folly imaginable, as you had much better have staid at home and earned your three shillings and six pence.* But if your minds are indeed impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and you are really desirous of humbling yourselves before Almighty God, your heavenly Father, come, join with me, and let us pray.’ This had an effect so uncommon and extraordinary on the congregation, that the utmost seriousness was universally manifested. The prayer and the sermon added greatly to the impressions already made, and tended to rouse the attention, influence the mind command the affections, and increase the temper which had been so happily produced. Many had reason to bless God for his unexpected visit, and to reckon this day one of the happiest of their lives.†

“While on this subject, we may introduce another anecdote of this wonderful man, to show the dealings of God with him, and the deep contemplations of his mind. He was attending the duties of

the Lord's day in his own congregation as usual, where the custom was to have morning and evening service with only a half hour's intermission, to relieve the attention. He had preached in the morning, and in the intermission had walked into the woods for meditation, the weather being warm. He was reflecting on the infinite wisdom of God, as manifested in all his works, and particularly in the wonderful method of salvation, through the death and sufferings of his beloved Son. This subject suddenly opened on his mind with such a flood of light, that his views of the glory, and the infinite majesty of Jehovah, were so inexpressibly great as entirely to overwhelm him, and he fell, almost lifeless, to the ground. When he had revived a little, all he could do was to raise a fervent prayer that God would withdraw himself from him, or that he must perish under a view of his ineffable glory. When able to reflect on his situation, he could not but abhor himself as a weak and despicable worm, and seemed to be overcome with astonishment, that a creature so unworthy and insufficient, had ever dared to attempt the instruction of his fellow-men in the nature and attributes of so glorious a Being. Overstaying his usual time, some of his elders went in search of him, and found him prostrate on the ground, unable to rise, and incapable of informing them of the cause. They raised him up, and after some time brought him to the church, and supported him to the pulpit, which he ascended on his hands and knees, to the no small astonishment of the congregation. He remained silent a considerable time, earnestly supplicating Almighty God (as he told the writer) to hide himself from him, that he might be enabled to address his people, who were by this time lost in wonder to know what had produced this uncommon event. His prayers were heard, and he became able to stand up, by holding the desk. He now began the most affecting and pathetic address that the congregation had ever received from him. He gave a surprising account of the views he had, of the infinite wisdom of God, and greatly deplored his own incapacity to speak to them concerning a being so infinitely glorious beyond all his powers of description. He attempted to show something of what had been discovered to him of the astonishing wisdom of Jehovah, of which it was impossible for human nature to form adequate conceptions. He then broke out into so fervent and expressive a prayer, as greatly to surprise the congregation, and draw tears from every eye. A sermon followed, that continued the solemn scene, and made very lasting impressions on all the hearers.*

"The great increase of communicants in his church was a good evidence of his pastoral care and powerful preaching, as it exceeded that of most churches in the synod. But his labours were not confined to the pulpit. He was indefatigable in his endeavours to communicate, in private families, a savour of the knowledge of spiritual and divine things. In his parochial visits, he used regularly to go through his congregation in order, so as to carry the unsearchable riches of Christ to every house. He earnestly pressed it on the conscience of parents to instruct their children at home by plain and easy questions, so as gradually to expand their young minds, and prepare them for the reception of the more practical doctrines of the gospel. In this, Mr. Tennent has presented an excellent example to his brethren in the ministry; for certain it is, that more good may be done in a congregation, by this domestic mode of instruction, than any one can imagine, who has not made the trial. Children and servants are in this way prepared for the teachings of the sanctuary, and to reap the full benefit of the word publicly preached. He made it a practice in all these visits to enforce practical religion on all, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, master and servant. To this he was particularly attentive, it being a favourite observation with him, 'that he loved a religion that a man could live by.'

“Mr Tennent carefully avoided the discussion of controversial subjects, unless specially called to it by particular circumstances, and then he was ever ready to assign the reason of his faith. The following occurrence will show the general state of his mind and feelings in regard to such subjects. A couple of young clergymen, visiting at his house, entered into a dispute on the question, at that time much controverted in New England, whether faith or repentance were first in order, in the conversion of a sinner. Not being able to determine the point, they agreed to make Mr. Tennent their umpire, and to dispute the subject at length before him. He accepted the proposal, and, after a solemn debate for some time, his opinion being asked, he very gravely took his pipe from his mouth, looked out of his window, pointed to a man ploughing on a hill at some distance, and asked the young clergymen, if they knew that man: on their answering in the negative, he told them it was one of his elders, who, to his full conviction, had been a sincere Christian for more than thirty years. ‘Now,’ said Mr. Tennent, ‘ask him, whether faith or repentance came first, what do you think he would say?’ They said, they could not tell. ‘Then,’ says he, ‘I will tell you: he would say, that he cared not which came first, but that he had got them both. Now, my friends,’ he added, ‘be careful that you have both a true faith, and a sincere repentance, and do not be greatly troubled which comes first.’ It is not, however, to be supposed by this, that Mr. Tennent was unfriendly to a deep and accurate examination of all important theological doctrines. There were few men more earnest than he, to have young clergymen well instructed and thoroughly furnished for their work. This, indeed, was an object on which his heart was much set, and which he exerted himself greatly to promote.

“Mr. Tennent was remarkably distinguished for a pointed attention to the particular circumstances and situation of the afflicted, either in body or mind, and would visit them with as much care and attention as a physician, and frequently indeed proved an able one, to both soul and body. But his greatest talent was that of a peace-maker, which he possessed in so eminent a degree, that probably none have exceeded, and very few have equalled him in it. He was sent for, far and near, to settle disputes, and heal difficulties, which arose in congregations; and, happily for those concerned, he was generally successful. Indeed, he seldom would relinquish his object till he had accomplished it.

“But while this man of God was thus successful in promoting the best interests of his fellow creatures, and advancing the glory of his Lord and Master, the great enemy of mankind was not likely to observe the destruction of his kingdom without making an effort to prevent it. As he assailed our blessed Saviour, in the days of his flesh, with all his art and all his power, so has he always made the faithful followers of the Redeemer the objects of his inveterate malice. If the good man of whom we write, was greatly honoured by peculiar communications from on high, he was also very often the subject of the severe buffetings of that malignant and fallen spirit.

“The time of which we are now speaking was remarkable for a great revival of religion, in which Mr. Tennent was considerably instrumental, and in which a Mr. John Rowland, brought up with Mr. Tennent at the Log College, was also very remarkable for his successful preaching, among all ranks of people. Possessing a commanding eloquence, as well as other estimable qualities, he became very popular, and was much celebrated throughout the country. His celebrity and success were subjects of very serious regret to many careless worldlings, who placed all their happiness in the enjoyment of temporal objects, and considered and represented Mr. Rowland and his brethren as fanatics and hypocrites. This was specially applicable to many of the great men of the then

province of New Jersey, and particularly to the Chief Justice, who was well known for his disbelief of revelation. There was, at this time, prowling through the country, a noted man by the name of Tom Bell, whose knowledge and understanding were very considerable, and who greatly excelled in low art and cunning. His mind was totally debased, and his whole conduct betrayed a soul capable of descending to every species of iniquity. In all the arts of theft, robbery, fraud, deception, and defamation, he was so deeply skilled, and so thoroughly practised, that it is believed, he never had his equal in this country. He had been indicted in almost every one of the middle colonies; but his ingenuity and cunning always enabled him to escape punishment. This man unhappily resembled Mr. Rowland, in his external appearance, so as hardly to be known from him, without the most careful examination.

"It so happened, that Tom Bell arrived one evening, at a tavern in Princeton, dressed in a dark, parson's gray frock. On his entering the tavern, about dusk, the late John Stockton, Esq., of that town, a pious and respectable man, to whom Mr. Rowland was well known, went up to Bell, and addressed him as Mr. Rowland, and was inviting him to go home with him. Bell assured him of his mistake. It was with some difficulty that Mr. Stockton acknowledged his error, and then informed Bell, that it had arisen from his great resemblance to Mr. Rowland. This hint was sufficient for the prolific genius of that notorious impostor. The next day, Bell went into the county of Hunterdon, and stopped in a congregation where Mr. Rowland had formerly preached once or twice, but where he was not intimately known. Here he met with a member of the congregation, to whom he introduced himself as the Rev. Mr. Rowland, who had preached to them some time before. This gentleman immediately invited him to his house, to spend the week; and begged him, as the people were without a minister, to preach for them on the next Sabbath, to which Bell agreed, and notice was accordingly given to the neighbourhood. The impostor was treated with every mark of attention and respect; and a private room was assigned to him, as a study, to prepare for the Sabbath. The sacred day arrived, and he was invited to ride to church with the ladies in the family wagon, and the master of the house accompanied them on an elegant horse. When they had arrived near the church, Bell on a sudden discovered, that he had left his notes in his study, and proposed to ride back for them on the fine horse, by which means he should be able to return in time for the service. This proposal was instantly agreed to, and Bell mounted the horse, returned to the house, rifled the desk of his host, and made off with the horse. Wherever he stopped, he called himself the Rev. John Rowland.

"At the time this event took place, Messrs. Tennent and Rowland had gone into Pennsylvania, or Maryland, with Mr. Joshua Anderson, and Mr. Benjamin Stevens, (both members of a church contiguous to that where Bell had practised his fraud) on business of a religious nature. Soon after their return, Mr. Rowland was charged with the above robbery: he gave bonds to appear at the court at Trenton, and the affair made a great noise throughout the colony. At the court of oyer and terminer, the judge charged the grand jury on the subject with great severity. After long consideration, the jury returned into court without finding a bill. The judge reprovved them, in an angry manner, and ordered them out again. They again returned without finding a bill, and were again sent out with threatenings of severe punishment if they persisted in their refusal. At last they agreed, and brought in a bill for the alleged crime. On the trial, Messrs. Tennent, Anderson, and Stevens, appeared as witnesses, and fully proved an alibi in favour of Mr. Rowland, by swearing, that on the very day on which the robbery was committed, they were with Mr. Rowland, and heard

him preach in Pennsylvania or Maryland. The jury accordingly acquitted him without hesitation, to the great disappointment and mortification of his prosecutors, and of many other enemies to the great revival of religion that had recently taken place; but to the great joy of the serious and well disposed.

“The spirits hostile to the spread of the gospel were not, however, so easily overcome. In their view, an opportunity was now presented, favourable for inflicting a deep wound on the cause of Christianity; and, as if urged on by the malice of man’s great enemy, they resolved that no means should be left untried, no arts unemployed, for the destruction of these distinguished servants of God. Many and various were the circumstances which still contributed to inspire them with hopes of success. The testimony of the person who had been robbed, was positive that Mr. Rowland was the robber; and this testimony was corroborated by that of a number of individuals who had seen Tom Bell personating Mr. Rowland, using his name, and in possession of the horse. These sons of Belial had been able, after great industry used for the purpose, to collect a mass of evidence of this kind, which they considered as establishing the fact; but Mr. Rowland was now out of their power by the verdict of not guilty. Their vengeance, therefore, was directed against the witnesses by whose testimony he had been cleared; and, they were accordingly arraigned for perjury, before a court of quarter sessions, in the county; and the grand jury received a strict charge, the plain import of which was, that these good men ought to be indicted. After an examination of the testimony on one side only, as is the custom in such cases, the grand jury did, accordingly, find bills of indictment against Messrs. Tennent, Anderson, and Stevens, for wilful and corrupt perjury. Their enemies, and the enemies of the gospel, now began to triumph. They gloried in the belief, that an indelible stain would be fixed on the professors of religion, and of consequence on religion itself; and that this new light, by which they denominated all appearance of piety, would soon be extinguished for ever.

“These indictments were removed to the supreme court; and poor Mr. Anderson, living in the county, and conscious of his entire innocence, could not brook the idea of lying under the odium of the hateful crime of perjury, he, therefore, demanded a trial at the first court of oyer and terminer. This proved most seriously injurious to him, for he was pronounced guilty, and most cruelly and unjustly condemned to stand one hour on the court-house steps, with a paper on his breast, whereon was written in large letters, ‘This is for wilful and corrupt perjury;’ which sentence was executed upon him.

“Messrs. Tennent and Stevens were summoned to appear at the next court; and attended accordingly, depending on the aid of Mr. John Coxe, an eminent lawyer, who had been previously employed to conduct their defence. As Mr. Tennent was wholly unacquainted with the nature of forensic litigation, and did not know of any person living who could prove his innocence, (all the persons who were with him being indicted) his only resource and consolation was, to commit himself to the divine will, and if he must suffer, to take it as from the hand of God, who, he well knew, could make even the wrath of man to praise him;* and considering it as probable that he might suffer, he had prepared a sermon to be preached from the pillory, if that should be his fate. On his arrival at Trenton, he found the famous Mr. Smith, of New York, father of the late chief justice of Canada, one of the ablest lawyers in America, and of a religious character, who had voluntarily attended to aid in his defence; also his brother Gilbert, who was now settled in the pastoral charge of the second Presbyterian church, in Philadelphia, and who brought Mr. John

Kinsey, one of the first counsellors of that city, for the same purpose. Messrs. Tennent and Stevens met these gentlemen at Mr. Coxe's, the morning before the trial was to come on. Mr. Coxe requested that they would bring in their witnesses, that they might examine them previously to their going into court. Mr. Tennent answered, that he did not know of any witnesses but God and his own conscience. Mr. Coxe replied, 'If you have no witnesses, sir, the trial must be put off; otherwise you most certainly will be convicted. You well know the strong testimony that will be brought against you, and the exertions that are making to accomplish your ruin.' Mr. Tennent replied, 'I am sensible of all this, yet it never shall be said that I have delayed the trial, or been afraid to meet the justice of my country. I know my own innocence, and that God whose I am, and whom I serve, will never suffer me to fall by these snares of the devil, or by the wicked machinations of his agents or servants. Therefore, gentlemen, go on to the trial.' Messrs. Smith and Kinsey, who were both religious men, told him that his confidence and trust in God, as a Christian minister of the gospel, was well founded, and before a heavenly tribunal would be all-important to him; but assured him it would not avail in an earthly court, and urged his consent to put off the trial. Mr. Tennent continued inflexible in his refusal; on which Mr. Coxe told him, that since he was determined to go to trial, he had the satisfaction of informing him, that they had discovered a flaw in the indictment, which might prove favourable to him on a demurrer. He asked for an explanation, and on finding that it was to admit the fact in a legal point of view, and rest on the law arising from it, Mr. Tennent broke out with great vehemence, saying that this was another snare of the devil, and before he would consent to it he would suffer death. He assured his counsel, that his confidence in God was so strong, and his assurance that he would bring about his deliverance in some way or other, was so great, that he did not wish them to delay the trial for a moment.

"Mr. Stevens, whose faith was not of this description, and who was bowed down to the ground under the most gloomy apprehensions of suffering, as his neighbour Mr. Anderson had done, eagerly seized the opportunity of escape that was offered, and was afterwards discharged on the exception.

"Mr. Coxe still urged putting off the trial, charging Mr. Tennent with acting the part rather of a wild enthusiast, than of a meek and prudent Christian; but he insisted that they should proceed, and left them in astonishment, not knowing how to act, when the bell summoned them to court.

"Mr. Tennent had not walked far in the street, before he met a man and his wife, who stopped him, and asked if his name was not Tennent. He answered in the affirmative, and begged to know if they had any business with him. The man replied, 'you best know.' He told his name, and said that he was from a certain place (which he mentioned) in Pennsylvania or Maryland; that Messrs. Rowland Tennent, Anderson, and Stevens, had lodged either at his house, or in a house wherein he and his wife had been servants, (it is not now certain which) at a particular time, which he named; that on the following day they had heard Messrs. Tennent and Rowland preach; that some nights before they left home, he and his wife waked out of a sound sleep, and each told the other a dream which had just occurred, and which proved to be the same in substance, to wit, that he, Mr. Tennent, at Trenton, was in the greatest possible distress, and that it was in their power and their's only, to relieve him. Considering it as a remarkable dream only, they again went to sleep, and it was twice repeated, precisely in the same manner, to both of them. This made so deep an impression on their minds, that they set off, and here they were, and would know of him what they

were to do. Mr. Tennent immediately went with them to the court house, and his counsel, on examining the man and his wife and finding their testimony to be full to the purpose, were, as they well might be, in perfect astonishment. Before the trial began, another person, of a low character, called on Mr. Tennent, and told him that he was so harrassed in conscience, for the part he had been acting in this prosecution, that he could get no rest till he had determined to come and make a full confession. He sent this man to his counsel also. Soon after, Mr. Stockton from Princeton appeared, and added his testimony. In short, they went to trial, and notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the ablest counsel, who had been employed to aid the attorney-general against Mr. Tennent, the advocates on his side so traced every movement of the defendant on the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, in question, and satisfied the jury so perfectly on the subject, that they did not hesitate honourably to acquit Mr. Tennent, by their unanimous verdict of not guilty, to the great confusion and mortification of his numerous opposers. Mr. Tennent assured the writer of this, that during the whole of this business, his spirits never failed him, and that he contemplated the possibility of his suffering so infamous a punishment, as standing in the pillory, without dismay, and had made preparation, and was fully determined, to deliver a sermon to the people in that situation, if he should be placed in it.

“He went from Trenton to Philadelphia with his brother, and on his return, as he was rising the hill at the entrance of Trenton, without reflecting on what had happened, he accidentally cast his eyes on the pillory, which suddenly so filled him with horror, as completely to unman him, and it was with great difficulty that he kept himself from falling from his horse. He reached the tavern door in considerable danger, was obliged to be assisted to dismount, and it was some time before he could so get the better of his fears and confusion, as to proceed on his journey. Such is the constitution of the human mind! It will often resist, with unshaken firmness, the severest external pressure and violence; and sometimes it yields without reason, when it has nothing to fear. Or, should we not rather say, such is the support which God sometimes affords to his people in the time of their necessity, and such the manner in which he leaves them to feel their own weakness when that necessity is past, that all the praise may be given where alone it is due?

“The writer sincerely rejoices, that though a number of the extraordinary incidents in the life of Mr. Tennent cannot be vouched by public testimony and authentic documents, yet the singular manner in which a gracious God did appear for this his faithful servant in the time of that distress which has just been noticed, is a matter of public notoriety, and capable of being verified by the most unquestionable testimony and records.

“This special instance of the interference of the righteous judge of all the earth ought to yield consolation to pious people in seasons of great difficulty and distress, where there is none that seems able to deliver them. Yet it ought to afford no encouragement to the enthusiast, who refuses to use the means of preservation and deliverance which God puts in his power. True confidence in God is always accompanied with the use of all lawful means, and with the rejection of all that are unlawful. It consists in an unshaken belief, that while right means are used, God will give that issue which shall be most for his glory and his people's good. The extraordinary occurrence here recorded may also serve as a solemn warning to the enemies of God's people, and to the advocates of infidelity, not to strive by wicked and deep laid machinations to oppose the success of the gospel, nor to attempt to injure the persons and characters of those faithful servants of the Most High, whom sooner or later he will vindicate to the unspeakable confusion of

all who have persecuted and traduced them.

“Mr. Tennent was a man of the most scrupulous integrity, and though of a very grave and solemn deportment, he had a remarkably cheerful disposition, and generally communicated his instructions with so much ease and pleasantry, as greatly to gain the confidence and affection of all with whom he conversed, especially of children and young people. In all his intercourse with strangers and men of the world, he so managed his conversation, that, while he seldom neglected a proper opportunity to impress the mind with serious things, he always made them covet his company, rather than avoid it; well knowing that there is a time for all things, and that even instruction and reproof, to be useful, must be prudently and seasonably given.

“An instance of this disposition occurred in Virginia. The late Rev. Mr. Samuel Blair and Mr. Tennent were sent by the synod on a mission into that province. They stopped one evening at a tavern for the night, where they found a number of guests, with whom they supped in a common room. After the table was cleared, our missionaries withdrew from it. Cards were then called for, and the landlord brought in a pack and laid them on the table. One of the gentlemen very politely asked the missionaries if they would not take a cut with them, not knowing that they were clergymen. Mr. Tennent very pleasantly answered, ‘With all my heart, gentlemen, if you can convince us, that thereby we can serve our master’s cause, or contribute any thing towards the success of our mission.’ This drew some smart reply from the gentleman, when Mr. T. with solemnity added, ‘We are ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We profess ourselves his servants; we are sent on his business, which is to persuade mankind to repent of their sins, to turn from them, and to accept of that happiness and salvation which is offered in the gospel.’ This very unexpected reply, delivered in a very tender though solemn manner, and with great apparent sincerity, so engaged the gentlemen’s attention, that the cards were laid aside, and an opportunity was afforded, and cheerfully embraced, for explaining in a sociable conversation, during the rest of the evening, some of the leading and most important doctrines of the gospel, to the satisfaction and apparent edification of the hearers.

“Resignation to the will of God in all his dispensations, however dark and afflictive, was among the excellent graces that adorned the character of this man of God. He had been tried in the course of God’s providence in various ways; but domestic afflictions, as yet, had not been laid upon him. The time, however, was now come when his character was to be brightened by a severe test of his resignation and obedience, a test attended with many peculiarly distressing circumstances. His youngest son, who was one of the handsomest of men, had just come into public life; had commenced the practice of physic; was married, and had one child. To the great distress of the parents, he discovered, though possessed of the sweetest temper and most agreeable manners, no regard to the things that belonged to his eternal peace. Wholly negligent of religion, he indulged without restraint in the gaiety and follies of the world. The pious father was incessant at the throne of grace in behalf of his dissipated son; and was continually entertaining hopes that God would, by the influences of his Spirit, arrest him in his career, and bring him into the church of Christ, before his own summons should arrive; that he might die in peace, under the consoling hope of meeting this dear child in a better world. God, however, had determined otherwise; and the son, while engaged in inoculating a number of persons, in a house he had obtained for the purpose, near his father’s neighbourhood, was seized in an unusually violent manner, with a raging fever. With the disorder, he was brought to a sudden and alarming view of his lost condition by nature, and the

grievous transgressions of his past life. His sins were all set in dread array against him. A horrible darkness, and an awful dread of the eternal displeasure of Jehovah, fell on him, so as to make him the dreadful example of a convicted sinner, trembling under the confounding presence of an angry God. The affectionate and pious father was constantly in prayer and supplication, that God would have mercy upon him. He seldom left the side of his bed. For many days the fever raged with unabated fury; but the immediate distresses which it occasioned, were lost or forgotten in the severer pains of an awakened conscience. Such was the height to which his anguish at last arose, that the bed on which he lay was shaken by the violent and united convulsions of mind and body. The parents were touched to the quick; and their unqualified submission to God, as a sovereign God, was put to the most rigorous proof. But in due time they came out of the furnace, as gold tried in the fire. God, in his infinite and condescending grace and mercy, was at last pleased, in some measure, to hear the many prayers put up by the parents, and many pious friends, for the relief of the poor sufferer. His views of the lost state of man by nature; of the only means of salvation, through the death and sufferings of the Saviour; of the necessity of the inward regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, became clear and consistent, and the importance of a practical acquaintance with these things was deeply and rationally impressed on his mind. He now saw, that salvation which he had deemed almost or altogether hopeless to him, was possible. His mind became calm, and he attended to religious instruction and advice. In a short time he began to give as much evidence of a change of heart as a death-bed repentance (rarely to be greatly relied on) can easily afford. He sent for his companions in iniquity, and, notwithstanding his disorder, exerted himself to the utmost to address them, which he did in the most solemn, awful, and impressive manner, as a person, who, by the infinite mercy of a prayer-hearing God, had been delivered from a hell gaping to receive him. He besought them, by all the terrors of everlasting destruction, by all the love they ought to bear to their own immortal souls; by the love of a crucified Jesus, who poured out his soul unto death, that they might live forever; by his own awful sufferings and terrible example; that they would repent and turn to God. This happy change was a reviving cordial to the distressed and suffering father. His soul was overjoyed, and his mouth was full of the praises of redeeming love. His mind and spirits were hereby prepared, with true resignation, to surrender the son of his advanced age to the God who gave him. After a few days more of severe suffering in body, but rejoicing in mind, the son was removed from time to eternity. There being no minister in the neighborhood, the father undertook to preach a funeral sermon. All the son's old companions that could be sent to, were especially invited, and the old gentleman preached in such a manner, with a particular address to the young men, as to astonish every hearer; and while the seriously inclined wondered and adored, the careless were confounded and greatly alarmed.

"Scarcely had Mr. Tennent got over this heavy affliction, and returned to an active and useful course of life for a few years, when God again called him to another severe and arduous struggle of the same nature. His eldest son, John, promised fair to make a distinguished figure in life, had possessed a large share in the affections of both father and mother, and was more dear to their hearts than ever, since the death of his brother. It so happened, that the father was called to New-York to heal some differences between the members of the church there.—The next morning after his arrival, he went into a bookstore, when one of the ministers of the Episcopal church came in, and on being introduced to him, after the common salutations, told him he condoled with him on the death of his eldest son in the West-Indies. The old gentleman was at first struck dumb. With difficulty he soon inquired how the news came; being informed that it was by a circuitous route, he

suddenly turned, and said, 'The will of the Lord be done.' The clergyman observed, that it was happy for him to be able so cordially to submit to it. Mr. Tennent replied, 'The Lord is my God, his will be done.' On being asked by the bookseller, who was his particular friend, to retire into the house, and endeavour to settle his mind, he answered, 'I am come on the Lord's business; my duty requires that I should finish it; when that is done I shall have time enough to mourn for my son.' He immediately set off to attend his appointment, finished the business to his satisfaction, and next day returned home, where he found that a letter had been received by a neighbour, containing the same information which he had before received. Thus, on the most trying occasion, he showed the same submission to the allotment of divine providence that was discoverable in all his former conduct. The following extract from a letter, written at this time to the writer of this narrative, will show the temper of his mind in his own language. 'Freehold, March, 1776. My dear sir, perhaps before this comes to hand, you will be informed, that He who gave me the honourable epithet of a father, has, in his wise and unerring providence, written me childless.* My son is dead. This account I had yesterday from a letter written to a friend; the account is so straight (though not circumstantial) that I cannot doubt its truth. The tender mother has not heard it, nor do I intend she shall, until authenticated. This I mention as a caution to you, in case you should write me before the matter is published. Let the dear heart have all possible ease, before the load, which it is likely will try her life, falls upon her. I know her attachment to that child; his conduct has been such as greatly endeared him to us. Our pains and expense in his education have been great, but infinitely short of what God has done for him. He has, therefore, the best right to him. Should we then, were it in our power, obstruct his taking full possession of his own property? God forbid! This, sir, through God's goodness, is not only what I say, but it is the temper of my soul, for which God only deserves the honour. It is now above fifty years since my soul resigned itself to God in Jesus Christ. I had then neither son nor daughter; I was completely satisfied with Him, and, blessed be his name, I am so now. Have I then reason to cry out as if ruined? O! no: on the contrary, I have the utmost reason for thanksgiving, that he has not, in righteous judgment, deprived me of himself, in whom all fulness dwells. My wife and myself are now hastening to childhood; if spared a few years, we shall need one to lead us; and we shall look to you, under God. All the benefit you can expect from so doing, will consist in the satisfaction of your own mind, that you have helped two old people through the last steps of their pilgrimage.' Thus did this pious man turn every event of life, however afflictive, to the praise and glory of God, and he seldom omitted an opportunity of inculcating the same disposition on all his acquaintance.

"When the late Rev. George Whitefield was last in this country, Mr. Tennent paid him a visit as he was passing through New Jersey. Mr. Whitefield and a number of other clergymen, among whom was Mr. Tennent, were invited to dinner by a gentleman in the neighborhood where the late Mr. William Livingston, since governor of New Jersey, resided, and who, with several other lay gentlemen, were among the guests. After dinner, in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation, Mr. Whitefield adverted to the difficulties attending the gospel ministry, arising from the small success with which their labours were crowned. He greatly lamented, that all their zeal, activity and fervour availed but little; said, that he was weary with the burdens and fatigues of the day; declared his great consolation was, that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ; that the prospect of a speedy deliverance had supported his spirits, or that he should, before now, have sunk under his labour. He then appealed to the ministers around him, if it were not their great comfort that they should soon go to rest. They

generally assented, excepting Mr. Tennent, who sat next to Mr. Whitefield, in silence; and by his countenance discovered but little pleasure in the conversation. On which, Mr. Whitefield turning to him, and tapping him on the knee, said, 'Well! brother Tennent, you are the oldest man amongst us, do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand, when you will be called home and freed from all the difficulties attending this chequered scene?' Mr. T. bluntly answered, 'I have no wish about it.' Mr. W. pressed him again; and Mr. T. again answered, 'No Sir, it is no pleasure to me at all, and if you knew your duty, it would be none to you. I have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can—as well as I can—and to serve my Lord and Master as faithfully as I can, until he shall think proper to call me home.' Mr. W. still urged for an explicit answer to his question, in case the time of death were left to his own choice. Mr. Tennent replied, 'I have no choice about it; I am God's servant, and have engaged to do his business, as long as he pleases to continue me therein. But now, brother, let me ask you a question. What do you think I would say, if I was to send my man Tom into the field to plough; and if at noon I should go to the field, and find him lounging under a tree, and complaining. 'Master the sun is very hot, and the ploughing hard and difficult, I am tired and weary of the work you have appointed me, and am overdone with the heat and burden of the day: do master let me return home and be discharged from this hard service?' What would I say? Why, that he was an idle, lazy fellow; that it was his business to do the work that I had appointed him, until I, the proper judge, should think fit to call him home. Or, suppose you had hired a man to serve you faithfully for a given time in a particular service, and he should, without any reason on your part, and before he had performed half his service, become weary of it, and upon every occasion be expressing a wish to be discharged, or placed in other circumstances? Would you not call him a wicked and slothful servant, and unworthy of the privileges of your employ?' The mild, pleasant, and Christian-like manner, in which this reproof was administered, rather increased the social harmony and edifying conversation of the company; who became satisfied that it was very possible to err even in desiring, with undue earnestness, 'to depart and be with Christ,' which in itself is 'far better' than to remain in this imperfect state; and that it is the duty of the Christian, in this respect, to say, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.'

"Among Mr. Tennent's qualifications, none were more conspicuous than his activity both of body and mind. He hated and despised sloth. He was almost always in action—never wearied in well-doing, nor in serving his friends. His integrity and independence of spirit were observable on the slightest acquaintance. He was so great a lover of truth, that he could not bear the least aberration from it, even in a joke. He was remarkable for his candour and liberality of sentiment, with regard to those who differed from him in opinion. His hospitality and domestic enjoyments were even proverbial. His public spirit was always conspicuous, and his attachment to what he thought the best interests of his country, was ardent and inflexible. He took an early and decided part with his country in the commencement of the late revolutionary war. He was convinced that she was oppressed, and that her petitions to the sovereign of the mother country were constitutional, loyal, moderate, and reasonable; that the treatment they received, was irrational, tyrannical, and intolerable. As he made it a rule, however, never to carry politics into the pulpit, he had no way to manifest his zeal for the public measures, but by his private prayers, and by his decided opinions delivered in private conversations. But, in this way, his sentiments became universally known, and he was considered as a warm friend to the American cause. Notwithstanding these political opinions, he was not blind to the errors of his countrymen, and

especially to their moral and religious conduct. The following extract from a letter to the author of these sketches, dated Feb. 14, 1775, strongly marks the temper of his mind. 'My very dear Sir, your kind letter came to hand, three days since. Your comforts and sorrows are mine in no small degree; I share with you in both; the tie is such as death cannot dissolve. This is a day of darkness in my view, and few are in any degree properly affected with it. I have, through grace, perhaps, as little to fear for myself, or mine, as any living. I humbly hope we are housed in Jesus; but I am distressed for the nation and land. The ruin of both is awfully threatened; and, though now deferred, may ere long be accomplished, unless reformation takes place. It behoves every one to cry, 'spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.' I know God is merciful; he has, notwithstanding, disinherited a people as dear to him as ever we were, whose sins were not more aggravated than ours. The Lord can deliver, but have we reason to think he will, having told us that he will 'wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalps of such who go on in their trespasses?' Is there any appearance of reformation? Yea, is it not the reverse? Are not our meetings for the preservation of our liberty, often abused by excessive drinking? &c. &c. Have not politics taken place of religion in all our conversations? Is it not become unconstitutional (to use the vulgar language) to mention God's name in company, unless by way of dishonouring, him? Are not things sacred neglected by some, and burlesqued by others? Is not the newspaper substituted for the Bible, on Lord's days, yea, at church? What will the end of these things be? Blessed be God, through Jesus Christ, He is for a sanctuary.'

"Mr. Tennent was on a visit, within less than twenty miles of New York, when a British frigate attempted to pass the batteries, and to proceed up the North River, while General Washington lay with the American army in the city. A very heavy cannonading took place, which was mistaken by the surrounding country for a general attack on our army. Mr. Tennent was deeply affected, and after a violent struggle within himself, he turned to a friend or two present, and said, 'Come, while our fellow citizens are fighting, let us retire to prayer.' They, accordingly, went up into his room, where he most devoutly poured out his soul for about half an hour, in the most fervent prayers, wrestling with, God in behalf of his suffering country.

"In the winter of 1776-7, the British overran a great part of the state of New Jersey, and particularly the county of Monmouth, where a number of the inhabitants were in the British interests. Such was their apparent power, and the distressed situation of the American army, retreating before them, that it was generally supposed by the people in the country, that the dispute was almost at an end, and that all hopes of successful opposition were nearly extinguished. A British party arose in the county, who seized their fellow citizens, and dragged them to a British provost, where they were treated in the most cruel manner, as rebels and traitors. Even citizens from other parts of the state, who had taken refuge in the county, depending on the known hospitality of the inhabitants, were not respected. In this situation, Mr. Tennent very justly thought himself in great danger; but having no place to flee to for safety, he remained at home, committing himself to the protection of Almighty God. In the month of Dec. 1776, a number of the inhabitants came to his house, and insisted that he should go to Princeton, without delay, and take the benefit of General Howe's proclamation, offering a pardon to those who should seek it within a limited time. He refused, till he found himself in danger of being taken off and committed to a British provost, which he well knew, was but another word for a lingering death. He also found that, in his present state, his usefulness as a minister of the gospel was at an end, unless he complied

with the wishes of the people, most of the whigs of influence having fled. Concluding, that present duty enforced the request which was thus urged upon him, he promised to go to Princeton. On his way, he lodged at the house of a young clergyman, and, on rising in the morning, he seemed greatly oppressed in spirit. On being asked what troubled him, he answered, with a heavy sigh, 'I am going to do a thing for conscience sake, directly against my conscience.' Soon after his return home, to the surprise of every body, the British quarters at Trenton were beaten up, and a British regiment taken at Princeton; the American army again advanced, and took a strong position at Morristown, by which the British in their turn, were obliged to retreat and contract their lines to Brunswick and Amboy. The Americans again got possession of the county of Monmouth, where the whigs returned in force. Mr. Tennent's mind was greatly oppressed with his untoward situation, and he severely blamed his untimely submission.

"About the latter end of February, or beginning of March, 1777, Mr. Tennent was suddenly seized with a fever, attended by violent symptoms. He sent for his family physician, who was in the act of setting off for the legislature of the state, of which he was a member. He called on his patient on his way, but could spend but a few minutes with him. He, however, examined carefully into Mr. Tennent's complaints, and the symptoms attending the disorder. With great candour, the physician informed his patient, that the attack appeared unusually violent; that the case required the best medical aid, and that it was out of his power to attend him. He feared that, at his advanced age, there was not strength of nature sufficient to overcome so severe a shock, and that his symptoms scarcely admitted of a favourable prognostic. The good old man received this news with his usual submission to the divine will; for, as he had always considered himself as bound for eternity, he had endeavoured so to live, that when the summons should come, he would have nothing to do but to die. He calmly replied, 'I am very sensible of the violence of my disorder, that it has racked my constitution to an uncommon degree, and beyond what I have ever before experienced, and that it is accompanied with symptoms of approaching dissolution; but, blessed be God, I have no wish to live, if it should be his will and pleasure to call me hence.' After a moment's pause, he seemed to recollect himself, and varied the expression thus: 'Blessed be God, I have no wish to live, if it should be his will and pleasure to call me hence, unless it should be to see a happy issue to the severe and arduous controversy my country is engaged in; but, even in this, the will of the Lord be done.'

"During his whole sickness, he continued perfectly resigned to the divine will, until death was swallowed up in victory, on the 8th day of March, 1777. His body was buried in his own church, at Freehold, a numerous concourse of people, composed, not only of the members of his own congregation, but of the inhabitants of the whole adjacent country, attending his funeral.

"Mr. Tennent was rather more than six feet high, of a spare thin visage, and of an erect carriage. He had bright, piercing eyes, a long sharp nose, and a long face. His general countenance was grave and solemn, but at all times cheerful and pleasant with his friends. It may be said of him, with peculiar propriety, that he appeared, in an extraordinary manner, to live above the world, and all its allurements. He seemed habitually to have such clear views of spiritual and heavenly things, as afforded him much of the foretaste and enjoyment of them. His faith was really and experimentally 'the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen.' Literally, his daily walk was with God, and he lived 'as seeing him who is invisible.' The divine presence with him, was frequently manifested in his public ministrations, and in his private conduct. His ardent

soul was seldom satisfied, unless he was exerting himself, in some way or other, in public or private, in rendering kind offices and effectual services of friendship, both in spiritual and temporal things, to his fellow-men. Take him in his whole demeanor and conduct, there are few of whom it might more emphatically be said, that he lived the life and died the death of the righteous.

“He was well read in divinity, and was of sound orthodox principles. He professed himself a moderate Calvinist. The doctrines of man’s depravity; the atonement of the Saviour; the absolute necessity of the all-powerful influence of the Spirit of God, to renew the heart and subdue the will; all in perfect consistence with the free agency of the sinner, were among the leading articles of his faith. These doctrines, indeed, were generally interwoven in his public discourses, whatever might be the particular subject discussed. His success was often answerable to his exertions. His people loved him as a father; revered him as the pastor and bishop of their souls; obeyed him as their instructor; and delighted in his company and private conversation as a friend and brother. He carefully avoided making a difference between his doctrines publicly taught and his private practice. Attending a synod, a few years before his death, a strange clergyman, whom he never had before seen, was introduced to the synod, and asked to preach in the evening. Mr. Tennent attended, and was much displeased with the sermon. As the congregation were going out of the church, Mr. Tennent in the crowd, coming up to the preacher, touched him on the shoulder, and said, ‘My brother, when I preach, I take care to save myself, whatever, I do with my congregation.’ The clergyman looked behind him with surprise, and seeing a very grave man, said, ‘What do you mean, Sir?’ Mr. Tennent answered, ‘You have been sending your whole congregation, synod and all, to perdition, and you have not even saved yourself. Whenever I preach, I make it a rule to save myself,’ and then abruptly left him, without his knowing who spoke to him.

“At Mr. Tennent’s death, the poor mourned for him as their patron, their comforter and support; and the rich lamented over him as their departed pastor and friend. The public at large, lost in him a firm assertor of the civil and religious interests of his country. He was truly a patriot, not in words and pretences, not in condemning all who differed from him to proscription and death, but in acting in such a manner, as would have rendered his country most happy, if all had followed his example. He insisted on his own rights and freedom of sentiment, but he was willing to let others enjoy the same privilege; and he thought it of as much importance to live and act well, as to think and speak justly.

“To conclude these imperfect sketches. May all who read the memoirs of this amiable and useful man, fervently and constantly beseech that God, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, that their life may be that of the righteous, so that their latter end may be like his: and that the Great Head of the Church, while he removes faithful and distinguished labourers from the gospel vineyard, may raise up others, who shall possess, even a double portion of their spirit, and who shall be even more successful in winning souls unto Jesus Christ, the great bishop of souls.”

CHAPTER XI(["tw://\[self\]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-"](#))

REMARKS ON THE PRECEDING NARRATIVE

Mr. Tennent’s trance not supernatural—Numerous diseases the cause of the phenomena—Case of Susannah Orrendorf—Mohammed—Lackinford—The dreams of the witnesses, cannot be accounted for on natural principles—God still, occasionally gives admonitory dreams.

It must be acknowledged, that some of the facts recorded in the preceding narrative, are of a marvellous nature; but we are inclined to believe that they all may be accounted for on natural principles, except one. The appearance of death, when life is not extinguished, but only suspended, has been often observed, on the termination of nervous fevers, and in epileptic and apoplectic fits. The temporary loss of memory on recovery, has also been often observed. Persons have been known to lie in one of these trances, for weeks together. And there is too much reason to fear, that many persons have been buried alive, by being prematurely carried to the grave. This undoubtedly would have been the unhappy case of Mr. Tennent, had not his young friend interposed. And as to the happy state of his mind, during this period, and his imagining that he was in heaven, it is all very natural, and does not require that we should suppose the soul to have been separated from the body. We would not deny, that a man through life so highly favoured in receiving extraordinary manifestations of God's perfections, and especially of his love, might, even when in this state of apparent death, have been the subject of a gracious influence, which filled his imagination with the rapturous views, which he enjoyed. We are disposed, however, to admire Mr. Tennent's prudence, in not being forward to speak of his experience, during this period; and we do not feel disposed to regret, that he never committed to writing an account of his visions; or if he did, that his executor never could lay his hands on the manuscript. When Paul was caught up to Paradise, and heard and saw the glory of the third heaven, he uttered not a word respecting the nature of his vision. He merely said, that he "heard unspeakable things, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." The writer would further remark, that in certain states of the nervous system, when the common functions of life seem to be suspended, it is no uncommon thing for the imagination to be strongly affected. In the year 1791, he went several miles out his way, in company with three distinguished clergymen, to visit a young woman, the daughter of a wealthy German farmer, not far from Hagerstown, Md., who had been for more than a year, subject every day, at the same hour, to certain epileptic paroxysms, during which, she had the appearance of one dead, or in a deep sleep, and always came to herself, singing. And professed, that, every day, she visited heaven; and gave a particular account of what she saw in the celestial world. During the whole time that this nervous disease lasted, the family solemnly declared, that she ate nothing, except that she wet her mouth occasionally with a few drops of sugar and water. The description which she gave of heaven, and her passage thither, had a strong resemblance to Mohammed's accounts of paradise; so that, as he was in early life subject to epileptic fits, the writer has been induced to think it probable, that his whole imposture had its origin in the visions which he experienced during these paroxysms; and that, at first, being persuaded that he had divine communications, he afterwards resorted to fraud to keep up his pretensions. However this may be, the young woman attracted multitudes from a distance, who were fully persuaded, that she did really visit heaven, and some weak people, who had recently lost dear friends, come to consult this girl, whether she saw any such persons in heaven; and for a while, so great was the fame of her celestial visits, that preachers who had visited her, publicly mentioned what they heard from her lips, in their sermons. On one occasion, a number of fiery zealots, under the strong influence of party spirit, believing that they and they only were the favourites of heaven, visited her and seriously inquired, which of the several denominations of Christians had the approbation of Christ. To the great gratification of most, they received a signal rebuke to their sectarian spirit; for the young woman, looking sternly at them, answered, "persons are not judged of in heaven by their denomination, but by the purity of their hearts, and lives." And when, in their prayers, they employed deafening vociferation, she

asked them when they were done, whether they thought that their Maker was deaf, that they made so much noise. As many as two hundred persons were known to have visited Susannah Orrendorf, on the same day. The writer has now before him, a printed narrative of the apparent death of Charles Lackingford, Allegheny county, Maryland. This account is confirmed by the affidavit of four of his neighbours, who declare, on oath, that they had been acquainted with the said Lackingford for at least twelve years, and that he had ever supported the character of an upright, honest man, and a good citizen; and that the utmost reliance may be placed on his word. In their affidavit, before a justice of the peace, these four men, whose names are given, declare, "That on, or about the 14th day of August, 1803, they were sent for to the house of Mr. Charles Lackingford about six miles from Fort Cumberland; that on their arrival, they found said Lackingford, lying stretched out as dead, to all human appearance; his eyes closed, his hands clenched, and limbs stiff. "That they were informed by his family, that he had died on that morning, apparently in an apoplexy: That they were solicited to render the family assistance in discharging the last rites of humanity; that the deponents caused a coffin to be made; but that on the night between the 14th and 15th of the month, while watching with the supposed corpse, precisely at 12 o'clock, some inarticulate sounds were heard by all the deponents, as proceeding from the abdomen of the said Lackingford; on which account, on the morning following, they deferred the intended interment. That the sounds were again repeated at 12 o'clock, on the noon of the 18th, when symptoms of returning life appeared; and at a quarter after 4 o'clock, P. M., the said Lackingford opened his eyes, and in a violent voice exclaimed, 'where am I?' On which he was released from his winding-sheet, and placed in bed, when he declared, that the arcana of the infernal regions had been opened to him, and that he had actually seen and conversed with devils. Deponents further say, that during the four days above stated, the body of the said Lackingford received no nourishment of any kind; and except the noise above stated, was to all appearance, a dead corpse; and deponents further say, that to the best of their opinion and belief, the trance of the said Lackingford cannot be ascribed to any physical cause; or to any other than one of the hidden and mysterious visitations of Providence. Further deponents say not.

"Taken and subscribed before me, "WILLIAM CUSHING, J. P., A. C."

SEAL.

We have seen accounts of many instances of persons lying for days, and even for weeks, in what are called trances, and of their telling of very marvellous things which had been seen by them, during the apparent suspension of life; but we have selected this account because of its being so well authenticated. The man's own narrative of his visit to hell, as he imagined, occupies about twelve pages. This we do not wish to transcribe. It serves, however, to show, how differently, different persons are affected in such a state of syncope. Mr. Tennent imagined himself in heaven; so did Susannah Orrendorf; but Mr. Lackingford was persuaded that he was in hell, and held much conversation with Belphegor, the high constable of the place, who took great pains to show him all the apartments, where different classes of sinners were confined and punished.

It may, however, be satisfactory to hear Mr. Lackingford's account of his former life, and of the circumstances attending his falling into this trance. "I am now," says he, "fifty-seven years of age. In my early days, I was brought up to the mercantile business, at a store on Elk Ridge Landing, near the City of Baltimore. In this situation, I made acquaintance with most of the fashionable vices

of commercial life, and must confess, that I indulged in no small practice of them; but, however, thank heaven, without impairing my naturally athletic constitution. Early in the contest for our glorious independence, I became a soldier, in defence of my country's rights, and in that capacity, continued to fight her battles, until Great Britain was forced to acknowledge our sovereignty.

"I am now settled on my share of land-rights, granted by congress for my services; and in the capacity of a plain farmer, have earned my bread for the last twenty years. I never had any ambition to see my name in print, or to hear myself talked of, beyond the limits of my little farm; but I could not resist the solicitations of my neighbours, to give to the world the extraordinary adventures which I experienced, during the four days and nights, when nature suspended her functions in my system, and left the soul unclogged by the massy materials of the body, to roam at large into the hidden regions of the damned spirits.

"On the 14th of August, 1803, just after sunrise, as I was stacking some hay, I heard a voice, as if it proceeded from the middle of the stack, exclaim, 'Charles, go to thy bed.' Terrified and struck dumb, I instantly threw down the stack, supposing some one was concealed therein, but to my still greater amazement, found no one; I looked all around me; no living object was visible. I threw myself on my knees, to implore the aid of Providence; but, alas! my power of utterance was deprived me—my tongue refused its office. Every limb trembled with fear, and still the same voice struck with redoubled energy on my astonished ears. I rose up,—a dimness overshadowed my eyes, and I went trembling towards my house, resolved to obey the invisible mandate. I had scarcely reached my bed, when one of the most welcome sleeps closed my eye-lids." Then he goes on to narrate what he imagined he saw and heard, in the infernal regions. The only thing in the foregoing history of William Tennent, which cannot be accounted for, upon the ordinary principles of human nature, is, the dreams of the man and his wife, which brought them from Maryland to Trenton, and whose testimony was absolutely necessary to save this good man from an ignominious punishment. In this case, if the facts are true—concerning which there can be no reasonable doubt—there must have been a supernatural interposition. These simple people could have had no knowledge of what was transacting in New Jersey; and when they came to Trenton, they knew not for what purpose their presence was needed. In all ages of the world, suggestions and impressions have been made in dreams, which have been important to the safety or interest of certain persons, for whose sake the communication was made. And we learn from the Bible, that dreams of this supernatural kind, have not been confined to the pious, but have been granted to heathen kings, and other persons who knew not the true God, as in the case of the butler and baker, of Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar. Such dreams are still on certain occasions granted, probably by the ministry of angels, for the admonition or direction of the people of God; or for reasons unknown to us. Although it is true, "in the multitude of dreams there are divers varieties," and although false prophets pretended to receive communications in dreams, and at this time, many persons are superstitiously affected by dreams, yet the truth of the fact ought not to be denied, that even in our day, dreams are sometimes admonitory, and seem to preserve certain persons from evils, which they could not otherwise escape. God has now informed us, that this mode of communication with men should entirely cease; and if there are, however rarely, such communications to certain persons, in sleep, it furnishes some proof of the existence of a world of spirits, invisible to us, but near; and that we are surrounded, and often guarded, by kind angels, who minister unto us, and preserve us from many evils of which we are not aware. Such dreams

are not properly called miraculous, nor can the persons to whom they are vouchsafed, be said to be inspired. They are merely extraordinary intimations to the mind, probably as was said, by the agency of guardian angels. The only unaccountable thing in this whole business is, that Mr. Tennent and his fellow travellers, had not sent off immediately to this distant place for witnesses; for there were many there who had heard him and Mr. Rowland preach. Conscious of innocence, they seem to have apprehended no danger; and when one of their number was found guilty, and actually punished for perjury, there might not have been time to bring persons from such a distance. But in regard to Mr. Tennent, he was not only conscious of innocence, but had such unshaken confidence in God, that he feared nothing; being fully persuaded that He would, in some way, interpose by his providence, for his deliverance; or would overrule his unjust condemnation and punishment, for his own glory. This last seems to have been especially on his mind; for we are informed, that he had prepared a sermon for the occasion, to be preached while standing on the pillory.

CHAPTER XII(["tw://\[self\]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-"](#))

ANECDOTES OF REV. WM. TENNENT

Mr. Tennent loses some of his toes—Attempted explanation—Anecdotes supplied by Dr. Miller—Anecdotes from the Assembly's Magazine, with an account of his interview with Murray the Universalist.

We have never known a man in modern times, concerning whom so many extraordinary things are related. The most important of these are contained in Dr. Boudinot's memoir of his life; but many others were omitted; either because he judged them of not sufficient importance to be recorded in such a work, or because, writing for a periodical, he was limited as to the space which the memoir was allowed to occupy. Many of these anecdotes, however, he took a pleasure in relating in conversation with his friends; and those which have been kindly furnished by my friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Miller, were received from him. I have been in some doubt about introducing the contents of this chapter into the volume; but as the anecdotes here given, are all believed to be authentic, it was thought that they would tend to exhibit in a more distinct light, the true character of this extraordinary man. Many others have been current in his vicinity, but as they have been handed down by tradition, they have not been considered as sufficiently authenticated, to be inserted in this memoir; and some of them are of too ludicrous a nature to have a place in a serious narrative.

There is one remarkable thing which happened to Mr. Tennent, not recorded in the memoir written by Dr. Boudinot, which has to most appeared more inexplicable than any other event of his life. One night, as the story goes, when Mr. Tennent was asleep in his own bed, he was waked up by a sharp pain in the region of the toes of one of his feet; and upon getting a light, and examining the foot, it was discovered that several of his toes had been cut entirely off, as if by some sharp instrument. But though the wounded part was bleeding, nothing was seen of the excised members; nor any means by which such a dismemberment could have been effected. In the room was found no animal, rat, cat, or dog, although diligent search was made; neither could there be discovered any sharp instrument, by which such a wound could have been inflicted. Mr. Tennent himself, confidently believed that the injury was done by the prince of darkness, of whose power and malice he was deeply convinced. Others supposed, that it must have been effected by some

domestic animal, which might have made its escape before a light was obtained; as both rats and cats have been known violently to attack and wound persons while asleep. But neither of these explanations give satisfaction. For as to Satan, it cannot be doubted that his malice is great, and that it is especially directed against holy men, and particularly faithful ministers. But we have no evidence that he is now permitted to injure or wound the bodies of the saints. Our fathers were more credulous on this point than we are, and we may dismiss all further notice of this account, as an opinion properly belonging to a former age. And as to the idea, that it might have been the bite of a hungry and voracious rat, or mad cat, the thing is very improbable. Neither of these animals could have, with their teeth, severed the toes from the foot so suddenly; and in that case, the wound would have had marks of the gnawing of such an animal; whereas it was said to have had the appearance of being cut by a sharp instrument. Perhaps the difficulty of accounting for the accident, prevented Dr. Boudinot from inserting the story in Mr. Tennent's memoir; for there can be no doubt that he was well acquainted with the fact, and all its circumstances. The author of this compilation has the more readily consented to record the event, because he has a hypothesis by which he thinks he can account for such an accident.

Upon a survey of the circumstances of the affair, it seems highly probable, that Mr. Tennent was a somnambulist, and received this injury by treading, in his rambles, on some sharp instrument; soon after which he returned to his bed, but did not feel the pain of the wound until he awoke. It is well known, that persons in this kind of sleep, are very little susceptible of the feeling of pain from any accident of this sort; and they seldom ever retain any recollection of the exercises of their minds at the time, or of the scenes through which they have passed. Many instances might be given of persons receiving bodily hurts while in this state, without being awakened thereby; and apparently, without any feeling of pain from wounds which would cause very acute suffering to one awake. And it may not be improper to refer for proof of this, to undoubted facts, witnessed by many, in regard to persons in a mesmeric sleep, who undergo surgical operations, which give intense pain in a common state, without any appearance of sensibility. The writer recollects to have heard of an instance precisely in point, which occurred in Philadelphia, in relation to a son of the late Dr. Sproat, who being a somnambulist, got out of his room at a window on a shed, and jumped on the ground, but lighting on something sharp, cut his foot; and being soon missed, was pursued by his bloody tracks on the snow, with which the ground was at the time covered. But he was not awakened from his sleep by the wound which he received. Other cases of serious injury sustained in the night by persons who could give no account how they occurred, have fallen under the notice of the writer, and which can only be accounted for by this hypothesis. If it be alleged, that Mr. Wm. Tennent was not known to be a somnambulist, it may be answered, that he certainly had a nervous system strung in a very peculiar manner, and many are subject to this kind of sleep, who never know anything about it. And we would adduce the fact under consideration, as a strong presumptive evidence of the thing supposed.

Anecdotes of the Rev. William Tennent, kindly communicated to the author, by the Rev. Doctor Miller, of Princeton.

"This remarkable man was greatly distinguished for decision of character. Many good men of his day, had more intellectual vigour than he possessed. But few of his contemporaries possessed as much as he did of that moral courage,—that fixedness of purpose, and that firmness of Christian heroism, which could not be turned to the right or the left This trait in his character was once very

strongly exemplified at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the College of New Jersey. It is well known that Mr. Tennent was one of the most active and zealous of the founders of that College; and that the great object of those worthy men, in all the labour and expense which they incurred in its establishment, was to train up a pious and learned ministry for the Presbyterian Church. For the attainment of this object, and to guard the College against every species of perversion or abuse, he was ever on the watch, and especially to promote the religious interests of the Institution.

“Soon after William Franklin (son of Benjamin) was appointed Governor of the Province of New Jersey, he took his seat, according to the provision of the Charter, as ex officio President of the Board. On one of the early occasions of his presiding in quality of Governor, after coming to that office, he formed a plan of wheedling the Board into an agreement to have their charter so modified, as to place the Institution more entirely in the power of the Provincial government, and to receive in exchange for this concession, some inconsiderable pecuniary advantage. The Governor made this proposal in a plausible speech, and was receiving the thanks of several short sighted and sanguine members of the Board of Trustees—when Mr. Tennent, who had been prevented by some dispensation of Providence from coming earlier, appeared in the Board, and took his seat. After listening for a few minutes, and hearing from one and another of his brother Trustees, the nature of the Governor’s plan and offer; after several of them had, in his presence, recognized the Governor’s proposal as highly favourable, and such as ought to be accepted; and praised ‘his Excellency’s generous proposal,’ as what all must think well of—Mr. Tennent, looking round the Board with the sharp and piercing eye, for which he was remarkable when strongly excited, rose and said: ‘Brethren! are you mad? I say, brethren, are you mad? Rather than accept the offer of the President, I would set fire to the College edifice, at its four corners, and run away in the light of the flames.’ Such was the effect of this rebuff from a Trustee of such known honesty, influence and decision, that little more was said. The proposal was laid on the table, and never more called up.

“Mr. Tennent was full of expedients for winning souls to Christ. He was remarkably fond of horses; had a good deal of skill in the choice and management of them; and was seldom known to ride or to keep an inferior one. There was a young man in his congregation, the son of one of his church-members, also distinguished for his attachment to horses, and for his skill in horsemanship. Mr. Tennent was very desirous of gaining access to this young man, and of securing his confidence. But after every effort to accomplish this object, was disappointed; the young man, trembling at the thought of being addressed on the subject of religion, avoided his pastor with the utmost vigilance; escaped from his father’s house whenever Mr. Tennent called; and in every possible way evaded an interview with him. Mr. Tennent observed this, and resorted to every contrivance in his power to overcome the young man’s aversion to his company. But in vain. Things went on in this way for a considerable time. In the mean while Mr. Tennent’s desire for an interview became more intense, from hearing that the young man had an active mind, and an amiable temper, and was considered as, in most respects, very promising by those who knew him best. One day, when Mr. Tennent was riding out in his course of family visitation, on a remarkably fleet horse, he saw this young man about a hundred yards before him, coming out from a neighbour’s gate, and going toward his father’s house. Mr. Tennent immediately quickened the pace of his horse, for the purpose of overtaking him. The young man, looking back and seeing Mr. Tennent coming, did the same. Each spurred on his horse, until the contest became a race at full speed. After running in this manner between one and two miles, Mr. Tennent, having much the

fleeter horse, overtook the young man, and, on coming up to him, said, in a very affable, pleasant manner, 'Well Johnny, I thought I should overtake you. I see you ride a good animal; but I had a notion that mine could beat him.' He then entered into familiar conversation with the young man, adapting all his remarks to what he supposed to be his favorite pursuits and topics. After riding a mile or two together, Mr. Tennent said to him, when they were about to separate, 'Johnny, come and see me. I shall be very glad to see you; I know you love a good horse. I think I have some horses and colts, that will please you. It will give me real pleasure to show them to you.' With this invitation and these remarks, they parted. In a few days the young man, greatly pleased with the manner in which Mr. Tennent had treated him, accepted his invitation, and called at his house. Mr. Tennent fulfilled his promise; took him through his stables, and round his farm, and entertained him greatly to his gratification, without saying one word to him of religion. The young man no longer shunned his company, but put himself in his way, not only without fear, but with pleasure, whenever he had an opportunity. Mr. Tennent very soon took occasion, after gaining his confidence, to address him on the most important of all subjects; and it was not long before he listened with serious attention; became hopefully the subject of renewing grace; and was soon united with the church of Christ.

"This excellent man was remarkably skilful, discriminating and faithful in dealing with those who came to him professing to be in a state of anxiety or inquiry respecting their salvation. He was once visited by a female, advanced in life, one of his stated hearers, who had not borne a very good character, but who now professed to be deeply anxious concerning her eternal welfare. She wept, acknowledged herself a great sinner, and abounded in language of severe self-crimination, and professions of deep penitence. Mr. Tennent thought he saw in her whole air and manner something like over-acting, which, taken in connexion with her former life, led him to suspect, that her professions were not very sincere. He, therefore, determined at once to put them to the test, and said: "Mrs. — you speak of yourself as a great sinner: that is just what we have always thought of you. I have no doubt it is very much as you say." The woman, who was indeed a hypocrite, fully expecting to be hailed with pleasure and confidence as a genuine convert by her minister, was thrown off her guard by this rebuff, and replied with strong resentment: 'It's no such thing. I'm not chargeable with these sins, I'm as good as you any day;' and immediately left the house; and with this interview dismissed her serious impressions.

"At another time Mr. Tennent, in riding out, stopped opposite the door of a small tavern in his neighbourhood to make some inquiry. While waiting a moment to obtain the desired information, a man, evidently intoxicated with strong drink, came out of the house, and accosted him by name. Finding that Mr. Tennent did not return his salutation with the readiness and familiarity of an acquaintance, he said: 'Mr. Tennent, I believe you do not know me; why, you converted me a few months ago.' 'Ah! my friend,' said Mr. Tennent, 'its like some of my bungling work. If the Spirit of God had converted you, we should not have seen you in this situation.' " In the same volume of the Assembly's Missionary Magazine which contains the biography of the Rev. William Tennent, jr., we have, from another hand, the three following anecdotes.

"He was crossing the bay from New York to Elizabethtown, in company with two gentlemen, who had no great fondness for clergymen, and who cautiously avoided him for some time after getting on board the boat. As he usually spoke loudly, they overheard what he said, and finding him a cheerful companion, who could converse upon other subjects besides religion, they ventured a

little nearer to him; and at length they and he engaged in a conversation upon politics. One of his congregation, who was a fellow-passenger, happening to overhear a remark he made, stepped up to him, and said, 'Mr. Tennent, please to spiritualize that.' 'Spiritualize that,' said Mr. T. 'you don't know what you are talking about.' 'Why, sir, there is no harm in talking religion, is there?' 'Yes,' replied Mr. T. 'there is a great deal of harm in it; and it is such good folks as you, that always lug religion in, by head and shoulders, whether it is proper or not, that hurt the cause; if you want to talk religion, you know where I live, and I know where you live, and you may call at my house, or I will call at yours, and I will talk religion with you till you are tired; but this is not the time to talk religion; we are talking politics.' This reply, and his conduct in other respects, so much ingratiated Mr. Tennent with the two gentlemen, as to furnish him with an opportunity for advantageously introducing conversation upon more important subjects; and the younger of the two was so much pleased, that on their arrival at Elizabethtown Point, he insisted upon Mr. Tennent taking his seat in a chair, and he walked from the Point to Elizabethtown, through a muddy road, which, to a person of Mr. Tennent's age, would have been very inconvenient, if not impracticable.

"At New York, Mr. Tennent went to hear a sermon delivered by a transient clergyman, who was often and well spoken of, but whose manner was singular, and who frequently introduced odd conceits into his sermons, which tended to excite mirth, rather than to edification. Upon leaving the church, a friend asked Mr. Tennent's opinion of the sermon. He said, it made him think of a man who should take a bag, and put into it some of the very best superfine wheat flour, a greater quantity of indian meal, and some arsenic, and mix them all together: a part of the sermon was of the very best quality; more of it was coarse, but very wholesome food; and some of it rank poison."

"Upon another occasion, he went with a friend to hear an illiterate carpenter preach at New York; and it appeared to him that the man denied the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The next morning Mr. Tennent called upon his friend, and asked if it appeared so to him? Upon his friend's replying in the affirmative, Mr. Tennent said, "then I must go and talk with him, and you must go along with me." His friend begged to be excused, but Mr. Tennent insisted upon his going, as he had heard the doctrine denied. They found the carpenter at breakfast. Mr. Tennent asked if he was the person who had preached last evening? he said he was. Then, said Mr. Tennent 'it appeared to me that you denied the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; did I understand you rightly?' 'Yes, sir, be sure I did,' said the carpenter; 'that is a doctrine which no man in his senses can believe.' 'I'll tell you,' replied Mr. Tennent 'that is the most precious doctrine in all the book of God: I will give up my life before I will give that up: I must talk with you about it.' The man alleged that he was a mechanic, who depended upon his trade for the support of his family, and could not stay to talk; he must mind his business. 'I am glad to hear that,' said Mr. Tennent 'I love to see men diligent in their lawful callings: it is their duty; but yours is of such a nature that you can work and talk at the same time; and I will go with you to where your business lies, so that your time shall not be wasted:' the carpenter said he did not want to talk, took his hat, and abruptly went off. Mr. Tennent followed him: the man walked faster: Mr. Tennent quickened his pace. At length the man ran; so did Mr. Tennent. But the carpenter was too fleet for his pursuer; by his speed he evaded his arguments, and remained in error." The following anecdote has been handed down by tradition, and in substance is confirmed by a one-sided account of the affair, contained in the life of Murray the Universalist, who is the person concerned. Mr. Tennent's zeal for the truth, and opposition to what he viewed to be error, were very strong; and were manifested whenever an

occasion occurred which called for their exercise. It so happened that Mr. Murray, an Englishman, who had adopted from Rely, the doctrines of Universalism, was landed on the Jersey shore, not very remote from Mr. Tennent's residence. Though he had not been a Universalist preacher in England, yet having while in connexion with the Methodists, both in Ireland and England, been accustomed to public speaking in the way of exhortation, he was induced upon his landing at a place on the Jersey shore, called "Good Luck," to commence preaching to the people. At first his doctrine of universal salvation was not clearly and openly announced, but rather covertly insinuated. Possessing some wit and eloquence he attracted many hearers, and travelled about the country, addressing the people wherever he could get an opportunity. Soon after he commenced this career, he came into the congregation of Freehold, and lodged with one of Mr. Tennent's hearers. As soon as this watchful pastor heard that the wolf had entered among the sheep of his flock, taking with him some of his neighbours, he went to the house where Mr. Murray was staying; and demanded of him 'by what authority he had assumed the office of preacher.' Murray answered him, by asking, "by what authority he asked him such a question." An altercation ensued, Mr. Tennent continuing peremptorily to demand his authority to preach, and he as pertinaciously evading a direct answer. It does not appear, however, from Mr. Murray's account, the only written one which we have seen, that Mr. Tennent then knew that he was a Universalist; for in the interview nothing was said on that subject; nor on any other point of doctrine. It would seem that Mr. Tennent considered him as an irregular, unauthorized itinerant, who, not being in connexion with any denomination of Christians, ought not to be encouraged. And, this, according to Mr. Murray's own account, was the exact state of the case. He stood entirely alone; and professed to hold ecclesiastical connexion with no body on earth; yet this man became the founder of a large sect, in this country; for the Universalists acknowledge him as a father. But as the course of error is always downward, most of his followers have departed far from his opinions, on other doctrinal points, as appears by his life.

CHAPTER XIII("tw:///self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

MEMOIR OF THE REV. CHARLES TENNENT

Birth—Immigration—Education—Settlement in the ministry at Whiteclay Creek—Great revival under the preaching of Mr. Whitefield—Removal and death.

From an original document, a small memorandum-book, kept by the Rev. William Tennent, sen., we learn, that his fourth son, Charles, was born at Colerain, in the county of Down, on the third day of May, in the year 1711, and was baptized by the Rev. Richard Donnell. At the time of his father's emigration from Ireland, he was, therefore, a boy of seven years of age.* He, as well as his older brothers, received his education under the paternal roof, or rather in the Log College. He appears, however, to have been less distinguished than either of his brothers; but seems to have been a respectable minister of the gospel, and was early settled in the Presbyterian congregation of Whiteclay Creek, in the state of Delaware. Soon after his settlement, in this place, the great revival under the preaching of Whitefield commenced, and was very powerful in this congregation. During this remarkable season of divine influence, Mr. Whitefield spent some days with Mr. Charles Tennent, and assisted him in the administration of the Lord's Supper; preaching to vast multitudes of people every day of the solemnity, which continued four days, according to custom. This information, the writer obtained, many years ago, from one of the subjects of the revival, Mrs.

Douglass, the sister of Charles Thompson, Sec'y of the continental congress, and grandmother of the late Rev. James Douglass, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, so highly esteemed as a spiritual, searching, evangelical preacher. This old lady appeared to me to be as eminently pious, as any person I ever knew. She informed me, that while Mr. Whitefield spoke at the tables, in administering the sacrament, he poured forth such a flood of tears, that his cambric handkerchief was wetted as if it had been dipped in water. She spoke of that day as by far the most glorious she had ever witnessed. Her account of the Rev. Charles Tennent, was, that he was a plain, good preacher; but not distinguished for great abilities. I was surprized to find that this pious old lady was no longer a member of the Presbyterian church, but had long ago, joined the communion of the Seceders. Upon enquiry it appeared, that this change had been made by her and some others, in consequence of the union entered into with the Old Side, in 1758. The congregation of Whiteclay Creek, of which Mr. Tennent was the pastor, was situated in the neighbourhood of some congregations, the ministers and members of which opposed the revival, and represented the whole as a delusion of the devil. The friends, and especially the subjects of the revival, could not but consider these opposers, as the enemies of vital piety, and, therefore, felt no disposition to hold any fellowship with them. They were, therefore, astonished and offended, when they understood that a union between the two parties had been consummated. As soon as Mr. Tennent returned from the synod, in Philadelphia, where the union had been agreed on, Mrs. Douglass went to him, and expostulated with him on the subject, "Oh! Mr. Tennent," said she, "how could you consent to enter into communion with those, who so wickedly reviled the glorious work of God's grace in this land? As for myself, I never can, and never will; until they profess repentance for their grievous sin, in speaking contemptuously of the work of the Holy Spirit." And accordingly, she went and joined the Seceders, who had begun to form societies, in several parts of Pennsylvania, and continued in their communion until her dying day. But her heart was still with the evangelical part of the Presbyterian church, and all her children entered into the communion of that church. Two of her sons, James Douglass, and Daniel Douglass, some forty years ago, were pious, intelligent, and estimable elders in the Presbyterian church in Alexandria, D. C., of which, the Rev. Dr. Muir, was the respected pastor. No doubt, the views of this good lady in regard to the union, so happily formed between the dissentient parties in the Presbyterian church, were narrow, yet they were very natural and arose from her acquaintance with the Old Side party being confined to those immediately around her, who had taken a very active part in ridiculing and maligning this blessed reformation, by which many sinners were converted, and turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The writer, in his youth, has known some people who would indulge in the most violent wrath, at any favourable mention of Mr. Whitefield; and yet they professed to believe the very doctrines which he preached. A large part of those, however, who belonged to the Old Side, were actuated by no such spirit; but were quiet, orderly, well informed Christians, who were very careful in the religious instruction of their own families; and very strict and conscientious in all the duties of religion.

Some years before his death, Mr. Charles Tennent removed from Whiteclay Creek, to Buckingham church, in Maryland, where he ended his days, and where it is presumed, his remains were interred. Of his latter days, and of the circumstances of his decease, we have received no authentic information. A dark cloud of oblivion seems to rest on the close of his life.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that he had a son, the Rev. William M. Tennent, who, after receiving a finished education, entered the holy ministry and became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Abington, in the vicinity of Philadelphia. He married a daughter of the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, of New York, and received the honourable degree of Doctor of Divinity from Yale College.

He was a man of great sweetness of temper and politeness of manners; and was distinguished for his hospitality. His house was seldom without the company of friends and acquaintances; and all who had the privilege of visiting at this pleasant retreat were delighted with their cordial reception and kind entertainment. His last sickness was long, but in it he was in a great measure exempt from pain, and was blessed with an uninterrupted assurance of the favour of God. The writer, then residing in Philadelphia, frequently saw and conversed with him; and he must say, he never saw any person in a sweeter, calmer, happier state of mind, and it continued for many weeks. He died in the year 1811 or 1812.

It is believed that no male descendant of any branch of the Tennent family now remains in this part of the country; though there are several in South Carolina. Indeed the only descendant of the Founder of the Log College, known to us, is a grand-daughter of the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, who resides in Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XIV("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

THE REV. SAMUEL BLAIR

Educated in the Log College—Licensed to preach by the Newcastle Presbytery—First settled at Shrewsbury, N. J.—Removes to New Londonderry in Pennsylvania—Great revival in that congregation—His letter to Mr. Prince—How far justifiable in violating rules of order—Dr. Finley's character of him. Mr. Davies' Elegy—Publications.

The following character of Mr. Samuel Blair is given by Dr. Finley, in his funeral sermon, occasioned by the death of this eminent servant of Jesus Christ.

"He was blessed with early piety. On his dying bed he could recollect with delight, various evidences of gracious influences in his tender years. By this means he was happily preserved from being ever engaged in vicious courses; and at once grew in stature and in grace. Religion, far from being a flashy thing with him, was rational and solid; manifesting itself in unreserved obedience to all God's commandments.

"To a holy disposition was added a great genius, capable of the highest improvement. He had a deep and penetrating judgment, a clear and regular way of conceiving things, and a retentive memory. He was an indefatigable student, a calm and impartial searcher after truth. He thought for himself, and was determined in his conclusions, only by evidence. He had a very considerable store of critical learning, and was especially conversant with the scriptures in the original languages. How great his attainments in philosophy were, was known by few; for in his last years, his thirst for knowledge did sensibly increase, and he greatly improved himself therein. He studied several branches of the mathematics, and especially, geometry and astronomy; nor will these seem tasteless studies to one who had such a savour of living piety, when it is considered that he saw the glory of God in all his works, and admired and adored Him in all. He delighted to see the 'invisible things of Him, even his eternal power and godhead, manifested by the things that are

made.' It was edifying to him to trace the footsteps of the divine wisdom in particulars, and the infinite reach of projection in the frame and structure of the whole.

"But his critical and philosophical learning, and his large acquaintance with geography and history, were exceeded by his knowledge in divinity. This was the business of his life, and herein he made such proficiency as few of his standing in the ministry have attained unto. Here he found what perfectly answered his refined, spiritual taste. The contemplation of redeeming love, did much more elevate his soul, than that of the works of creation; for therein he saw the wisdom, the power, the justice, and the love of God, more clearly displayed. On every subject he had a set of most accurately studied thoughts. He had often weighed in an impartial balance, every theological controversy; was a solid disputant, and able to defend all necessary truth. He was a judicious casuist, and could very satisfyingly resolve dubious and perplexed cases of conscience. He was not only a proficient in systematic divinity, which is comparatively a small attainment, but a great textuary. He studied the sacred oracles above all other things, and that it was not in vain, manifestly appeared from his great ability in 'dividing the word of truth.' He could 'bring out of his treasure, things new and old.' How clearly and fully would he explain his subject? with what irresistible arguments confirm the truth! With what admirable dexterity accommodate it to his audience! And with what solemn pungency did he impress it on the conscience! He spoke like one who knew the worth of souls, and felt in himself the surest constraints of love to God and man.

"As to his religious principles, he was of noble and generous sentiments. He had not 'so learned Christ,' as to be furious in his zeal for mere circumstantial, or indifferent points. He understood the nature of religion better than to place it in things in which it does not consist; and was too much exercised about 'the great matters of the law,' to be equally zealous for 'mint, anise, and cummin.' Though sacrifice be good; yet he had learned that 'mercy is better.' He believed, and that in accordance with the scriptures, that the communion of saints is of much greater importance, than many of those things in which Christians differ in judgment, and was, therefore, far from such narrowness, as to make every principle and practice which he thought to be good and true, a term of communion; and he was as far from the contrary extreme of indifference to the truth, and laxness of discipline. As he was diligent in the exercise of his ministerial office, to the utmost of his strength, not sparing himself; so God did very remarkably succeed his faithful ministrations to the conversion of many souls. He was the spiritual father of great numbers. I have had acquaintance with Christians in different places, where he only preached occasionally, who gave all hopeful evidences of a sacred conversion, and acknowledged him to be the instrument of it. He was strict in discipline; yet so as to be still candid; and severely just, yet so as to be still compassionate and tender. And with what wisdom and circumspection, he judged in difficult cases, his brethren of the presbytery well know. We waited for his sage remarks, and heard attentively, his prudent reasonings; and after his words how seldom had any one occasion to speak again! 'His speech dropped upon us, and we waited for him, as for the rain.' He has been eminently servicable to the church, by assisting several promising youths in their studies for the ministry; who, becoming learned by his instructions, and formed by his example, are now wise, and useful, and faithful ministers.

"He was remarkably grave and solemn in his aspect and deportment; yet, of a cheerful, even, and pleasant temper. And in conversation with his intimate friends, facetious and witty, when the season and concurring circumstances would allow him to indulge in that way; in respect of which

his prudence could well direct him. He was of a generous and liberal disposition; far from being niggardly, or covetous; was forward in acts of charity to the indigent, according to his ability, and all his conduct discovered a noble indifference toward earthly things.

"If we consider him as a friend, he was as firm and steadfast, and might as much be depended on as any I ever knew. He was remote from precarious and fickle humours: his approbation was not easily obtained, nor easily lost. Nor was he a friend only in compliment, but would cheerfully undergo hardships, and suffer disadvantages, in order to do a friendly office. He was conscientiously punctual in attending ecclesiastical judicatures, presbyteries or synods. His presence might be depended on, if nothing extraordinary intervened, as certainly as the appointed day. He was not absent on every trifling inconvenience. In this respect his conduct was truly exemplary, and demonstrated his constant care for the public interests of religion. So great was his attention to matters of common concern, as to incline him, rather to expose himself, than balk an opportunity of doing good. It is well known, that his going upon an urgent call, in a weakly state of body; and in unsettled season, to a convention of the Trustees of New Jersey College, gave occasion to that fatal sickness, from which he never fully recovered.

"In social life, also, he was worthy of imitation. As a husband, he was affectionate and kind; as a father, tender and indulgent. In him, condescension and authority were duly tempered. There was that in him that could engage love and command reverence, at the same time. Who that was acquainted with him would not be ready to say, 'happy was the family of which he was the head, and happy the congregation that enjoyed his ministry? happy the judicature of which he was a member; and happy the person, who was favoured with his friendship! He was a public blessing to the church, an honour to his people, an ornament to his profession who 'magnified his office.' He spoke as he believed; he practised as he preached; he lived holy, and died joyfully.

"For a long course of years, he had a habitual, unwavering assurance of his interest in the favour of God, and that a blessed and glorious eternity would, one day open upon him; which were his own emphatical words on his dying bed. This his assurance was solid and scriptural, arising from the many and clear experiences he had of gracious communications to his soul. He was made sensible in his early years, of his guilty state by nature as well as practice; felt his inability to deliver himself; saw plainly that he lay at mercy, and that it was entirely at God's pleasure to save or reject him. This view of the case created in him a restless concern, until the way of life through Jesus Christ was graciously discovered to him. Then he saw that God could save him in consistency with all the honours of governing justice; for that the obedience and sufferings of Christ, in the room of sinners, have made a sufficient atonement for sin. He saw that Christ was a Saviour every way complete and suitable for him. His soul approved the divine and glorious plan; and freely disclaiming all dependence on his own righteousness, wisdom, and strength, most gladly accepted the offer of the gospel, that Christ should be his 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' Strict holiness was his choice, and it was the delightful business of his life, to 'do always those things which pleased his heavenly Father.' And on his dying bed, he had the full approbation and testimony of his conscience, as to the general bent and tenor of his life. These particulars are the heads of what he himself told me in his last sickness, and are delivered in the same order, as near as I can possibly recollect." When he approached near his end, he expressed most ardent desires "to depart and be with Christ:" and especially, the three last days of his life were taken up in this exercise. Many gracious words he spoke, gave an

affectionate farewell to his beloved, sorrowful consort, and dear children: tenderly committed them to the divine mercy and faithfulness, and fervently prayed, that the blessing of the Most High might be vouchsafed to them, and rest upon them; which prayer, I hope, will be answered. His last words, a minute or two before his departure, were, “the Bridegroom is come, and we shall now have all things.” And thus, under a gleam of heaven, he breathed out his last. The Rev. Samuel Davies, who had received nearly his whole education under the tuition of Samuel Blair, was deeply affected when he heard the sad tidings of the death of his revered, and beloved instructor. He was then residing at Hanover, in Virginia, where he had gone to occupy an important station, as will be particularly related in another part of this work. Mr. Davies, who possessed ardent affections, and a lively imagination, frequently gave indulgence to his poetic genius, which, if it had been cultivated, might have rendered him conspicuous in that department, now invoked his sacred Muse, and composed an elegy of many lines, on his admired friend and tutor. The poem is more remarkable for pathos, than for smooth versification. The only reason for noticing it here, is, to show the opinion entertained of Mr. Blair, by this first of American preachers. A few extracts will be sufficient to answer our purpose.

“——Blair is no more—then this poor world has lost

As rich a jewel as her stores could boast;

Heaven, in just vengeance, has recalled again,

Its faithful envoy, from the sons of men,

Advanced him from his pious toils below,

In raptures there, in kindred plains to glow.”

“O, had not the mournful news divulged,

My mind had still the pleasing dream indulged—

Still fancied Blair, with health and vigour blessed,

With some grand purpose labouring in his breast.

In studious thought, pursuing truth divine,

Till the full demonstration round him shine;

Or, from the sacred desk, proclaiming loud,

His Master’s message, to the attentive crowd,

While heavenly truth with bright conviction glares,

And coward error shrinks, and disappears;

While quick remorse, the hardy sinner feels,

And Calv’ry’s balm, the bleeding conscience heals.”

“Oh! could the Muse’s languid colours paint,

The man, the scholar, student, preacher, saint;
I'd place his image full in public view;
His friends should know more than before they knew.
His foes astonished at his virtues, gaze,
Or shrink confounded from the oppressive blaze.
To trace his bright example, all should turn,
And with the bravest emulation burn.
His name should my poor lays immortalize.
Till he, to attest his character, arise,

And the Great Judge, the encomium ratifies." The following lines will serve to show who were the persons, in Mr. Davies's estimation, who deserved to be handed down to posterity, as the chosen friends, and faithful coadjutors of Mr. Blair, in his evangelical labours. They were all alumni of the Log College, or of Mr. Blair's school, at New Londonderry. And if we look at the men educated in this school, we cannot but entertain an exalted opinion of Mr. Samuel Blair, as an instructor.

"Surviving remnant of the sacred tribe,
Who knew the worth these plaintive lays describe;
Tennents, three worthies of immortal fame,
Brethren by office, birth, in heart and name.
Finley, who fall enjoyed the unbosomed friend;
Rodgers, whose soul he like his own refined,
When all attention, eager to admit
The flowing knowledge, at his reverend feet,
Raptured we sat; and thou above the rest,
Brother and image of the dear deceased.
Surviving Blair! Oh, let spontaneous flow
The floods of tributary grief you owe.
And in your number—if so mean a name,
May the sad honour of chief mourner claim,
Oh! may my filial tears more copious flow,
And swell the tide of universal woe.

Oh! Blair! whom all the tenderest names commend,

My father, tutor, pastor, brother, friend!

While distance, the sad privilege denies,

O'er thy dear tomb, to vent my bursting eyes.

The Muse erects—the sole return allowed—

This humble monument of gratitude.” As the remarkable and impressive solemnity of Samuel Blair’s appearance, especially in the pulpit, has been noticed by all who have given any account of him; it will be gratifying to have the same confirmed by such a man as Samuel Davies, who himself was so distinguished for dignity and solemnity in the pulpit, that one of the most excellent laymen I ever knew, told me, that he went to hear Mr. Davies preach, when he was just grown up, and that the sight of the man, and the mere utterance of his text, “Martha, Martha,” &c., made a deeper impression on him, than all the sermons he had ever heard before.

“Now, in the sacred desk, I see him rise,

And well he acts the herald of the skies.

Graceful solemnity, and striking awe

Sit in his looks, and deep attention draw.

His speaking aspect—in the bloom of youth

Renewed—declares unutterable truth.

Unthinking crowds grow solemn as they gaze,

And read his awful message in his face.” The principal writings of the Rev. Samuel Blair, were collected by his brother John, after his death, and published in Philadelphia, in the year 1754, together with Dr. Finley’s Funeral Sermon, from which we have so largely quoted, and Mr. Davies’s Elegy. This volume contains seven sermons, all on highly important and practical subjects; which are treated in a very solemn and methodical manner. His style is perspicuous, but neither terse nor elegant; but the thoughts are those of a profound thinker. To these sermons is appended an elaborate treatise on Predestination and Reprobation, evincing that the author was a thorough-going Calvinist. This treatise has been recently republished in Baltimore. This volume also contains his “Vindication,” written by the direction of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, in answer to “The Government of the Church,” &c., by the Rev. John Thompson. The Rev. Samuel Blair, was a native of Ireland, but came early to this country, and received his education in the Log College, under Mr. Wm. Tennent, Sen., at Neshaminy. He must, indeed, have been among the first pupils of this institution. After finishing his classical and theological studies, Mr. Blair put himself under the care of the New Castle presbytery, by which body he was, in due time, licensed to preach the gospel. Soon after his license, he was settled in the Presbyterian congregation, at Shrewsbury, in New Jersey. He laboured in this field, for five or six years, when he received an earnest call to settle in New Londonderry, otherwise called Fagg’s Manor, in the State of Pennsylvania. Here he instituted a classical school, similar in its purpose to that of Mr. Tennent, in

Neshaminy. In which, some of the ablest ministers of the Presbyterian church received either the whole, or the more substantial parts of their education. Among these were, the Rev. Samuel Davies, the Rev. Alexander Cumming, the Rev. John Rodgers, D. D., the Rev. James Finley, and the Rev. Hugh Henry.

Mr. Blair's settlement at Shrewsbury, was in the year 1734, when he was only twenty-two years of age. The presbytery of New Brunswick did not exist until the year 1738, of which Mr. Blair was one of the original members. When he received the call from New Londonderry, in Chester county, Pennsylvania, he left it to the presbytery to decide, whether he should go or stay. After mature deliberation, they advised him to accept the call, as they were of opinion it would introduce him into a wider field of usefulness.

There are no records extant, from which we can learn any particulars respecting the fruits of Mr. Blair's labours at Shrewsbury. Here he commenced his ministerial work; and as he was a faithful, able and zealous preacher of the truth as it is in Jesus, we entertain no doubt that some of the good seed which he sowed, fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit. The vicissitudes of that congregation have been remarkable. For a while it was flourishing, and had many respectable members, but it became apparently extinct, and the house of worship was burned; but after being dead for some years, it was resuscitated; it now promises to flourish again.

Under his ministry at New Londonderry, there occurred a very remarkable revival of religion, of which he wrote a particular narrative. The congregation at Fagg's Manor, consisted almost entirely of emigrants from the north of Ireland; and had been formed a number of years, but had never enjoyed the ministry of a stated pastor. His settlement among them took place in November, 1739; although he was not installed as their pastor, until the month of April, 1740. The revival referred to above, commenced a short time after his settlement in the place. The following account is contained in the "Narrative" which he wrote, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, in his "Christian History."

"New Londonderry in Pennsylvania, Aug. 6th, 1744.

"Rev. Sir,

"I do most gladly comply with your desire in sending you some account of the glorious appearance of God in a way of special grace for us in this congregation, and other parts of this country: and am of the same judgment with you and other pious and judicious people, that the collecting and publishing of such accounts may greatly tend to the glory of our Redeemer, and the increase of his triumphs. I much rejoice in the publication of such a collection in the Christian History, so far as it is already carried on: I think it may serve to many excellent purposes, and be an happy mean of advancing the dear interests of our glorious Redeemer's kingdom, both in the present age, and the ages to come. And I cannot but look upon myself as called of God in duty, being thus invited to it, by you, Rev. Sir, to put to a hand, among many others of my reverend fathers and brethren on both sides of the Atlantic, to the carrying on of the design of said history, containing accounts of the revival and propagation of religion in this remarkable day of grace. I cannot, indeed, give near so full and particular a relation of the revival of religion here, as I might have done, had I had such a thing in view at the time when God was most eminently carrying on his work among us: I entirely neglected then to note down any particulars in writing, for which I have been often sorry since; so

that this account must be very imperfect to what it might otherwise have been.

“That it may the more clearly appear that the Lord has indeed carried on a work of true real religion among us of late years, I conceive it will be useful to give a brief general view of the state of religion in these parts, before this remarkable season. I doubt not then but there were some sincerely religious people up and down; and there were, I believe, a considerable number in the several congregations, pretty exact, according to their education, in the observance of the external forms of religion, not only as to attendance upon public ordinances on the sabbath, but also, as to the practice of family worship, and perhaps, secret prayer too: but with these things the most part seemed to all appearance to rest contented; and to satisfy their consciences with a dead formality in religion. If they performed these duties pretty punctually in their seasons, and as they thought with a good meaning out of conscience, and not just to obtain a name for religion among men; then they were ready to conclude that they were truly and sincerely religious. A very lamentable ignorance of the main essentials of true practical religion, and the doctrines nextly relating thereunto, very generally prevailed. The nature and necessity of the new birth, was but little known or thought of. The necessity of a conviction of sin and misery, by the Holy Spirit opening and applying the law to the conscience, in order to a saving closure with Christ, was hardly known at all, to the most. It was thought, that if there was any need of a heart-distressing sight of the soul's danger, and fear of divine wrath, it was only needful for the grosser sort of sinners: and for any others to be deeply exercised this way (as there might sometimes be before, some rare instances observable) this was generally looked upon to be a great evil and temptation, that had befallen those persons. The common names for such soul-concern were, melancholy, trouble of mind, or despair. These terms were in common, so far as I have been acquainted, indifferently used as synonymous; and trouble of mind, was looked upon as a great evil, which all persons that made any sober profession and practice of religion ought carefully to avoid. There was scarcely any suspicion at all, in general, of any danger of depending upon self-righteousness, and not upon the righteousness of Christ alone for salvation. Papists and Quakers would be readily acknowledged guilty of this crime; but hardly any professed Presbyterian. The necessity of being first in Christ by a vital union, and in a justified state, before our religious services can be well pleasing and acceptable to God, was very little understood or thought of: but the common notion seemed to be, that if people were aiming to be in the way of duty as well as they could, as they imagined, there was no reason to be much afraid.

“According to these principles, and this ignorance of some of the most soul-concerning truths of the gospel, people were very generally through the land, careless at heart, and stupidly indifferent about the great concerns of eternity. There was very little appearance of any hearty engagedness in religion: and indeed the wise, for the most part, were in a great degree asleep with the foolish. It was sad to see with what a careless behaviour the public ordinances were attended, and how people were given to unsuitable worldly discourse, on the Lord's holy day. In public companies, especially at weddings, a vain and frothy lightness was apparent in the deportment of many professors: and in some places, very extravagant follies, as horse-running, fiddling and dancing, pretty much obtained, on those occasions.

Thus, religion lay as it were a dying, and ready to expire its last breath of life in this part of the visible church: and it was in the spring of 1740, when the God of salvation was pleased to visit us with the blessed effusions of his holy spirit in an eminent manner. The first very open and public

appearance of this gracious visitation in these parts, was in the congregation which God has committed to my charge. This congregation has not been erected above fourteen or fifteen years from this time: the place is a new settlement, generally settled with people from Ireland (as all our congregations in Pennsylvania, except two or three, chiefly are made up of people from that kingdom).* I am the first minister they have ever had settled in the place; having been regularly liberated from my former charge, in East Jersey, above an hundred miles north-eastward from hence; the reverend presbytery of New Brunswick of which I had the comfort of being a member, judging it to be my duty, for sundry reasons, to remove from thence. At the earnest invitation of the people here, I came to them in the beginning of November, 1739; accepted of a call from them that winter, and was formally installed and settled among them as their minister, in April following. There were some hopefully pious people here at my first coming, which was a great encouragement and comfort to me.

“I had some view and sense of the deplorable condition of the land in general; and accordingly the scope of my preaching through that first winter after I came here, was mainly calculated for persons in a natural unregenerate state. I endeavoured, as the Lord enabled me, to open up and prove from his word, the truths which I judged most necessary for such as were in that state to know and believe, in order to their conviction and conversion. I endeavoured to deal searchingly and solemnly with them: and through the concurring blessing of God, I had knowledge of four or five brought under deep convictions that winter.

“In the beginning of March, I took a journey into East Jersey; and was abroad for two or three Sabbaths: a neighbouring minister, who seemed to be earnest for the awakening and conversion of secure sinners, and whom I had obtained to preach a Sabbath to my people in my absence, preached to them, I think, on the first Sabbath after I left home: his subject was the dangerous and awful case of such as continue unregenerate, and unfruitful under the means of grace. The text was Luke 13:7. ‘Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? Under that sermon, there was a visible appearance of much soul-concern among the hearers; so that some burst out with an audible noise into bitter crying; a thing not known in these parts before. After I had come home, there came a young man to my house, under deep trouble about the state of his soul, whom I had looked upon as a pretty light merry sort of a youth: he told me that he was not anything concerned about himself in the time of hearing the above-mentioned sermon, nor afterwards, till the next day that he went to his labour, which was grubbing, in order to clear some new ground. The first grub he set about, was a pretty large one, with a high top, and when he had cut the roots, as it fell down, these words came instantly to his remembrance, and as a spear to his heart, ‘cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?’ So, thought he, must I be cut down by the justice of God, for the burning of hell, unless I get into another state than I am now in. He thus came into very great and abiding distress, which, to all appearance, has had a happy issue; his conversation being to this day as becomes the gospel of Christ.

“The news of this very public appearance of deep soul-concern among my people, met me a hundred miles from home; I was very joyful to hear of it, in hopes that God was about to carry on an extensive work of converting grace amongst them. And the first sermon I preached after my return to them, was from Matthew 6:33. ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.’ After opening up and explaining the parts of the text, when, in the improvement, I came to press

the injunction in the text upon the unconverted and ungodly, and offered this as one reason among others, why they should now henceforth first of all seek the kingdom and righteousness of God, viz., that they had neglected too long to do so already: this consideration seemed to come and cut like a sword upon several in the congregation; so that while I was speaking upon it, they could no longer contain, but burst out in the most bitter mourning. I desired them as much as possible, to restrain themselves from making any noise, that would hinder themselves or others from hearing what was spoken: and often afterwards I had occasion to repeat the same counsel: I still advise people to endeavour to moderate and bound their passions, but not so as to resist or stifle their conviction. The number of the awakened increased very fast: frequently under sermons there were some newly convicted, and brought into deep distress of soul about their perishing estate. Our Sabbath assemblies soon became vastly large: many people from almost all parts around, inclining very much to come where there was such appearance of the divine power and presence. I think there was scarcely a sermon or lecture preached here through that whole summer, but there were manifest evidences of impressions on the hearers; and many times the impressions were very great and general: several would be overcome and fainting; others deeply sobbing, hardly able to contain; others crying in a most dolorous manner; many others more silently weeping; and a solemn concern appearing in the countenances of many others. And sometimes the soul-exercises of some (though comparatively but very few) would so far affect their bodies, as to occasion some strange unusual bodily motions. I had opportunities of speaking particularly with a great many of those, who afforded such outward tokens of inward soul-concern in the time of public worship and hearing of the word: indeed, many came to me of themselves in their distress, for private instruction and counsel; and I found, so far as I can remember, that with by far the greater part their apparent concern in public was not a transient qualm of conscience, or merely a floating commotion of the affections; but a rational fixed conviction of their dangerous perishing estate. They could generally offer as a convictive evidence of their being in an unconverted miserable estate, that they were utter strangers to those dispositions, exercises, and experiences of soul in religion, which they heard laid down from God's word, as the inseparable characters of the truly regenerate people of God; even such as before had something of the form of religion; and, I think the greater number were of this sort; and several had been pretty exact and punctual in the performance of outward duties; they saw they had been contenting themselves with the form without the life and power of godliness; and that they had been taking peace to their consciences from, and depending upon their own righteousness, and not the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

"In a word, they saw that true practical religion was quite another thing than they had conceived it to be, or had any true experience of. There were likewise many up and down the land, brought under deep distressing convictions that summer, who had lived very loose lives, regardless of the very externals of religion. In this congregation, I believe there were very few that were not stirred up to some solemn thoughtfulness and concern more than usual about their souls. The general carriage and behaviour of people was soon very visibly altered. Those awakened were much given to reading in the Holy Scriptures, and other good books. Excellent books that had lain by much neglected, were then much perused, and lent from one to another; and it was a peculiar satisfaction to people, to find how exactly the doctrines they heard daily preached, harmonized with the doctrines contained and taught by great and godly men in other parts, and former times. The subjects of discourse almost always, when any of them were together, were the matters of religion and great concerns of their souls. All unsuitable, worldly, vain discourse on the Lord's day,

seemed to be laid aside among them: indeed, for anything that appeared, there seemed to be almost a universal reformation in this respect in our public assemblies, on the Lord's day.

"There was an earnest desire in people after opportunities for public worship and hearing the word. I appointed, in the spring, to preach every Friday through the summer, when I was at home, and those meetings were well attended; and at several of them, the power of the Lord was remarkably with us. The main scope of my preaching, through that summer, was, laying open the deplorable state of man by nature since the fall, our ruined exposed case by the breach of the first covenant, and the awful condition of such as were not in Christ, giving the marks and characters of such as were in that condition: and, moreover, laying open the way of recovery, in the new covenant, through a Mediator, with the nature and necessity of faith in Christ the Mediator, &c. I laboured much on the last mentioned heads; that the people might have right apprehensions of the gospel-method of life and salvation. I treated much on the way of sinners closing with Christ by faith, and obtaining a right peace to an awakened wounded conscience: showing that persons were not to take peace to themselves on account of their repentings, sorrows, prayers, and reformations; nor to make these things the grounds of their adventuring themselves upon Christ and his righteousness, and of their expectations of life by him: and that neither were they to obtain or seek peace in extraordinary ways, by visions, dreams, or immediate inspirations: but, by an understanding view, and believing persuasion of the way of life, as revealed in the gospel, through the suretiship obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ; with a view of the suitableness and sufficiency of that mediatory righteousness of Christ, for the justification and life of law-condemned sinners: and thereupon, freely accepting him for their Saviour, heartily consenting to, and being well pleased with the way of salvation, and venturing their all upon his mediation, from the warrant and encouragement afforded of God thereunto in his word, by his free offer, authoritative command, and sure promise to those that so believe. I endeavoured to show the fruits and evidences of a true faith, &c.

"After some time, many of the convinced and distressed, afforded very hopeful satisfying evidence that the Lord had brought them to a true closure with Jesus Christ; and that their distresses and fears had been in a great measure removed in a right gospel-way, by believing in the Son of God. Several of them had very remarkable and sweet deliverances this way. It was very agreeable to hear their accounts, how that when they were in the deepest perplexity and darkness, distress and difficulty, seeking God as poor condemned hell-deserving sinners, the scheme of recovering grace through a Redeemer has been opened to their understandings with a surprising beauty and glory, so that they were enabled to believe in Christ with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. It appeared that most generally the Holy Spirit improved for this purpose, and made use of some one particular passage or other of the Holy Scripture, that came to their remembrance in their distress: some gospel-offer or promise, or some declaration of God directly referring to the recovery and salvation of undone sinners, by the new-covenant. But with some it was otherwise: they had not any one particular place of Scripture more than another in their view, at the time. Those who met with such a remarkable relief; as their account of it was rational and scriptural, so, they appeared to have had at the time, the attendants and fruits of a true faith; particularly humility, love, and an affectionate regard to the will and honour of God: much of their exercise was in self-abasing and self-loathing; and admiring the astonishing condescension and grace of God towards such vile and despicable creatures, that had been so full of enmity and disaffection to him. They freely and

sweetly, with all their hearts, chose the way of his commandments; their inflamed desire was to live to him for ever, according to his will; and to the glory of his name.

“There were others that had not such remarkable relief and comfort, who yet I could not but think were savingly renewed and brought truly to accept of and rest upon Jesus Christ, though not with such a degree of liveliness and liberty, strength and joy; and some of those continued for a considerable time after, for the most part, under a very distressing suspicion and jealousy of their case. I was all along very cautious of expressing to people my judgment of the goodness of their states, except where I had pretty clear evidences from them, of their being savingly changed; and yet they continued in deep distress, casting off all their evidences. Sometimes in such cases, I have thought it needful to use greater freedom that way than ordinary; but otherwise, I judged that it could be of little use, and might easily be hurtful.

“Beside those above spoken of, whose experience of a work of grace was in a good degree clear and satisfying, there were some others (though but very few in this congregation, that I knew of) who, having very little knowledge or capacity, had a very obscure and improper way of representing their case. In relating how they had been exercised, they would chiefly speak of such things as were only the effects of their soul exercise upon their bodies, from time to time, and some things that were purely imaginary: which obliged me to be at much pains in my inquiries, before I could get any just ideas of their case. I would ask them, what were the thoughts, the views and apprehensions of their minds, and exercise of their affections, at such times when they felt, perhaps, a quivering come over them, or a faintness, or thought they saw their hearts full of some nauseous filthiness; or when they felt a heavy weight or load at their hearts, or felt the weight again taken off, and a pleasant warmth rising from their hearts, as they would probably express themselves, which might be the occasions or causes of these things they spoke of; and then, when with some difficulty I could get them to understand me, some of them would give a pretty rational account of solemn and spiritual exercises: and after a thorough careful examination this way, I could not but conceive good hopes of some such persons.

“But there were, moreover, several others, who seemed to think concerning themselves that they were under some good work, of whom yet I could have no reasonable ground to think that they were under any hopeful work of the Spirit of God. As near as I could judge of their case from all my acquaintance and conversation with them, it was much to this purpose. They believed there was a good work going on; that people were convinced, and brought into a converted state; and they desired to be converted too. They saw others weeping and fainting, and heard people mourning and lamenting, and they thought if they could be like these it would be very hopeful with them; hence, they endeavoured just to get themselves affected by sermons, and if they could come to weeping, or get their passions so raised as to incline them to vent themselves by cries, now they hoped they were got under convictions, and were in a very hopeful way; and afterwards, they would speak of their being in trouble, and aim at complaining of themselves, but seemed as if they knew not well how to do it, nor what to say against themselves; and then they would be looking and expecting to get some texts of scripture applied to them for their comfort; and when any scripture text which they thought was suitable for that purpose, came to their minds, they were in hopes it was brought to them by the Spirit of God, that they might take comfort from it. And thus, much in such a way as this, some appeared to be pleasing themselves with an imaginary conversion of their own making. I endeavoured to correct and guard against all such mistakes so

far as I discovered them, in the course of my ministry; and to open up the nature of a true conviction by the Spirit of God, and of a saving conversion.

“Thus I have given a very brief account of the state and progress of religion here through that first summer after the remarkable revival of it among us. Towards the end of that summer, there seemed to be a stop put to the further progress of the work as to conviction and awakening of sinners; and ever since there have been very few instances of persons convinced. It remains then, that I speak something of the abiding effects and after fruits of those awakenings and other religious exercises which people were under during the above mentioned period. Such as were only under some slight impressions and superficial awakenings, seem in general to have lost them all again without any abiding hopeful alteration upon them. They seem to have fallen back again into their former carelessness and stupidity and some that were under pretty great awakenings, and considerably deep convictions, of their miserable state, seem also to have got peace again to their consciences without getting it by a true faith in the Lord Jesus; affording no satisfying evidence of their being savingly renewed. But, through the infinite rich grace of God (blessed be his glorious name!) there is a considerable number who afford all the evidence that can be reasonably expected and required for our satisfaction in the case, of their having been the subjects of a thorough saving change: (except in some singular instances of behaviour, which alas! proceed from, and shew the sad remains of original corruption even in the regenerate children of God, while in this imperfect state) their walk is habitually tender and conscientious, their carriage towards their neighbours just and kind, and they appear to have an agreeable peculiar love one for another; and for all in whom appears the image of God. Their discourses of religion, their engagedness and dispositions of soul in the practice of the immediate duties and ordinances of religion, all appear quite otherwise than formerly. Indeed, the liveliness of their affections in the ways of religion is much abated in general, and they are in some measure humbly sensible of this and grieved for it, and are carefully endeavouring still to live unto God; much grieved with their imperfections and the plagues they find in their own hearts; and frequently they meet with some delightful enlivenings of soul; and, particularly, our sacramental solemnities for communicating in the Lord’s Supper, have generally been very blessed seasons of enlivening and enlargement to the people of God. There is a very evident and great increase of Christian knowledge with many of them. We enjoy in this congregation the happiness of a great degree of harmony and concord; scarcely any have appeared with open opposition and bitterness against the work of God among us, and elsewhere up and down the land: though there are a pretty many such in several other places through the country: some, indeed, in this congregation, but very few, have separated from us and joined with the ministers who have unhappily opposed this blessed work.

“It would have been a great advantage to this account, had I been careful in time to have written down the experiences of particular persons: but this I neglected in the proper season. However, I have more lately noted down an account of some of the soul exercises and experiences of one person, which I think may be proper to make public on this occasion. The person is a single young woman, but I judge it proper to conceal her name, because she is yet living. I was very careful to be exact in the affair, both in my conversing with her, and writing the account she gave me of herself, immediately after. And though I don’t pretend to give her very words for the most part, yet I am well satisfied I don’t misrepresent what she related. The account then is this; she was first brought to some solemn thoughtfulness and concern about her soul’s case, by seeing others so

much concerned about their souls: when she saw people in deep distress about the state of their souls, she thought with herself, how unconcerned she was about her own. And though she thought that she had not been very guilty of great sins, yet she feared she was too little concerned about her eternal well-being: and then the sermons she heard made her still uneasy about her case; so that she would go home on the Sabbath evenings, pretty much troubled and cast down; which concern used to abide with her for a few days after, but still, towards the end of the week she would become pretty easy; and then, by hearing the word on the Sabbath days, her uneasiness was always renewed for a few days again. And thus it fared with her, until one day as she was hearing a sermon preached from Hebrews 3:15 : 'To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' The minister, in the sermon, spoke to this effect, 'How many of you have been hearing the gospel for a long time, and yet your hearts remain always hard, without being made better by it: the gospel is the voice of God, but you have heard it only as the voice of man and not the voice of God, and so have not been benefited by it.' These words came with power to her heart. She saw that this was her very case; and she had an awful sense of the sin of her mis-improvement of the gospel, of her stupidity, hardness and unprofitableness under the hearing of the word of God. She saw that she was hereby exposed to the sin-punishing justice of God, and so was filled with very great fear and terror: but she said there was no other sin at that time applied to her conscience, neither did she see herself as altogether without Christ.

"This deep concern, on the fore-mentioned account, stuck pretty close by her afterwards. There was a society of private Christians to meet in the neighbourhood, some day after, in the same week, for reading, prayer, and religious conference. She had not been at a society of that kind before, but she longed very much for the time of their meeting then, that she might go there: and while she was there, she got an awful view of her sin and corruption, and saw that she was without Christ and without grace; and her exercise and distress of soul was such, that it made her for a while both deaf and blind; but she said she had the ordinary use of her understanding, and begged that Christ might not leave her to perish, for she saw she was undone without him. After this she lived in bitterness of soul: and at another time she had such a view of her sinfulness, of the holiness and justice of God, and the danger she was in of eternal misery, as filled her with extreme anguish; so that had it not been that she was supported by an apprehension of God's all-sufficiency, she told me, she was persuaded, she should have fallen immediately into despair. She continued for some weeks in great distress of spirit, seeking and pleading for mercy without any comfort; until one Sabbath evening, in a house where she was lodged, during the time of a sacramental solemnity, while the family were singing Psalms 84:1-12, her soul conceived strong hopes of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, and she had such apprehensions of the happiness of the heavenly state, that her heart was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory; she sung with such elevation of soul, as if she had sung out of herself, as she expressed it; she thought at the time, it was as if the Lord had put by the veil and showed her the open glory of heaven: she had very enlarged views of the sufficiency of Christ to save: she was clearly persuaded, to the fullest satisfaction, that there was merit enough in him to answer for the sins of the most guilty sinner; and she saw that God could well be reconciled to all elect sinners in his Son; which was a most ravishing, delightful scene of contemplation to her.

"But while she was in this frame, after some time she thought with herself, that notwithstanding all this, yet she could not with the full assurance of faith lay claim to the Lord Jesus as her own

Saviour, in particular; she could not say with such full satisfaction and certainty as she desired, that he would be a Saviour, in particular, to her; and hence, for want of thoroughly understanding wherein the very essence of a saving faith consists, she had some jealous fear that she was not yet brought truly to believe in Christ. However, she was pretty free from her former terrors, after this sweet interview. But after some time, she grew more disconsolate, and more sensibly afraid of her state, on the forementioned account: she heard that sinners in closing with Christ by faith, received him for their Saviour, which she thought included in it a persuasion that he was their's, in particular, and she could not clearly say that this had ever been her case; and so she came awfully to suspect herself to be as yet an unbeliever; and though she came in time to that sweet plerophory, and full assurance of faith; yet she has since seen her mistake in that matter about the nature of a true and saving faith. She continued very much under those grievous dejections, for about two years, and yet enjoyed considerable sweetness and comfort, at times. She often came to hear sermons with a desire to get clearly convinced of her being yet in a Christless state, and with a formed resolution to take and apply to herself what might be said in the sermon to the unconverted: but most commonly she returned very agreeably disappointed; she would generally hear some mark of grace, some evidence of a real Christian laid down, which she could lay claim to, and could not deny; and thus she was supported and comforted, from time to time. During these two year, it was still with much fear and perplexity that she adventured to communicate in the Lord's Supper; but she could not omit it; and she always found some refreshing and sweetness, by that ordinance.

"After she had been so long under an almost alternate succession of troubles and supports, the sun of righteousness at last broke out upon her, to the clear satisfaction and unspeakable ravishment of her soul, at a communion table. There her mind was let into the glorious mysteries of redemption, with great enlargement; while she meditated on the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, she thought with herself, he was not merely a man who suffered so for sinners, but infinitely more than man, even the most high God, the eternal Son, equal with the Father: and she saw his being God, put an infinite lustre and value upon his sufferings as man; her heart was filled with a most unutterable admiration of his person, his merit and his love: she was enabled to believe in him with a strong self-evidencing faith; she believed that he had suffered for her sins; that she was the very person who by her sins had occasioned his sufferings, and brought agony and pain upon him. The consideration of this filled her with the deepest abhorrence of her sins, and most bitter grief for them; she said she could have desired with all her heart to have melted and dissolved her body quite away in that very place, in lamentation and mourning over her sins. After this enjoyment, her soul was generally delighting in God, and she had much of the light of his countenance with her: and Oh! her great concern still was, how she might live to the Lord, how she might do anything for him, and give honour to him. The Lord condescended to be much with her by his enlivening and comforting presence, and especially, sacramental seasons were blessed and precious seasons to her. At one of those occasions, she was in a sweet frame, meditating on the blood and water that issued from the wound made by the spear in her Saviour's side; she thought, as water is of a purifying cleansing nature, so there was sanctifying virtue as well as justifying merit in the Lord Jesus; and that she could no more be without the water, his sanctifying grace to cleanse her very polluted soul, than she could be without his blood to do away her guilt: and her heart was much taken up with the beauty and excellency of sanctification. At another time, a communion solemnity likewise, she was very full of delight and wonder with the thoughts of electing love; how that God

had provided and determined so great things for her before ever she had a being. And a very memorable enjoyment she had at another time, on Monday after a communion Sabbath, when these words came to her mind, 'The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.' The glory and delight let in upon her soul by these words was so great, that it quite overcame her bodily frame: she said it seemed to her that she was almost all spirit, and that the body was quite laid by; and she was sometimes in hopes that the union would actually break, and the soul get quite away. She saw much at that time into the meaning of her Lord in those words, 'Because I live ye shall live also.'

"Respecting a time of sickness she had, concerning which I enquired of her, she told me, she expected pretty much to die then, and was very joyful at the near prospect of her change; and sensibly grieved to find herself recover again, chiefly because, that while she lived here she was so frail and sinful, and could do so little for the Lord's honour. I was with her in the time of that sickness, and indeed, I scarcely ever saw one appearing to be so fully and sweetly satisfied under the afflicting hand of God; she manifestly appeared to lie under it with a peaceful serenity and divine sweetness in her whole soul. In a word, her whole deportment in the world, bespeaks much humility and heavenliness of spirit.

"One of our Christian friends, a man about fifty years of age, was removed from us by death in the beginning of May last; of whom I can give some broken imperfect account, which perhaps may be of some use. His name was Hanse Kirkpatrick: he was a man of a pretty good understanding, and had been, I believe, a sober professor for many years, though he had not been very long in America. After the work of religion began so powerfully amongst us, I found in conversation with him, that he believed it to be a good work, but seemed very unwilling to give up his good opinion of his own case: he told me of some concern and trouble he had been in about his soul in his younger years; but yet the case looked suspicious that he had got ease in a legal way, upon an outward form of religion. At another time, being at his house, and taking up a little book that lay by me on the table, which I found to be Mr. Mather's dead faith anatomized, and self-justiciary convicted,' he said to me, that was indeed a strange book as ever he saw, and that according to that author, it was a great thing indeed to have a right faith that was true and saving, another thing than it was generally supposed to be; or to this purpose. He seemed to me at that time to be under more fears about his own case than I had observed in him before. Not long after this, as he was hearing a sermon, one day, the word was applied with irresistible evidence and power to his heart, so that he saw himself as yet in a perishing undone case: whereupon, the distress and exercise of his soul was so great, that he fell off the seat on which he was sitting, and wept and cried, very bitterly. A little after this he went to Philadelphia, at the time of the meeting of the synod, in hopes that perhaps he might meet with some benefit to his soul, by hearing the ministers preach there, or by conversing with some of them. He told me afterwards, that while he was there, and as he walked the streets, he was unspeakably distressed with the view of his miserable condition; so that he could hardly keep his distress from being publicly discerned upon him: and, that he seemed sometimes to be even in a manner afraid that the streets would open and swallow up such a wretched creature. He told me of his trouble, and his very sweet relief out of it, in a most moving manner, under a very fresh sense and impression of both; but the particulars of his relief, I have quite forgot.

“He was afterwards chosen and set apart for a ruling elder in the congregation. He died of an imposthume, and gradually wasted away for a long time before his death, and was for about two months entirely confined to his bed. He told me, that for some time before he was laid bedfast, he had been full of very distressing fears and jealousies about his soul’s state, and was altogether unsatisfied about his interest in Christ; but that soon after he was confined to his bed, the Lord afforded him his comforting presence, cleared up his interest, and removed his fears. After this, he continued still clear and peaceful in his soul, and sweetly and wholly resigned to the Lord’s will, until death. While he had strength to speak much, he was free and forward to discourse of God and divine things. One time, as two other of our elders were with him, he exhorted them to continue steadfast and faithful to God’s truths and cause; for, he said, if he had a thousand souls, he could freely venture them all upon the doctrines which had been taught them in this congregation. One time when I took leave of him, he burst out into tears, saying, ‘I had been the messenger of the Lord of hosts to him that the Lord had sent to call him out of the broad way of destruction.’ For some days before his decease, he could speak but very little, but to all appearance, with a great deal of serenity and sweetness of soul, he fell asleep in Jesus.

“There have been very comfortable instances of little children, among us. Two sisters, the one being about seven, the other about nine years of age, were hopefully converted, that summer, when religion was so much revived here. I discoursed with them both very lately, and from their own account, and the account of their parents, there appears to have been a lasting and thorough change wrought in them. They speak of their soul experiences with a very becoming gravity, and apparent impression of the things they speak of.

“The youngest was awakened by hearing the word preached: she told me she heard in sermons, that except persons were convinced and converted, they would surely go to hell; and she knew she was not converted. This set her to praying with great earnestness, with tears and cries; yet her fears and distress continued for several days, until, one time, as she was praying, her heart, she said, was drawn out in great love to God; and, as she thought of heaven, and being with God, she was filled with sweetness and delight: I could not find by her, that she had at that time any explicit particular thoughts about Christ as a Redeemer, but, she said, she knew then that Christ had died for sinners. She told me, she often found such delight and love to God since, as she did then, and at such times, she was very willing to die that she might be with God: but she said, she was sometimes afraid yet of going to hell. I asked her, ‘If she was troubled at any time when she was not afraid of going to hell?’ She said, ‘yes:’ I asked her, ‘what she was troubled for, then?’ she said, ‘because she had done ill to God;’ meaning, that she had done evil, and sinned against God. Some time after she first found comfort, one night, when her father and all the rest of the family, but her mother and herself, were gone to a private society, she said to her mother, ‘that the people were singing and praying, where her father was gone,’ and desired her mother to do the same with her: and after they were gone to bed, ‘she desired her mother to sing some psalms which she had by heart, for she said, she did not want to go to sleep.

“Her sister was brought into trouble about her soul, that same summer, by sickness. It continued with her some time after her recovery; until one day, coming home from meeting, as she heard some people speaking about Christ and heaven, her heart was inflamed with love to Christ. She says, that ‘when she has Christ’s presence with her, she does not know what to do to get away and be with God.’ Their parents told me, that for a long time they seemed to be almost wholly

taken up in religion: that no weather, through the extremity of winter, would hinder them from going out daily to by-places for secret prayer; and if anything came in the way that they could not get out for prayer, at such times as they inclined and thought most proper, they would weep and cry. Their parents say they are very obedient children, and strict observers of the Sabbath.

“There are likewise other young ones in the place, of whom I know nothing to the contrary, but what they continue hopeful and religious, to this day.

“This blessed shower of divine influences, spread very much through this province, that summer: and was likewise considerable in some other places, bordering upon it. The accounts of some ministers being something distinguished by their searching, awakening doctrine, and solemn pathetic manner of address, and the news of the effects of their preaching upon their hearers, seemed in some measure to awaken people through the country, to consider their careless and formal way of going on in religion; and very much excited their desires to hear those ministers. There were several vacant congregations without any settled pastors, which earnestly begged for their visits: and several ministers who did not appear heartily to put their shoulder to help in carrying on the same work, yet then yielded to the pressing importunities of their people, in inviting those brethren to preach in their pulpits: so that they were very much called abroad, and employed in incessant labours, and the Lord wrought with them, mightily. Very great assemblies would ordinarily meet to hear them, on any day of the week; and, oftentimes, a surprising power accompanying their preaching, was visible among the multitudes of their hearers. It was a very comfortable enlivening time to God's people; and great numbers of secure careless professors, and many loose irreligious persons, through the land, were deeply convinced of their miserable perishing estates; and there is abundant reason to believe and be satisfied, that many of them were in the issue, savingly converted to God. I myself, have had occasion to converse with a great many up and down, who have given a most agreeable account of very precious and clear experiences of the grace of God. Several, even in Baltimore, a county in the province of Maryland, who were brought up almost in a state of heathenism, without almost any knowledge of the true doctrines of Christianity, afford very satisfying evidences of being brought to a saving acquaintance with God in Christ Jesus.

“Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to give a brief account of the revival of religion among us, in these parts; in which I have endeavoured, all along, to be conscientiously exact, in relating things according to the naked truth: knowing, that I must not speak wickedly, even for God; nor talk deceitfully, for Him.

“And upon the whole, I must say, it is beyond all dispute with me, and I think it is beyond all reasonable contradiction, that God has carried on a great and glorious work of his grace among us.

“I am, Rev Sir, “Your very respectful son and servant,

“Samuel Blair.

“Rev. Sir.

“Having an opportunity of obtaining these attestations before sending my letter to you, I send them also along, if you please they may be inserted in the Christian History, at the end of my account.

S. B.

"New Londonderry, August 7th, 1744.

"We the subscribers, ruling elders, in the congregation of New Londonderry, do give our testimony and attestation to the above account of the revival of religion in this congregation and other parts of this country, so far as the said account relates to things that were open to public observation, and such things as we have had opportunity of being acquainted with. Particularly, we testify, that there has been a great and very general awakening among people, whereby they have been stirred up to an earnest uncommon concern and diligence about their eternal salvation, according to the above account of it: and, that many give very comfortable evidence by their knowledge, declaration of experience, and conscientious practice, of their being savingly changed and turned to God.

James Cochran,

John Ramsay,

John Love,

John Smith,

John Simson,

Wm. Boyd."

Mr. Samuel Blair was truly a burning and a shining light: but like many others of this description, while he warmed and enlightened others, he himself was consumed. Though his life was protracted beyond the age attained by Davies and Brainerd; yet he may be said to have died young; for from the inscription on his tomb, it appears, that he was only thirty-nine years, and twenty-one days old, when he was taken away. His remains lie in the burying ground of Fagg's Manor; where his tomb may yet be seen. The whole inscription is,

"Here lieth the body of

The Rev. Samuel Blair,

Who departed this life,

The 5th day of July 1751.

Aged 39 years and 21 days."

"In yonder sacred house I spent my breath,

Now silent, mouldering, here I lie in death;

These lips shall wake and yet declare,

A dread amen, to truths they published there."

Mr. Blair was one of the most learned and profound, as well as pious, excellent, and venerable men of his day. His deep and clear views as a theologian, are sufficiently evident from his treatise

on "Predestination," where this awful and mysterious doctrine is treated with the hand of a master. As a preacher, Mr. Blair was very eminent. There was a solemnity in his very appearance, which struck his hearers with awe, before he opened his mouth. And his manner of preaching, while it was truly evangelical and instructive, was exceedingly impressive. He spoke as in the view of eternity, as in the immediate presence of God. The opinion which Mr. Davies entertained of Mr. Blair as a preacher, may be learned from an anecdote received from Dr. Rodgers, by a person still living.* "When the Rev. Samuel Davies returned from Europe, his friends were curious to learn his opinion of the celebrated preachers, whom he had heard in England and Scotland. After dealing out liberal commendations on such as he had most admired, he concluded by saying, that he had heard no one, who, in his judgment, was superior to his former teacher, the Rev. Samuel Blair.

Mr. Blair was intimately associated with Mr. Gilbert Tennent, in all his controversies with the synod of Philadelphia. He concurred in all the proceedings of the New Brunswick presbytery, in which they acted in opposition to the rule of the synod, requiring candidates to be examined by a committee of their appointment; and in preaching within the bounds of settled congregations, where the people requested it. He also united with Mr. Tennent in presenting to the synod complaints against the members of that body, by which proceedings the minds of the majority of the synod were so exasperated, that they introduced a solemn protest against the New Brunswick brethren, which led to an immediate separation of the parties; a schism which continued seventeen years, before it could be healed; as has been already related. To ascertain, at this time, which of the parties were most to blame in these unhappy controversies and divisions, is not easy. Faults undoubtedly there were on both sides. The Old Side, were much to blame in setting themselves in opposition to the revival of religion, which had so gloriously commenced. By doing so, they incurred a fearful responsibility. That Tennent and Blair transgressed the rules of order, cannot be denied. They disobeyed the synod, and entered into the congregations of their brethren without their consent. Whether in these things they were excusable, will depend upon the true state of the churches, at that time. Our Saviour and his apostles, disregarded the orders of the priests and of the synagogue. And Luther and the other Reformers, did not feel themselves bound by the authority of the popish magistracy and priesthood. Every minister holds a commission to preach the gospel to every creature, to whom he can gain access; and if a certain number of people, who are anxious to hear the gospel, happen, by human arrangements, to be circumscribed within the limits of a parish, over which another has charge; and if this nominal pastor is believed not so to preach the gospel as to lead the people in the way of salvation, why may not the faithful preacher disregard these human arrangements intended to promote order, and carry the gospel to those who are thirsting for the word of life? No doubt, the principle is liable to great abuse, and may occasion great disorder, and result in much more evil than good. The question in regard to these devoted men is, whether the people in the congregations of their opponents were really in such a perishing condition as would authorize them to overleap the fence, which, for the sake of order, had been set up. And this is the point which, in my opinion, we are incapable of deciding. Men may continue to maintain in theory an orthodox creed, and yet may manifest such deadly hostility to vital piety, that they must be considered the enemies of the cause of God, and the work of the Spirit. That the opposers of the revival, at that time, did exhibit such a character cannot be asserted universally, for some of them appear to have been, in the main, sincere Christians, and only meant to set themselves in opposition to those opinions and practices, connected with the revival, which were reprehensible. But that many of those of the Old

Side, manifested a malignity of spirit against the revival, which was wicked in the extreme, I entertain no doubt. I have heard so much from aged persons who were living in the midst of the revival; and even the subjects of it, have given me such accounts of the malign spirit with which the whole work was ridiculed and opposed, by many, that I cannot doubt, that, in a good degree, the contest between the parties, was, between the friends and the enemies of true religion. And something of the same spirit of hostility to revivals was handed down to our own times. I have known men of high standing in the church, and undoubted learning, who derided every account of revivals, and sudden conversions, as fanatical and foolish. It is, therefore, my deliberate opinion, that in the general, the Tennents and Blairs, and their coadjutors, were men approved of God, and greatly honoured, as the instruments of winning many souls to Christ; while their opponents, were for the most part, unfriendly to vital piety. But while I consider the ministers of the New Brunswick presbytery, and their coadjutors, as the real friends and successful promoters of true religion, in this land, I do not mean to exonerate them from all blame. They were men, and liable to human imperfections. Some of them were men of ardent temperament, and somewhat overbearing disposition; and under the influence of a fervid zeal, they did and said many unadvised things. When the state of the church became more settled, and the warmth of their feelings had subsided, they themselves viewed matters in a very different light from what they had done, in the heat of the controversy.

CHAPTER XV("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

THE REV. JOHN BLAIR

Education—First settlement—Driven away by the Indians—Is called to Fagg's Manor—Continues the school—Elected Professor of Theology in Nassau Hall—Resigns on the arrival of Dr. Witherspoon—Removes to Orange County, N. Y.—His end—The family of the Blairs.

The Rev. John Blair, was a younger brother of the person, whose memoir is given in the preceding chapter. He was also an alumnus of the Log College, and as a theologian was not inferior to any man in the Presbyterian church, in his day. He was first settled in Pennsylvania, at Big Spring (now Newville) in the Cumberland Valley, in the vicinity of Carlisle. But by reason of the hostile incursion of the Indians, his people were obliged to leave their rude habitations, on the frontier, and to retreat into the more densely populated part of the colony. Mr. Blair, it would seem, never returned to the place whence he had been driven by the invasion of the savages, but upon the decease of his brother Samuel, he received and accepted a call to be his successor, at Fagg's Manor; and that not only as pastor of the church, but also as the teacher of the school which his brother had instituted in that place. In this important station he continued for nine years; and though not equal to his brother as an impressive preacher, as a scholar and as a theologian, he was not inferior.

New Jersey College having been founded for the very purpose of giving a complete education to candidates for the ministry, these academies, which had done so much for the church, no longer had the same importance, as when no such institution existed. Accordingly, not only did the Log College, at Neshaminy, which was the mother institution, cease, as soon as the college was erected, but the celebrated school at Nottingham, was not continued after Dr. Finley was chosen president of Nassau Hall. And when Dr. Finley died, a sum of money having been left for the support of a professor of divinity; Mr. John Blair was elected, professor of theology, in the College of New Jersey. This invitation he accepted, and removed to Princeton. He was also appointed vice

president of the college, and until the arrival of Dr. Witherspoon, performed all the duties of president. The funds of the college not being adequate to support a professor of theology, distinct from the president; and it being known that Dr. Witherspoon was an orthodox and eminent theologian, who could consistently with his other duties teach theology, Mr. Blair judged it would be expedient for him to resign. Upon this he received a call to settle as pastor of a Presbyterian congregation in Wallkill, Orange county, New York. Here he continued to labour in the duties of the ministry, until he was called away from the field, by death, which occurred, Dec. 8, 1771, when he was not more than fifty-one, or fifty-two years of age. The character of Mr. John Blair is thus drawn, by a writer of a sketch of his life, in the "Assembly's Magazine."

"John Blair, an eminent minister of Pennsylvania, was ordained to the pastoral charge of three congregations in Cumberland county, as early as 1742. These were frontier settlements, and exposed to the depredation of the Indians, with whom a state of war then existed; and he was obliged to remove. He accepted a call from Fagg's Manor, in 1757. The congregation had been favoured with the ministry of his brother, Samuel Blair. And here he continued about nine years; and besides discharging the duties of the ministry, he superintended also a flourishing grammar-school, and prepared many young men for the ministry. When the presidency of New Jersey college became vacant, by the death of Dr. Finley, he was chosen professor of divinity, and had for some time, the charge of that seminary before the arrival of Dr. Witherspoon.

"He was a judicious and persuasive preacher, and through his exertions sinners were converted, and the children of God edified. Fully convinced of the truth of the doctrines of grace, he addressed immortal souls with that warmth and power, which left a witness in every bosom. Though he sometimes wrote his sermons in full, yet his common mode of preaching was by short notes, comprising the general outlines. His labours were too abundant to admit of more; and no more was necessary to a mind so richly stored with the great truths of religion. For his large family he amassed no fortune, but he left them what was infinitely better, a religious education, a holy example, and prayers which have been remarkably answered. His disposition was uncommonly patient, placid, benevolent, disinterested, and cheerful. He was too mild to indulge bitterness or severity; and he thought that the truth required little else but to be fairly stated and properly understood. Those who could not relish the savour of his piety, loved him as an amiable, and revered him as a great man. Though no bigot, he firmly believed that the presbyterian form of government is most scriptural, and the most favourable to religion and happiness.

"In his last sickness, he imparted his advice to the congregation, and represented to his family the necessity of an interest in Christ. A few nights before he died, he said, 'Directly, I am going to glory—my Master calls me, I must be gone.' "

Mr. John Blair left behind him a treatise on Regeneration, which is ably written and entirely orthodox. He also published a treatise on the Scriptural Terms of admission to the Lord's Supper, in which he maintains that ministers and church officers, have no more authority to debar those who desire to attend, from the Lord's table, than from any other duty of God's worship. This piece, the late Rev. J. P. Wilson, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Philadelphia, had republished in a small selection of treatises on the Lord's Supper; from which it may be inferred, that he approved the sentiments which it contains.

It is always gratifying to a laudable curiosity to learn something respecting the families and descendants of men once eminent in the church; although in the pursuit of this knowledge, we often meet with mortifying instances of a sad degeneracy. But when it is otherwise, it is always pleasing to the pious mind to be able to trace eminent piety and talents descending from generation to generation. Two of the sisters of Samuel and John Blair were married to distinguished ministers of the Presbyterian church: the one, to the Rev. John Carmichael, pastor of the church at the Forks of Brandywine; who was also an eminent patriot, in the struggle of this country for independence. The other, was married to the Rev. Robert Smith, D.D., of Pequea, the father of three ministers, who were eminent in the Presbyterian church, and two of them distinguished presidents of literary institutions. The Rev. Doctor Samuel S. Smith, was the first president of Hampden Sidney College in Virginia, and then the immediate successor of Dr. Witherspoon, as president of New Jersey College: the other, the Rev. John B. Smith, D.D., who succeeded his brother as president of Hampden Sidney, and was afterwards, the first president of Union College in Schenectady. He was an eloquent, evangelical, and successful minister. Under his ministry, in Virginia, commenced a powerful and extensive revival, the influence of which extended far and wide through the state, and also to North Carolina, and Kentucky. Mr. William Smith, the third son, was a pious, judicious minister; less distinguished than either of his brothers; but his good old father was wont to say, that though William was inferior to his brothers in learning and eloquence, yet to comfort and edify the plain Christian, he was equal to either of them. The Rev. Samuel Blair, of Fagg's Manor, had a son of the same name, who was considered the most accomplished and promising young minister in the Presbyterian Church. He, at an early age, received a call to be colleague with the Rev. Mr. Sewall, in the old South Church, Boston. Before he was licensed, he had for some time acted as a tutor in his alma mater. The estimation in which he was held by the trustees of the college, may be learned from the fact, that after Dr. Witherspoon had declined the first invitation of the board, young Mr. Blair was elected president, before he was thirty years of age. But soon after his election, intelligence was received from Scotland, that if the call were repeated, Dr. Witherspoon would, in all probability, accept the invitation. As soon as this was known to Mr. Blair, he immediately wrote to the president of the board, declining the office. This prompt and generous decision, freed the trustees from all the embarrassment in which otherwise they might have been involved. Of course, the election of Mr. Blair could not have been known to Dr. Witherspoon, when he signified his willingness to accept the appointment; and when he understood from what motives Mr. Blair had declined the office, he was much affected with the disinterestedness of the young man, and often spoke of it with admiration. But though the morning of Mr. Blair's life was so bright, and promised so much to the church, the sanguine hopes of his friends were far from being realized in his future usefulness. By being ship-wrecked on his way to Boston, he was much exposed; and to this was attributed the decline of his health and spirits. He also lost, at this time, the whole of his manuscript sermons; a loss which could not be suddenly repaired, and which affected his spirits not a little. He, therefore, did not remain long in Boston, but returned to Pennsylvania, where he resided at the house of his father-in-law, Dr. Shippen, in Germantown, and was very little engaged in the duties of his office, afterwards; although his life was protracted to a good old age. The writer having spent several summers in Germantown, before Dr. Blair's decease, had the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with him; and found him to be a man of great refinement of mind, mild and amiable in disposition, and friendly to evangelical doctrine and practical piety. From the history of this popular

young man, it may be inferred, that too much applause is a dangerous thing to a young minister. Another remark which may be made, is, that for a young man to form a connexion, by marriage, with a rich and fashionable family, seldom ever works well for his usefulness in the ministry; especially if his partner is of a gay and worldly disposition. And lastly, that speculation on deep points of theology, when the mind is not under a decided spiritual influence, is always attended with evil, even to those who at bottom are sincerely pious.

One of the daughters of Samuel Blair, Sen., was married to a young minister from Virginia, the Rev. David Rice, and became the mother of a numerous progeny, who are now scattered through Virginia and Kentucky, to which last mentioned place Mr. Rice removed, and on the rising population of which, his evangelical labours and holy example, left a lasting impression.

Mr. John Blair also had a son, educated at Princeton, New Jersey, who became a minister of the gospel. He graduated in the year 1775, soon after which, he went to the county of Hanover, in Virginia, and became the principal of an academy, which had been established by the Rev. Daniel Mc Calla. While in this office, he applied himself to the study of theology, without any instructor, and having passed the usual trials, to the approbation of the presbytery of Hanover, he was licensed to preach the gospel. The academy not prospering according to his wishes, Mr. Blair removed from Hanover to the city of Richmond, where he taught a classical school, at his own house, and preached alternately at Hanover meeting house, and in the Capitol, in Richmond. At this time, there was no Presbyterian church in Richmond; but before Mr. Blair's death, and after Dr. Rice had collected a congregation and erected a church in the lower part of the city, Mr. Blair's hearers made an exertion, and built a handsome church on Shockoe Hill. He was a sensible, pleasant man, and much respected by all the leading characters in the city of Richmond; but he possessed a moderate degree of religious zeal, and no considerable fruits attended his ministry, as far as has come to our knowledge.

Another son of the Rev. John Blair, also educated at Princeton, went to Kentucky, where it is understood that he was a respectable lawyer.

CHAPTER XVI("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

THE REV. SAMUEL FINLEY, D. D.

Birth in Ireland—Immigration to America—Education at the Log College—Becomes a popular Preacher—A successful Itinerant—Settles at Nottingham, Md.—Institutes a Classical School—Eminent as a Teacher—Distinguished Scholars—Elected President of New Jersey College—Continues in this station five years—Seized with a Liver Complaint—Goes to Philadelphia to consult Physicians—Dies there in the triumphs of Faith—Burial—Writings.

Dr. Finley was born in the county of Armagh, in the province of Ulster, Ireland, in the year 1715, and was one of seven sons, who were all esteemed pious. One of his brothers, the Rev. James Finley, was an esteemed minister in the Presbyterian church; and although his talents were very inferior to those of his brother Samuel, yet he was reckoned to be eminently pious; and continued laboriously to preach the gospel, until an advanced period of life. His latter years he spent in the western part of Pennsylvania, where he died some years before the close of the last century. The writer remembers to have seen him at a meeting of the Virginia synod, in Lexington, in the year 1789. He was one of the pioneers who, amidst many hardships and privations, carried the gospel

to the settlers in the country round about Pittsburgh; and was the companion and coadjutor of such men as Mc Millan, Joseph Smith, Power, Patterson, Dod, Dunlap, &c. The parents of Dr. Finley were of Scotch descent, and were distinguished for their piety. Finding their son to be of a quick capacity, and fond of learning, they resolved to give him the best education which their circumstances would admit; and after he had obtained the rudiments of an English education, he was sent abroad some distance from home, to prosecute his studies. In this school, he distinguished himself by his assiduity and his proficiency in learning. When he was in his nineteenth year, he emigrated from his native country, and came to America. He arrived in Philadelphia on the 28th of September, in the year 1734. He appears to have become a subject of divine grace, at a very early age. He has been heard to say, that when only six years old, he heard a sermon which made a deep impression on his mind, and the text of which he never forgot. From that day, he was seized with an ardent desire to become a minister of the gospel. And as he grew up, this desire continued to ripen and increase; so that his purpose was early formed to devote his life to the service of God. Upon his coming to America, he steadily pursued his studies with a view to the holy ministry. And as he arrived in Philadelphia, at the very time when Mr. Tennent's school was flourishing at Neshaminy, and as there was then no other institution in the Presbyterian church where young men were trained for the ministry, there is the strongest probability that he was a student at the Log College. This probability is strengthened by the fact, that he put himself under the care of the New Brunswick Presbytery, most of the members of which were educated in this school. His license took place on the 5th of August, in the year 1740. Having received authority to preach, he itinerated extensively; and as his pulpit talents were of a high order of excellence, he was greatly instrumental in carrying on the work of the Lord, which at that time prevailed in almost every part of the land. His labours in the gospel were greatly blessed in West Jersey;—in Deerfield, Greenwich, and Cape May. He preached also for six months, with great acceptance, in the congregation to which Gilbert Tennent was afterwards called, in Philadelphia. His ordination took place on the 13th of October, in the year 1742. He was probably ordained as an evangelist, and continued to visit the places destitute of the stated means of grace, for several years; and all accounts agree in ascribing much success to his itinerant labours. It was, probably, during this period, that he made a preaching incursion into Connecticut. But so rigid were the laws of this land of steady habits, that Mr. Finley, for preaching in a congregation in New Haven, was seized as a vagrant, by the civil authority, and carried beyond the limits of the colony. He does not appear to have been permanently settled as a pastor, until June, 1744, when he accepted a call from Nottingham, Maryland. In this place, he remained for seventeen years.* In this place, he instituted an academy, with the view, chiefly, of preparing young men for the gospel ministry. This school was conducted with admirable wisdom and success, and acquired a higher reputation than any other in the middle colonies; so that students from a distance were attracted to it. Some of the most distinguished men in our country, laid the foundation of their eminence and usefulness, in this academy. At one time, there was a cluster of such young men, who all were afterwards distinguished, and some of them, among the very first men in the country, as the following names well show. Governor Martin, of North Carolina; Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, and his brother, Jacob Rush, an eminent and pious judge; Ebenezer Hazard, Esq. of Philadelphia; Rev. James Waddel, D. D., of Virginia; Rev. Dr. Mc Whorter, of Newark, N. J.; Col. John Bayard, speaker of the House of Representatives; Governor Henry, of Maryland, and the Rev. William M. Tennent, of Abington, Pa. It would not be easy, in any country, to find such a constellation in one

school, at the same time. That Dr. Finley was an accomplished scholar, and a skilful teacher, was universally admitted. Perhaps this country has not had better classical scholars formed any where, than in this school. The method of instruction in the Latin and Greek languages, was thorough and accurate. The scholars were carefully drilled in the application of the rules of syntax, and in the prosody of these languages. Dr. Finley boarded most of his pupils in his own house, and when they were met at meals, he was in the habit of relaxing from the severity of the pedagogue, and indulging in facetious remarks; saying, that nothing more helped digestion than a hearty laugh. His own temper was remarkably benignant and sweet, and his manners affable and polite.

Dr. Finley had been seriously thought of before Mr. Davies was called to the presidency of Nassau Hall, and when Mr. Davies at first declined the invitation, he strongly recommended Dr. Finley. And it cannot be denied, that both in scholarship, and skill in teaching, the latter was far superior. Dr. Finley too, was a much older man, and had been several years longer in the ministry. But Davies was a man of much more genius, and eloquence, and his acquaintance with English literature was far more perfect. The premature decease of so many presidents of New Jersey College brought forward a succession of illustrious men, who have ever since reflected honour on that literary institution. Dickinson, Burr, Edwards, Davies, and Finley, all filled the presidential chair, within five or six years. Dr. Finley was elected president, in the year 1761, and immediately entered on the duties of the office; and the trustees were not disappointed in their expectations of his wisdom and efficiency. As he was permitted to remain five years in office, he had the opportunity of carrying into effect, plans for the improvement of the institution, so that its reputation was greatly extended. Dr. Finley held correspondence with some of the learned men of Europe, among whom was Dr. Samuel Chandler, of London; who, as appears by his letters, entertained a high esteem, and indeed, affectionate friendship, for his distant correspondent. It was through the influence of this learned dissenter, that, without the knowledge of Mr. Finley, the degree of doctor of divinity was bestowed upon him by the University of Glasgow; which seems to have been the first instance of any Presbyterian minister, in America, receiving that honorary distinction. But if genius and theological learning could have commanded it, Dickinson, Burr, Edwards and Davies, would all have been distinguished, in the same way. But they need no such appendage to their names; their works have secured to them, a much higher honour, in the estimation of posterity. And it must be a mortification to many modest men, who bear the title of doctor, that divines to whom they are conscious that they are not fit to be compared, lived and died, without having their names distinguished by any such title. The disease by which Dr. Finley's constitution was attacked, an obstruction of the liver, was supposed to have been contracted by too great assiduity in his studies, and too constant occupation in the public duties of his office. He did not die at home, but in the city of Philadelphia, whither he had gone to consult physicians, respecting his disease. When informed by the physician who attended him, that nothing could be done to remove his malady, and that it must soon prove mortal, he expressed an entire resignation to the divine will, and from that time, was engaged in 'setting his house in order.' He said, "If my work is done, I am ready; I do not desire to live a day longer, than I can work for God." At that time, however, he did not apprehend that his end was so near as it proved to be. His disease made rapid progress; and he was informed by one of his physicians, that he had but few days to live; on which, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "Then, welcome, Lord Jesus." On the Sabbath preceding his death, he was informed by Dr. Clarkson, his brother-in-law, that he perceived a manifest alteration in his appearance, and that evidently his end was near. "Then," said he, "may the Lord bring me near

himself! I have been waiting with a Canaan hunger for the promised land. I have often wondered that God suffered me to live. I have more wondered, that he ever called me to be a minister of his word. He has often afforded me much strength, which, though I have often abused, He returned in mercy. Oh! faithful are the promises of God! O that I could see Him as I have seen Him in the sanctuary! Although I have earnestly desired death, as the hireling pants for the evening shade; yet will I wait all the days of my appointed time. I have often struggled with principalities and powers, and have been brought almost to despair—Lord, let it suffice!” Here he sat up; and closing his eyes, he prayed, fervently, that God would show him his glory, before he should depart hence—that He would enable him to endure patiently to the end,—and particularly, that he might be kept from dishonouring the ministry. He then resumed his discourse, and spoke as follows, “I can truly say, I have loved the service of God. I know not in what language to speak of my own unworthiness—I have been undutiful—I have honestly endeavoured to act for God, but with much weakness and corruption.” He then lay down, but continued to speak in broken sentences. “A Christian’s death,” said he, “is the best part of his experience. The Lord has made provision for the whole way: provision for the soul and for the body. O that I could recollect Sabbath blessings! The Lord hath given me many souls, as crowns of my rejoicing. Blessed be God, eternal rest is at hand. Eternity is but long enough, to enjoy my God. This, has animated me in my secret studies, I was ashamed to take rest here. O that I could be filled with the fulness of God! that fulness which fills heaven.” Being asked whether he would choose to live or die, he replied, “to die—though I cannot but say, I feel the same strait that Paul did, that he knew not which to choose, ‘for me to live is Christ, but to die is gain.’ But should God, by a miracle, prolong my life, I would still continue to serve Him. His service has ever been sweet to me. I have loved it much. I have tried my Master’s yoke, and will never shrink my neck from it. “His yoke is easy and his burden light.” One said to him, “You are more cheerful and vigorous, Sir.” “Yes. I rise or fall as eternal life seems nearer, or farther off.” It being remarked, that he always used the expression, “dear Lord,” in his prayers, he answered, “O, He is very dear—very precious, indeed.”—“How pretty is it for a minister to die on the Sabbath—I expect to spend the remainder of this Sabbath in heaven.” One of the company said, you will soon be joined to the blessed society of heaven; you will forever hold intercourse with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with the spirits of the just made perfect—with old friends and many old-fashioned people.” “Yes, Sir,” he replied with a smile, “but they are a most polite people now.” He expressed great gratitude to friends around him, and said, “May the Lord repay you—may He bless you abundantly, not only with temporal, but with spiritual blessings!” Turning to his wife, he said, “I expect, my dear, to see you shortly in glory.” In this, however, he was disappointed, for Mrs. Finley continued to live, many years after her husband’s decease. She was, a long time, completely blind; but under this privation, manifested a pious and contented disposition; being entirely resigned to the will of her heavenly Father. It was an edifying and refreshing thing for any person to pay a visit to her and her companion, Mrs. Hodge, with whom she lived. Their conversation was indeed in heaven. But to return. Dr. Finley, seeing a member of the Second Presbyterian church present, said, “I have often preached and prayed among you, my dear Sir, and the doctrines I preached to you, are now my support, and blessed be God, they are without a flaw. May the Lord bless and prosper your church. He designs good for it yet, I trust.” To a person from Princeton, he said, “Give my love to the people of Princeton, and tell them that I am going to die, and that I am not afraid to die.” He would sometimes cry out, “The Lord Jesus will take care of his cause in this world!” Upon awaking the next morning, he exclaimed, “Oh what a

disappointment I have met with—I expected, this morning to have been in heaven!” On account of extreme weakness, he was unable to speak much during this day, but what he did say was the language of triumph. The next morning, with a pleasing smile on his countenance, he cried out, “O, I shall triumph over every foe. The Lord hath given me the victory. I exult—I triumph. O that I could see untainted purity! Now I know that it is impossible that faith should not triumph over earth and hell.” “I think I have nothing to do but to die. Yet, perhaps I have—Lord show me my task.” He then said, “Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit—I do it with confidence—I do it with full assurance. I know that thou wilt keep that which I have committed to thee. I have been dreaming too fast of the time of my departure, for I find it does not come; but the Lord is faithful, and will not tarry beyond the appointed time.” In the afternoon of this day, the Rev. Elihu Spencer called to see him, and said, “I have come, dear Sir, to see you confirm by facts the gospel you have been preaching, pray Sir, how do you feel?” To which he replied, “full of triumph—I triumph through Christ. Nothing clips my wings, but the thoughts of my dissolution being prolonged. O, that it were to night! My very soul thirsts for eternal rest.” Mr. Spencer asked him, “what he saw in eternity to excite such vehement desires?” “I see,” said he, “the eternal love and goodness of God. I see the fulness of the Mediator. I see the love of Jesus ... O to be dissolved, and to be with Him! I long to be clothed with the complete righteousness of Christ.” He then desired Mr. Spencer to pray with him, before they parted, and said, “I have gained the victory over the devil. Pray to God to preserve me from evil—to keep me from dishonouring his great name in this critical hour; and to support me with his presence in my passage through the valley of the shadow of death.” The remainder of the evening he spent in taking leave of his friends, and blessing and exhorting such of his children as were present. He would frequently cry out, “Why move the tardy hours so slow?” The next day terminated the conflict. He was no longer able to speak, but a friend having desired him to give a token by which it might be known, whether he still continued to triumph, he lifted up his hand, and uttered the word “Yes.” About nine o’clock, he fell into a profound sleep, and appeared to be much more free from pain than he had been for many days before. He continued to sleep without changing his position, till about one o’clock, when he expired, without a sigh or a groan. During his whole sickness he was never heard to utter a repining word, and in taking leave of his dearest friends, he was never seen to shed a tear, or to exhibit any sign of sorrow. His death occurred on the 16th of July, 1766, in the fifty-first year of his age.

It was the purpose of Dr. Finley’s friends to have his remains removed to Princeton, and buried with his illustrious predecessors, who lie interred in the cemetery of that place; but the heat of the weather rendered it inconvenient to carry the body so far, and therefore he was buried by the side of his dear friend, Gilbert Tennent, within the Second Presbyterian church. When this church was enlarged, the remains of both these venerable men were removed to the common burying ground of the congregation. Agreeably to his dying request, his body was carried to the grave, by eight members of the senior class of the College of New Jersey. The Trustees of the College, to show their respect for the deceased, caused a cenotaph to be erected in the cemetery of Princeton, in a line with the tombs of the other presidents, whose remains are there entombed.

Dr. Finley was a person of low stature, and of a round and ruddy countenance. In the pulpit he was solemn, sensible, and sententious; and sometimes glowed with fervid animation. He was remarkable for sweetness of temper, politeness, and generosity. He was also distinguished for diligence and punctuality in the performance of all his duties. His sermons were rather solid, than

brilliant; not hasty productions, but composed with care; and while they were in a style pleasing to the cultivated mind, they were, at the same time, intelligible by the illiterate.

Dr. Finley was twice married; first, to Sarah Hall, by whom he had eight children. She died in the year 1760, before he left Nottingham. His second wife was Ann Clarkson, daughter of Mr. Clarkson, merchant of New York, who was a lineal descendant of the Rev. David Clarkson, B.D., one of the two thousand ministers, ejected for non-conformity in England, in the year 1662. His second wife survived him forty-one years. His son Ebenezer Finley, was a physician in Charleston, S. C., where his descendents still dwell and are respectable, and generally pious. One of his daughters was married to Samuel Breeze, Esq., of Shrewsbury, New Jersey, who was the mother of the wife of the Rev. Jedediah Morse, D.D.; consequently, the ingenious and respectable sons of Dr. Morse, now resident in the city of New York, are the great grandsons of Dr. Finley.

Dr. Finley wrote no work of any considerable size; but published several sermons and essays, which however are nearly out of print. In 1741, he published a sermon on Matthew 12:28, entitled, "Christ Triumphant and Satan Raging." In 1743, "A Refutation of Mr. Thompson's Sermon on Conviction." And in the same year, a treatise against the Moravians, entitled "Satan Stripped of his Evangelical Robe." In 1747, a Treatise against the Antipedobaptism of Abel Morgan, entitled, "A Plea for the Speechless." And in 1749, he published a sermon, preached at the ordination of the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, at St. George's, March, 1749.

Also, a sermon on the death of the Rev. Samuel Davies, his predecessor in the college, which is prefixed to most editions of Davies's Sermons. To which may be added, "A Sermon, occasioned by the death of the Rev. Gilbert Tennent," preached in the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

It would be desirable, if we had the materials, to give a history of the flourishing and important academical institutions which arose out of the Log College, and which were conducted on the same principles, and with the same views, by men who had received their education in that school. And it would be gratifying to our readers, we doubt not, if we were to annex some biographical account of the eminent men who proceeded from these academies, prior to the erection of the College of New Jersey. Such, for example, as the Rev. Samuel Davies, the Rev. John Rodgers, D.D., the Rev. Dr. McWhorter, the Rev. Mr. Cumming, and the Rev. Dr. Waddel; but this would carry us much beyond our prescribed limits; and in regard to several of the most distinguished of the persons mentioned, would lead us over ground which has already been occupied by abler hands.

CHAPTER XVII("tw://[self]?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

THE REV. WM. ROBINSON

An Englishman—Occasion of his Emigration—Teaches in New Jersey and in Delaware—Is converted—Joins the Presbyterians—Studies at the Log College—Seeks out the Destitute—Taken up in Virginia—Permitted to proceed—Visits Cub Creek—Conversion of David Austin—Sent for to Hanover—Extraordinary Religious awakening—Success of his labours—Mr. Davies's Letter to Mr. Bellamy—Preaches in New York with his wonted success—Also in Maryland—Died early—None of the circumstances of his end have come down—Left no writings.

Concerning the early history of this successful evangelist, very little is known. The only account which the writer has met with, is that found in a note, in the "Life of the Rev. Dr. Rodgers," by the Rev. Dr. Miller. It is here stated, "that Mr. Robinson was the son of a wealthy Quaker in England. Being permitted to pay a visit of a few weeks, to an aunt in the city of London, from whom he had considerable expectations, he greatly overstaid the time which had been allowed him; and becoming deeply involved in the dissipations of the town, he incurred large debts, which he knew his father would never pay, and which his aunt refused to discharge. In this situation, fearing to return home, and unable to remain longer in London, he determined to quit his native country, and seek his fortune in America. In this determination, his aunt reluctantly acquiesced, and furnished him with a small sum of money for the purpose. Soon after his arrival in America, he had recourse for subsistence to teaching a school in New Jersey, in the bounds of the presbytery of New Brunswick. He had been for some time engaged in this business, without any practical sense of religion, when it pleased God to bring him to a knowledge of himself, and the way of salvation, in a remarkable manner. He was riding at a late hour one evening, when the moon and stars shone with unusual brightness, and when every thing around him was calculated to excite reflection. While he was meditating on the beauty and grandeur of the scene which the firmament presented, and was saying to himself, how transcendently glorious must be the Author of all this beauty and grandeur, the thought struck him with the suddenness and force of lightning, 'But what do I know of this God? Have I ever sought his favour, or made him my friend?' This happy impression, which proved by its permanency and its effects, to have come from the best of all sources, never left him until he took refuge in Christ as the hope and life of his soul."

It appears from some circumstances of the life of the Rev. Samuel Davies, that Mr. Robinson also taught a classical school in the state of Delaware; for it is mentioned that Mr. Davies, when a boy was one of his pupils; and his parents, we know, resided in the state of Delaware.

After Mr. Robinson's conversion, he determined to devote his life to the service of God, in the work of the holy ministry; and having fallen in with the Presbyterians, he connected himself with that church; and the uncontradicted tradition is, that he pursued a course of preparation for the ministry, in the Log College; and after the usual trials, was licensed to preach the gospel, by the presbytery of New Brunswick; and after some probation, was ordained by them as an evangelist.

Mr. Robinson, soon after his ordination, determined to go and visit the "lost sheep of the house of Israel;" that is, the distant and dispersed settlements of Presbyterians, in the states south of New Jersey. The Presbyterians from the north of Ireland, between the years 1720 and 1730, had come over to America, in large numbers. They generally landed at New Castle, or Philadelphia, and then proceeded to the interior of the country. In the frontier of Pennsylvania, they were greatly infested by the hostile incursions of the Indians, which induced them to turn their attention to the western parts of Virginia, and North Carolina. In some instances, whole congregations, driven from their homes by the savages, removed in a body, with their ministers, to a region less exposed to the incursions of their murderous foe. The valley between the Blue Ridge and the North mountain—a fine lime-stone farming county—was first occupied by these Irish Presbyterians; the Germans, who now possess a large part of this fertile region, came in afterwards. In many places, all along the frontier were small groups of Presbyterians, who were entirely destitute of the public means of grace. To these scattered sheep, Mr. Robinson directed his benevolent attention; feeling something of the zeal which actuated Paul, he did not wish to build on another man's foundation,

but to preach Christ where he had not been named. In another respect, he resembled Paul, for he went forward, fearless of danger, and as it would seem, without even inquiring whether the laws of the colonies into which he was going, would allow itinerant preachers to assp through the land. Accordingly, he had penetrated but a short day's journey into the Old Dominion, and reached the town of Winchester, when he was apprehended by the civil authorities; and it appearing that he had transgressed the laws of the colony, a mittimus was made out by the magistrate, to send him to Williamsburg, the then seat of government; for they were at a loss what disposal to make of him. The sheriff to whom he was committed, having set off on the journey, began to think that it would be a useless thing to conduct his prisoner to a place so distant, and finding that he was a sensible, well disposed man, he assumed the responsibility of letting him go on his missionary tour. Mr. Robinson proceded along the valley, every where finding new settlements of Presbyterians, until he reached the waters of James River. The writer has heard an old man who was among the first settlers of the country round about Lexington, then called the Forks, say, that he had heard Mr. Robinson preach in that settlement, soon after it was formed. But, the inhabitants in the valley, not extending any farther to the south-west, he returned, and crossing the Blue Ridge, at Rock Fish gap, proceeded to the south, across the country, until he reached Cub Creek, then in Lunenburg, now Charlotte. Here he found a pretty large settlement of Presbyterians, where he stopped and preached; and here as in all other places, his ministry was attended by the Spirit of God: sinners were awakened and converted, and the people of God were greatly strengthened and comforted. I have conversed with an old man, when I was young, who was living in this settlement at the time, and was afterwards an elder in the church organized there. His name was Robert Weakly, born in Pennsylvania; and though brought up among the opposers of the revival, he was led by curiosity to hear the Rev. Samuel Blair preach, and was brought under deep conviction; and after many trials, he hoped, to a sound conversion. From which time, he connected himself with the "New-Lights," as they were called. This man, late in life, having removed into Halifax county, where he had no opportunity of attending on the Lord's Supper in his own church, and being debarred from the communion by the Baptists among whom he lived, unless he would submit to be immersed, was at length induced to go down with them under the water; but though thus nominally a Baptist, his heart was as truly Presbyterian as ever. He was a man of eminent and long tried piety, and had a good report from all of every name, whether in the church or out of it. This man informed me, that under Mr. Robinson's first sermon, a remarkable conversion of a half-breed Indian, one of the wickedest of men, had taken place, under unusual circumstances. When notice was given to his family of a sermon at the Stand, by a travelling preacher, his wife wished to go, but he positively forbade her, but said he would go himself. His name was David Austin. When the congregation had collected, he was seen lying outside of the assembly, under a tree, asleep. And thus he lay, until the preacher took his text, which he uttered in a thundering voice, "Awake, thou that sleepest," Austin sprang to his feet, as if pierced with a dart, and fixing his eyes on the preacher, never removed them, but drew nigher and nigher to the Stand, until at the close, he was observed standing at the preacher's feet, and the tears streaming from his eyes. After a few days of pungent conviction, he received comfort by faith in Christ, and became one of the most eminent Christians in all the land. His talent for administering consolation to distressed consciences was so well known, that he has been sent for, as far as thirty miles, to converse with a lady under spiritual darkness and distress of mind. I have heard a pious old mother in Israel say, that she had heard Mr. Davies and Dr. Waddel, and the Smiths, converse on religion, but she never heard any one

whom she found so much comfort in hearing, as old David Austin. A remarkable attention to religion in the county of Hanover, existed at this time, without the aid of the ministry. Some persons from that place being on a visit to Cub Creek, when Mr. Robinson, on his way to Carolina, visited that settlement, then called "The Caldwell Settlement," gave an account, upon their return, of the preacher they had heard. Upon hearing this account, the serious people of Hanover inquired, at what time Mr. Robinson expected to return from Carolina to Cub Creek; and they immediately resolved to send two of their number to meet him at the time specified. It so happened, however, that the information received was not correct; for when the messengers arrived at Cub Creek, they found to their disappointment, that he had passed several days before. Determined, however, not to go back without him, they pursued after him through a very rugged, mountainous country, and overtook him at Rockfish, at the foot of the Blue Ridge. Mr. Robinson upon hearing the state of things in Hanover, did not hesitate to go with the men; but in order to reach the place before the Sabbath, it became necessary to ride one whole night. And when he arrived, the leaders of the dissenting congregation were much perplexed and concerned, lest his doctrines should not accord with those which from books they had imbibed; therefore, before he was introduced to the congregation, they took him into a private room and asked him, what was his opinion of such works as Luther on the Galatians, Boston, Bunyan, &c., and when he expressed the warmest approbation, they were delighted above measure. But as it will be gratifying to the reader to see the whole of the letter which Mr. Davies wrote to Mr. Bellamy, in which the narrative of Mr. Robinson's visit to Hanover is contained, it shall be here inserted.

Letter from Mr. Davies, minister of Hanover, Virginia, to Mr. Bellamy of Bethlehem, in New-England.

"June 28, 1751.

"Rev. and Dear Sir:—

"If the publication of a narrative of the rise, progress, and present situation of religion in Virginia, may not only gratify good people, but (as you give me reason to hope) animate their prayers for us, and also encourage preachers to come into these parts, I should charge myself with a criminal neglect if I refused to publish the marvellous works of the Lord among us. I hope I may observe without the umbrage of calumny, what is but too evident to serious people of all denominations among us, that religion has been, and in most parts of the colony still is, in a very low state. A surprising negligence in attending public worship, and an equal surprising levity and unconcernedness in those that attend. Family religion a rarity, and a solemn concern about eternal things, a greater. Vices of various kinds triumphant, and even a form of godliness not common. But universal fame makes it needless for me to enlarge on this disagreeable subject, Before the revival in 1743, there were a few who were awakened, as they have told me, either by their own serious reflections, suggested and enforced by divine energy, or on reading some authors of the last century, particularly Bolton, Baxter, Flavel, Bunyan. There was one Mr. Samuel Morris who had for some time been very anxious about his own salvation, who after obtaining blessed relief in Christ, became zealous for the salvation of his neighbours, and very earnest to use means to awaken them. This was the tendency of his conversation; and he also read to them such authors as had been most useful to himself, particularly, Luther on the Galatians, and his Table Discourses, and several pieces of honest Bunyan's. By these means some of his neighbours were

made more thoughtful about their souls; but the concern was not very extensive. I have prevailed on my good friend just now named, who was the principal private instrument of promoting the late work, and therefore well acquainted with it, to write me a narrative of its rise and progress, and this, together with what he and others have told me, I shall present to you, without any material alterations.

"In the year 1740, Mr. Whitfield had preached at Williamsburgh at the invitation of Mr. Blair, our late commissary. But we being fifty miles distant from Williamsburgh, he left the colony before we had an opportunity of hearing him. But in the year 1743, a young man from Scotland had got a book of his sermons preached in Glasgow, and taken from his mouth in short hand, which after I had read with great benefit, I invited my neighbors to come and hear it; and the plainness and fervency of these discourses being attended with the power of the Lord, many were convinced of their undone condition, and constrained to seek deliverance with the greatest solicitude. A considerable number met to hear these sermons every Sabbath, and frequently, on week days. The concern of some was so passionate and violent, that they could not avoid crying out, weeping bitterly, &c. And that, when such indications of religious concern were so strange and ridiculous, that they could not be occasioned by example or sympathy, and the affectation of them would be so unprofitable an instance of hypocrisy, that none could be tempted to it. My dwelling-house at length was too small to contain the people, whereupon we determined to build a meeting-house, merely for reading. And having never been used to social extempore prayer, none of us durst attempt it. By this single mean several were awakened, and their conduct ever since is a proof of the continuance and happy issue of their impressions. When the report was spread abroad, I was invited to several places to read these sermons, at a considerable distance, and by this means the concern was propagated. About this time, our absenting ourselves from the established Church, contrary, as was alleged, to the laws of the land, was taken notice of, and we were called upon by the court to assign our reasons for it, and to declare what denomination we were of. As we knew but little of any denomination of dissenters, except Quakers, we were at a loss what name to assume. At length, recollecting that Luther was a noted reformer, and that his books had been of especial service to us, we declared ourselves Lutherans; and thus we continued, until Providence sent us the Rev. Mr. William Robinson. This Mr. Robinson was a zealous, laborious minister of Christ, who by the permission of the presbytery took a journey through the new settlements in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. He founded a Congregation at Lunenburg.* In Amehat also, a county somewhat nearer us than the former, his labours were extensively blest: and while he was there, some of our people sent him an invitation to come and preach at our reading house. Being satisfied about the soundness of his principles, and being informed that the method of his preaching was awakening, we were very eager to hear him. On the 6th of July, 1743, he preached his first sermon to us from Luke 13:3, and continued with us preaching four days successively. The congregation was large the first day, and vastly increased the three ensuing. 'Tis hard for the liveliest imagination to form an image of the condition of the assembly, on these glorious days of the Son of man. Such of us as had been hungering for the word before, were lost in an agreeable surprise and astonishment, and some could not refrain from publicly declaring their transport: we were overwhelmed with the thoughts of the unexpected goodness of God, in allowing us to hear the gospel preached in a manner that surpassed our hopes. Many that came through curiosity were pricked to the heart, and but few in the numerous assemblies on these four days, appeared unaffected. They returned alarmed with apprehensions of their

dangerous condition, convinced of their former entire ignorance of religion, and anxiously inquiring what they should do to be saved. And there is reason to believe there was as much good done by these four Sermons, as by all the sermons preached in these parts before or since. Before Mr. Robinson left us, he successfully endeavoured to correct some of our mistakes, and to bring us to carry on the worship of God more regularly, at our meetings. After this we met to read good sermons, and began and concluded with prayer and singing of psalms, which till then we had omitted. The blessing of God remarkably attended these more private means, and it was really astonishing to observe the solemn impressions begun or continued in many, by hearing good discourses read. I had repeated invitations to come to many places round, some of them 30 or 40 miles distant, to read. Considerable numbers attended with eager attention and awful solemnity, and several were in a judgment of charity turned to God, and thereupon erected meeting-houses, and chose readers among themselves, by which the work was more extensively carried on.

“Soon after Mr. Robinson left us, the Rev. Mr. John Blair paid us a visit; and truly he came to us in the fulness of the gospel of Christ. Former impressions were ripened and new ones made on many hearts. One night in particular, a whole house full of people was quite overcome with the power of the word, particularly of one pungent sentence, and they could hardly sit or stand, or keep their passions under proper restraint. So general was the concern during his stay with us, and so ignorant were we of the danger of apostacy, that we pleased ourselves with the thoughts of more being brought to Christ at that time, than now appears to have been, though there is still the greatest reason to hope that several bound themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. Some time after this, the Rev. Mr. Roan was sent, us by the presbytery of Newcastle. He continued with us a longer time than any of the former, and the happy effects of his ministrations are still apparent. He was instrumental in beginning and promoting the religious concern in several places where there was little appearance of it before. This, together with his speaking pretty freely about the degeneracy of the clergy in this colony, gave a general alarm, and some measures were concerted to suppress us. To incense the indignation of the government the more, a perfidious wretch deposed, he heard Mr. Roan utter blasphemous expressions, in his sermon. An indictment was thereupon drawn up against Mr. Roan, (though by that time he had departed the colony,) and some who had invited him to preach at their houses, were cited to appear before the general court, and two of them were fined. While my cause was upon trial, I had reason to rejoice that the throne of grace is accessible in all places, and that helpless creatures can send up their desires unseen, in the midst of a crowd. Six witnesses were cited to prove the indictment against Mr. Roan, but their depositions were in his favour; and the witness who accused him of blasphemy, when he heard of the arrival of Messrs. Tennent and Finley, fled, and has not returned since; so that the indictment was dropped. But I had reason to fear being banished the colony, and all circumstances seemed to threaten the extirpation of religion among the dissenters in these parts. In these difficulties, having no person of a public character to appear in our favour, we were determined to acquaint the Synod of New-York with our case. Accordingly four of us went to the Synod, May, 1745, when the Lord favoured us with success. The synod drew up an address to our governor, the honorable Sir William Gooch, and sent it with Messrs. Tennent and Finley, who were received by the governor with respect, who gave them liberty to preach among us. By this means the dreadful cloud was scattered for a while, and our languid hopes revived. They continued with us about a week, and though the deluge of passion in which we were at first overwhelmed, was by this time somewhat abated, yet much good was done by

their ministry. The people of God were refreshed, and several careless sinners were awakened. Some, that had trusted before in their moral conduct, and religious duties, were convinced of the depravity of their nature, and the necessity of regeneration, though indeed there were but few unregenerate persons among us at that time, that could claim so regular a character, the most part indulging themselves in criminal liberties, and being remiss in the duties of religion, which alas! is too commonly the case still in such parts of the colony as the late revival did not extend to.

“After they left us, we continued vacant for a considerable time, and kept up our meetings for reading and praying in several places, and the Lord favored us with his presence. I was again repeatedly presented and fined in court for absenting myself from Church, and keeping up unlawful meetings, as they were called; but the bush flourished in the flames. The next that were appointed to supply us, were the Rev. Messrs. William Tennent and Samuel Blair. They administered the Lord’s Supper among us; and we have reason ever to remember it as a most glorious day of the Son of Man. The assembly was large, and the novelty of the manner of the administration, did peculiarly engage their attention. It appeared as one of the days of heaven to some of us; and we could hardly help wishing we could, with Joshua, have delayed the revolutions of the heavens to prolong it. After Messrs. Tennent and Blair were gone, Mr. Whitefield came, and preached four or five days, which was the happy means of giving us further encouragement, and engaging others to the Lord, especially among the church people, who received the gospel more readily from him than from ministers of the Presbyterian denomination. After his departure, we were destitute of a minister, and followed our usual method of reading and prayer, at our meeting, till the Rev. Mr. Davies, our present pastor, was sent us by the presbytery, to supply us a few weeks in the spring, 1747; when our discouragements from the government were renewed and multiplied; for, upon a Lord’s day, a proclamation was set up at our meeting house, strictly requiring all magistrates to suppress and prohibit, as far as they lawfully could, all itinerant preachers, &c. which occasioned us to forbear reading that day, till we had time to deliberate and consult what was expedient to do; but how joyfully were we surprised before the next Sabbath, when we unexpectedly heard that Mr. Davies was come to preach so long among us, and especially that he had qualified himself, according to law, and obtained the licensing of four meetinghouses among us, which had never been done before. Thus man’s extremity is the Lord’s opportunity. For this seasonable interposition of Divine Providence, we desire to offer our grateful praises, and we importune the friends of Zion, to concur with us.

“Thus far Mr. Morris’s narrative. Then the Rev. Mr. Davies proceeds to give an account of the state of their affairs since he came among them in April, 1747.—‘Upon my arrival, I petitioned the general court to grant me a license to officiate in and about Hanover, at four meeting-houses, which, after some delay, was granted, upon my qualifying according to the act of Toleration. I preached frequently in Hanover, and some of the adjacent counties: and though the fervour of the late work was considerably abated, and my labours were not blessed with success equal to those of my brethren, yet I have reason to hope they were of service, in several instances. The importunities they used with me to settle with them were invincible; and upon my departure, they sent a call for me to the presbytery. After I returned from Virginia, I spent a year under melancholy and consumptive languishments, expecting death. In the spring of 1748, I began slowly to recover, though I then looked on it only as the intermission of a disorder that would finally prove mortal. But upon the arrival of a messenger from Hanover, I put my life in my hand, and determined to accept

of their call, hoping I might live to prepare the way for some more useful successor, and willing to expire under the fatigues of duty, rather than in voluntary negligence. The Hon. Sir Wm. Gooch our late governor, always discovered a ready disposition to allow us all claimable privileges, and the greatest aversion to persecuting measures; but, considering the shocking reports spread abroad concerning us by officious malignants, it was no great wonder that the council discovered considerable reluctance to tolerate us. Had it not been for this, I persuade myself they would have shown themselves the guardians of our legal privileges, as well as generous patriots to their country, which is the character generally given them. In October, 1748, besides the four meeting-houses already mentioned, the people petitioned for the licensing of three more, which with great difficulty was obtained. Among these seven, I have hitherto divided my time. Three of them lay in Hanover county, the other four in the counties of Henrico, Carolina, Louisa, and Goochland. The nearest are twelve or fifteen miles distant from each other, and the extremes about forty. My congregation is very much dispersed, and notwithstanding the number of the meeting-houses, some live twenty, some thirty, and a few forty miles from the nearest. Were they all compactly situated in one county, they would be sufficient to form three distinct congregations. Many of the church people also attend when there is sermon at any of these houses. This I looked upon at first as mere curiosity after novelty, but as it continues, and in some places seems to increase, I cannot but look upon it as a happy token of their being at length thoroughly engaged. And I have the greater reason to hope so now, as experience has confirmed my former hopes. Fifty or sixty families having thus been happily entangled in the net of the gospel by their own curiosity, or some such motive. There are about three hundred communicants in my congregation, of whom the greatest number are in the judgment of rational charity, real Christians. Besides some, who, through excessive scrupulousness, do not seek admission to the Lord's table. There is also a number of Negroes. Sometimes I see an hundred and more among my hearers. (Psalms 68:31) I have baptized about forty of them within these three years, upon such a profession of faith as I then judged credible. Some of them, I fear, have apostatized; but others I trust, will persevere to the end. I have had as satisfying evidences of as sincere piety from several of them, as I ever had from any person in my life, and their artless simplicity, their passionate aspirations after Christ, their incessant endeavours to know and do the will of God, have charmed me. But alas! while my charge is so extensive, I cannot take sufficient pains with them for their instruction, which often oppresses my heart.

"There have been instances of unhappy apostacy among us; but, blessed be God, not many in proportion to the number brought under concern. At present there are a few under promising impressions; but, in general, a lamentable security prevails. Oh, for a little reviving in our bondage! I might have given you a particular account of the conversion of some persons here, as indeed there are some uncommon instances of it, but I shall only observe in general, that abstracting from particular circumstances, the work of conversion has been carried on in such steps as are described by experimental divines, as Allein, Shepherd, Stoddard, Flavel, &c. And nothing confirms me more in the truth of their opinions concerning experimental piety, than this agreement and uniformity as to the substance, in the exercises of those that can make the fairest claim to saving grace. There is one Isaac Oliver here, whose history, could I write it intelligibly to you, would be very entertaining. He has been deaf and dumb from his birth, and yet I have the utmost reason to believe he is truly gracious, and also acquainted with most of the doctrines, and many of the historical facts of the Bible. I have seen him represent the crucifixion of Christ in such

significant signs, that I could not but understand them. Those that live in the house with him, can hold conversation with him very readily. There is so much of the devout ardour of his soul discovered at times, as is really affecting, and I have seen him converse in signs about the love and sufferings of Christ, till he has been transported into earnestness, and dissolved in tears. The above Mr. Morris, with whom he lives, has told me, that eight years ago, he appeared remarkably changed, and ever since is very conscientious in the whole of his behaviour; generally delights to attend both public and family worship, though he cannot hear a word; and is observed sometimes to retire to secret prayer, though he signifies that he is praying with his heart, when about his business, or in company, which is peculiarly practicable to him, as in all places he enjoys retirement. I could relate several peculiarities about him; but as they are unintelligible to myself, or might seem incredible to those that are unacquainted with him, I omit them. So much, however, I know of him, that I cannot but look upon him as a miraculous monument of Almighty grace, that can perform its purposes on men, notwithstanding the greatest natural or moral impediments; and I submit it to the judgment of others, whether a person so incapable of external instructions, could be brought to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven any other way than by immediate revelation. Besides the people here, several of my brethren, who have been here, particularly Messrs. Samuel Blair and John Roan, can attest this relation. I forgot to inform you, in its proper place, that the Rev. Mr. Davenport was sent by the synod to Hanover last summer, and continued here about two months. And, blest be God, did not labour in vain. Some were brought under concern, and many of the Lord's people much revived, who can never forget the instrument of it.

"Thus, dear Sir, I have given you a brief account of what I am persuaded you will readily own to be the work of the Lord. We claim no infallibility, but we must not fall into scepticism. If we could form no judgment of such a work, why should we pretend to promote the conversion of men, if we cannot have any satisfying knowledge of it, when it appears? Indeed, the evidence of its divinity here is so irresistible, that it has extorted an acknowledgment from some from whom it could hardly be expected. Were you, Sir, a narrow bigot, you would, no doubt, rejoice to hear that there are now some hundreds of dissenters in a place, where, a few years ago, there were not ten; but I assure myself of your congratulations on a nobler account, because a considerable number of perishing sinners are gained to the blessed Redeemer, with whom, though you never see them here, you may spend a blissful eternity. After all, poor Virginia demands your compassion, for religion at present is but like the cloud which Elijah's servant saw. Oh that it may spread and cover the land!

"As to other counties where dissenters are settled.—There are two congregations, one in Albermarle, and one in Augusta county, belonging to the synod of Philadelphia, that have ministers settled among them: but those that have put themselves under the care of the New Castle presbytery (which are vastly more numerous), notwithstanding their repeated endeavours, are still destitute of ministers. There are as many of them as would form five distinct congregations, three at least in Augusta, one in Frederick, and one at least in Lunenburg and Amelia.* Notwithstanding the supplies our presbytery have sent them, some of them, particularly Lunenburg, have been both a year together without one sermon. I hope one of them may soon be provided by a pious young man, Mr. Todd, sent by New Brunswick presbytery, but I have no prospect as to the rest; for I can now count up at least six or seven vacant congregations in Pennsylvania, and two or three in Maryland, besides the five mentioned in the frontier counties of

Virginia, and a part of my own congregation, which I would willingly declare vacant, had they opportunity of obtaining another minister. And there are but twelve members in New Castle presbytery, and two or three candidates that are pre-engaged to vacancies in Pennsylvania. We have indeed of late licensed several pious youths, but our vacancies increase almost as fast as our ministers, by the settlement of new places, or the breaking out of religious concern in places where there was little before; and some of our most useful members are lately called home by death; such as Messrs. Robinson and Dean, and now Mr. Samuel Blair. May the Lord induce faithful ministers from New England, or wherever they might be spared, to come and help us! While these congregations have been destitute of settled pastors, itinerant preaching among them has, by the blessing of God, been very useful. Mr. Robinson underwent great hardships in North Carolina, without much success, by reason of the fewness and savage ignorance of the inhabitants; but the ease is now happily altered. A new congregation, I think upon Pee-dee river, sent a petition lately to our presbytery for a minister. Besides this, I hear of several other places in North Carolina, that are ripening very fast for the gospel. 'O that the Lord would send forth faithful labourers into his harvest!' Mr. Robinson was the instrument of awakening several in Lunenburg and Amelia, with whom I lately spent a fortnight, at their earnest desire; and there is a prospect of doing much service, were they furnished with a faithful minister. I met with most encouragement in a part of Amelia county, where very few had heard any of my brethren. The assemblies were large even on week days, and sometimes there appeared much solemnity and affection among them. There appears great probability of success, if they had a faithful minister. It was really afflicting to me that the necessity of my own congregation constrained me to leave them so soon. In Augusta, there is a great number of solid lively Christians. There was a pretty general awakening there some years ago, under the ministry of Messrs. Dean and Byram. I believe three ministers might live very comfortably among them. In Frederick county, there has also been (as I am informed by my brethren who have been there) a considerable awakening some years ago, which has had a blessed issue in many, and the congregation have been seeking a minister these several years. In Maryland also, there has been a considerable revival (shall I call it?) or first plantation of religion, in Baltimore county, where I am informed Mr. Whittlesey is likely to settle. In Kent county, and Queen Anne's, a number of careless sinners have been awakened and hopefully brought to Christ. The work was begun and chiefly carried on by the instrumentality of that favoured man Mr. Robinson, whose success, whenever I reflect upon it, astonishes me. Oh! he did much in a little time, and who would not choose such an expeditious pilgrimage through this world? There is, in these places, a considerable congregation, and they have made repeated essays to obtain a settled minister. There was a great stir about religion in Buckingham, a place on the sea-shore, about four years ago, which has since spread and issued in a hopeful conversion in several instances. They also want a minister. But the most glorious display of divine grace in Maryland has been in and about Somerset county. It began, I think, in 1745, by the ministry of Mr. Robinson, and was afterwards carried on by several ministers that preached transiently there. I was there about two months, when the work was at its height, and I never saw such a deep and spreading concern: the assemblies were numerous, though in the extremity of a cold winter, and unwearied in attending the word; and frequently there were very few among them that did not give some plain indications of distress or joy. Oh! these were the happiest days that ever my eyes saw. Since that, the harvest seems over there, though considerable gleanings, I hear, are still gathered. They have of late got Mr. Henry for their minister, a young man, who, I trust, will be an extensive blessing to

that part of the colony. I shall prize it, dear Sir, as a great blessing, if you and others of the Lord's servants and people in distant parts, favour us with your prayers. And shall be glad to correspond with them. Our acquaintance with the various parts of the church, qualifies us to adapt our prayers to their state. May your Divine Master bless you and succeed your ministrations, and pour out his Spirit on the land where you reside. I am, &c.* Not only in Hanover, but in all the places, where Mr. Robinson preached, there were permanent fruits of his labours. The writer has seen and conversed with a number of persons who were brought to serious consideration under the ministry of this successful evangelist. Old John White, who resided near Charlestown, in Jefferson county, and who was the father of judge White of Winchester, was one of Mr. Robinson's great admirers, and I believe, brought to the experimental knowledge of the truth under his ministry. Old Mr. Hoge, the father of the Rev. Dr. Moses Hoge, who was a Seceder, informed the writer, that he often heard Robinson when he preached at Opekin and Cedar Creek, in Frederick county; and while he admitted that he preached the gospel faithfully, and with great zeal; yet said, there was a want of method in his discourses. After Mr. Robinson's return from this interesting tour, he laboured in the state of New York, with his usual success; and also in some congregations in Maryland, where there was a blessed work of grace under his ministry.

Probably Mr. Robinson, during the short period of his life, was the instrument in the conversion of as many souls, as any minister who ever lived in this country. The only circumstance relating to his person which has come down is, that he was blind of one eye; so that by some he was called "the one-eyed Robinson."

We are also entirely ignorant of the circumstances of his death. This event we know occurred before the year 1751, in which Mr. Davies wrote his letter to Mr. Bellamy, for it is mentioned with grief in that communication. If we mistake not, Mr. Davies has celebrated the labours and successes of this servant of God, in one of his poems; and Mr. Tennent, somewhere, speaks of him as "that wonderful man." Mr. Robinson was never married, and had, it is believed, no relatives in this country; and as far as appears never printed anything, nor left any of his writings to be a memorial to posterity of his fervent piety and evangelical spirit. It is not even known, where his body rests; but his glorious Master whom he served so faithfully in the gospel, will know where to find it, when He shall come to resuscitate the bodies of his saints.

CHAPTER XVIII(["tw:///self?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-"](#))

MEMOIR OF REV. JOHN ROWLAND

Mr. Rowland received by the New Brunswick Presbytery, at its first meeting in violation of the rule of Synod—His trials—Speedy licensure—Accepts a call to Maidenhead and Hopewell—Great revival—His letter to Mr. Prince—Removal to Pennsylvania—Revival at New Providence—Close of life unknown. Of Mr. Rowland nothing is known prior to the time when he was taken under the care of the New Brunswick presbytery, at its first meeting in August, 1738. It is certain, indeed, that he was an alumnus of the Log College, where probably he received the principal part of his education. In receiving him under their care, the presbytery deliberately violated a standing rule of the synod, which required, that every candidate, before being taken on trials by any presbytery, should submit himself to an examination on his classical and scientific attainments, to a committee of the synod. This rule the presbytery of New Brunswick believed to be arbitrary, and an undue infringement on the rights of presbyteries; and therefore determined to disregard it. This was

undoubtedly a rash and disorderly proceeding. Even if their opinion about the rights of presbyteries had been correct, they should first have remonstrated against the synod's rule, and endeavoured to have it repealed. But the members of this new presbytery having been the principal supporters of the Log College, considered the rule of the synod as particularly directed against that institution; and on this account were disposed to resist it. Hence arose the violent dissension between this presbytery and the synod, which issued in a division of the body into two parts, the Old and the New Side; of which an account has already been given. At this first meeting of the New Brunswick presbytery, the following ministers and elders were present, viz., Gilbert Tennent, John Cross, William Tennent, Eleazer Wales, and Samuel Blair. The elders were James McCoy, John Henry, William Moor, Robert Cunningham, and Thomas Davis. As none, in the minutes, are marked as absent, it would seem that this first meeting of the presbytery set an example deserving the imitation of their successors. All the ministers were in their place; and an equal number of ruling elders; so that there was no delinquency on their part. The first business, after they were regularly constituted, was, the receiving of Mr. John Rowland as a candidate under their care. And in regard to the rule of synod, after much discussion they adopted the following resolution.

"That in point of conscience, they were not restrained from using the liberty and power, which presbyteries all along have hitherto enjoyed; but that it was their duty to take the said Mr. Rowland on trials, for which conclusion they conceive they have many weighty and sufficient reasons." The presbytery then proceeded to the examination of Mr. Rowland, "on the several parts of learning, and on his experience of a work of converting grace in his soul, which he sustained to their satisfaction." The trials of Mr. Rowland were carried through as rapidly as was consistent with the usage in such cases. The presbytery met again on the 1st day of September of the same year, when he read a Latin exegesis, and a sermon on Psalms 87:5. With these trials the presbytery expressed themselves well pleased; and assigned him as the subject of a popular sermon, Romans 3:24, and adjourned to meet the following week, at Freehold, when Mr. Rowland preached at the opening of the presbytery, who having taken the sermon under consideration, it was highly and unanimously approved. The candidate having now gone through all the prescribed trials, after adopting the Westminster Confession of Faith as the confession of his faith, was licensed to preach the gospel of Christ. His licensure took place exactly one month after he was taken under the care of the presbytery. There is no reason to lead us to conclude that Mr. Rowland was deficient in the qualifications requisite for the office of the ministry. From the record it appears, that the presbytery were well satisfied with all the parts of his trials; and it is known that he was a popular and an awakening preacher, and that his ministry was attended with much success. As might have been expected, this act of the presbytery brought down upon them the censure of the synod; and the presbytery not being disposed to submit to a rule which they considered arbitrary and inconsistent with their rights, things grew worse and worse, until the parties separated. Before this event, however, the synod absolutely refused to consider Mr. Rowland as a member of their body. They did not deny that he was a minister of the gospel, but alleged, that having been brought in contrary to their rules, he could not be recognised as a member. It appears from Mr. Rowland's letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston, that on the very day of his being licensed to preach the gospel, an application was made to the presbytery for his services, by the united congregations of Maidenhead (Lawrence) and Hopewell (Pennington). And it was not long after this, that he was artfully personated by Tom Bell, when he was absent on a preaching tour in

Maryland, in company with the Rev. William Tennent. On his return, as has been related in the life of Mr. William Tennent, he was indicted for horse-stealing and robbery, was cleared by the testimony of Mr. Tennent and two others, who swore that he was, at the time, in a distant part of the country. But the impression on the public mind was so strong, that he was the person seen by many in the possession of the stolen horse, that the three witnesses, including Mr. Tennent, were indicted for perjury, and one of them actually suffered the penalty of the law for this crime. How wonderfully Mr. Tennent was delivered from an ignominious punishment, may be seen in the memoir which we have published of this extraordinary man.

Mr. Rowland accepted the invitation of the congregations before mentioned, and his labours among them were attended with an extraordinary blessing, in a great revival of religion, in both these congregations. But as Mr. Rowland himself has given a narrative of this work of grace, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston, we think it most expedient to publish his own account, in his own words. The letter is as follows:

“Rev. Sir,

“In answer to yours, &c.—I was sent forth to preach the gospel of Christ, by the presbytery of New Brunswick, on September 7th, 1738, on which day the congregation of Maidenhead and Hopewell, put in a supplication for me to the presbytery; and accordingly I complied therewith. In process of time, we had the privilege of Maidenhead meeting-house, and my people built a meeting-house in Hopewell; but, before this, we were constrained to keep our meetings in barns in both towns; and, though we thus appeared as poor despised creatures, yet the congregation that attended my ministry, was so numerous, that the largest barns among us were chosen to worship God in. It was some discouragement to me at first, that I and my people had no better places for divine worship; but at that time I thought on these things, which proved some support to me, viz., that our Lord and Saviour was born in a mean place, and likewise preached in the ship, and on the mountain, as well as in the synagogues, and that it had been the frequent lot of his people, to betake themselves to worship him in places attended with many inconveniences. There is another town lying contiguous to Hopewell, which is called Amwell; the people there were something numerous likewise; and having none to labour among them in the word, they petitioned for a part of my time, viz., one Sabbath in three; and it was granted unto them; so that my labours among these three towns, for the most part of the time that I lived in the Jerseys, were equally divided. There was a small number in Hopewell and Maidenhead, truly acquainted with vital religion, as far as I could judge, before I came among them, and they seemed so earnest in prayer, night and day, to have the gospel in power among them, as if they would take no denial. But of them who became my congregation in Amwell, there were but very few that knew the Lord Jesus when I came among them; yet, in many ways, they were a very agreeable people; so that I was much encouraged to labour among them.

“The subjects which I chiefly insisted on for about six months, were conviction and conversion; and usually I made choice of the most rousing and awakening texts, to set forth the nature of these doctrines; and I have reason to hope, that the Lord began to accompany his word in a measure from the very first. Some began to be convinced that they were in the way to misery, and unacquainted with the way to the kingdom of Heaven. But then, let it be observed, that but one or two were taken with convictions at a time, or under one sermon: for many months together* their

convictions were still increased, and the number of the convinced was still multiplied. I commonly preached in the night as well as in the day, and frequently on week days also; so that they had hardly any opportunity to cast their convictions out of their thoughts, the Lord continuing to co-operate with his word. The frequent opportunities which I took to examine them were made very beneficial, through the divine blessing, to preserve their convictions alive until the time of grace, of which I shall speak afterwards. The attention of all, in general, was awakened; fathers, mothers, and the youth; some negroes, also, seemed very earnest after the word, and were convinced thereby of their sin and misery, and that Christ they must have, or perish for ever.

“The people of God were much enlivened to see poor sinners convinced of the perishing nature of their state, and their absolute need of Christ: their supplications to God were mostly bent for the conversion of sinners, and their conversation, whenever they met together, as far as I observed it, (and frequent opportunities I had to observe it) savoured exceedingly of the things of God; so that I cannot say that I ever saw those pious people given to wordliness in their conversation, or to lightness and vanity in their discourses. Great was the love they bore to one another, and sweet was the peace which subsisted among themselves; so that I was not interrupted from my work by making up differences among them.

“In the month of May, 1739, I began to think that the most inviting and encouraging subjects would be the most agreeable to convinced souls; and accordingly I began with these words, John 11:28-29. ‘The master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.’ The discourse upon this subject was brought home, through the divine influence, upon the souls of many. Solemn weeping, and deep concern, appeared through the congregation: I had hopes that the hearts of some had been knit close to Jesus our Lord, which afterwards appeared to be so; of which more hereafter. I was still encouraged to go on, in inviting convinced sinners to come and embrace the person and purchase of the dear Lord Jesus. Then I made choice of that word in Matthew 22:4. ‘And all things are ready; come unto the marriage.’ This was also blessed to poor convinced souls; they were brought under a full persuasion that Jesus, the Son of God, was ready and willing to embrace them with his everlasting favour, and to pardon their sins and transgressions; but then they found more of their own hardness, and had a clearer view of their own unwillingness to come unto the Lord Jesus Christ, which increased their mourning and sorrow, and made them press forwards with more living earnestness in search after Jesus Christ. A variety of other engaging subjects I made use of for a considerable time, to press them to a full closure with Jesus Christ. At length, by frequent converse among them, and enquiring strictly into the nature of the views they had of Christ, and the outgoings of their souls after him, and their willingness to be ruled by Jesus Christ in their whole hearts and lives, I could not but be favourable in my thoughts of such, as persons favoured of the Lord.

“I find, by reading what accounts I kept by me of the blessed work of grace which hath been in these towns, that there was much good done by visiting, by which means I found out many that had been touched, of whom I had not well heard how it was with them, which gave me an opportunity to offer such things unto them, as might tend to fix these beginnings in their souls, and increase them. So likewise many were convinced of their lost state by nature. By particular examinations, I found likewise, that private examination of persons, as to their state and condition, is an excellent mean to lay them open to conviction under the public word; and thus were some convinced in these towns.

“The divine influence of the Spirit of God was very evidently afforded with his word, though not in every opportunity, yet in several, until May, 1740, in which time many more were added unto the Lord’s people. Some of these opportunities, for clearness sake, I shall mention. One was in October 6th, 1739, in a night meeting; but the people not having been warned with sufficient care, there met but about fifteen persons, eleven of whom were deeply convinced of their misery, and some of them cried out so very awfully, that I was constrained to conclude. After sermon I took an opportunity to enquire of those persons, what was the real cause of their crying out in such a manner. Some of whom answered me, ‘that they saw hell opening before them, and themselves ready to fall into it.’ Others answered me, ‘that they were struck with such a sense of their sinfulness, that they were afraid the Lord would never have mercy on them.’ Another of these opportunities was on December 30th, 1739. As to myself, I felt exceeding poor in the frame of my soul; so that I thought I might well say, as in the words of the text I preached on that day, Isaiah 40:6, ‘What shall I cry?’ But the Lord was pleased to manifest his grace and power exceedingly through the whole service. The people of God were much enlarged in love, to see that whatever gracious word was sent with power into their hearts, was sent from God; for the man knoweth not what to cry, without being guided by the word and Spirit. Some hardened creatures, who thought not much of religion, as if there was no reality in it, were deeply convinced of the truth, reality, and beauty of religion. Others, who knew not well which way to walk, or what to choose, opposers I cannot call them, though they had not joined with our side; such, I say, as far as we could judge the tree by the fruit, were also convinced and converted under that discourse. Many youths also were wrought upon; so that I cannot say truly, that any remained untouched. Some of these persons were pleased to tell me, ‘that they never would forget this day, in which God had been so gracious unto them.’ As to backsliders from convictions, who were not converted, I shall afterwards speak of them. The night of the same day being spent in public worship (viz. the first part thereof), was attended with the same divine influence. Another of these opportunities was in April 6th, 1740, in Maidenhead. The subject that was insisted on, was the gospel-net, from Matthew 13:1-58. Many who were not acquainted with the spiritual nature of the gospel in the least degree, as far as I found, were greatly bowed down, and brought to own that it was the Lord’s work which was carried on. The people, in general, through the whole assembly, seemed as if they were humbled before the Lord, which afterwards proved itself to be so. Without controversy, many of these slipped out of the net as fast as they could; yet many, blessed be God, were held in it by almighty power.

“I come next to speak of the times of most remarkable power that I witnessed in these towns. It begun on this wise; there had been a weekday’s meeting in Maidenhead, on July 24th, 1740. Worship seemed to be attended with much warmth of affection, which gave much encouragement to the minister again; for lukewarmness at this time had prevailed very much among the people; and the affections of some were much removed from others of their fellow members; neither did they seem to have such a thirst for the word of God as formerly. Things had come to this pass in about two months; but how astonishing is it to consider what sweet methods the Lord observed to remove them! for, as the people were passing homewards through the town after worship, some inclined to stop at one of the Christian houses; and the stopping of some occasioned others to stop till the number was about forty; and when they were all set in the house, that the time might be profitably spent, the first part of the fiftieth psalm was sung, which seemed to be performed with unusual quickening. When singing was over, the same verses were explained at some length, and

the Spirit of the Lord was pleased to work by it upon all that were present, as far as we could discern by the outward man, and much converse that was spent among them all in particular. In about an hour afterwards, the love of God's people that were present, was uncommonly inflamed to Jesus Christ, their views of his majesty and glory were much enlarged, their longings after him much stirred up, and their fear of him graciously increased; their zeal for God's glory was kindled anew, and their concern for the cause of God seemed to receive much growth; and as to the unconverted that were present, we could not find otherwise, but that they had received very clear discoveries of their undone state by nature. This was followed with the mighty power of God, in a sermon next evening to a large congregation in the same town. And, in Amwell, July 27th, and in Maidenhead again on August 3d, God was pleased to magnify his grace in visiting many poor sinners. In these opportunities he opened their eyes to see themselves without Christ, and without hope in the world; their convictions were attended with great horror and trembling, and loud weeping, which I supposed could not be stopped so easily as some do imagine; for I observed that many did continue crying in the most doleful manner along the road, in their way home; and it was not in the power of man to prevail with them to refrain; for the word of the Lord remained like fire upon their hearts. Furthermore, the Lord was pleased to add many more to my people, who used not to walk with them, who still continue in communion with them, of whom I hope it may be said, that they are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The seed of the word was dropped into the hearts of others, who bore not much regard to the doctrine of the new-birth which was preached among us, and did not spring up visibly until near three years after.

"As to the issue of these convictions which I have last mentioned, I think it must be owned, that many of them were followed with a sound conversion, or else we must give up speaking any thing as to any grace in this life. Many backslided, and became stiff-necked again, though I must say that I have not seen such backslidings in these towns, as I have seen in many others; the instances are but few in them in comparison to what I have seen in most other places that I have been acquainted with. One great mean to prevent backsliding from convictions in Amwell, was this: when the husband was taken, the wife was also taken, or when the wife was visited, the husband was also; so that they were ever stirring up each other. Many such instances are in the town of Amwell, upon which account that congregation appears to me peculiarly beautiful; and, as to Maidenhead and Hopewell, I believe that one great mean that the Lord used there to prevent backsliding, was the care and diligence of some of the Christian people in conversing with the convinced; for several of the Christians were so engaged in deep concern for the work of God, that they could not rest satisfied until they had reason to hope, that the souls that were convinced from one time to another, were also brought through to sound conversion.

"Respecting the nature of this work which I have been speaking of, it will appear yet more distinct, by giving some account of their experiences. And, first, I would speak something more of their convictions; they can give a very different account of sin, both original, and actual; their views of heart corruption, their distance from God, and their having lived so long without him, were very clear and affecting; their hardness and unbelief, their ignorance and blindness pressed very close upon them; their need of Christ, and his Spirit, was such, in their apprehension, that there was no rest nor contentment to be taken in any thing here below, until they did obtain an interest in Jesus Christ, and receive his Spirit to purify and sanctify their hearts. There are a few among them, whose convictions were not attended with any considerable degree of horror; they were very

watchful over themselves lest they should receive false comfort, and so rest in ungrounded hopes; their hunger after Jesus Christ, his righteousness, and all his fulness, was very earnest, and their experience of it very clear; therefore they wanted the word preached often, and they would sit under it with great affection, waiting on the Lord. Their views of the Lord Jesus, in his person, nature and offices, were very clear, and their acquaintance with the actings of their faith on him, together with the out-going of their souls in love towards him. They can give a satisfying account of those things according to the holy scriptures. Their experience of a saving closure with Jesus Christ, and the sweet manifestations they had of him at the time of spiritual marriage, were very glorious, and their affections have been often stirred afresh towards Jesus Christ, in meditating on, and speaking of their espousals. They are careful to maintain a holy communion with God in the general course of their lives. I have seen some of them in considerable agonies when they have been under the hidings of God's face; so that they could take no rest by any means, until the gracious Lord would be pleased to shine again upon them with the light of his countenance. They are properly diligent in the things of this life; yet they are ready to attend on the word of God on any opportunity that offers to them on week days.

"They still continue zealous for God and his truth; their walk is steady in the ways of God, and not unconstant and uneven. And, that I may conclude with Hopewell and Maidenhead, I would say, that Jesus Christ has gathered for himself a blessed flock there; and, however they may be vilified and scorned by those who have their portion in this life, yet I hope no less, but that they are precious with God, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of his right hand forevermore. Amen.

After some time, Mr. Rowland removed from New Jersey into Pennsylvania, where he had charge of a congregation in what is called "the Great Valley," and also of Providence, near to Norristown. Much of his time, however, seems to have been spent in itinerating, and preaching from place to place, during the great awakening with which the churches were then visited. The only account which we have of Mr. Rowland's labours and success in Pennsylvania, are given by himself in his narrative sent to Mr. Prince.

"In the year 174*" says he, "I came and lived in Charlestown, Pennsylvania, and have continued according to the order of the Presbytery, preaching among them, and the people of New Providence. But as my ministry has been chiefly successful at the latter place, since I came into these parts, I shall only speak of what I have observed of the work of God, in New Providence.

"The people of this place, before I came, were but an ignorant sort of people, unacquainted with religion, both as to principle and practice; and though they would pretend, some to be of one denomination, and some of another; yet a vain name was all. Looseness prevailed much in the place, and there was not one to speak to another in a suitable manner, neither of the vileness, deformity, and unprofitableness of the ways of sin; nor of the glory, and excellency, and profitableness of the ways of God. I know not that any of them observed family prayer, or even asked a blessing on their food. This was the case among them, as they told me at several times, and again since I began to write this narrative. The conviction and conversion of the people of New Providence occurred within about two months of one another. It was the time of my travelling among them that the Lord chose to bless for their ingathering to Jesus Christ; and since I have laboured stately among them, it has been as much my endeavour to build up those who were called into the fellowship of God, as to convince sinners of their misery, and to this end, my

labours were blessed again among them throughout the year 174*. As to their conviction and conversion unto God, I may say, they are capable to give a scriptural account of these things. I forbear to speak of many extraordinary appearances, such as some scores crying out at one instant; and of others falling down and fainting.

“These people are still increasing and blessed be the Lord, they are endeavouring to walk in communion with God, and with one another. And for this end, they meet in society, in the meeting house, two or three hours at a time, for prayer and praise; and they find this an excellent means to prepare them for the holy Sabbath. They are careful to maintain the worship of God in their families, and to use all agreeable [proper] means to increase their own knowledge in the things of God.

“I choose to say no more, though I may truly say, that what I have spoken of the glorious work of God in this place, and in the towns of Amwell, Hopewell, and Maidenhead, is but a very little to what I might have said.”

There is one circumstance connected with this revival in New Providence, which in a peculiar manner interests the writer. His own grandfather, then residing on the Schuylkill above Norristown, was a subject of this revival, and a member of this church; although he was awakened under the preaching of Mr. Whitefield.

Though Mr. Rowland filled a considerable space in the church, while he lived, as he was a boanerges in denouncing the terrors of the law against impenitent sinners, insomuch that he acquired among the irreligious, the title so often given to faithful preachers, “the hell-fire Rowland,” yet no word or memorial of the close of his life remains. He seems not to have been married, and to have died early.

Here, we may remark, that none of the distinguished ministers of that period, except William Tennent, sen., reached the age of seventy; and some of the most able and successful among them, did not even arrive at the age of forty. Among these we reckon Samuel Blair, Samuel Davies, Wm. Robinson, and John Rowland. These men may be said to have lived fast. They did much for their Lord, in a short time. Being burning as well as shining lights, they were themselves consumed, while they gave light to others. Oh that a race of ministers, like-minded, burning with a consuming zeal, might be raised up among us!

CHAPTER XIX("tw:///self?tid=20&popup=0" \l "Biographical_Sketches_Contents-")

CONCLUSION

Rev. Charles Beatty—Birth and education—Acts as a pedler—Converses in Latin with the Founder of the Log College—Becomes a student in the Institution—Is licensed to preach—Settles at Neshaminy—A missionary to the Indians—An agent for the Widow’s Fund—For the College of New Jersey—Goes to Barbadoes and dies there—Letter of Rev. Jonathan Dickinson—Letter of Rev. Wm. Tennent, jr. The Rev. Charles Beatty was another of the pupils of the Log College, whose name should be rescued from oblivion.

Mr. Beatty was a native of the north of Ireland, where he had enjoyed the privilege of a pretty good classical education; but being of an adventurous and enterprising spirit, when quite young he determined to emigrate from the land of his nativity, and seek his fortune in America. Being

destitute of property, he adopted the plan of making his living in the capacity of a pedler, or travelling merchant. One day, in the prosecution of his business, he called at the Log College, and astonished Mr. Tennent, the principal, by addressing him in correct Latin, and appeared to be familiar with that language. After much conversation, in which Mr. Beatty manifested fervent piety, and considerable religious knowledge, as well as good education in other respects, Mr. Tennent said to him, "go and sell the contents of your pack, and return immediately and study with me. It will be a sin for you to continue a pedler, when you can be so much more useful in another profession." He accepted Mr. Tennent's offer, and in due time became an eminent minister. This account is no doubt authentic, as it is taken from Dr. Miller's Life of Dr. Rodgers, who had long been intimately acquainted with Mr. Beatty.

After Mr. Beatty had finished his studies at the Log College, he was licensed to preach the gospel by the presbytery of New Brunswick; and in a short time afterwards, was settled as pastor of the church at Neshaminy, left vacant by the death of the venerable founder of the Log College. About this time, in consequence of the publication of Brainerd's journal of missionary labours among the Indians, a missionary spirit seems to have been enkindled among the ministers of the Presbyterian Church, in connection with the synod of New York and New Jersey. Under this influence, both Mr. Beatty of Neshaminy, and Mr. Treat of Abington, left their congregations, and went on a mission to the Indians. In Allen's American Biographical Dictionary, it is stated, that Mr. Beatty was engaged in missionary work, from 1740 to 1765, a period of twenty-five years. This must be a great mistake, Mr. Beatty was not in the ministry so early as 1740, and his service as a missionary, did not continue one-sixth of the time specified.

Mr. Beatty was an able, evangelical preacher, and was much esteemed for his private virtues, and public labours. He seems to have possessed much of a public spirit, and a popular address; for he was twice employed as an agent, first in behalf of the Widow's Fund, established for the benefit of the families of poor presbyterian ministers. This agency was performed by the appointment of the synod, and occurred about the year 1761; so that he could not then have been on a mission to the Indians. Afterwards, he was appointed to collect funds for New Jersey College, and in pursuance of this object, he went to the island of Barbadoes, where he was taken sick, and died on the 13th of August, 1772. He had been appointed a trustee of the college in 1763, and continued its ardent friend until the day of his death; and, indeed, he sacrificed his life in endeavouring to promote its prosperity.

It appears from the college records, that Dr. Witherspoon himself, had been appointed to visit the West Indies, to collect funds for the college; but finding it inconvenient to go, he recommended his son, James Witherspoon, to the Board. Upon which this gentleman was commissioned, and also the Rev. Charles Beatty, to accompany him. The death of Mr. Beatty frustrated the scheme, as upon his death, Mr. Witherspoon returned home. In regard to Mr. Beatty's death, the only thing on record in the minutes of the Trustees, in whose service he was employed, is the following, viz: "It appearing that Mr. Edward Ireland, in Barbadoes, had showed particular kindness to Mr. Beatty, ordered that W. P. Smith, Esq., write a letter of thanks to him in the name of the Board." As Mr. Treat, minister of Abington, though not educated at the Log College, was closely associated with the members of the New Brunswick Presbytery, and sympathized with them in all their measures, and was one of those cast out by the protest of the majority of the members of the synod of Philadelphia, it may be proper to say of him, that he was highly esteemed as a preacher and as a

man, and was an active and zealous promoter of the revival. He and Mr. Beatty were neighbours in their fields of labour, and were men of a like spirit. They both went as missionaries to the Indians, and were devotedly attached to the Rev. David Brainerd. An evidence of which we have recorded in his journal. When they understood that he was about to leave the work, on account of increasing ill health, they travelled all the way to Princeton, to see him before he left New Jersey.

Mr. Treat is mentioned by Mr. Whitefield, in his journal, as a minister who had been preaching several years, without any acquaintance with experimental religion; but was brought under deep concern for his soul, by hearing Mr. Whitefield preach. And having, as he believed, experienced at this time a change of heart, he became very zealous in preaching the doctrines of grace, and warning professors against the delusion of resting on a mere form of religion. Of the Rev. M. Wales, pastor of the church at Kingston, and one of the original members of the New Brunswick Presbytery, we have received no authentic information. In Mr. Whitefield's journal, we find the names of a Mr. Campbell, and a Mr. Lawrence mentioned, as evangelical ministers, who had received their education in this institution; but no particulars respecting either of them have come down to us.

Here then we might bring our labours respecting the Log College, to a close, but as one object of our work is, to furnish our readers with a full account of the extraordinary revival of religion, which was in progress, in this state, about a hundred years ago, we will add as a sort of appendix to the narratives already given, two letters, the one written by the Rev. Jonathan Dickinson, minister of Elizabethtown and addressed to the Rev. Mr. Foxcroft, of London; the other, a letter from the Rev. Wm. Tennent of Freehold to Dr. Finley, giving an interesting account of a revival in the College of New Jersey, in the year 1757, which has been copied from the autograph, now in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Carnahan, President of the College. This letter, as far as we know, has never been published; except that an extract from it is found in the preface to a volume of Gilbert Tennent's Sermons; where, however, it is not indicated to whom the letter was addressed.

Mr. Dickinson's Letter

"Elizabethtown, Aug. 23d, 1743.

"In these towns, religion was in a very low state; professors generally lifeless, and the body of our people careless, carnal and secure, till some time in August, 1739, the summer before Mr. Whitefield came first into these parts, when there was a remarkable revival at Newark, especially among the rising generation: many of whom were now brought under convictions, and instead of frequenting vain company as usual, were flocking to their minister with that important inquiry, 'what shall we do to be saved?' This concern increased for a considerable time among the young (though not wholly confined to them); and in November, December, and January following, it became more remarkable, as well as more general. There was an apparent reformation among the youth of the town: their customary tavern-haunting, frolicking, and other youthful extravagancies, were now laid aside, a new face of things appeared in the town: all occasions of religious conversation were improved with delight: a seriousness, solemnity, and devout attention appeared in their public assemblies; and a solemn concern about their eternal welfare, was visible in the very countenances of many. This revival of religion was chiefly observable among the younger people, till the following March; when the whole town in general was brought under an uncommon concern about their eternal interests; and the congregation appeared universally

affected under some sermons that were then preached to them; and there is good reason to conclude, that there was a considerable number who experienced a saving change about that time. The summer following, this awakening concern sensibly abated, though it did not wholly die away; and nothing remarkable occurred till February, 1740–41, when they were again visited with the special and manifest effusions of the Spirit of God. A plain, familiar sermon then preached, without any peculiar terror, fervour, or affectionate manner of address, was set home with power. Many were brought to see and feel, that till then, they had no more than a name to live; and professors in general, were put upon serious and solemn inquiries into the foundation of their hope. There seemed to be very few in the whole congregation, but who felt more or less the power of God at this happy season; though the greatest concern now appeared among the rising generation. There is good reason to conclude, that there were a greater number now brought home to Christ, than in the former gracious visitation. It was remarkable at this season, that as sinners were generally under an awakening distressing sense of their guilt and danger: so the children of God were greatly refreshed and comforted; their souls were magnifying the Lord, and rejoicing in God their Saviour, while others, in distressing agony, were crying out, ‘men and brethren, what shall we do?’

‘In the summer following, this religious concern sensibly decayed; though the sincere converts now held fast their profession without wavering; yet there were too many who had been under convictions, that grew careless and secure; and all endeavours proved ineffectual to give new life to their former solicitude about their eternal welfare. What seemed greatly to contribute to this (now growing) security among these, was the pride, false and rash zeal, and censoriousness, which appeared among some few at this time, who made high pretences to religion. This opened the mouths of many against the whole work; and raised that opposition which was not before heard of: almost everybody seeming to acknowledge the finger of God in these wonderful appearances, till this handle was given to their opposition. And the dreadful scandals of Mr. C——, which came to light about this time, proved a means to still further harden many in their declension and apostacy. That unhappy gentleman having made so high pretensions to extraordinary piety and zeal, his scandals gave the deeper wound to vital and experimental godliness. Thus Sir, I have faithfully given you a narrative, in some brief and general hints of the late revival of religion at Newark; and shall now proceed to give you a brief view of the like manifestations of the divine grace at Elizabethtown.

“The Rev. Mr. Whitefield preached a sermon here in the fall of the year 1739, to a numerous and attentive auditory; but I could observe no further influence upon our people by that address, than a general thoughtfulness about religion; and a promptitude to make the extraordinary zeal and diligence of that gentleman, the common and turning topic of their conversation. I do not know that there was any one person brought under conviction, or any new and special concern about their salvation, by that sermon; nor more than one by any endeavours that were used with them that fall, or the succeeding winter. Though there was such a shaking among the dry bones so near to us, as is above represented, and we had continual accounts from Newark of the growing distress among their people, (their young people especially) our congregation remained yet secure and careless; and could not be awakened out of their sleep. You will easily conceive, that this must needs be an afflicting and discouraging consideration to me; that when from other places, we had the joyful news of so many flying to Christ as a cloud, and as doves to their windows, I had yet

cause to complain, that I laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought. But notwithstanding all these discouraging appearances, I could not but entertain an uncommon concern, particularly for the young people of my charge, during that winter and the ensuing spring; which not only animated my addresses to the throne of grace on their behalf, but my endeavours also to excite in them, if possible, some affecting sense of their misery, danger, and necessity of a Saviour. To that end, there were frequent lectures appointed for the young people in particular; but without any visible success, until some time in June, 1740, when we had a remarkable manifestation of the divine presence with us.

“Having at that time invited the young people to hear a sermon, there was a numerous congregation convened, which consisted chiefly of our youth, though there were many others with them. I preached to them a plain, practical sermon, without any special liveliness or vigour; for I was then in a remarkably dead and dull frame, till enlivened by a sudden and deep impression, which visibly appeared upon the congregation in general. There was no crying out, or falling down—as elsewhere has happened—but the inward distress and concern of the audience discovered itself by their tears, and by an audible sobbing and sighing in almost all parts of the assembly. There appeared such tokens of a solemn and deep concern, as I never before saw in any congregation whatsoever. From this time, we heard no more of our young people’s meeting together for frolics and extravagant diversions, as had been usual among them; but instead thereof, private meetings for religious exercises were by them set up in several parts of the town. All our opportunities of public worship, were carefully and constantly attended by our people in general; and a serious and solemn attention to the ministry of the word, was observable in their very countenances. Numbers were almost daily repairing to me for assistance in their eternal concerns. There were then probably more came to me in one day on that errand, than usually in half a year’s space before.* In a word, the face of the congregation was quite altered; and religion became the common subject of conversation among a great part of the people.

“Though this work began among our young people; and the most of those with whom we have reason to conclude it became effectual, were of the younger sort; yet there were some who had lived a careless and sensual life to an advanced age, who were under convictions, and, I hope, savingly brought home to Christ, at this blessed time of the effusion of his Holy Spirit. Though there were so many brought under convictions at once, we had very little appearance of those irregular heats among us, which are so loudly complained of in some other parts of the land. I do not remember to have heard of above two or three instances of any thing of that nature, in this congregation; and those were easily and speedily regulated. It is observable, that this work was substantially the same in all the differing subjects of it, though some passed through much greater degrees of distress and terror than others; and this distress lasted much longer with some than with others; yet all were brought under a deep sense of their sin, guilt, and danger; and none that I know of obtained satisfying discoveries of safety in Christ, till they were first brought to despair of help from themselves or any of their own refuges, and to see and feel that they lay at mercy.

“We had no instances among us of such sudden conversions as I have heard of elsewhere; but our new converts were all for a considerable time under a law work, before they were brought to any satisfying views of their interest in Christ and the favour of God. Nor had we many instances of those ecstatic, rapturous joys, that were so frequent in some other places. It was remarkable that they who were formerly eminent for religion, were now greatly quickened and revived; and some of

them had now such joyful manifestations of God's love to their souls as they had never before experienced. It was also remarkable, that as this work began among us in a time of greatest health and prosperity; so the concern began sensibly to wear off in one of the greatest mortalities that had ever been known in the town; which makes it appear more evidently to be the work of God himself. Though there were some of those who were then under special convictions, that have worn off their impressions, and are become secure and careless; yet I do not know of any two persons, who gave reasonable hopes of a real change at that time, but who have hitherto by their conversation confirmed our hopes of their saving conversion to God.

"I would be very cautious of any confident determinations, with respect to the conversion of particular persons: but if we may judge the tree by the fruits, which we have now had so long a time to observe, we have reason to suppose, that near about sixty persons have received a saving change in this congregation only, and a number in the parish next adjoining to us, though I dare not pretend to guess how many, since the beginning of this work. The general concern which as I have observed, appeared upon the face of the congregation, has gradually worn off; and a great part of those who came short of the effectual and saving influences of the blessed Spirit, are returned to their former security and insensibility, and again appear like a valley of dry bones. Though there be yet a considerable number, that do not give satisfying evidences of a regenerate state, who have not worn off their serious impressions.

"I entreat your prayers for us, that He with whom is the residue of the Spirit, would again revive his work among us, and have compassion upon the many poor souls who are yet in the paths of destruction and death. And be pleased particularly to remember at the throne of grace. Yours, &c.

JONATHAN DICKINSON."

Mr. William Tennent's Letter

"February 27, 1757.

"My Dear Brother,

"Yours of the 14th of January, I received, last night. It was precious to me as it seemed to inflame an affection, which I trust shall continue throughout eternity. How sweet is love to the brethren! How refreshing to feel that what we have is no farther our own, than as it serves to glorify God, and benefit his people. I never questioned, though I wondered at your regard for me. But to pass to something of greater importance. I went to college last Monday, having heard that God had begun a work of the Spirit there: and saw as astonishing a display of God's power and grace, as I ever beheld or heard of in the conviction of sinners. Not one member in the house missed it, in a greater or lesser degree. The whole house was a Bochim. A sense of God's holiness was so impressed on the hearts of its inhabitants, that there were only two who were esteemed to be religious, that I know of, whose hopes were not greatly shaken. The glorious ray reached the Latin school, and much affected the master and a number of the scholars. Nor was it confined to the students only; some others were awakened. I spoke with all the members, personally, except one that I providentially found the most of whom inquired with anxious solicitude, what they should do to be saved, according to the example of the trembling jailor ... I never saw any in that case who had more clear views of God, themselves, their duty, defects, their impotence and misery, than they had in general. Every room had mourning inhabitants: their studies witnessed to their prayers.

You will want to know how they behaved. I answer, as solemn mourners at the funeral of a dear friend. It pleased the Lord so to order it, that there were no public outcries. I believe, there never was in any house more genuine sorrow for sin, and longing for Jesus. The work so far exceeded my most enlarged expectations, that I was lost in surprize, and constrained often to say, 'Is it so? Can it be true?' Nor is my being eye and ear witness from Monday to Friday at two o'clock, able to recover me from my astonishment. I felt as the apostles when it was told them, the Lord had risen. They could not believe through fear and great joy. Surely the good, the great Jehovah, is wise in counsel, and wonderful in working. I can truly say, that my reverend brethren and myself, felt no small degree of that pleasing surprize that possessed the Israelites in their return from the Babylonish captivity, mentioned in Psalms 126:1-6 when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, 'We were like them that dreamed.' 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.'

"This glorious work was gradual, like the increasing light of the morning. It was not begun by the ordinary means of preaching; nor have any alarming methods been used to promote this religious concern; yet so great was the distress, that I did not think proper to use any arguments of terror, in public, lest some should sink under the weight of their distress. Notwithstanding, I found by conversing with them; that a wise and gracious Providence had brought about a concurrence of different incidents which tended to engage them to a serious thoughtfulness about their souls. These things considered in connexion, I humbly conceive, manifest singularly the finger of God: the freeness of which grace will equally appear, by considering that a little before this gracious, never to be forgotten visitation, some of the youth had given a greater loose to their corruptions, than was common among them—a spirit of pride and contention, to the great grief, and almost discouragement of the worthy president. There was little or no motion of the passions in the preachers, during their public performances; nor any public discourses in the hours allotted for study, but at the morning and evening prayers; and these brief, consisting of plain scriptural directions, proper to persons under spiritual trouble. The president never shone in my eye as he does now. His good judgment and humility, his zeal and integrity greatly endeared him to me. Before I came away, several received something like the spirit of adoption, being tenderly affected with a sense of redeeming love, and thereby disposed, and determined to endeavour after holiness in all things.

"I cannot fully represent the glorious work. It will bear your most enlarged apprehensions of a work of grace. Let God have all the glory. My poor children, through free grace partook of the shower of blessing. Eternally praised be my God and Father, who has herein pitied the low estate of his most mean and worthless servant, in graciously granting me my desire. This to me is a tree of life: yea, it is to my soul as if I had seen the face of God. I left them in distress, they are in the hands of a gracious God, to whom I have long since devoted them with all my heart and soul. Seeing you desire to know their names, they are John and William. Perhaps, a few lines from you, dear brother, might be blessed to them. Praying our sincerest affection to Mrs. Finley. I greatly need your prayers, that I may be thankful and faithful unto death.

"I am yours,

"WM. TENNENT, Jr."

S. A Brief Compend of Bible Truth

A

BRIEF COMPEND

of

BIBLE TRUTH

BY ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.,

professor in the theological seminary, at princeton

new jersey.

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At the request of a benevolent friend, the author prepared a brief Compend of Bible Truth, to be inserted in a volume intended for the instruction of the Blind, which contained also Prayers and Hymns to aid their devotions. When this volume was published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, it was thought this small Compend might be rendered useful to others, as well as the Blind. Accordingly, it was printed in a diminutive volume, which, though it treated on the most vital subjects of theology, might be read from beginning to end in two or three hours. This little volume was published without the author's name. Being however persuaded, that it might with advantage be enlarged, he has added what increases the volume to more than double the size of the original publication; and this, not by adding to the chapters already printed, which are left unaltered, but by introducing other subjects, not treated in the Compend at first prepared. The volume now given to the public comprises a brief system of theology, and may be found useful to such as may not have the opportunity of studying larger works. As it is not intended for the learned, but for plain, common readers, technical phrases and abstruse disquisitions have been avoided; yet, the author has attempted to establish every doctrine advanced, by solid arguments, derived from reason and Scripture. Being firmly persuaded, that divine truth is to be the grand instrument for the illumination and reformation of the world, he feels desirous to contribute his humble part towards its universal diffusion. So far as Bible truth is contained in this brief Compend, may the blessing of God attend it to the benefit of every reader! And if any thing erroneous has been uttered, may it be forgiven, and its evil tendency counter acted!

A. A.

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COMPEND OF BIBLE TRUTH

CHAPTER I("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \ "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Being of God

Of all conceptions of the human mind, the idea of God is the most sublime. It is not only sublime, but awful. Every thing else appears diminutive while the mind is occupied with this thought. Though the idea of an eternal and infinite being is too great for the grasp of the human intellect, yet it is suited to the human mind. It fills it, and produces a feeling of reverence, which is felt to be a right emotion. If there is no such being, this is the grandest illusion which ever possessed the imagination of man. If it be an error, then error is preferable to truth; for on this supposition, truth in its whole compass has nothing in grandeur to compare with illusion. Remove this idea, and the mind is confounded with an infinite blank. Deprived of this, the intellect has no object to fill it: it is confounded and distressed with the retrospect of the past, and prospect of the future. But it cannot be, that this noblest of all conceptions of the human mind should be false: the capacity of the soul of man to form such a conception is a proof of the existence of a great and good and intelligent First Cause.

God has not left himself without a witness of his being and his perfections. It may well be doubted whether the evidence of a divine existence, the Author of all things, could be clearer and stronger than it is. A display of exquisite skill in every organized body around us is far better evidence than any extraordinary appearance, however glorious, or the uttering of any voice, however

tremendous. Such miraculous phenomena would indeed powerfully excite and astonish the mind, and would be a certain proof of the existence of a superior being; but would, in reality, add nothing to the force of the evidence which we already possess, in the innumerable curiously and wisely organized animal bodies by which we are surrounded. And if we were confined to the examination of our own constitution of mind and body, the innumerable instances of manifest wisdom in the contrivance of the several parts, their exact adaptation to one another, and their wonderful correspondence with the elements of the external world without us, the evidence of an intelligent cause is irresistible. If any man surveys the structure of the human body, its bones and joints, its blood-vessels and muscles, its heart and stomach, its nerves and glands, and all these parts put into harmonious action by a vital power, the source of which is not understood—if he surveys the adaptation of light to the eye, or air to the ear and to the lungs, and of food to the stomachs of different animals, and notices the exact correspondence between the appetites of animals, and the power of their stomachs to digest that food and that only which is craved by their appetites respectively; and considers what wonderful provision has been made for the preservation and defence of every species; how much wisdom in their covering, instruments of motion and defence; in the propagation of their respective species, and the nourishment of their young—I say, if any man's mind is so constructed as to see all these things, and yet remain sceptical respecting the existence of an intelligent cause the conclusion must be that such a mind is destitute of reason, or has not the capacity of discerning evidence and feeling its force. In prosecuting the argument from the evident appearance of wisdom in the structure of animal and vegetable bodies, is not necessary to multiply these cumulative proofs; for as one watch, or one telescope would prove the existence of a skilful artist, so the careful examination of a few specimens of animal or vegetable organization will satisfy the mind, as well as the minute survey of thousands of similar organizations. The attempts of ingenious and scientific men to account for these appearances, so evidently indicative of design, without the supposition of an intelligent Creator, are so replete with folly, that we cannot but think such men abandoned of God to believe a lie, because they liked not to retain the knowledge of God in their thoughts; so that it is still true, that it is the fool who hath said in heart, "there is no God."

If all other arguments for the being of God were wanting, the truth might be inferred with strong probability from our moral feelings. Every man feels himself bound by a moral law; he cannot but see the difference between right and wrong, in many actions. The former he feels to be obligatory the latter not. Whence this binding internal law, so deeply engraven on the heart of every man, that he cannot escape from the feeling of its obligation? Does it not clearly intimate that there is a Lawgiver, who has provided a witness of his right in every bosom? Where there is a moral law there must be a moral governor. As long as conscience exists in the breasts of men, atheism cannot prevail long. In the tumult of the passions, in the glare of false reasonings, God may for a while be forgotten and his very being denied; but, ere long, these moral feelings will bring men back to the acknowledgement of their Creator. There is good reason to think that the preservation of some religion among all nations is more owing to their moral constitution than to any reasoning on the subject. We need not fear, therefore, that atheism will ever prevail very generally, or continue long.

CHAPTER II("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Personality and Perfection of God

It is admitted by all who believe that God exists, that he possesses all conceivable perfection; and right reason would lead us to the opinion, that as he is infinite he must possess attributes of which, at present, we can form no conception. Our ideas of excellence cannot exceed the manifestations of perfection in the creation; but it would be absurd to suppose that any excellence could be in the creatures, which did not exist in a higher degree in the Creator. As all men who acknowledge a God agree, that all possible perfection belongs to his character, it is unnecessary to adduce any arguments for its proof. Indeed, it seems to be an intuitive truth, that all perfection must reside in the first cause. The very idea of God is that of a being infinitely perfect. Whatever doctrine, therefore, derogates from the perfection of the Supreme Being must be false. It is, therefore, the dictate of reason, that we should remove from our idea of God, every thing which argues any weakness or imperfection. And as our ideas of natural and moral excellence are derived from contemplating the creatures, we must rise to just conceptions of the Deity by ascribing these excellencies to him, in an infinite degree.

Upon this principle, we ascribe to God unity, spirituality, power, knowledge, immensity, eternity, immutability, sovereignty, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Upon this principle, God must be independent, and perfectly free to act according to his own pleasure.

God is a person, distinct from the universe. Every being who possesses intellect and will, is a person. The execution of any work of design, in which there is an adaptation of means to ends, and a harmonious operation of parts to produce a desirable effect, necessarily involves the exercise both of intellect and will. The idea that the universe is God, or that God is the soul of the world, but not a person distinct from it, is nothing more than a disguised system of atheism. God is distinct from, and independent of all creatures.

CHAPTER III("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \ "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Holy Scriptures

The Bible is made up of many books written through a period of more than fifteen hundred years, by men who professed to have received their doctrines from God, and to have committed them to writing by his direction. These Scriptures, then, must contain a revelation from God, or be a vile imposture. On the latter supposition it is marvellous, that the same purpose of deception should be maintained for so long a period, by a succession of impostors, all agreeing in the same sentiments; and that the cheat should never have been discovered.

Again, when we examine the moral character and tendency of these books, it is unaccountable that, throughout, they should inculcate a sublimer theology and purer morality than any other books in the world; that they should condemn every species of vice, and especially, that they should severely reprobate all falsehood, deceit, and fraud; thus, in almost every page, pronouncing their own condemnation. As it cannot be explained what could have made wicked impostors wish to inculcate such doctrines, so it is contrary to all experience, that men of habitually corrupt minds should be able to conceive or write discourses of so much moral purity and surpassing excellence. Read the sermons of Christ. Peruse the epistles of the apostles, and try to believe that these discourses proceeded from men steeped in fraud and corrupt principles. We are ready at once to say—impossible! When we see light, we know that it must have proceeded from a luminous body. When we see wisdom in creation, we know that there exists a being of

incomparable wisdom; and when we read a book of extraordinary power of argument, or replete with sublime imagery, we are sure that such works are the product of gifted minds. What shall we think then, when we behold in the Scriptures moral excellence shining forth in the purest and most comprehensive precepts, and embodied in bright examples of consistent piety and virtue? The character of Jesus Christ, as portrayed by the evangelists, is itself a moral phenomenon, which cannot be accounted for on any other supposition than that the writers were inspired. It is easy in words to ascribe exalted virtues to a hero, and to exaggerate his excellences by heaping up pompous epithets; but to describe a character of perfect virtue by merely relating what he said and did, and to place him often in circumstances where it is not only difficult to do right, but where an extraordinary wisdom is requisite to determine what is right, is not easy. But in this way has the character of Jesus Christ been delineated by the evangelists, without one word of eulogy. And let it be remarked, that they were unlearned men, who had enjoyed none of the advantages of a liberal education. Let any number of common, uneducated men undertake to write a history of some eminent person, and what would be the result, even if their intentions were honest? No honest inquirer can read the Pentateuch, and fail to rise from the perusal, astonished at the wisdom, the majesty, the purity, and the simplicity of the composition. Is it possible then that the five books of Moses are a base forgery? Could an impostor have persuaded a whole nation to adopt a burdensome and expensive code of laws, if he had not been able to give undoubted evidence of his divine mission? And could he have so deluded a whole nation as to induce them to believe that they saw the miraculous judgments of God poured out on the Egyptians, that they saw the sea divided at the word of Moses, that they actually marched through an arm of the sea as on dry land, and that they had been fed with manna rained from the clouds for forty years, and had seen the water gushing from the dry rock upon the touch of the wonder-working rod, if no such events had ever occurred? The history of these miracles is so interwoven with the common events, and with the religious institutions of the Jews, that they cannot be separated.

Let the sceptic tell us what motive could have induced any wicked impostor to write the book of Psalms. Here we have, not merely sublime poetic imagery, but a spirit of fervent elevated devotion, to which there is no parallel in all the heathen writings. He must have been a strange impostor, that could compose such songs, or could have felt any pleasure in such elevated, spiritual exercises. Can the deist now produce any compositions which will bear a comparison with these?

Again, read the book of Proverbs. Do you see any marks of imposture here? Do we not find concentrated more useful maxims of prudence and political economy, and more excellent moral precepts than can be gathered from all the sages of the pagan world?

But, it may be alleged, that men differ in their tastes respecting the internal excellence of literary compositions: and that in a matter of so great importance we ought to possess some more decisive evidence of divine inspiration. Well, what will be considered sufficient evidence that God has made to men a revelation of his will? Will it be satisfactory, if they who profess to be inspired are enabled to do works which are far above the power of man, and which require the almighty power of God? No one will doubt that if God give his attestation to any declaration, it should be received as true, for "He is not a man that he should lie." If then, the apostles actually wrought miracles in the name of Jesus, and in confirmation of their doctrine, it cannot be denied that they were inspired. That such miracles were actually wrought openly and in the presence of watchful

and bitter enemies is a matter of record. The four evangelists have testified in the gospels, that Christ gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, sound limbs to the cripple, and that in several instances, before a multitude of people, he raised the dead. They testify, that after his crucifixion he rose from the dead; and that forty days after his crucifixion he sent down, as he had promised, the Holy Spirit, on the apostles, bestowing upon them and others various miraculous gifts, which Paul publicly testifies were common in the churches. The truth of Christianity then, rests on this single point, Is the testimony of these miracles true, or a mere fable? That the gospels were written near the time when these things were done is capable of the fullest proof. Indeed, had not these facts been credited fully by the first disciples, they never would have submitted to such sacrifices, and exposed themselves to such dangers, as we know they did. All earthly considerations weighed heavily on the other side. Every convert to Christianity is, therefore, a witness of the truth of these miracles for they had every motive to examine into the truth and the facts were of such a nature that they could not have been deceived.

It does, indeed require, strong evidence to satisfy the mind that there has been a departure from the common course of nature; but testimony may be so strong that it would be unreasonable to doubt of the miracles which it is brought to attest. It is admitted that there have often been false witnesses, and that we may be deceived by trusting to insufficient testimony; but, we know, also, that in many cases our faith in testimony is as strong as in those things which have passed before our eyes. The point of examination then is, whether it is more probable that the testimony is false, or that a miracle has been wrought. If many persons, without any motive to deceive, and without previous concert, agree and stand to it in the midst of threatenings and sufferings, that they have witnessed miracles, it would be folly to disbelieve. And, especially, if such events followed in such immediate and continued succession as can only be accounted for by supposing the miracles to have been performed, the evidence may arise to such a degree of certainty as to assure us that we are not deceived. Now, the conversion of the civilized world to Christianity can never be accounted for on any supposition but the truth of the miracles and supernatural influence accompanying the gospel. And the whole train of succeeding events goes to corroborate the truth of the evangelical history.

Another incontrovertible evidence of the truth of Christianity is the salutary effects which it has produced in the world. The conversion and reformation of sinners has been a standing proof of the divine origin of the Bible; and this evidence is not confined to ancient days. Blessed be God, clear and striking instances of the reformation of wicked men have occurred under our own observation. And the gospel has produced in our own times such a remarkable change in the moral and civil condition of some of the most ignorant, degraded, and vicious tribes of heathen, that if there were no other evidence of its truth, this would go far to satisfy an honest mind. Can any reasonable man believe that preaching a cunningly devised fable would turn men from their sins, to which they had been long habituated?

Hundreds and thousands, also, in Christian lands can testify, that the truth of God has produced a powerful and salutary effect on their own minds, convincing them of their sin and danger, and exciting in them trust in Christ, which has enkindled their love, and brought sweet peace into their troubled breasts. And we see, continually, the power of the gospel to afford consolation in affliction and to buoy up the soul with assured hope, even in the hour of death.

But, if all the convincing proofs, above mentioned, were wanting, the undeniable prophecies which have been literally fulfilled, are a clear demonstration of a divine revelation; for who can predict distant future events but God alone? The prophecies relate to the fortunes of the Jewish people—to the destiny of many great and proud cities and nations; but the most important predictions of the Old Testament relate to the Messiah, which were literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Yet no prophecy of Scripture is more striking and convincing than that of Christ respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin and dispersion of the Jews, the fulfilment of which is recorded in the history of Josephus who was not a Christian, but an eye witness of the facts.

CHAPTER IV("tw:///self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Unity of God

The idea of God is forced upon the rational mind, to enable it to account for the innumerable marks of design manifest in the universe; but there is no necessity to suppose more than one great First Cause, to account for every thing. There is, therefore, nothing in reason, or in the works of nature, which would lead to the conclusion that there are more Gods than one. Indeed, the very supposition of more Gods than one shocks and confounds the rational mind. If we were capable of comprehending the subject, it is more than probable that we should see that the existence of two infinite beings is an absurd and impossible conception. There is, however, no need to resort to metaphysical arguments; the harmony of the laws of the universe indicates one mind—one counsel. The existence of evil led some of the ancients to adopt the theory of two eternal beings; but if that were true, we should find two systems of laws in the universe; and a continual interference and collision between them; whereas, the laws of matter, even as far as the planets and stars, are uniform. Between all the parts of creation, there is a beautiful consistency, and mutual relations, which show, that as the Author of the universe is infinite in knowledge and power, so He is One. And as to the existence of evil, moral and natural, it can be accounted for by the liberty of action with which man and other moral agents were endowed; which liberty is essential to a system in which creatures render a voluntary obedience to their Creator. If there had been no possibility of sinning, there could have been no such thing as virtue, or moral excellence. But again, what is often called evil, arises necessarily from the limited nature of creatures; and especially when the plan includes a scale of being, descending from the highest to the lowest. Every species, as you descend, is less perfect than those above it. Such a gradation involves necessarily the evil of partial defect. But properly speaking, this is no evil; every thing in the universe is good in its kind; but there is no absolute perfection but in God alone—"None is good but God."

We do not assert that the argument for the unity of God from reason is absolutely demonstrative; as it might be alleged, that two or more beings, wise, powerful, and good, might be united in counsel, in the plan of the universe and the works of creation; just as several men might agree upon a plan of a temple or other building; and all the appearances would be the same, as if only one person were concerned. Let this be granted, and yet we may assert, that reason cannot furnish the shadow of an argument in favour of a plurality of Gods. As far as she sees and speaks, her voice is in favour of the divine unity.

We feel less concerned to insist on any thing further as evident from the light of nature, because the doctrine is clearly revealed, and repeatedly taught in the Sacred Scriptures. All that we deem it important to establish on this point is, that reason teaches nothing contrary to the unity of God; and so far as she sheds any light on the subject, it is altogether in favour of the doctrine.

Let us then attend to the clear, unequivocal declarations of the Bible. "Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." Deuteronomy 6:4. "The Lord He is God, there is none else beside Him." Deuteronomy 4:5. "Thou art the God, even thou alone of all the kingdoms of the earth." 2 Kings 19:15. "Thou, even Thou art Lord alone." Nehemiah 9:6. "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." Isaiah 44:6. "Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God, I know not any." 8. "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God." John 17:3. "But to us there is but one God." 1 Corinthians 8:6. "God is one." Galatians 3:20. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well." James 2:19.

It would be easy to multiply texts in confirmation of this doctrine, but these are sufficient. Indeed, no one who admits the Bible as authority, can doubt on this subject; and consequently, the fact is, that Jews and Christians have received the Unity of God as a fundamental truth.

CHAPTER V("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Spirituality and Simplicity of the Divine Nature

That God is a pure Spirit, reason as well as Scripture requires us to believe. As God is an intelligent being, and the source of all intelligence, he must be a spirit; and as he is a voluntary agent, he must be an intelligent person. Matter is inert, unconscious, and cannot be the subject of thought or volition. Matter is also divisible to an indefinite extent, and the parts of bodies are separate from each other, so that each particle is a separate existence; but unity belongs to mind, therefore the mind cannot be material. Again, all matter is solid and extended, and necessarily excludes all other bodies from occupying the same space: if then God were a material being, as he is omnipresent, he would exclude all other bodies from the universe: or if not everywhere present, there would be some places where there was no God; and if limited to a certain locality, however extended it might be, there would be infinite space, in which God does not exist. But if the materialist denies that inactivity, solidity, divisibility and extension, are the natural properties of matter, and maintains that all matter consists of monads, which are in their nature active, indivisible, unextended, and that some of these, if not the whole, are endued with consciousness, and are susceptible of all the actions which we ascribe to mind, then there is no such thing as matter in the universe; but every thing that exists must fall under the class of spiritual being; for that substance which is active, indivisible, unextended, and capable of consciousness and other mental acts, is mind or spirit, and we cannot give a better definition of spirit than to deny to it those properties commonly ascribed to matter, and allowing to it the capacity of thought.

Materialists, therefore, in attempting to overthrow the belief of spiritual being, do in fact subvert the doctrine of the existence of matter, by affirming that it does not possess the properties commonly attributed to it, and does possess the powers and capabilities of spiritual existence. And on this theory, the materialist becomes an immaterialist; and when men agree in the properties which belong to any substance, it matters little what name they give it. We leave the atheistical

materialist to settle his account with natural philosophers, as to the properties of matter; and according to his own theory, all our arguments derived from the immateriality of the soul, for its incorruptibility or continued existence, stand in full force. As God is a pure intelligence, and everywhere present, and everywhere active, he is a Spirit.

Some, however, while they admitted this, held that God was the soul of the world, and that the world was to him what our bodies are to us. This is one form of the doctrine of pantheism, which has been revived in our day. It is a monstrous notion to consider all bodies a part of the Supreme Being. It destroys all individuality and all accountableness, and therefore, contradicts some of the clearest intuitions of our minds. Every man is conscious that he is a person, distinct from all other persons; and every man feels that he is capable of acting freely, and of doing good or evil, as a moral agent; and that he is accountable for his actions. All theories and reasonings which contradict self-evident principles of truth, must be false, and deserve no further consideration. The Holy Scriptures, everywhere, represent God as a being of infinite intelligence, as a being of will and affection; as omnipotent, and ever active; for all things are not only created, but upheld in being by his sustaining hand. Even active beings require his conservative energy to support them in being, and to continue their faculties in existence. Therefore, it is not only said, that he upholdeth all things by his power, but that it is "in him we live, and move, and have our being." The Holy Scriptures enter into no nice disquisitions respecting matter and spirit, their properties, and differences; but assume as true, those first truths which are known without philosophy, to every man of common sense. That man is a free and accountable agent, is everywhere, in the Bible, not proved, but assumed as true, and as being as well known as it can be. And the same is the fact in regard to our nature consisting of soul and body; of which every man, who has his reason, is as well convinced as he could be by any revelation.

And, as soon as we know that there is a God, we feel constrained to admit, that he must possess all excellence and every possible perfection, as before stated. And, therefore, as spirit is the most excellent kind of substance, and as God is made known to us as wise and powerful, by the creation, we cannot but believe, that he is a pure spirit, uncompounded, and free from bodily parts and members. And when God is spoken of as having head, hands, face, arms, feet, &c., it is necessary to consider this mode of speech as figurative, and intended to represent those things in the divine character or actions, which bear some distant resemblance to what is found in man. Indeed, when God is said to be a Spirit, it is not to be understood that his essence, which is eternal and immutable, is of the same nature with created spirits; but only, that there is a resemblance. If there were any substance known to us of a nobler nature than spirit, we should of course ascribe that to God; but still with the qualification, that the essence of God is infinitely superior to all creatures. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find, that there is but one text which positively asserts that God is a Spirit, excepting those which relate to the third person of the adorable Trinity; for this truth is every where assumed as known, and as implied in all his attributes. The text referred to is in John 4:24. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

CHAPTER VI("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \I "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Character of God

God is the maker of all things. He is therefore almighty. He is also wise. Of this our own frame is evidence enough. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our eyes and ears, our hands and feet, our mouths and stomach, and heart and blood-vessels, all attest the wisdom of God. We see it also in the inferior animals. Their bodies are formed with as much wisdom as our own. Every creature has a form and nature, and appetites, and instincts suited to its condition in the world. The birds with their feathers and wings, the fishes with their fins, and the beasts with their feet of various kinds, are proofs of the wisdom of God. The trees, the flowers, and the grass do also show forth the wisdom of Him who gave them being. If we admire the wisdom of man in a watch, or a telescope, or a steam engine, much more should we be filled with adoring wonder, when we contemplate the infinitely superior wisdom of God, displayed in all his works. Wherever we turn our eyes, we are met with the marks of wise design. The sun, which gives us light by day, and diffuses life through all nature, is a wonderful object. The moon and stars are beautiful and glorious works of the great Creator. Day and night, winter and summer, seed time and harvest, speak the wisdom of God. Indeed, the evidences of divine wisdom in every thing within us and around us, are so innumerable, that it is impossible to recount them. We may then, every hour, exclaim, with the royal Psalmist, "How manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all:" "The earth is full of thy riches:" or with the wise man, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding he hath established the heavens:" or with the prophet, "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding."

God is good. His goodness is manifest in every work of his wisdom, for he hath so continued and arranged all things in the best manner, to promote the happiness of his creatures, according to their nature and capacity. Especially, his goodness appears in the capacity of pleasure given to man, all the exercises and operations of whose nature give him pleasure, when indulged in their proper measure. Man is formed with such a nature, that he cannot open his eyes on the beautiful world which he inhabits, without pleasure. The glory of the firmament, the beauty of the landscape, and the sublimity of the lofty mountains and vast ocean, fill the rational mind with pure delight. The various works of nature or of art, perceived by the eye or ear, furnish a feast to the mind. The food which nourishes us is pleasant to the taste, and the water which gushes from the earth, affords a sweet refreshment. The light is pleasant to the eyes, and the air is felt to be invigorating to the lungs. Action is pleasant, and so is repose. Sleep, though it is the image of death, is sweet and refreshing to the labouring man. There are to man, thousands of sources of pleasure. If he were only innocent, even the world as it is, though labouring under a curse for sin, would still furnish many of the delights of paradise. Truly God is good. To Moses he said, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee." And when he proclaimed to his servant his name, a part of it was, "abundant in goodness and truth." "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! "The goodness of God endureth continually."

God is holy. Every excellence is his, and without holiness he would not be an object of veneration. The dictates of our own conscience teach us that the Father of our spirits is holy. And in the Bible no attribute of Jehovah is more clearly and frequently brought to view. Holiness is the true ground of that adoration which enters so essentially into the worship of God. "Worship ye at his footstool for he is holy." "But thou art holy, thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." "The Lord is holy in all

his works." Holiness is the sum of all moral excellence. When the heavenly hosts worship Jehovah, they ascribe holiness to him in the most emphatic manner. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." And the four symbolical living creatures whom John saw before the throne of the Most High, "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy lord god almighty, which is and was and is to come." Every thing which has any relation to God, or his worship is holy; his word, his house, his angels, his prophets, his people, his sabbaths, and all the places where he records his name, and all the institutions by which he is worshipped. "There is none holy as the Lord." God is also just and righteous, giving to every one his due. Justice is the rectitude of God's nature. Justice is essential to him as governor of the world. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." "He will by no means spare the guilty." The Lord is the righteous Judge. "And I heard the angel say, Thou art righteous, O Lord"—"O Lord, true and righteous are thy judgments."

God is great. "The Lord your God is a great God." "Thou art great, O Lord God, none is like unto thee." When Solomon was engaged in erecting the temple, he said, "The house I build is great, for great is our God." Thus also Nehemiah, in his prayer, (Nehemiah 9:32) calls God, "The great, the mighty, and the terrible God." And Isaiah, "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (Isaiah 19:20) And Jeremiah, "Thou art great, and thy name is great in might." (Jeremiah 10:6) Mention is often made in Scripture of God's "great name." "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Joshua 7:9.) "Behold, I have sworn by my great name." (Jeremiah 44:9.) "Thou art great, and thy name great." (Jeremiah 10:6.) "My name shall be great among the Gentiles." By the "name" of God we should understand his attributes. God is great in all his perfections; and "his greatness is unsearchable."

God is eternal. He has had no beginning, and he will have no end. This perpetuity of existence is frequently expressed in the Bible, by saying, He is, and was, and is to come. Of his years there is no end: "Before the mountains were brought forth," said Moses, "or ever thou hadst formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Eternity is often ascribed to God in Scripture. "Unto the King eternal." "The eternal God is thy refuge." "His eternal power and Godhead." Indeed, the idea of eternity, though incomprehensible, forces itself upon us when we think of the First Cause. He who is the Creator of all things can have no beginning. To suppose the contrary, would involve us in the grossest absurdity. And as God is eternal, so he is unchangeable. He says of himself, "I change not." He is the Father of lights, with whom "there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." His purposes and plans are as unchangeable as his nature. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Any change in the essence or will of Jehovah would argue weakness, or want of perfect knowledge of all contingencies.

God knows all things. "Thou God seest me." "The Lord searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. There is nothing hidden from his sight. All things are naked and open before him with whom we have to do. He seeth the end from the beginning." All the free actions of his creatures are known to him, for he hath most exactly foretold many such actions, as is evident from his predictions respecting the treachery of Judas, the denial of Peter, and the malice and envy of his crucifiers. If the Lord was not omniscient he could not possibly govern the world with wisdom. But no truth is more clearly revealed, and no attribute is more essential to the perfection of Jehovah. "For thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men."

God is every where. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?" "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." "For his eyes are on the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings." "Behold, I fill heaven and earth." And yet the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. And he is not only present, but active. He sustains all things by the word of his power. He is the living God. "In him we live and move and have our being."

God is incomprehensible. "Who by searching can find him out; who can find out the Almighty to perfection?" "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain to it." His greatness is unsearchable. "There is no searching of his understanding." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." So these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him! But the thunder of his power, who can understand? And so it will ever be, for the time can never come when the finite shall comprehend the infinite. Hereafter, much of the darkness which now overspreads the divine character and dispensations, will be dissipated; but new mysteries will be forever rising to the view of the contemplative mind! But if we have all the knowledge of God, of which our finite minds are susceptible, we should desire no more. An increasing knowledge of God will be one of the chief felicities of heaven.

God is merciful and gracious. Unless this attribute of mercy had been clearly revealed, a knowledge of all other attributes would give us little comfort. Even the goodness of God would hold out no consolation to sinners, who had forfeited every claim to divine benefits. When inexorable justice holds criminals in its grasp, of what account is it to them that their king dispenses favours to his obedient subjects? Man, by nature, is justly condemned. Justice cannot be set aside; it must have its demand, or God must change. Then, the only relief is the mercy and grace of God. And mercy can only have room for exercise when justice is satisfied. And this wonderful work has been accomplished by the atonement of the Son of God. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Not that we first loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The chief object of divine revelation was to reveal the mercy of God. That God was good, and would do good to his obedient creatures, reason could teach; and that he was just, and would render to every one his due, was also a dictate of natural religion. But how God could be just and justify the ungodly, was a problem which human reason never could solve. That, however, which is impossible to man is possible with God. "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Through the satisfaction made by Christ's atonement to divine justice, the door of mercy has been opened, and a free salvation offered to the guilty. The love of God to sinners, which is the same as his mercy, is much spoken of in the word of God. And indeed it is, at once, the most delightful and wonderful object which can engage the contemplation of any human being. This love has its origin in the divine mind; there was nothing in the character of fallen man to excite it. It is, therefore, sovereign, free, and from everlasting. The depth and height and length and breadth of this love pass all knowledge. The bright evidence of its strength and freeness is found in the gift of his only begotten Son. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." "As high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." When he proclaimed his name to Moses, it was, "The Lord is merciful

and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." The songs of praise addressed to God in the ancient church, were wont to be concluded with the chorus, "The mercy of the Lord endureth forever." "O give thanks unto the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever." "Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth forever."

God is a God of truth and faithfulness. Truth is his very nature. All his declarations are true. "Thy word is truth." And as he has consented to enter into covenants with men, and to make great and precious promises to his people, he is faithful in fulfilling whatever he has spoken. No part of the good which he has ever promised has failed, or ever can fail of its accomplishment. "And ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you." "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." He is therefore styled the "covenant-keeping God." And as he is faithful in the fulfilment of his promises, so is he true in the execution of his threatenings against impenitent transgressors. To suppose that his denunciations of vengeance against sinners were merely spoken to produce terror, is most dishonouring to the God of truth. "The strength of Israel will not lie." "God is not a man that he should lie." "Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" "Surely, O Lord, thou wilt slay the wicked." "The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." If in any case his threatenings are not executed, it is because a condition was implied, as when God threatens an individual or a nation with destruction, and that individual or nation takes warning and repents, then his wrath is turned away. In all such threats there is an implied condition, that if the guilty will repent, they shall escape the threatened destruction. Indeed, the very end of addressing such threatenings to men, is to bring them to repentance, that they may escape condign punishment.

God is long-suffering and forbearing toward the children of men. "He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "He endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." This forbearance of the Almighty is often abused by wicked men. "Because judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work, therefore the heart of the children of men is fully set in them to do evil."

God is condescending and compassionate. When we consider the majesty of God, nothing is more wonderful than his condescension. "He humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth." "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Though the Lord be high he hath respect unto the lowly." "Though heaven be his throne and earth his footstool, yet to this man will he look who is of an humble and contrite spirit and trembleth at his word." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

God is supreme. "His kingdom ruleth over all and he doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." All honour, glory, blessing, and praise should be ascribed to God.

CHAPTER VII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Holy Trinity

The Scriptural evidence of this doctrine would not be deemed insufficient by any one, were it not for the idea that there is something in the doctrine repugnant to reason; or, which it is very difficult to reconcile to right reason. The only thing then, which reason has to do with the subject is, to examine whether there is any thing in the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, which is manifestly repugnant to any truth clearly ascertained by the use of right reason. It is admitted that this doctrine is not known by the light of nature; for even if there should be found in the material universe, or in the human mind, a resemblance to the Trinity, as some have supposed, this resemblance, if admitted would furnish no conclusive argument in favour of the doctrine. It is not pretended that the doctrine is either made known, or can be proved by reasoning. It is a doctrine of pure revelation. But if its opponents could show that it contradicted any clear and universally acknowledged principles of truth, we should be reduced to the necessity of either rejecting the Bible, which teaches the doctrine, or of so interpreting the Scriptures, as to exclude the absurd opinion. The first course is pursued by deists, who often give this as a sufficient reason for rejecting the Bible, that it contains doctrines contrary to reason. Jews and Mohammedans are found making the same objection. But all Anti-trinitarian Christians adopt the second course. They admit the evidences of divine revelation to be convincing, and they therefore receive the Scriptures as a true revelation. But, as they think that this doctrine is contrary to reason, they determine that it cannot be the doctrine of divine revelation; and in consequence, exert all their force to destroy the authority of such texts as seem to contain it; or so interpret them, that they may speak a different language. It seems necessary, therefore, to inquire, whether, indeed, there is any thing in the doctrine of the Trinity palpably contradictory, or evidently incompatible with evident principles of reason. Here it is important to distinguish between doctrines which are above reason, and those which are contrary to reason. That many things which are certainly true are above reason, must be admitted by every rational man that will consider the subject. That God is without beginning is as certain a truth as any which could be mentioned, and yet it is above reason. Who can comprehend a duration without a beginning? And from this incomprehensible truth, even atheism would give no relief; for the atheist is obliged to admit that something has existed from eternity, unless he choose to say that all existing things originated without cause, which would be still more incomprehensible. That God is every where present is admitted by Unitarians; and yet they must maintain that there can be no diffusion of the divine essence through the parts of space; but that the whole Deity is every where. Is not this above reason? And who can comprehend the divine omniscience? Indeed, as all the attributes of God are infinite, that very term shows that they transcend human reason; for no finite mind can comprehend that which is infinite. There are also facts which relate to our own existence, the truth of which we know certainly, and yet we are utterly unable to comprehend them. Who can explain the true cause of muscular motion in the human body? Nothing is more certain in our experience than that our minds and bodies are intimately united, so that they constantly and reciprocally affect each other. How it is that we perceive by the eye, hear by the ear, distinguish tastes by the tongue, or odours by the smell, are all mysteries. They are truths, but they are above reason. Now it is readily admitted, that the doctrine of a Trinity, in the divine essence, falls into the class of incomprehensible truths. We know it to be a truth, because God, who cannot lie, has plainly declared it; but how it is, or how it can be, is above our comprehension, just as some of the fundamental truths of natural religion, which have been mentioned, are above reason.

It is however alleged, that God's being at the same time one and three is plainly repugnant to reason; the proposition containing a palpable contradiction. This statement Trinitarians utterly deny; and certainly the external evidence is very much against it; for much the greater number of wise and impartial men, who have carefully examined the subject since Christianity was introduced, have believed in the doctrine of the Trinity. But let us examine this objection, and see whether it has any foundation. If Trinitarians asserted that the persons of the Trinity were three and one, in the same sense, there would indeed be an evident contradiction; but this is so far from being the fact, that all writers on the subject are careful to state, that while there are three distinctions, called persons, there is but one essence. But it is alleged, that if there be three persons, there must be three Gods; for a person is a distinct, intelligent and voluntary agent; and if there be three distinct, intelligent, voluntary agents, there must be three Gods. But who can show it to involve any contradiction that three equal intelligences should be united in the possession of a common essence? But the whole force of this objection arises from taking the word person in a strict and definite sense, as used when applied to men; whereas, we are under no necessity of retaining this word; it is not found in Scripture, and many Trinitarians have rejected it. There may be three in the divine essence, and yet these may not with much propriety be called persons. Still, in our opinion, there is no need to depart from the terms commonly made use of by Trinitarians. Some term is necessary to designate the three, and there is no objection to the word person, which would not exist in full force against any other word; and this term has the sanction of long usage, and is found in almost every writer on the subject. All that is necessary is, as in analogous cases, to explain the sense in which the word is used in application to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And here it should be remembered, that all our language which we use to designate the attributes of God, is necessarily inadequate; and the most common words in application to the Deity have a peculiar meaning. This is the fact when we use the words intellect, will, purpose, love, &c. God's understanding is infinitely different from ours; the will of God cannot be understood as precisely similar to will in the human mind. And in regard to affections and passions this is so evident, that many, to avoid the ascription of any imperfection to the Supreme Being, have denied to him every kind of affection, as well as passion. But, in the use of such terms, it should be considered that they must not be taken definitely and strictly, as they apply to man, but as representing vaguely and indefinitely something in God which resembles those things in man for which these words stand. And no other rule, in the use of the term person, is necessary, when the word is used in relation to the Supreme Being, than what is necessary in many other cases. The word person is used merely to mark a distinction evidently made in Scripture, and may, in this indefinite sense, be properly used; because, in relation to Father, Son, and Spirit, personal pronouns are used, and personal acts are ascribed to them. The question respecting the truth of the Trinity is, however, not to be confounded with the one respecting the propriety of the use of the word persons, which some who hold the doctrine of the Trinity firmly, have rejected. And some, who nevertheless believed in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as being divine, have scrupled to use the word Trinity, because it is not found in Holy Scripture. Now, while men receive implicitly all that is taught in Scripture respecting each of these, we need not contend with them about the theological terms which shall be employed.

Though the Trinity is not a doctrine discoverable by reason, yet we find some vestiges of it in nearly all ancient systems of Pagan theology, which seems to indicate that it was handed down by tradition from the earliest ages of the world. But we do not adduce this as a fact likely to have any

weight with the anti-trinitarian. Indeed, some have ingeniously founded an argument against the doctrine from its resemblance to Platonism, and other Pagan systems. But still, no more reasonable account of the triad, found in most ancient theories of religion, can be given, than by supposing an early tradition to have been received on this subject. Our appeal, however, must be to the infallible oracles of divine revelation; and although we find many vestiges of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, in the Old Testament, yet as these are not so evident but that they are liable to dispute, it will save time to proceed at once to the testimonies which are found in the New Testament. And our first object will be to show, that three persons are often mentioned together, by three distinct names; and then we will bring convincing arguments to prove that each of these is God; and there being but one God, as we have seen, these three must, in some mysterious way, be united in one essence. At the baptism of Christ, the Father spake from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;" and the Holy Ghost descended on Christ in the form of a dove. Here then we have Christ visible in the form of man, the Father speaking of the son in a voice from heaven, and the Holy Ghost, in a visible form, descending on Christ. Whatever may be determined respecting the nature of these persons, they are manifestly three in number. The Holy Ghost did not speak, and the Father did speak, but did not descend in a visible form; and, evidently, the Son was not the person who spoke or descended. This evident manifestation of three persons at the baptism of Christ, led one of the Christian fathers to exclaim, "Let him who would have a proof of the Trinity go to Jordan." The clear distinction of the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is again most evidently set forth in Christ's consolatory discourse to his disciples, before he suffered, recorded in John 14:1-31, John 15:1-27 and John 16:1-33, and also in his intercessory prayer, John 17:1-26. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that shall abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Here the Son prays to the Father for the Comforter, the Spirit. That there are three mentioned is too evident to need proof.

Another clear testimony to the truth that there are three distinct persons in the divine essence, is found in the form of Christian baptism, which Christ gave to his apostles, in the commission which he gave them just before his ascension to heaven. "Go," said he, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." These are among the most solemn and important words in the New Testament; they contain the commission under which not only the apostles, but all ministers of the gospel act, and the form of words directed to be used in baptism, was intended to be employed in the administration of this ordinance, through all periods of the church. All persons who have ever been regularly baptized, have had these words pronounced over them, while emblematically, or sacramentally washed from their sins. Into whose name then have all Christians, from the beginning, been baptized? Into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Undoubtedly Christians are baptized into the name of God; but God is here represented as three. It would indeed be incredible that baptism should be in the name of the Supreme God, of a man or mere creature, and of a divine attribute. The mention of such an interpretation is enough to refute it. Undoubtedly our Lord, in his commission, must have intended by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to designate three persons. Whether they are all to be considered as partaking of the divine nature, is not now the immediate object of inquiry, but whether three persons are designated. The divinity of each will be here after proved.

Again, the apostolical benediction, recorded in 2 Corinthians 13:14, is another conclusive evidence of the existence of three persons in the Godhead. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." Here grace is implored of the Son, love from God the Father, and communion from the Holy Ghost. It is impossible, by any proper rules of interpretation, to evade the conclusion, that three divine persons are here named. Similar proof we have in Ephesians 2:18. "For through him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Here the same three persons are brought into view, and designated by their appropriate appellatives. Another passage in which the three persons are distinctly mentioned together, is, 1 Peter 1:2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Here, again, we find the same three persons clearly distinguished. And although the text in 1 John 5:7, has been disputed, on plausible grounds, and the testimony of existing manuscripts is unfavourable to its authenticity, yet there being positive evidence that ancient manuscripts which contained it, have been destroyed or lost, I think it should not be omitted in a summary of the evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity, as I have a strong persuasion that it is really a precious part of inspired Scripture, which we are not at liberty to abandon, but which was probably insidiously dropped out of the copies, in the days of Arian ascendancy. What confirms me in this opinion is, that it is evidently referred to both by Tertullian and Cyprian, who lived long before our oldest extant manuscripts were written. The words are, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." Here we have our whole doctrine expressed, as clearly as it could be done in words. The evidence of three distinct persons has now, we think, been established beyond all reasonable contradiction, as the doctrine clearly and repeatedly inculcated in the Scriptures of truth.

CHAPTER VIII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Divinity of Christ

The proof of the Deity of the Son of God is the main point in establishing the doctrine of the Trinity; for if it can be clearly shown that there is a second person in the divine essence, there will be small repugnance to the admission of a third. And here it may be observed, that the appellation "Son of God," is remarkable. A son is always of the same nature with the father who begat him, and possesses the same attributes. It is true, Adam, in Luke's genealogy of Christ, is called the son of God, by which no more is to be understood but that God was his immediate Creator. But Christ is called not only the Son of God, but His "only begotten Son." (John 1:14.) And angels are called "sons of God," as being immediately created by him; but the apostle Paul distinguishes the sonship of Christ from that of angels, in that remarkable passage in Hebrews 1:1-14, where he says, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Here we learn that the Son is not one of the angels, for he is clearly distinguished from them all. Not only so, but the angels were commanded to worship him, when he made his first appearance in the world. Now, he whom angels worship, can be no other than God. Was it ever heard of, or any where read, that the angels were commanded to worship one another? No: but they did receive a command to worship

the Son. This shows that Christ was not called Son, merely on account of his miraculous birth, or his designation to office, as Mediator, or his resurrection from the dead. All these may serve to show that he is the Son of God; but he was Son from the beginning—by nature a Son—eternally begotten; for as Son, he is to be worshipped by the most exalted angels of heaven. And while he is addressed by the Father as a Son, he is emphatically addressed as God. “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” To which of the angels was ever an address like this made? As these words are a quotation from Psalms 45:6, by turning to the passage we find, that the person addressed is called the King, and is addressed as the Most Mighty. There is, moreover, another argument for the eternity of Christ, contained in this pregnant passage, which is of the most conclusive nature. Indeed, it is so cogent, that this being impartially weighed, all further arguments seem to be superfluous. It is derived from the fact, plainly declared by the apostle, and made prominent in several other parts of Scripture, that Christ, here called the Son of God, is the Creator of the universe. Surely he who created all things must be God; or all distinction between God and the creature is obliterated. How do we know that there is a God, but by the creation? The idea that the power of creation may be delegated to a creature, is the same as to suppose that a creature may be rendered omnipotent and infinitely wise; that is, that a creature may be endowed with divine attributes; or that there may be another God. And as to the notion that Christ was employed in creation as an instrument, it is still less reasonable, for as creation is an instantaneous work of almighty power, what place was there for any instrumentality? Besides, in the passage under consideration, there is no allusion to any instrument. It is simply and plainly declared, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.” In the second verse, it is indeed said, “By whom He created the worlds;” but in the order of operation, in the persons of the Trinity, the Son is always represented as acting in conformity with the will of the Father; but still as exercising the same power, and possessing the same knowledge. The very name Father indicates, that he is primary in order of existence and of operation: by some, therefore, he has been called the fountain of the Deity. Thus our Lord says, “For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son, to have life in himself.” “All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” Here the knowledge of the Father by the Son, is put on a level with the knowledge which the Father has of the Son; and the nature of the Son is represented as incomprehensible to all others but the Father, just as the nature of the Father is incomprehensible to all but the Son. An equality in the possession of divine attributes is here as clearly taught, as is possible. Can it be a mere creature who knows the essence of God, as his essence is known by God? Impossible. But let us attend more particularly to the argument from the creation of the heavens and the earth, and all which they contain. There are several other testimonies to this fact, which it may be expedient to bring into view. In the first chapter of the gospel of John, Christ, under the name Logos, is not only said to have been in the beginning with God, but to be God; and the evangelist goes on to say, “all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” He is also declared to be the source of life and of light. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men”—“That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” And that there might be no doubt respecting the person denominated Logos, it is said, “And the word (Logos) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” It is reported by some of the earliest of the Christian fathers, that

John wrote his gospel for the very purpose of refuting the errors of certain heretics, who denied the divinity of the Son. And whether that was the occasion of his writing or not, he could not have asserted the doctrine more clearly and explicitly than he has done. And now do anti-trinitarians evade the force of this passage? The Arians, by maintaining that the Son performed the work of creation by a delegated power, or as an instrument. But this interpretation will not suit the Socinians, and all who deny the existence of Christ before he was born of Mary. They, therefore, have invented a gloss, which certainly no common reader would ever have thought of; and which nothing but dire necessity could ever have induced any one to adopt. It is, that it is meant that Christ was the author of the new dispensation, and disposed of and regulated every thing in the Christian church. When men are driven to such forced interpretations, it is a clear evidence that they cannot maintain their ground, by solid argument: it is a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*; and we should be satisfied to leave the matter there. There is no need of an elaborate refutation of what so plainly refutes itself.

Another remarkable testimony to the fact, that Christ is the creator of all things, is found in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians 1:15-17 : "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Here, not only the creation of the visible universe is ascribed to the Son, but also all things invisible; and lest any should be disposed to confine this work to inanimate substances, the whole hierarchy of heaven is declared also to have been created by him. The most exalted of the celestial host are his creatures. And not only so, but all things are continually supported by Him. The expression, "first-born of every creature," has misled many to think that this scripture asserted that Christ was the first formed creature; but the most judicious critics have shown, that this is not the proper meaning of the original term; but the true sense is, "first begotten before all creation;" that is, from eternity. The same idea is expressed, in the last verse cited, "and he is before all things." "From the foundation of the world"—"before the foundation of the world"—"before all things," are the modes of speech by which an eternity past, is expressed in scripture. One would think, that none could resort to the forced interpretation which has been put on the passage in John, but what else can the Unitarian do? He has no other refuge from the convincing force of the testimony, unless he should have recourse to the supposition, that the whole passage is spurious; but there is no proof of any such thing. No text in the Bible is more certainly authentic. The Unitarian is therefore obliged, as before, to pretend that the apostle is not speaking of the creation of the world, but of the setting up the gospel kingdom. If absurdity were stamped on the face of this interpretation when applied to the passage in John, what shall we say of it here, where the heavens and the earth are expressly mentioned; and not only so, but things visible and invisible; and finally the glorious hosts of heaven, angels, dominions, principalities and powers, are mentioned among his works. And all these he upholds by his power. Is there any passage in the Bible, where the creation of all things is more expressly and particularly ascribed to the Father, than here to the Son? To attempt to apply the language here used, in the midst of a plain didactic discourse, to the setting up of the Christian church, or introducing a new dispensation, is so unreasonable at first view, that there is really no need of a refutation. What could be meant by the heavens and the earth?—What by things visible and invisible? What by the names of the celestial

orders? If such an interpretation could be admitted, then the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures would be utterly useless. No text, on any subject could be brought forward in proof of the unity, or of any of the attributes of God, which might not be turned aside with as much show of reason, as is exhibited in this interpretation. In the text in the gospel of John, they demurred, because the word used for made, was not the one commonly used to express a creation out of nothing, but here we have the very word, used by the Seventy to express the work of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. In the former case, the objection had no force, but in this there is no foundation for it. This wild notion, by which, in the foregoing testimonies, they would have us by the creation of all things in heaven and earth, to understand the setting up a new kingdom, or introducing a new dispensation after the advent of Christ, cannot possibly be applied to the text in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; for there it is declared, that the heaven and earth of which he spake, the creation of which he ascribed to the Son of God, should perish—and that they should wax old as doth a garment, and that as a vesture they should be folded up and changed. But surely this cannot apply to the kingdom of Christ, or the new creation, for this is everlasting.

If there is a doctrine plainly taught in the Bible, this is one, that Christ is the Creator of all things: and if so, he must be truly God: we have no higher idea of God than Creator of heaven and earth. If another besides the true God may be the Creator, then another besides God possesses those attributes by the manifestation of which in the works of nature, we know that there is a God, and by which his almighty power and infinite wisdom are made known.

It seems unnecessary to adduce other arguments, as this is of itself as demonstrative of the deity of Christ, as if we had a thousand. The mind which can resist this would resist any number. If it were necessary, we could adduce hundreds of texts in which the doctrine is expressed or implied. We shall, therefore, conclude by observing, that Christ is called Jehovah—the great God—The mighty God, the true God. And arguments for his divinity might be derived from his miracles—from his glorious work of redemption—from the worship and obedience demanded, and from his being appointed the Judge of the quick and the dead—of angels and of men. But it is deemed unnecessary to deduce arguments from all these topics, as what has been said is sufficient.

CHAPTER IX("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \I "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Personality of the Holy Spirit

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit may be established by arguments of the same kind as have been adduced in support of the Deity of the Son; but it does not seem necessary to go over the same ground again; especially, as at the present there are none, as far as we know, who maintain that the Holy Spirit is a created being. Anti-trinitarians of the present day, admit that the Spirit is divine, but not a distinct person from the Father. As the spirit of a man is the man himself, so they think that the Spirit of God is God, or the wisdom or power of God. Another reason why it is not necessary now to enter into an elaborate argument to establish the divinity of the Spirit is, that reason makes no greater objection to a Trinity than a duality in the Godhead. If the proofs of the deity of the Son are conclusive, the same kind of evidence will readily be received in favour of a third person. We shall, therefore, occupy the space which can be allotted for this point, to a consideration of the proofs of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. And here the reader will recollect the observations made respecting the sense in which the word person is used, when applied to the divine essence. We do not pretend that we are able to form definite and clear

conceptions on this subject. Among creatures, where we find an intelligent, voluntary agent, we call that being a person. And such persons are spoken of by proper names, and by personal pronouns, which are used instead of the name. John is possessed of reason and will, and he pursues such objects as are agreeable to his taste. John is a person. Every one who is constituted like John, however he may differ from him in other respects, is also called a person. We find in Scripture three, to whom divine attributes and works are ascribed, and each of whom has an appropriate name, and is frequently represented as acting, feeling, and speaking; and to each of these the pronouns used in reference to persons are often applied. And they are not different names of the same person, because they are, in a number of cases, all mentioned in the same sentence; and they are represented as speaking to each other, and as sending or promising to send another. And there are appropriate acts ascribed to each. It cannot be supposed, that, if the Holy Spirit were not a distinct person, this mode of speaking of him, in the Holy Scriptures, would be kept up whenever he is mentioned. Sometimes, by a lively figure, that which is not a person is personified, and introduced as thinking, feeling, seeing, hearing, and speaking; but no one is ever deceived by this liberty of speech; but if this personification were kept up whenever this inanimate, unintelligent being was mentioned, it would tend only to confusion and error. But this is never done in regard to such beings as are not possessed of intelligence.

Let it then be kept distinctly in view, that the Holy Spirit is either a person, or a divine attribute, as none now are found maintaining that the Holy Spirit is a creature; and if he were, he would still be a person. What we now wish to establish is, the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. The personality of the Paraclete, who is the Holy Ghost, is exceedingly manifest from the words of Christ, where he promises to pray the Father to send the Holy Spirit, (John 14:16-17,) where the personal pronoun is used to designate the Holy Ghost, no less than six times, in two verses. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And again, in the 26th verse, "But the Comforter, (Paraclete,) which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things," &c. Also, in chap. 16:7-14. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." In this last passage, the personal pronoun is applied to the Holy Spirit, nearly a dozen times. And there is a peculiar force in the original, which cannot be preserved in English. The Greek word for Spirit is of the neuter gender, but the inspired writer, instead of making use of a pronoun of the corresponding gender, constantly uses the pronoun of the masculine gender. No conceivable reason can be assigned for this, except that the Spirit is really a person, a divine person, and therefore should be represented by the masculine pronoun.

How would it sound to attribute to any divine attribute, or operation, what is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, throughout the Scriptures? "I will pray to the Father, and he will send his wisdom, and he shall teach you all things. He will not speak of himself, but he will take of mine and shew it unto you. And when wisdom is come, he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment." "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto Wisdom?" "He that blasphemeth against Wisdom, it shall never be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." "As Wisdom said by David." "Wisdom said, separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have appointed them." "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Wisdom." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of Wisdom, be with you all." The same incongruity, or rather absurdity, would follow from substituting any other word expressive, not of a person, but an attribute, or an influence, or operation, for the name of Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, in all the places where it occurs. We never can receive the Sacred Scriptures as a certain rule of faith, intended to guide all classes of people, without admitting that the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a person. It is true, there are passages in which, if there were no others, we might be led to suppose that the Spirit was a gift, or divine influence shed on the minds of men; but all these texts can be much more easily explained, so as to harmonize with those which ascribe personal acts to the Holy Spirit, than those be reconciled to the hypothesis that the Spirit is an attribute, or an influence. When we read of the Spirit dwelling in us, being given without measure, being quenched, &c., it is easy to understand that the operations and influences of this divine agent are intended.

We conclude then, that, according to a fair interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, there are three persons, each being made known by a distinct name, and to each operations and offices ascribed, which are peculiar; and yet, in all works, there is a perfect concurrence of three distinct agents. And as we have clear evidence, that there is one God, and none beside, and as to each of the three, divine attributes are ascribed in Scripture, these three must be one God, although in what way they are one and three we do not know, and do not pretend to explain. It is, however, no greater mystery than God's eternity, self-existence, and omnipresence. All we need to know is, what God hath declared in his word. Hath Christ said, "I and my Father are one," and shall we not believe it, although we cannot understand not explain how they are one? Christ says, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Here are two, the Father and the Son, and yet they are so identified, that he that hath seen the one, hath seen the other also. Here is a fact plainly stated; this we are bound to believe; but how this can be, or what is the nature of this union, we are not required to understand, or to believe any thing respecting its nature. And if the Father and the Son are one God, the Holy Spirit, to whom divine attributes and works are also ascribed, must be one with the Father and the Son. Indeed, Unitarians admit this now. They agree that the Holy Spirit is God himself. His personality, however, they deny. But we have proved that the Holy Spirit is a person, because he is constantly spoken of as performing the acts which none but a person can perform. Let it be admitted, that the word person, in application to the Spirit, must not be taken in the same precise, definite sense, as when applied to men and angels. The Spirit searches—the Spirit understands—the Spirit speaks—the Spirit calls and appoints to the ministry—the Spirit reproves, teaches, guides, comforts, intercedes, inspires, sanctifies—sheds abroad the love of God. The Spirit witnesses with our spirits—the Spirit quickens—the Spirit may be grieved—may be sinned against, distinctly from sins against the Son.

What an adorable being is the Triune God! How gloriously mysterious in his being, attributes, operations, and personal acts! How little are we capable of knowing of this infinite Being. "None by searching can find out the Almighty to perfection." Where the feelings of the heart are right, the incomprehensible nature of the divine existence causes no obstruction to genuine devotion. Indeed, the soul of man is so constituted as to require an incomprehensible Being as the object of worship. Profound adoration is the very feeling which corresponds with this attribute. Were it not so, the angels in heaven would be perplexed and unhappy; for the more is known of God, the more mysteries are perceived in the divine character. "Clouds and darkness are around about him, but justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." He is also represented as "dwelling in light which is inaccessible," and to which no mortal can approach. How condescending is God to furnish us with an object of worship in our own nature, where the attributes of Deity shine forth in the face of a man like ourselves. This is truly the grand mystery of Godliness; "God manifest in the flesh;" "the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ;" so that he is both God and man in the same person. And perhaps this mode of exhibiting the divine attributes in humanity may be of unspeakable importance to all intelligent creatures in heaven. It may have given them an opportunity of knowing much more of God than they ever knew before, or could know in any other way. The doctrine of redemption is not only useful to the redeemed, but to all the hierarchy of heaven. No creature can know any thing of the nature of God but what he is pleased to reveal; and the method by which he makes himself known, is by his works and dispensations. No creature can penetrate the divine essence, and search the deep things of God. That the Son knows the Father, as he is known by him, furnishes a conclusive argument of his divinity. And that the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God, is also a sure argument of his divinity.

CHAPTER X("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Creation

The first information which the Bible gives us, is of the creation of all things out of nothing, in the space of six days. No other book gives any satisfactory account of the creation of the world, or of the origin of the human race. The Bible does not profess to inform us when the substance of the heavens and the earth, was created; but it assures us that it had a beginning, and that God was its creator. When the time arrived for the creation of man upon the earth, the confused and shapeless mass which was covered with darkness, under the forming and creative agency of the Almighty, began to assume a new appearance. And the effects produced were not wrought instantly, but day after day, for six consecutive days. On the first day, light was created, for God said "Let there be light, and there was light." On the second day, God formed the firmament or atmosphere, which separated between the water in the seas, and that held suspended in the clouds, or invisibly in the air. On the third day, the waters were collected into the basin prepared for them, and were separated from the earth or dry land, which now became visible; and on this day, also, the earth was planted with every kind of herb yielding seed, and tree yielding fruit after their kinds respectively, with the power of propagating their species. On the fourth day, the luminaries of heaven were formed, or then began to shine upon the earth; the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night; and also the stars. If it be asked how light could exist and form the day, before the creation of the sun, it must be confessed that our knowledge of the elements of matter is very indistinct and imperfect. The question proceeds on the supposition that light is a substance which comes out of the sun by emanation: but it is much more reasonable to believe, that light is nothing

more than a certain condition of a widely diffused fluid, which when excited produces in us the sense of sight; just as another fluid when agitated, by its undulations produces in us the sense of hearing. On this subject we assert nothing, but if the theory mentioned will remove the difficulty, it is a proper answer to the question. But even if the sun were a body of light, the substance of light might have been created before it was conglomerated into one great body; or, the sun might not have been visible till the fourth day. On the fifth day, the water and air were replenished with living inhabitants, with constitutions, instincts, and senses, exactly suited to the element in which they were placed. On the sixth day, the earth was stocked with beasts, and reptiles of every species.

And, finally, a council was, as it were, called in heaven, when the crowning work of creation was about to be produced; that is, the adorable Trinity deliberated, speaking after the manner of men. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every thing that creepeth on the earth." As God is a spirit, and has no bodily parts, what is here said of his "image and likeness" must relate to his spiritual and moral nature. As man was created an immortal, intelligent spirit, in this respect, he bears a resemblance to his Creator; but we have stronger evidence for referring these words to the moral image of God. For the apostle Paul, when speaking of the renewal of man in the image of God, makes it to consist in "righteousness and true holiness," (Ephesians 4:24.) And, in another place, he makes this image to consist in "knowledge:" "And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him," in which last words, there is a plain reference to the history of man's creation, in Genesis.

But, as it was not judged to be good that man should be alone, his Creator, in great kindness, formed for him a suitable companion, a woman taken from his own side, a help meet for him, and the mother of all living. To the man was given the name, Adam, the import of which is "red," and to the woman the name Eve, which signifies "living."

God pronounced all that he had created "good," "very good." Nothing imperfect ever came from the hands of God. All creatures were not made equal; and in respect to constitution some are more perfect than others; but every thing is perfect in its kind. In creation, as far as it is subjected to our view, there is a beautiful gradation of creatures from the most exalted angel down to the minutest atom; and among animated creatures there is a scale of perfection, according to which one living creature rises above another by almost insensible degrees. And among the creatures there is observable a mutual dependence of one upon another; and in the whole there is an astonishing harmony; or if there should be the appearance of disorder and confusion in some things, it must be attributed to our ignorance; for as far as we can understand the works of God, every thing seems to be in its proper place, and governed by laws adapted to its nature.

CHAPTER XI("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Good Angels

Although reason cannot assure us, that there are in the universe creatures of an order superior to man; yet all analogy is favourable to such a doctrine. As we find that below the human race, there is a gradation of animated beings, down to the lowest forms of organized life, it would be strange indeed, if the infinite space above man should be entirely unoccupied. And as the Deity is a pure

spirit, without bodily parts, it would seem reasonable to think, that he has made some species of creatures, of a purely spiritual essence. These remarks are made, because Rationalists are generally disposed to deny the real existence of angels; whereas, professing to be guided by reason, they ought readily to receive this doctrine, which is so clearly revealed in the Bible. It may properly be mentioned here, that Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans, all con cur in believing in a species of creatures of nobler capacities than belong to the human race. This almost universal agreement, is probably derived from ancient tradition; but if from the suggestions of reason, it is still favourable to the doctrine of Scripture, on this subject. The word translated angel properly means, a messenger. It is, therefore, frequently applied to human beings, in which cases it is literally translated messenger. And not only so, but we have abundant proof, that the word is also used to designate the Son of God, the angel that appeared to Abraham, and is expressly called Jehovah; also, the same that spoke to Moses from the burning bush, and said, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who is also called an angel. This is the angel who led the Israelites through the wilderness by a fiery pillar and protecting cloud, and often appeared to them in glory, at the tabernacle. This was the angel, in whom was "the name of Jehovah," and who is called by Malachi, "the messenger," or "angel of the Covenant."

Many theologians have also maintained, that Michael the Archangel was not a created being, but the Son of God; for this opinion, however, the reasons are not conclusive: yet there is no propriety in speaking of archangels, for only one is ever mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

There can be no doubt that angels are created beings, although we are not informed when they were brought into existence. It is probable, however, that the whole universe, with all the various species of beings, was produced at once, since the whole appears to form one grand system. But we must not pretend to be wise above what is written.

Angels are moral agents and accountable beings, or they could not be holy, and could not have sinned, as many of them have done. They were doubtless, placed when created, in a state of probation, as man was. Indeed, every rational creature, made under a moral law, is naturally in a state of probation; that is, obedience is required of him, and a reward promised, and a penalty threatened in case of disobedience. All creatures are mutable, and, therefore, all creatures, however exalted, are capable of sinning when left to themselves. Unless God, in infinite kindness and condescension, limited the period of probation, it would last forever; as forever, the creature left to himself would be liable to sin: but it has pleased the goodness of God to limit the probation of his moral subjects to a certain period, probably short, after which, those who stand the trial and retain their integrity, are confirmed in a state of immutable holiness and happiness. Those angels who kept their first estate, and resisted the temptation by which many of their companions were seduced from their allegiance, are not only called "holy angels," but "elect angels." What proportion of the number fell is not revealed; though the Romanists pretend to determine this and many other points, for which they have no authority from Scripture. The number of good angels, we know, is very great. Christ said, that he could pray to his Father, and he would send to his aid more than twelve legions of angels; which would be more than seventy thousand. And at the birth of our Saviour, there were present with the Shepherds, a great multitude of the heavenly host. And in the book of Daniel and of the Revelation, we read of "thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand." And in the 12 chapter of the Hebrews, the apostle speaks of "an innumerable company of angels."

They are possessed of wisdom and intelligence superior to that of man, and continually contemplate the divine glory as manifested in the work of creation; and especially, in the work of redemption. "Which things," says Peter, "the angels desire to look into." And in the Revelation of John, they are represented as encircling the throne of the Almighty, and ascribing unto Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb, "power, and riches, and wisdom, and honour, and glory, and blessing." That the angels are guardians of the children of God, is clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures. "The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear Him and delivereth them. (Psalms 39:7.) "For He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Psalms 91:11-12.) And it seems to be intimated by our Saviour that particular angels have the charge of individuals; for when speaking of children that believe, he says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10.) But whether every saint has an angel to attend him alone, is not revealed, and the thing is not probable: for aught we know, one guardian angel may be sufficient for many individuals. Neither is it necessary to suppose, that guardian angels are always present with their wards: it is sufficient that they frequently visit them. And it would seem clear from Scripture, that all the holy angels are occupied in this service; for, in the epistle to the Hebrews, we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14.) The Romanists, indeed, confine this ministry to the very lowest of the nine orders of their celestial hierarchy: but for their doctrine, they have no solid foundation, and it is refuted by the declaration of our Lord, already quoted, that the guardian angels of the little ones who believe, do always behold the face of God in heaven. These must, therefore, be of the highest order; and the word angels, in the New Testament, is a general term, comprehending all orders. This leads us at once to the inquiry, whether there are different ranks and orders of good angels. While we reject the hierarchy of the Romish priests, which has no foundation in Scripture, we cannot but admit, that according to the testimony of Paul, there are several ranks, or orders of angels, but how they differ from one another, we cannot tell. All we know is that the names by which they are designated and distinguished, import high station and great power and dignity. They are called, "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers;" but exalted as they are, the Son of God is declared to be their Creator. As the word "angel" signifies a messenger, some are of opinion, that the "spirits of the just made perfect" may be of the number employed in missions to the earth; and especially as guardians. But nothing of this kind can be learned from the Sacred Scriptures.

CHAPTER XII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Bad Angels

There is an evil being, often mentioned in Scripture both in the Old and New Testament, called Satan, the devil, and Beelzebub, and by other significant names. But he is always spoken of as one: the original Greek for devil (Διαβόλος) never being found in the plural, to signify devils; though the plural is used in the New Testament for slanderers. It is true, the word devils, in the plural, is often read in our version; but the original thus translated, is an entirely different word, and would more properly be rendered demons. From this some have been disposed to maintain, that these demons were of an entirely different nature from the person called Diabolus and Satan; and some have conjectured that they were the departed spirits of wicked men. But there is little

foundation in the Scriptures for these conjectures. Satan is no doubt greatly superior to all the other evil spirits; but whether of a different species we cannot tell. One individual of the same species may be endowed with powers far above the rest. An opinion which has more probability is, that Satan, in a state of innocence, was an archangel, or prince over a large number of the celestial host; and that by his influence, those subject to his authority were seduced from their allegiance, and fell with him in the same transgression. For he is still called “the prince of the devils”—“the god of this world,” “the prince of the power of the air,” “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience,” “the adversary that goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” And, what comes nearer to the point, we read of hell being originally prepared for “the devil and his angels.” And as we know that evil spirits are very numerous, we may infer, that they are all in subjection to this prince of darkness; whether willingly, or unwillingly, it would be vain to inquire. And this will account for what, to many has appeared difficult to be understood, how Satan can tempt so many persons, all over the world, at once: it would seem, at first view, that he is omnipresent. But if he has at his command thousands of emissaries, or even if this host of evil spirits act independently of him, the difficulty will be removed. It ought, however, to be remembered, that a spirit can pass from place to place more rapidly than the light; and Satan may be carrying on his temptations in America this moment, and the next he may be in Europe, and then in Africa or Asia, and back again, in the twinkling of an eye. The Scriptures make it certain, that our first parents were seduced by the devil, in the form of the serpent; and that the curse denounced on the serpent related chiefly to him. In the book of Revelation, he is called “that old serpent the devil;” and by our Lord it is declared, that “he was a murderer from the beginning,” and “a liar and the father of it,” which can have no other reference than to the bringing death on our first parents, and their posterity; and to the lie—the first ever told in this world—by which he deceived the woman, when he said, “Thou shalt not surely die.” And for these reasons he is called “a murderer,” and “the father of lies.”

How great his malice is against the people of God, and what injuries he would inflict upon them, if permitted, may be learned from the book of Job. At the advent of our Saviour, he seems to have been let loose in an unusual manner; for “the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil,” and therefore the powers of darkness were permitted to exert their malice and cunning, in a degree greater than at any other period. As Christ came to accomplish a salvation which the first Adam had failed to secure, there was a propriety in his being exposed to the temptations of the same adversary who had overcome our first representative. Accordingly Satan made an insidious attack on our Lord, as soon as he came up from the waters of baptism; and he was led into the wilderness by the Spirit for this very purpose. But in this assault, he was completely repulsed; and when our Substitute died on the cross, which Satan had brought about by entering into Judas, the serpent’s head was completely bruised by the Seed of the woman, whilst he could do no more than bruise the heel of the God-man Mediator. In the view of this victory, Christ said, on a certain occasion, “I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” And again, “Now is the prince of this world judged.”

Whilst Christ was on earth many persons were possessed of demons, who, entering into them, agitated and convulsed their bodies in a very hideous manner; and so governed the bodies of the miserable sufferers, that they became mere instruments of the evil spirits, who made use of their tongues to utter what the demons wished. The power of our Saviour was manifested, frequently

and triumphantly, in ejecting the unclean spirits from the bodies in which they had taken up their abode. Sometimes, many would take possession of one person. In one case, a certain demoniac, upon being asked his name, answered, "Legion, because we are many." And in another case, seven devils were cast out of one woman, who became eminent for her tender love to her Saviour. And our Lord mentions a case where a demon, for a time, left the person possessed, and wandering about in dry places, and finding no rest, said, "I will return to my house, whence I came out; and taking seven other spirits more wicked than himself, he returned and found his house ready for him, swept and garnished, and they went in and dwelt there; and the last state of that man was worse than the first."

We are not to suppose that the mere demoniacal possession of a person was a crime; or, that what was said or done by a demoniac, would be charged on the man or woman possessed; but these possessions were probably the punishment of sins which they had committed; or, as in case of the blind man, "that the works of God might be manifest in them." Because the effects produced on the human body by these possessions greatly resemble certain diseases, such as insanity and epilepsy, to which the human frame is subject, some learned men have maintained that what are called demoniacal possessions in the New Testament, were nothing but incurable diseases, and allege, that the miracle is as real upon this hypothesis, as on the other. This is true; but the objection to this opinion is, that it undermines the truth of the Gospel history. If nothing more was said than that certain demoniacs were healed, this hypothesis might be admitted. For we read, that among others who were healed by our Saviour, were lunatics, and yet, no educated man now believes that madness is produced by the moon. But in regard to demoniacal possessions, the evangelists relate conversations which passed between them and our Lord; and, in one instance, where there were many in one man, they entreated that they might not be sent out of the country, but should be permitted to enter into a numerous herd of swine, which were on the mountain, near the lake; and permission being given, the herd of swine ran violently down a precipice into the sea, and were drowned. If all this is to be taken as a mere accommodation to Jewish prejudices, then we can have no certainty of any of the facts related by the evangelists. And, indeed, the censure would fall back on our Saviour himself, who continually speaks of demoniacs as persons really possessed by unclean spirits. And as a further proof of the reality of such possessions, it may be remarked, that the demons acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God; and that in a country where the people knew him not, and begged him to depart from their coasts. It is expressly said, that upon the approach of Jesus, the demon cried out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, the most high? I adjure thee, by God, that thou torment me not." And he asked him, "What is thy name?" and he answered, saying, "My name is legion, for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was nigh the mountains a great herd of swine feeding, and all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave, and the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place, and perished in the sea." Now, if any one, upon a careful perusal of this narrative, can persuade himself that these were no real spirits, but that it was simply a case of insanity, and that demons are introduced in accommodation to the common prejudices of the Jews, he will have adopted a principle of interpretation which will go far towards subverting the whole gospel history. For, why may it not be as reasonably supposed, that when Christ speaks of the resurrection of the body, or of a future judgment, he is merely uttering opinions common among the Pharisees, the predominant sect of

the Jews? In answer to the allegation, that the symptoms were precisely the same, as of diseases which are still often met with, it may be replied that the demons might be permitted to produce these very diseases, as we know that these malignant spirits are capable of producing diseases of any kind, if permitted without restraint to operate with the power which naturally belongs to them, as we see in the case of Job, and of the woman healed by our Saviour, on the Sabbath day, "whom," said he, "Satan hath bound, lo! these eighteen years." And, in some of these diseases, as they now occur, we know too little about their real causes to make it the ground for argument. Physicians are very little acquainted with the causes of diseases of every species. All they can ascertain by the most accurate examination is, the disease itself, or the derangement of some part of the human system. But in many cases, they can acquire no knowledge of the cause of that disorder; and for any thing we know, evil spirits may now, sometimes, have a power over the bodies of men, by permission. We do not assert this as a fact, but only that the thing is not impossible, nor altogether improbable. But our principal concern with the existence of evil spirits, does not relate to their power to injure the body, but their cunning and malice in tempting men to sin. As Satan tempted our Lord, so he did his disciples. He took complete possession of Judas, by his consent, and induced him to commit the most enormous crime on record. He also tempted Peter, and for a season overcame him, and had he not been preserved from utter apostasy, by the intercession of his Lord, we have reason to think that his case would have been as desperate as that of Judas. Christ says, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And when Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of an enormous crime, in lying to the Holy Ghost, Peter, in his address, said, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?" And that true believers have to endure a severe conflict with these powers of darkness is exceedingly evident from what Paul says, in his Epistle to the Ephesians. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." He exhorts, "to take the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked." It is hence manifest, that Christians are surrounded by a host of spiritual enemies, of whom the devil is the leader; and it would seem that there are the same orders among the fallen, as among the blessed angels. They are described as "principalities, powers, and rulers, and as spiritual wickedness in high places." And in 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul cautions those to whom he wrote, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." And Peter recognizes the existence and malice of the same invisible enemy, in his exhortation to Christians. "Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And Paul exhorts the Ephesians, "Neither give place to the devil," that is, do not yield to him; resist him. The same exhortation, in substance, is given by James. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." This doctrine of spiritual enemies watching our path and seeking our destruction, is, at first view, very appalling; until we recollect, that the Captain of our salvation is able to bruise Satan under our feet; yea, has already conquered him, and has him completely under his control, and has promised to his people "that they shall not be tempted above what they are able to bear," and that "with the temptation he will make a way for their escape." But if the real Christian is thus exposed to the temptations of the evil one, what must be the condition of impenitent men? The Scriptures are also very explicit and full on this point. They are said to be "led captive by the devil at his will." Those who are "dead in trespasses and sins," are described as "walking according to the course of

this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." When the gospel is preached, Satan taketh away the word that was sown in the hearts of the hearers. He is also said to "blind the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." And when men are converted, they are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do." "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." Wretched, indeed, is the condition of those who are under the power of such a malignant spirit. They are willing slaves to the most cruel of masters.

CHAPTER XIII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Providence of God

The providence of God is "his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions."

All creatures are necessarily dependent on the Creator for their continued existence. If he should withdraw his supporting hand, they would cease to be. If we admit that God in wisdom made the world, he had some end in view in the works which by his power he produced: it is most certain, therefore, that he will so direct and govern his creatures, that the end designed shall be accomplished. Being perfect in wisdom and power, he is able to order all events, and the actions of all creatures, in such a manner as to attain the end which he purposed to himself in the beginning. To suppose that his purpose failed of its accomplishment, or that the actual state of things in the universe is different from the original plan of the Creator, would be attended with so many absurd consequences, that the idea should not for a moment be admitted. Such an opinion would detract essentially from the wisdom or power of the Creator, and would destroy all confidence in him as the Governor of the world; for if disconcerted and disappointed in the execution of his plan, in one instance, there can be no security that the same will not happen again and again, until every thing shall fall into disorder; so that the end proposed to himself by the Creator, shall be for ever frustrated. The only reason which has induced any to entertain the opinion that the plan of the Almighty has been disconcerted, is the introduction of sin into the world by the actions of free agents. It has been assumed as a principle, that God is not only not the author of sin, which is true, but that, consistently with his holiness, he could not form a purpose, that it should be permitted to exist. Though the motive which has led many to maintain that sin has come into the world in opposition to the purpose of God is good, yet the opinion is utterly untenable, in consistency with the perfections of Jehovah. It would make it necessary to believe, not only that he did not design that evil should exist, but that he did not foresee the event; for if he had foreseen it he could have prevented it, if in no other way yet by omitting to bring into existence a creature capable of frustrating his plan; or by producing a creature who, he foreknew, would not transgress. We must believe, therefore, that the purposes of God cannot fail of their accomplishment, and hence, that he not only foresaw, but determined to suffer his creatures, in the exercise of their freedom, to commit sin. Yet this permission does not imply that he was the author of sin, or that he can look upon it with the least favour or approbation; for sin is ever that abominable thing which God hates. But he permitted free agents to commit sin; that is, he did not interpose to hinder them from acting as they pleased, because he knew that he could make the

existence of sin and misery, the occasion of more illustriously displaying his attributes, particularly his justice and his mercy, than could have been done in other circumstances. The reason then, why sin was permitted to exist was, that God might have an opportunity of manifesting his own glory to all intelligent creatures more conspicuously; which is the great end of all his works and dispensations. The providence of God in regard to sin consists, first, in his purpose to permit free agents, in the exercise of their freedom, to commit sin; secondly, in so directing and governing sinful creatures, that their actions may be made subservient to his own wise purposes; and when they would not have this tendency they are restrained, according to that declaration in the Psalms, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." The Holy Scriptures constantly represent the providence of God as concerned in the evil actions of men, not as causing or approving them, but as permitting, governing, and directing them, so that they may promote his own glory. Thus, the envy of Joseph's brethren, which led them to sell him as a slave, was overruled to be the occasion of preserving the whole family from death. The crucifixion of our Lord was by the hands of wicked men, in the free indulgence of their own malice, but it was nevertheless, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." And the same is true of all sinful actions; they are hateful to God, considered in their own nature, and yet his providence is concerned in their permission, and direction, so as to promote a good end. The providence of God, therefore, in its relation to the sins of men, is most holy and wise, and does not interfere in the least with man's free agency. "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will:" and his "counsel shall stand." "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3:6. The providence of God extends to all events, great and small. Both reason and revelation teach this doctrine. For if God governs the world at all, his providence must extend to small things as well as to great, because of the concatenation of events, according to which the great often depend for their existence on the small. And if reason were silent, the Scriptures speak out clearly on this point. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord." "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." "For the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The doctrine of a particular superintending providence, as it is a most reasonable, so is a most comfortable truth. If any thing could occur without being included in the plan of the divine government, we never could feel that we are safe. The sure ground of our trust in God is, "that he works all things according to the counsel of his own will." When the dark and cloudy day of adversity comes, and billow after billow rolls over us, and threatens to overwhelm us, our consolation is that our God rideth on the whirlwind and directeth the storm. We may often think with Jacob, "that all these things are against us;" but when we can view every event, however afflictive, as the appointment of our heavenly Father, we can say with Eli, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." It is a delightful thought to the true Christian, that all events are under the government of Divine Providence. The book of providence, the leaves of which are successively unfolded day after day, should be carefully studied, and its indications faithfully used in directing us in the path of duty.

CHAPTER XIV("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Man's Primeval State

As man was created a free, moral agent, it is not only true that he was capable of being governed by a moral law, but such a law resulted necessarily from his relation to his Creator. It was his duty as it was his delight, to exercise love and every holy affection toward that Being who possesses

every perfection. Although man was perfect in holiness, being created in the image of God, yet he was mutable, as being a creature; for immutability properly belongs to God only. All accountable creatures are, therefore, from their very condition, in a state of probation, that is, they are made subject to a law which they are required to obey, but which, in the exercise of their freedom, they may disobey. It cannot be doubted that man was endowed with full power to comply with all the divine requisitions. The law demanded nothing but the faithful exercise of those powers and affections which belong to human nature. The sum of all obedience was to love the Lord his God with all his heart. This was not only easy to an uncorrupted nature, but his highest happiness was connected with it. Man's probation would have continued without limit, unless God, in great condescension and kindness, had been pleased to enter into covenant with him. The word "covenant" is to be understood in a much more general and comprehensive sense, than the common import of the English term covenant. It is a solemn transaction in which God appoints and establishes certain conditions on which man might become partaker of eternal life in heaven, secure from all danger of forfeiting his interest in the favour of God. And as it pleased God that the human kind should come into the world in connexion with the first man, and should proceed from him as his children, it seemed good to infinite wisdom to make him the federal head and representative of all his posterity; so that upon his rendering perfect obedience to the commandments of God, for a certain limited period, eternal life would be secured to himself and to all his natural descendants; and on the other hand, if he transgressed the law given to him, his sin should be considered as the sin of the whole race; or, in other words, should be so imputed to them, as that they should be brought into existence in the same moral condition into which he should fall, and be subject to the same penalties. And in order that there might be a clear and decisive test of the obedience or disobedience of man, under this covenant of works, a particular tree was selected, called on account of its use, "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Although the fruit of this tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, yet our first parents were forbidden to eat of it, or even to touch it; and thus it became a precise test of obedience or disobedience.

There was also another sacramental tree, called "the tree of life," the fruit of which was to be used to prevent all disease or tendency to death; or, more probably, to be a sign and seal of eternal life to our first parents, when their period of probation should be ended, provided they continued in obedience.

Man, when created out of the dust of the earth, was inspired with a rational and immortal soul, and placed in a pleasant garden, planted with every kind of trees, bearing nutritious fruits; the temperature of which was so mild that no covering for the human body was needed. As he was without experience, all knowledge necessary for the preservation of life and the performance of duty was given to him, and among these gifts was that of speech, without which there could have been no easy interchange of sentiments, nor any considerable progress in knowledge. Man was also made lord of the creation; for God said to his newly formed creature, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth." And in this respect, also, man was the image of his Creator. It was, therefore, left to Adam to give names to every beast of the field and fowl of the air; and for this purpose they were made to pass before him, "and whatever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

It would seem from the tenor of the sacred history, that God conversed freely with his creature man, while he remained in Paradise, either by the ministry of holy angels; or, more probably, by his Son, assuming by anticipation the appearance of man. But, on points where the Sacred Scriptures do not speak decisively, it is our wisdom to be silent.

Here we may contemplate the interesting condition of our first parents. They were holy and happy, and had nothing to fear but sin; yet, considering the natural weakness of creatures, their situation was most critical, and the everlasting interests of unnumbered millions were suspended on the fallible will of our first parents. And soon, alas! all was lost!

Upon a survey of the condition in which man was placed, when created, there are two reflections which force themselves on our minds.

1. The goodness of God to the first man and to the race. Man was indeed fearfully and wonderfully made, as to the structure and constitution of his body, and, also, as to the intellectual endowments of his mind, being enriched with the noble faculties of reason, memory, and imagination. But, above all, the goodness of the Creator is manifest in stamping upon the soul of man his own moral image, and in communicating to him all that knowledge which was requisite for the performance of duty and the enjoyment of happiness. This goodness was also conspicuous in the external provision made for the supply of all his wants, and the gratification of all his innocent desires.

2. Comparing the condition of Adam in innocence with that of man now, we may form some idea of the greatness of our loss. A withering curse has fallen upon the ground itself, man has lost his perfection of life and health, and has forfeited his immortality. But the heaviest part of the curse has lighted on his moral powers. The image of God, which was his beauty and dignity, has been effaced. Corruption and disorder have ensued; and, in the place of happiness, misery, in its multiform kinds, has seized upon him. Alas! the crown has fallen from his head, and the most fine gold has become dim!

CHAPTER XV("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Law of God

From the relation which a rational creature sustains to his Creator, arises an obligation to perfect obedience. The right of the Author of our being to what he has made out of nothing, is the completest right of which we can form a conception. And, as God is infinitely excellent and glorious in his own nature, it is reasonable that he should require the supreme love of the rational creature. If we had any thing better than our love and gratitude to give, in return for what we have received from our Creator and Preserver, we should be under obligation to render the best which we possibly could; but since pure love is the best offering of which we are capable, God requires that. But when perfect obedience is rendered, we do not repay our debt; this never can be done. When we have done all, we have only performed our duty, and as it relates to God, are "unprofitable servants." When man was created, he was endowed with the necessary knowledge of God, and his disposition was conformable to his law, which was written on his heart. But when man sinned, the image of God, as far as it consisted in moral likeness, was lost; but some knowledge of duty, and feeling of moral obligation remained. This, however, through ignorance and negligence, was soon so obscured, that except in regard to a few great enormities, men have generally lost sight of the law of God as a rule of duty, reaching not only to the outward actions, but to the thoughts and

affections of the heart. It became very necessary, therefore, that there should be a new revelation of the moral law, and such a specification of particular duties, as was suited to the people of Israel, to whom the revelation was made. This revelation was communicated by God himself from mount Horeb, in the midst of thunderings and lightnings and darkness and tempest, in a voice of tremendous majesty: and the Decalogue which contained the specifications of this moral law, was written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, after having been uttered in a voice of thunder from the midst of the fiery mountain. The sum and substance of the moral law, as it relates to the inner man, is comprehended in two commandments, which are recognized by our Saviour as still in force, and as containing summarily all moral duty. The first of these is, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two hang all the law and the prophets." As to the dispositions and affections of heart, required by this law, they are the same to all persons, and under all dispensations; but as to the external acts required, they vary according to the relations in which men are placed. While, therefore, the principles of moral obedience are simple, the acts which may be incumbent on moral agents, may be infinitely diversified. All, however, in every situation, are bound externally to reverence and worship God, and to exercise justice and mercy in their intercourse with their fellow men. And there are also moral duties which have respect to ourselves. It is the duty of all, by lawful means, to seek their own welfare—the improvement of their minds, and the health and purity of their bodies; and to avoid every thing which has any tendency to injure themselves. The exhortation, "Do thyself no harm," is of general application, and is a moral duty of great importance.

It has been common to divide moral duties into three classes; such as we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. From what has been said, it is evident, that there is some foundation, in the nature of the case, for this threefold distinction. But it seems scarcely correct to speak of owing duties to our fellow creatures, or to ourselves, as though we had more sovereigns than one. There is, strictly, but one Sovereign and one Judge, to whom we owe allegiance. We are bound to love our neighbour, because God enjoins it; and to promote our own welfare, for the same reason. We are under one moral law which is binding, because it is made known to us to be the will of God. It is obvious, that when all internal holiness is comprehended in love, this word must be taken in a generic sense, to include all right affections toward God, and toward our fellow creatures, such as reverence, trust, gratitude, &c.; and a like latitude should be given to it, in relation to our fellow men. The law of God is perfect. It has been justly called a transcript of the moral perfections of God. It is the highest standard of moral dignity and excellence, of which the creature is capable. It is also the measure of man's supreme happiness. We see then, not only that it is just in God to require perfect obedience to the law, and that to require less would be a derogation from his holiness; but that his goodness is equally manifest in the requisition of all the love and obedience of which the nature of man is susceptible; for it is that very state of mind, in which man's purest and sublimest happiness consists. And if we should, for a moment, suppose, that a less degree of love and obedience should be required, either as to intensity or constancy, where would we fix this degree? It is evident, that in proportion as man falls short of perfect love, or that degree of love to his Creator, of which he is constitutionally capable, so far he sinks in moral dignity and excellence. And no man can fix any other measure of love, which might not be, on the same principle, lowered more and more, until nothing was left. But the law of God is also just, for it requires no more than

what the creature, as he came from the hands of his Creator, had full power to render. In the case of all creatures, in innocence, the maxim is correct, that duty and ability must be commensurate. Accordingly, God does not require man to love or obey, with the powers of an angel, but to love the Lord his God with all his heart, mind, and strength. But this maxim cannot with propriety be applied to the case of those who by their own fault have lost the ability of rendering perfect obedience. The law of God cannot lower its demands in proportion to the inability of man, brought on by transgression. That blindness of mind, and that hardness of heart, and perversity of will, produced by sinning, are in themselves sinful, and cannot, therefore, furnish any excuse. In fact, these things constitute the root and core of our depravity, and are the very things for which man shall chiefly be condemned. The same is true of inveterate habits of sin, and errors which are the fruit of sin. These things cannot excuse, or there would be no blame any where. No moral change, however, affects the essence of the soul; its faculties remain the same under all moral conditions. Sin destroys no constitutional faculty, and regeneration produces no new faculty. Man, in all stages of his existence, continues to be a free moral agent. If this were not the case, he could not be the subject of a moral government. Whatever the law requires, therefore, man has the mental faculties which are sufficient for its performance, if they were under the direction and government of right dispositions of heart. These things being rightly understood, the difficulty and perplexity often experienced in regard to man's being required to perform what he has no power to perform, will be removed.

Besides those duties which arise out of our natural relations, and which are called moral, God may prescribe other actions, commanding the creature to perform acts, or abstain from acts, which in themselves are indifferent, that is, destitute of a moral character; and these acts when commanded or forbidden, are as really binding on the conscience as those dictated by reason, for, whatever is known to be the will of God, is law, and obligatory. The only difference between duties of this class, and others, is, that the obligation rests simply on the revealed will of God; and having nothing of a holy or sinful nature considered in themselves, they may be changed or abolished at the pleasure of the Sovereign. But moral duties are, in the same relations, and under the same circumstances, immutable; they cannot be dispensed with. This lays a foundation for the distinction between moral and positive precepts. The first God must require, or cease to be holy; the last are binding when commanded, but may be changed or abolished by the Lawgiver, according to his wisdom and pleasure. It is not to be understood, however, that ceremonial, or positive precepts have nothing of a moral nature. The difference between moral and positive duties is merely in the external act; but as to the motive and end, there is no difference whatever. God's commands must be obeyed from love to him, and with a view to his glory, of whatever kind they be. The decalogue, or Ten Commandments, should be considered as a general specification of the duties arising out of the usual relations in which men stand; and not intended to express every particular species of duty, or every conceivable kind of sin. Such a law, thus carried out in minute detail, would be useless by its bulk, and by the multiplicity of particulars would distract, rather than direct. The method chosen, is by far more consonant with wisdom, where the principles of moral duty are clearly laid down, and such a number of specifications given, as will enable the conscientious reader or hearer to form a correct judgment respecting similar cases. The following rules have been given as useful in the explanation of the Decalogue.

1. The law is spiritual, and extends not only to the external acts of the body, but to the thoughts, desires, and purposes of the heart or mind. Paul, in Romans 7:14. testifies that the law is spiritual. "For we know that the law is spiritual." Romans 7:7. "For I had not known sin, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The same thing may be conclusively argued from the character of the Lawgiver, who is holy, and whose prerogative it is, to search the heart. And in the common judgment of mankind, the good or evil of an act must be traced to the motive and the purpose of the agent. Civil rulers can only take cognizance of overt acts, but God judgeth the heart. Hence it often happens, that that which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God; because man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart. And this is strongly confirmed and illustrated in our Saviour's exposition of the true nature of the law, where he represents malice to possess the guilt of murder, and a wanton eye that of adultery.

2. In affirmative precepts, negative must be considered as included; and vice versa, negative in affirmative. In many passages of Scripture much more is meant, than is explicitly expressed. But in the application of this rule, caution and sound judgment are requisite, lest we make the law a mere Lesbian rule, a nose of wax, which can be bent into any shape—a vague and indefinite thing, which every one may understand in that sense which suits him. We must inquire accurately and profoundly, into the mind of the Legislator as elsewhere expressed, and pay strict attention to the context, and to the occasion on which any precept was spoken.

It is plain, however, that a precept enjoining something good, cannot be obeyed without avoiding the contrary evil. It is also evident, that when any particular sin is forbidden, obedience cannot be rendered, without cultivating and practising the contrary virtue. Thus, when it is said, "Thou shalt not kill," it is evident that it is implied, that we should not only refrain from injuring our neighbour, but should do what we can to promote his welfare. And the command, not to steal, includes an obligation to advance, as far as it may be in our power, our neighbour's property and outward estate. And every one sees, that the command to honour our parents, includes a prohibition to dishonour or injure them.

3. In each of the commandments it is necessary to suppose, that, for brevity's sake, a part is put for the whole; a specimen which may be said to represent all duties or sins of the same class: and the prohibition of any sin, includes all things which would tend toward it, and all inclinations leading to its commission. Thus, when it is said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," all impure conduct is forbidden, as sodomy, incest, fornication, and all lascivious actions; also all unchaste thoughts, imaginations and desires which lead to the commission of the crimes that belong to this class.

4. The cause must be considered as included in the effect, the genus in the species, and the correlative in the relative. Thus, in the prohibition of stealing, covetousness, its cause, is forbidden. In the prohibition of murder, cherished anger is included. Under the head of theft, every species of fraud and injustice is included. Under the sin of "taking the name of the Lord in vain" is included all profaneness, and want of due reverence for any thing relating to God, as all trifling and jesting with his word; and all ridicule or contempt of the worship and ordinances of his house. So also, when the duty of children to parents is enjoined, the correlative duties of parents to their children must be considered as required. And the mention of one class of relative duties, must be considered as a specimen of all relative duties. It is right, therefore, under the fifth commandment, to comprehend the duties of magistrates and subjects, of masters and servants, of pastors and their flocks, of

husbands and wives, and of every relation which lawfully exists among men.

There are two rules laid down by theologians on this subject, which though generally true, cannot be considered as universally applicable.

5. The one is, that the duties of the first table, or those which have God for their object, should have preference above those of the second table, which have our fellow men for their object. But, if a man be in danger of perishing, and we can save his life, by omitting prayer, or the worship of God, it is obviously our duty to give preference to the duty of saving the life of a fellow creature. Many other cases might be supposed.

6. The second rule, commonly laid down, and which is not of universal application, is, that moral duties take the preference over positive; mercy must be preferred to sacrifice. For this we have the authority of the prophets and our Saviour himself: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

Neither must this rule be considered as universally applicable. Indeed, we cannot in any case, determine our duty by it, without regard to the nature and circumstances of the duties which may come into competition; for where there is no inconsistency in performing the duties, both kinds are obligatory, though some may be much more important than others. The Pharisees who neglected the weightier matters of the law, and were scrupulous in observing the payment of tithes, even on the herbs of the garden, are not blamed for tithing mint, anise, and cummin, but for neglecting much more important duties; as appears by the words of our Saviour, "These ought ye to have done, and not leave the others undone." But when moral and positive duties interfere, the question is, whether the moral must in all cases have the precedence. That mercy should be preferred to sacrifice, is clearly revealed, but that in every case, a divinely appointed ordinance must give way to every species of moral duty, cannot properly be inferred from this text. Suppose a believer to be so situated that he has the opportunity of receiving Christian baptism, or attending on the Lord's supper, and to be under the necessity of going on a tedious voyage to sea, would it be his duty to neglect either of these holy sacraments for the sake of performing some moral act not of the first importance, which could not be performed, unless he would omit these positive duties? For example, suppose that just when about to attend on the Lord's supper, he should be sent for, to visit a sick person at a distance, would he be bound to neglect the only opportunity he might ever have, to receive either of the sacraments of the Christian church? I think not. Indeed, to Christians, as commonly situated, it would not be proper to absent themselves from the table of the Lord, in order to pull an ox or sheep out of a pit, into which it had fallen; though this is a moral duty, when not called to the performance of other duties, which are more important.

Why the ceremonies of religion are sometimes spoken of in a disparaging way, was on account of the total defect of spirituality. As Isaiah says, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of rams, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts?" And again, "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." The reason why appointed rites are thus spoken of, as services condemned and spurned by the Almighty, is not because the right performance of the ceremonial law was not acceptable, but because the people utterly neglected the moral and spiritual part of worship, which is its essence,

and depended entirely on the performance of external rites, while they indulged without restraint their wicked inclinations; vainly trusting that these observances would be a compensation for all moral defects.

7. Another rule which has been given for the interpretation of the moral law is, "That affirmative precepts are always obligatory, but do not require a constant performance; whereas negative precepts are not only always obligatory, but must be constantly observed." This rule, though true, is of very little use, as the direction contained in it, is obvious to the reason of every reflecting man. The duty of prayer is always obligatory, but not a duty to be performed at all times; but the negative precept, forbidding us to take the name of the Lord in vain, binds us always, and is always to be observed. The moral law will be better understood by considering the nature of the obedience which it demands; and this may be comprehended in the following particulars.

I. The law reaches to the whole of man; to the soul with all its faculties, and to the body with all its members.

II. A fourfold perfection is required by the law.

1. It must be cordial or from the heart.

2. Universal, both as to its object and its parts.

3. In the degree of its intensity—with all the heart, &c.

4. In its duration; it must never cease.

5. The beginning, middle and end of obedience, is love out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. But under the term love is comprehended as was said before, every virtuous feeling and holy purpose and emotion. When the word is thus taken, "love is the fulfilling of the law." The two commandments in which all others are included are love to God and love to our neighbour. As on these hang all the law and the prophets, that is, all incumbent duties, in them must be included all holy affections toward God, and all right dispositions toward our fellow creatures, according to our relation to them and our opportunity of doing them good, "for love worketh no ill to his neighbour."

CHAPTER XVI("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Fall of Man

How long our first parents continued in innocence we are not informed, and it would be in vain to conjecture; but the common opinion has been that the time was short.

Already an enemy of God existed; a fallen spirit, who had led a multitude of his fellow angels into rebellion, who were cast out of their celestial habitations, but had liberty, for a season, to roam about the universe of God. Satan, the prince of the devils, envying the happiness of man, formed the design of seducing him from his allegiance, and bringing him into the same degraded and wretched condition with himself. He, therefore, watched his opportunity, and knowing the woman to be the "weaker vessel," he resolved to make his first assault on her. She seems to have been curiously gazing on the beautiful fruit of the forbidden tree, when the arch-fiend, making use of the body of the serpent, which was the wisest of the animal tribes, and had originally an erect and pleasing form, "said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the

garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” Here the positive commandment of God was violated, the covenant of life broken, and the curse of death incurred, not only for himself, but for all his posterity. Philosophically to explain how a perfectly holy creature could sin, is not easy; but as a practical matter the thing is not difficult. The mind of man was incapable of thinking of many things at once; to his constitution belong many natural desires and appetites. The objects suited to these might so occupy the mind, for a season, as to exclude higher and nobler ideas; and, in a moment of inadvertency the lower propensities, which act with a blind force, might prevail with persons, before innocent, to do an act which God had forbidden; especially, when by an impudent falsehood the danger of the act was positively denied, and when it was confidently alleged that great good would be the result.

Whether the man was influenced to eat, by the same motives which prevailed with the woman, is a matter of uncertainty. Many suppose that he was led by love to his wife to determine to perish with her, rather than be for ever separated from her. It matters little what were his motives; the fact was, that he deliberately transgressed the law of God, and thus involved a world in ruin. The immediate consequences of the fatal transgression were, a new set of feelings, of guilt, shame, and fear, which caused our first parents to cover themselves with fig-leaves, and to hide themselves among the thick trees of the garden; and when questioned by their Maker they attempted to excuse themselves, and to charge their fault upon another. They were now driven from the garden, and flaming cherubim stationed at the entrance to prevent their return. The ground was cursed for their sake, and doomed thenceforth to bring forth thorns and briars; so that man would have to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. The sentence of death was also confirmed, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” It may be asked, how the threatening, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” was executed, since Adam continued to live upon earth for more than nine hundred years? “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” This threatening was executed, or began to be executed, that very day; for, from the moment of man’s eating the forbidden fruit, he became mortal; death already began to work. Again, in death, as threatened in the penalty, every kind of evil is included. Temporal death, consisting of a separation of soul and body, was not the principal thing; but spiritual death, which consists in a separation from God, a loss of his favour, and image, and which perpetuated, is eternal death, commenced on the very day on which man sinned. While man, after the fall, retained all his physical powers of soul and body, and continued still to be a moral and accountable creature, he entirely lost that clothing of moral excellence, which was the beauty and glory of his nature. He was now dead in law, and dead in trespasses and sins; and from being a holy being, became totally depraved; that is, destitute of any principle of true holiness; but capable of unlimited increase in wickedness. That the posterity of Adam “sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression,” is evident from the fact that they have all become mortal, and are subjected to all the temporal evils which fell upon him. They are all excluded from paradise, and are forced to till the earth with the sweat of their brow, which still groans under the curse, and spontaneously brings forth noxious weeds instead of

useful grains and fruits. Woman is still, all over the world, subject to the same pains in parturition, which were threatened to Eve. But more than this, men come into the world destitute of that holiness, or original righteousness, in which Adam was created. By nature all are children of wrath. All go astray from their earliest years. "There is none that doeth good, no not one. There is no fear of God before their eyes, and the way of peace have they not known." This state of corruption is not confined to idolatrous Gentiles, but belongs also to the Jews, who were in external covenant with God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And these streams of iniquity David traces up to the polluted fountain, when he cries out, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." That the universality of death in the human race, is owing to the transgression of Adam, is clearly evinced from the express declarations of Holy Scripture. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death hath passed on all men, because that (or in whom) all have sinned." "As by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners." "By one man's offence, death reigned by one." "Through the offence of one many are dead." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." And the facts, known by universal experience, are in exact accordance with these declarations of the Bible. All men die. And that this is on account of the imputation of Adam's sin, is evident from this, that death reigns over "those who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" that is, over infants who have not been guilty of any actual violation of the law of God.

Whether it was just in God to constitute Adam the representative of all his posterity, and suspend their salvation on his obedience, is not a question for us to discuss. Whatever God does is just, and not only just, but wise; and though darkness may rest on this transaction, this is owing to our ignorance and prejudice. We need not fear that the Judge of all the earth will not be able to vindicate his own dispensations to the whole universe.

Some have thought to evade or lessen the apparent hardship of the case, by denying the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and maintaining that children were only punished for the depraved nature derived from Adam. But how came they to inherit this depraved nature? Is not this the principal part of the curse? And it goes a very little way to relieve the mind which labours, to say that infants are punished for latent depravity, instead of suffering for the sin of Adam.

Instead of cavilling and complaining of the dispensations of the Almighty, by which we have become miserable sinners, let us not cease to bewail the deep corruption of our nature; and let us, instead of perplexing ourselves with fruitless inquiries about the principles of the divine government, by which we have been involved in this ruin, earnestly seek to know what that gracious remedy is, which God has provided for our recovery. The fact is certain, that we are in a depraved and miserable state, and unless we are redeemed from it, we must be forever in a state of degradation and misery. When it is asserted, that man is totally depraved, the meaning is not that he is as wicked as he is capable of being; or, that all men are sinners in an equal degree; but, that all men are by nature destitute of any principle of true holiness; all love the creature supremely, and their carnal hearts are at enmity with God, and not subject unto his law, neither, indeed, can be. It is evident from what has been said, that man is in a sinful, miserable, and helpless condition.

CHAPTER XVII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Covenant of Grace; or, Plan of Redemption

In this treatise, the word “covenant” is used in a wide sense, to correspond with the latitude which belongs to the original terms, of which this is a translation. Without attempting to give a very exact, or logical definition of the phrase “covenant of grace,” I would say, that by it is meant the whole plan of redemption, from its commencement to its consummation; or, that gracious method of bestowing salvation on elect sinners, which is revealed in the holy Scriptures. The fall of man, by which God’s chief work on earth was ruined, was not an unexpected event which took the omniscient God by surprise; nor could it disconcert that scheme which had been originally conceived in the eternal mind. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,” (Acts 15:18.) Although God is not the author of sin, and can never look upon evil but with the strongest disapprobation; yet, having created man a free, accountable creature, and having endowed him with full ability to obey the law under which he was placed, he chose to leave him to the freedom of his own will, without exerting any direct influence on him, either to preserve him in obedience, or to cause him to fall. And, although he knew that man would fall into sin and ruin, yet he purposed to permit this, that is, not to hinder it; because he knew that he could make it the occasion of a more illustrious display of his attributes, especially of his justice and mercy, than could be made under other circumstances.

It is essential to just views of the covenant of grace, to assume it as an undoubted truth, that the condemnation of mankind, under the covenant of works, was just, and that the Ruler of the universe was not under any obligations to devise any plan of recovery for fallen man, any more than for fallen angels; for if it would not have been just to leave men under the curse which they had incurred, then that covenant or law, under which man was placed, was not a righteous constitution; and if it would not have been just to leave the human race in the ruin in which they were involved, then their deliverance would not be a matter of grace, but of justice. A difference of opinion may exist among the orthodox, as to the kind and degree of punishment to which the human race would have been subjected, if the law had been executed fully upon them, but there can be but one opinion respecting the justice of their punishment, by all who entertain correct opinions respecting the character and dispensations of the Governor of the universe. God was not bound to provide a Redeemer; this was a matter of mere grace and favour. The origin of the covenant of grace was the unparalleled, incomprehensible love of God to sinners of the human race. The obstacles in the way of accomplishing the salvation of those whose death was demanded by law and justice, were apparently insuperable. It may be presumed, that if the problem, how God could be just and yet justify the ungodly, had been proposed to a conclave of the brightest angels in heaven, they could not have worked out a satisfactory answer: it would have baffled their utmost intellectual efforts. That God cannot cease to treat his creatures according to the principles of eternal justice is most evident; and that justice required that the sinner should suffer, according to his demerit, is equally evident. Where, then, is there any foundation for hope in regard to those who have once transgressed? And not only the justice, but the truth of God stood in the way of the sinner’s salvation. God had threatened the penalty of death, interminable death; and the Ruler of the universe must maintain the truth of his word, as it respects his threatenings as well as his promises: “God is not a man that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent.” (Numbers 29:13.) But that which could not be discovered by the wisdom of creatures, was devised by the infinite wisdom of God. In the counsels of the adorable Trinity the plan was agreed upon.

Between the Father and the Son, a transaction took place, which may strictly be termed a covenant, for, speaking after the manner of men, there were mutual stipulations entered into between the high contracting parties. The Father, as Legislator and Governor of the universe, appoints the Son to the office of Mediator, and, on certain conditions, gives to him a chosen people, elected from the common mass of fallen man, "according to his own good purpose." The Son willingly accepts the arduous office, and engages to comply with the proposed conditions; and the Holy Spirit consents to perform his part in the execution and consummation of the glorious plan. But, contriving and planning was not all that was requisite; the Mediator, in order to redeem man, must obey and suffer in his place; and this rendered it necessary, that he should descend to earth and be born of a woman, and made under the law. And this stoop of humiliation was not enough; the Son of God must suffer and die, in the room of the creature man. And, in order that he might exhaust the penalty due to man for sin, the Redeemer must not only die, but his death must be of the most bitter and accursed kind. To all this he consented, and covenanted on behalf of his chosen, to meet all the demands of law and justice against them.

If any should ask, what evidence we have of this covenant of redemption, we answer, in the words of the Mediator, "I appoint," or, as the original word imports, "I give by covenant, unto you, a kingdom, as the Father hath given by covenant unto me." Luke 22:29. Again, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John 17:2. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me." (John 17:6.) "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou gavest me." (John 17:9.) "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." And the solemn declaration in the eighty-ninth Psalm, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant," has always, by the church, been referred to the Messiah, to the spiritual David, David's Lord, and David's Son. But why was this salvation confined to a certain favoured number, called the elect of God? This doctrine of the sovereignty of divine grace, has, from the beginning, been offensive to human reason. The selection of men, and not of angels, as the object of redemption, can be borne with; but that, out of the same mass, some should be taken, confessedly no better than others by nature; and that many should be reprobated or left, no worse than those elected, has ever been a stumbling-block to multitudes; and hence, however plainly the doctrine be revealed, they will not receive it; and frequently manifest great hostility to all who maintain and preach it, as did the Jews when our Lord inculcated it by reference to certain facts in the sacred history. But however offensive this doctrine is to human reason, since it is clearly revealed, and often expressed in the word of God, we are not at liberty to relinquish or conceal it. If God might justly have left all men to perish in their sin, certainly he may justly leave a part in that state of ruin into which they have fallen. As all men are by nature children of wrath, the redemption of a part cannot alter or affect the condition of the rest. Because the pardoning power in the State releases certain persons from the penalty of the law, this does not render it unjust to punish others who are under a sentence of condemnation. The justice of God in this case is easily vindicated; but it is not so easy to reconcile this proceeding with his benevolence. If God could as easily have saved all as a part, why did he not manifest his goodness in doing so? To which it may be answered, that we do not know the reasons of the divine conduct, in this matter. He, as an absolute Sovereign, has a right to do as seemeth good with his own. He constantly refers election to his own good pleasure, to the counsel of his own will. He has infinitely good reasons; but as he has not revealed them, we have no right to inquire into them. The manifestation of God's gracious

purpose, in the covenant of grace, began to be made immediately after the fall; first, in the sentence pronounced on the serpent, in which it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, that is, of "the old serpent, which is the devil;" and next by the institution of bloody sacrifices, and accepting the offerings of this kind made in faith, as in the case of Abel; and by various communications to the saints, until the time of Abraham, with whom God entered into a special covenant, and to whom he made many gracious promises, and granted peculiar privileges to his descendants, and separated the chosen race from all the world, and placed the seal of his covenant in their flesh. But when the seed of Jacob had grown to be a great nation in Egypt, where they were held in abject and cruel bondage, God appeared unto Moses at mount Horeb, in the burning bush, and commissioned him to deliver his people, and by a series of wonderful miracles, to conduct them to Canaan, which land four hundred years before he had promised to Abraham. While in the wilderness, at the foot of mount Sinai, God appeared in dreadful majesty to all the people, and uttered his holy law in ten commandments, in the midst of thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet, while the whole mountain burned with fire. The moral law was binding on man by nature, but it had become so much obliterated, that it became necessary to republish it, that the people having the true standard of duty before them, might be convinced of their sins, and driven to seek refuge in the atoning blood, so copiously shed on the Jewish altar.

Besides the moral law, which was not only proclaimed by the voice of God, but engraved by the finger of God on two tables of stone, he gave many ritual laws to be observed, instituted a priesthood, and consecrated the family of Aaron to this service, and directed Moses to erect a tabernacle for worship, exactly according to a pattern showed him on the mount, where he remained in the presence of God forty days, without eating or drinking, at two different times. All these institutions, of a ceremonial kind, were intended to be a shadow of good things to come. This dispensation, administered by sacrifices, by types, and prophecies, continued, without essential change, until it was superseded by the more glorious dispensation of the gospel, introduced after the advent of the Messiah; who being the Mediator of the new covenant, and having answered all the types and fulfilled all the prophecies, brought that dispensation to an end. And the New Testament dispensation, with clearer light, greater liberty, more of the spirit of adoption, and a spiritual worship not confined to any particular place, nor burdened with external forms and rites, it is believed, will continue until the second advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Incarnation

Christ did not come into the world until about four thousand years from the creation had elapsed. By this delay it clearly appeared how deep was the depravity of fallen man, as all nations, the Israelites only excepted, departed from God, and lost the knowledge of his true character. And having apostatized from the worship and service of their Creator, they universally, with the exception already mentioned, addicted themselves to the most abominable idolatries, and to every species of degrading vice. This apostasy was not owing to any defect of external light, for, as Paul teaches, "that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood

by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful; but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." It was proper that the world should have the opportunity of making trial of their own wisdom before the device of infinite wisdom should be manifested. Opportunity had also been thus afforded to prepare the way for the advent of the Mediator, by a system of types and prophecies, which clearly designated his person and offices, and thus furnished indubitable evidence of his being indeed the Christ of God. The time selected for the advent of the Saviour was also suitable, because the world was then full of inhabitants; the human mind had been highly cultivated, and the intellectual faculties had attained their utmost vigour, and all the civilized world were subject to one government; and the Latin and Greek languages were understood through the whole extent of the Roman empire. And although in the previous age civil discord and desolating wars disturbed the empire, all was now reduced to peace under Augustus Cæsar, so that a favourable opportunity was afforded for propagating the gospel among the nations. Besides, the time of Messiah's advent had been fixed in the distinct enunciations of prophecy. Shiloh was to come before the sceptre had entirely departed from Judah, which was now far on the wane. He was to fill the temple of Zerubbabel with his glory, which was soon after this destroyed. And the specified weeks of Daniel, when the Messiah should be cut off, were drawing to a close. The "fulness of time" was therefore come, when "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

It had been predicted by Isaiah, that "a virgin should conceive and bring forth a Son, and that his name should be Emmanuel, God with us." It was also foretold by the same prophet, that "a child should be born, who should be the Mighty God." There was, therefore, a general expectation among the Jews, that the advent of the Messiah was at hand; and this expectation was increased, when John the Baptist began to preach in the wilderness, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah; "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God;" (Isaiah 40:3,) and also the prediction of Malachi, "Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me;" and again, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Malachi 3:1; Malachi 4:5.) The place of the Messiah's birth had been explicitly named by the prophet Micah; so that when the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, and inquired where he was to be born who was King of the Jews, Herod the king called together a convention of all the priests and scribes, to determine this question, which they appear to have agreed upon unanimously, for they immediately answered, "in Bethlehem of Judea," and referred to the prophecy of Micah. The providence of God in bringing about the fulfilment of this prophecy was remarkable, for Mary and her husband resided at Nazareth. But it had been so ordered by an imperial edict, that every person should resort to the town to which his family properly belonged, to be registered, with a view to a general taxation; and thus the mother of our Lord was brought to Bethlehem at the very time when she was to be delivered of the child, conceived in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. And as there was not found room for them in the inn, the Son of God was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. This glorious event for our lost world, was not suffered to take place without suitable notice: for however inattentive the great

men of this world might be to this humble, but miraculous birth, the angels of God had their attention directed to it as the most important event which had ever occurred in our world. One of the heavenly host, probably Gabriel, appeared to a company of shepherds in the vicinity, who were watching their flocks by night, and said, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." And as soon as he had delivered his message, "a multitude of the heavenly host was with the angel, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men."

Until Christ was about thirty years of age, he lived in retirement at Nazareth. When John, his forerunner, had been for some time engaged in his public ministry preaching repentance, and baptizing the people, Jesus came forth, and was baptized in the river Jordan. Having voluntarily placed himself under the law, it was proper that he should comply with not only the moral precepts, but with all the ceremonial institutions then in force. For although he could not attend on these institutions as one who needed forgiveness, or purification, or repentance, yet as he came to take the sinner's place, he obeyed all the laws then obligatory on the people; for in infancy, he was circumcised, when grown up, he attended the Jewish worship at the temple, partook of the passover, joined in the worship of the synagogue, and, as John was commissioned of God to preach and baptize, he submitted to his baptism. John at first forbade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus answered, and said, "Suffer it to be so now;" and assigned as a reason, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." By the incarnation the divine and human natures were mysteriously united. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "God was manifest in the flesh." "He that was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, but took on him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death."

CHAPTER XIX("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Expiatory Sufferings of Christ; or, The Atonement

An atonement is that which expiates sin; which reconciles an offended party; which makes satisfaction for offences committed. The reason why an atonement was necessary, was the inflexible nature of divine justice. This attribute leads the Ruler of the universe to render to every one his due; to treat every one according to his character. The justice of God was manifested in giving to man a righteous law, and annexing a penalty exactly proportioned to the demerit of every transgression. Such a penalty being annexed to the law, it is evident that to execute it is a righteous thing; and when this penalty is incurred by transgression, the Judge of all the earth, acting justly, must inflict it. He cannot deny himself. "He is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent." If the penalty of the law might be set aside in one instance, it might in all, and then government would be at an end. Indeed, no reason can be assigned for a difference; if one sinner is exempted from punishment, the same treatment should be extended to all; for, in the administration of law and justice, there should be uniformity; though that principle does not apply to me dispensation of grace.

How then can any sinner be saved? This is a problem, which we are persuaded no finite intelligence could have solved. But, what created wisdom could not discover, the wisdom of the

Triune God was able to accomplish. The principle of an adequate atonement by a qualified Surety, was the one adopted. But who is sufficient to make the requisite satisfaction to law and justice? for, upon the principles already stated, such a satisfaction was necessary. No mere creature could be the substitute; for, beside, that such an one would owe obedience for himself to the full extent of his powers, the actions and sufferings of a mere creature could not possess that merit which could be accepted, to answer the demands of the law against millions. Neither could any person of the Godhead perform the work of redemption. The Deity can neither suffer nor obey. This mighty difficulty can only be overcome by the constitution of a person, in whom both natures shall be united; that is, by the second person in the glorious Trinity assuming human nature into such intimate union with himself, that the actions and sufferings of this nature shall be the actions and sufferings of the person of the Son of God. That such a substitution was admissible depended on the wisdom and will of God. Among men, there would exist strong reasons against permitting the innocent to die for the guilty; but when we inquire what these reasons are, we find, that not one of them applies to the redemption of Christ. He has a complete right to dispose of himself, and the power to qualify himself for the arduous work; and by admitting the substitution of Christ in the room of his chosen people, no injury is sustained in any quarter; for, though the Redeemer must endure an inconceivable weight of sorrow for a season, for this he will reap a glorious and endless reward. And though the guilty escape, yet the plan provides for their complete reformation; and the mercy of God is illustriously displayed, and placed in a light in which it never could have been, if this plan had not been revealed. And not only is mercy and condescension exhibited in a bright and peculiar light, which gives to all the intelligent creation new discoveries of the divine character; but justice, which would have appeared glorious in the punishment of the guilty in exact proportion to their demerit, yet shines forth with a far brighter lustre in the sufferings of the only begotten Son of God, than in the condign punishment of a world of guilty sinners. Here, then, we see what the nature of an atonement must be. It must remove those obstacles which stood in the way of the sinner's salvation. These arose from the law and justice of God, which demanded the life of the transgressor. The Redeemer, therefore, must make a full satisfaction to law and justice, or the sinner cannot be saved. He must render a meritorious obedience to the law which men had broken, and receive the punishment of their sins in his own person. The sufferings of Christ were, therefore, of a strictly vicarious nature. "He bare our sins in his own body, on the tree." "He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "Our iniquities were laid upon him." No doubt he set us a glorious example of perfect patience and fortitude, in enduring so much pain and ignominy; but example was not the main end of these sufferings, which would place them on the same level with those of other martyrs. And, it is not disputed that the death of Christ is calculated to produce a moral impression on all intelligent minds, but even this was not the direct end of Christ's sufferings, according to the Scriptures; but he died as an expiatory victim, a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, as atonement for all the sins of his chosen, as a ransom to redeem them from their bondage; yea, as a curse, to redeem them that were under the curse. And this view of the atonement is vital to the Christian system. It is plainly the doctrine of the Old as well as the New Testament; and it ever has been the doctrine of every sound part of the Christian church; and it would be easy to show, that the objections to it are either frivolous, or they are such as subvert the gospel of Christ, and bring in another gospel, which exposes the abettors of it to the anathema of Paul. Galatians 1:8.

All the sufferings of Christ should be considered as expiatory, and as constituting the atonement which he undertook to make for his people; and, indeed, his whole state of humiliation, should be considered as belonging to his expiation. When he first felt the pangs incident to infancy, when he went about from day to day, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,"—when reproached, slandered, and reviled—when hungry, thirsty, and weary—when filled with grief at the hardness and perverseness of the people, which drew tears from his eyes—when bathed in his own blood in Gethsemane—when betrayed, bound, dragged to trial—when falsely accused, and condemned—when mocked and reviled—when scourged—when crowned with thorns—when fainting under the cross—when nailed to the tree—when exposed to the profane gaze of the multitude denuded of his garments—when exhausted with pain and thirst—and above all, when forsaken of God—and when he breathed out his soul in death, he was enduring the penalty of the law. And after he was taken from the cross and laid in the sepulchre, though he suffered no positive pain, yet he was still bearing the curse or penalty of the law, which was death. And if it be asked for whom did the Redeemer bear all this, he has given the answer, "I lay down my life for the sheep." He loved his church and gave himself for it. But his atonement, considered in its intrinsic value and suitableness, is infinite, and sufficient in applied, to save the whole world. The sufferings of Christ, being those of a divine person, have an infinite value; it follows, therefore, that although the punishment of the sinner was everlasting, yet Christ could exhaust the penalty of the law in a limited time; that is, his sufferings and death, though limited to a short period, were more than an equivalent for the eternal sufferings of those for whom he laid down his life. And in making this vicarious atonement, it was not at all necessary that the Mediator should be the subject of remorse and despair; for these are not essential to the penalty of the law, but merely incidental, arising from the circumstances and moral character of the sufferer. But it was necessary that our substitute should suffer a painful and accursed death, for this was specifically threatened. Some have supposed that Christ endured something of the torments of the damned after his death, as the creed says, "he descended into hell;" but the word hell here signifies no more than the place of departed spirits, or the grave. Christ's sufferings were finished on the cross; and on that very day his spirit entered into paradise. Luke 23:43. It cannot be reasonably doubted, but that all those for whom Christ offered himself a sacrifice, will eventually be saved.

CHAPTER XX("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

The blessed Redeemer, having been three days in the grave, according to his own oft repeated prediction; that is, a part of three days, which, according to the usual method of computing time, was reckoned for three days, rose from the dead, and during forty days, which he remained upon the earth, appeared a number of times to his disciples, and gave them not only ocular but palpable evidence of the reality of his resurrection. And that there might remain no doubt of his identity, he showed them his hands and his feet, and even condescended to permit them to put their fingers into the print of the nails, and to thrust their hands into the opening made in his side by the soldier's spear, after his death. And, on one occasion, he appeared to above five hundred of his disciples convened in Galilee, on a mountain, where he had promised before his crucifixion to meet them. As the disciples had not understood his predictions respecting his death and resurrection, they were very slow to believe even their own senses. On this account, the risen Saviour took pains to remove every shadow of doubt, and in several instances ate and drank in

their presence, just as before his death. This time was also improved to give the Apostles all needful instructions respecting their ministry, after he should leave them. At the expiration of the forty days, he led his disciples out to mount Olivet, where he blessed them, and was parted from them, and carried up to heaven, in the midst of thousands of angels, according to what the Holy Ghost says, in the sixty-eighth Psalm, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive. Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them;" which passage Paul expressly applies to Christ. (Ephesians 4:8-9.)

Until the time of his ascension, as far as appears, Christ's body remained the same as before his death; but as a body of flesh and blood, though free from every stain, is not suited to the heavenly state, it is reasonable to suppose, that Christ's body now underwent such a sudden change, as we are informed will pass on the bodies of the saints who shall be found alive upon earth when Christ shall make his second appearance. Before his ascension, he had flesh and bones, which could be handled and felt; but now he assumed that glorious body in which he appears in heaven, and in which every eye shall behold him when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, with all his holy angels, to judge the world. That Christ appeared, after his resurrection, in the same body which was nailed to the cross, and laid in the sepulchre, is as evident from the sacred Scriptures, as words can make it. Luke gives the following explicit testimony: "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet." And though the fact is not mentioned, we may certainly infer, that Christ's body underwent a change before he entered heaven; for we are assured that "flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and as this is true in regard to believers, it is equally so respecting Christ. Still it is the self same body which is now in heaven at the right hand of God, which suffered on the cross—but glorified.

CHAPTER XXI("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Mediatorial Offices of Christ

The offices of Christ have long been divided into three; the prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal; and this is not an arbitrary distinction, but is founded in the wants of men; for he who undertakes to save sinners must be qualified to deliver them from their ignorance, from their guilt, and from their depravity; and he must have power to protect them from all their enemies, and raise them from death and the grave, and bring them to the possession of eternal life. When Christ was upon earth, most of his time, during his public ministry, was spent in teaching. And in the exercise of this office, "He taught with authority, and not as the scribes." Even in the judgment of his enemies, "never man spake like this man." But, when about to leave the world, he promised to his disciples another teacher, who should remain with them, and lead them into all truth, and who should bring to their remembrance whatever he had said to them. Thus, he now exercises the office of a prophet by his word and Spirit, by which agency all the children of God are taught of him; and through faith in the holy Scriptures, are made wise unto salvation. By the law they obtain the knowledge of sin; by the

gospel they are made acquainted with the only remedy; and by the influence of the Holy Spirit are enabled "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." As Moses prophesied that the Lord should raise up a prophet like unto him; that is, one who should be the author of a new dispensation; so, the same glorious person is predicted in the Psalms, as a priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek; a priest who should have no predecessor nor successor, but should possess in himself an everlasting priesthood; and who, by the sacrifice of himself, should be able to accomplish what the Levitical priests never could. What they performed and exhibited in shadows, he executed in substance. As their sacrifices and oblations were to remove ceremonial guilt and uncleanness, he, by the one offering of himself, obtained eternal redemption for us. And as the high priest, on the great day of atonement, after slaying the sin-offering, both for himself and the people carried the blood into the most holy place, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat; so Christ, the High Priest of our profession, having offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross, has entered into the most holy place, not made with hands, where he appears before God, to present, as it were, the "blood which cleanseth from all sin." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places, made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Hebrews 9:24; Hebrews 10:14.) Two things belong to the office of priesthood: first, oblation, or the offering a sacrifice; secondly, the sprinkling the blood, or the presentment of the oblation before God. This, in Scripture, is called intercession; because, on the ground of having complied with the stipulated conditions in the covenant of redemption, the Mediator has a right to claim the deliverance of those for whom he undertook. This, therefore, is a very necessary part of the mediatorial work. It is the moving cause of all that is done in the application of the purchased redemption. Therefore it is written, "that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And here we see the reason why the true believer never comes again into condemnation, notwithstanding all his sins and infirmities; because he has an Advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation for his sins. As fast as he contracts guilt, his sins are blotted out; or, rather, as he has the righteousness of Christ set down to his account, he cannot come into condemnation. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall Christ, that died, or rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?" The Christian then, in all his trials, under all his burdens, when tempted to despond or despair, should have recourse to the cross, and should look for comfort to the prevalent intercessions of his great High Priest. In the second Psalm it is written, "I will set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." And Jesus Christ was born a king. He was lineally descended from David, to whose family the regal authority was promised for ever. When Pilate interrogated him, whether he was a king, he did not deny it, but admitted and asserted it, saying, "Thou sayest that I am a king. For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." After his resurrection, he declared to his disciples, "all power in heaven, and in earth, is given unto me." And we read, "that angels and principalities are subject to him." He is made "head over all things for his church, which is his body." He is therefore called "the King of kings and Lord of lords." "For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." In the exercise of his regal office, he governs all providential events and revolutions, so as to promote the ultimate glory and triumph of his kingdom. He holds under restraint all those enemies, who would otherwise destroy his sheep. Over these he watches

with a shepherd's care. In the exercise of his regal office he will judge the world in righteousness. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

CHAPTER XXII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Justification

Correct ideas on the subject of a sinner's justification are exceedingly important; because this is a cardinal point in the Christian system. A mistake here will be apt to extend its pernicious influence to every other important doctrine. There is in human nature a strong tendency to build on a false foundation; because man, when created, was placed under a covenant of works; and, by nature, he knows no other way, than "do and live." Human reason and the dictates of conscience, urge men to seek the favour of God by obeying his will. If we were able to render to the law such an obedience as would secure justification, this would still be the right way, and no other need be sought. "If there had been a law," says Paul, "which could have given life, verily righteousness (or justification) should have been by the law." "But what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In most cases we should think it unnecessary and inexpedient to contend about the meaning of a word, when they who used it, explained the sense in which they take it; but, here it is exceedingly important, to ascertain the scriptural meaning of the word justification; for this is the point from which men's opinions are most apt to diverge from the dictates of divine revelation. And if we put a wrong sense on the word, it will be sure to favour the dangerous doctrine of human merit.

We would, therefore, lay it down as a truth, capable of the clearest proof, that justification, as used in Scripture, does not mean any change wrought within us, but a change of our relation or standing under the law. As condemnation does not signify the making a man wicked, but declaring him guilty; so justification, which is the very opposite of condemnation, does not mean the infusion of holiness or justice into the hearts of men; but, it is the sentence of a judge, declaring that the person to whom it appertains, is acquitted from every charge, and stands right in the view of the law. It is then the act of the Judge of the universe, by which it is declared, that all condemnation is removed, and that the sinful man is accepted as righteous in the eye of the law. It is evident, that there can be no justification by any law, unless the person accused can plead a perfect righteousness; for if he has sinned but once, that one sin will prevent his justification as certainly as a thousand. After Adam had committed the first sin, it was impossible he should ever be justified by his own works. And thus the word is used in regard to human laws. If a man is arraigned before any just tribunal, and it is proved that he has committed one felonious act, the judge cannot justify him. And hence it appears evident to reason, and the same thing is repeatedly and emphatically taught in Scripture, "that by the deeds of the law no man can be justified in the sight of God." And the reason simply is, that no man's obedience to the law is perfect. The idea entertained by some, that a sinner's imperfect obedience may be the ground of justification, is, therefore, evidently absurd. And the opinion, that the moral law is changed, and so relaxed as to

be level to the capacity of sinful creatures, is false and unscriptural, and tends to introduce another gospel, entirely subversive of the true system of salvation. Man's sincere obedience, though imperfect, may be an evidence that he is in a justified state, but never can be the ground of the sentence of the Judge. The question then returns, "How can any man be just with God, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?" To which we answer, that a man under the gospel is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; that is, he is justified by the perfect righteousness of Christ, received by faith. This righteousness is imputed to the believing sinner; that is, God treats him as if he himself had wrought it out.

God, the Judge, views the sinner, considered in his own character, as he is, chargeable with innumerable transgressions of his holy law; but, when this ungodly man truly believes and becomes united to Christ, he imputes to him the perfect righteousness of his Surety, who has, in his stead, obeyed the precept and suffered the penalty of the law; and thus rendered a complete satisfaction to both law and justice. He can, therefore, be just, while he justifies the ungodly; for the sentence is not pronounced on the ground of any righteousness which the believing sinner has of his own, but entirely on the ground of the perfect righteousness of the Mediator, which is accepted, as though it had been rendered by himself. And in this transaction there is no erroneous judgment; for the Judge sees every thing as it is, and pardons the sinner and accepts his person, because he is viewed, "not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of the faith of Christ; even the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Some are willing to admit that the forgiveness of sin is on account of the atonement of Christ; but they are strongly opposed to the idea, that Christ's actual obedience to the law should be the ground of the believer's being adjudged to eternal life. But, if this be excluded, then the believer's own obedience must be the ground on which he receives life. But, here again, its imperfection renders it impossible that it should entitle him to any reward, much less to the reward of eternal life. The Scriptures, however, settle this dispute. Paul says, "As by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Christ is, by the prophet, emphatically called, "The Lord our righteousness." This is charged upon the Jews as their fatal mistake, "that they went about to establish a righteousness of their own, and did not submit unto the righteousness of God." And it is then declared, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." As it is said, "that faith is imputed for righteousness," many have adopted the opinion, that the act of faith is graciously accepted, instead of a legal righteousness. But this would be inconsistent with the scope of the apostle, whose main object is to show that justification is entirely gratuitous, on account of Christ's merit; but faith is as much our act and our work, as any thing else; and, if a man is justified by his own faith, then boasting is no more excluded, than when he seeks justification by many good acts. Besides, the Judge of all cannot declare, that the mere act of faith answers all the demands of the law. Therefore, when it is said, that faith is imputed for righteousness, it must relate to the object of faith, even the perfect righteousness of Christ. If a condemned criminal should be pardoned by his prince, on account of the intercession of his own son, when the pardon is offered, the man gladly accepts it. This act of acceptance may be said to save him from death; but, the true ground of his deliverance is the intercession of the prince. In this way, as a mere instrument, faith justifies the sinner, and is imputed for righteousness, because it lays hold of and appropriates the righteousness of God, by which the law of God has been completely satisfied.

Others, considering faith as the root of every Christian virtue, and the spring of all good works, adopt the opinion, that to be justified by faith is the same as to be justified by our whole evangelical obedience, and that the works excluded by Paul, are either ceremonial observances, or “dead works,” not proceeding from faith. To this theory the same objection lies, as has been already urged; namely, that this righteousness is imperfect, and no imperfect righteousness can justify. And another objection, which is fatal to this theory, is, that the sinner is justified completely when he first believes; “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;” “being justified freely by his grace;” “being justified by faith.” But, if evangelical obedience is the ground of justification, no man can be justified in this life, for he will be engaged in working out this righteousness all his life. This consequence being inevitable, a learned commentator maintains, that there is no justification till the day of judgment.

There is nothing more difficult than to bring men off from dependence, in some form, on their own righteousness. Therefore, the advocates of human merit, and justification by works, have seized with avidity upon the words of the apostle James, who declares that “a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” If he used the words “faith” and “justification” in the same sense as that in which they are used by Paul, there would be a flat contradiction between these two apostles. Thus Luther viewed the matter, at first, and, therefore, for a while, rejected the epistle of James. But, when the scope of this apostle is considered, and the whole discourse impartially weighed, it will be found, that in doctrine he and Paul did not disagree, though they employ the terms mentioned in a somewhat different sense. James was engaged in refuting the opinion of certain professors, who held that all that was necessary to justification was a speculative assent to the truth. He shows that such a faith, being dead, could not justify. His doctrine is, that a living, operative faith, is necessary; and, that our faith must be shown by our works; and this is the same thing which Paul taught. Moreover, he uses the word justification, in the passage referred to, not for a sinner’s acceptance with God, at first, but by it he means that which showed his sincerity; those good works which the saints perform justify them in the eyes of men; and this is evident from the example of Abraham, for he asks, Was not Abraham justified by works, when he offered up his son? But the pious act of offering up Isaac, took place many years after God had accepted Abraham, and entered into covenant with him. This act, therefore, could not have been the ground of his justification in the sight of God; but it justified the sincerity of his profession, and showed that he was indeed a true believer. These apostles, therefore, do not differ, but essentially agree in their doctrine. By an impartial consideration of all the schemes of justification which have been devised, there is none which gives due honour to the divine law, except that which represents the righteousness of Christ imputed and received by faith, as the only ground of a sinner’s pardon and acceptance. And, if God could have been just, and could have justified the sinner on any other ground, the whole Mediatorial work of Christ might have been dispensed with. A common objection to this doctrine of gratuitous justification is, that it tends to negligence and licentiousness. This objection is as old as the time of Paul, for he states it distinctly and answers it effectually. “Do we make void the law through faith? nay we establish the law.” “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” The faith which justifies, works by love and purifies the heart, therefore the justified person cannot be negligent of good works. And, if an appeal be made to facts, it will be found that those who maintain this doctrine, are not deficient in obedience, on a comparison with those who hold a different doctrine.

Regeneration and Conversion

The necessity of a change of moral character in man, arises from the fact, that by nature all men are "dead in trespasses and sins," and, therefore, if any of the human race are ever saved, they must be regenerated; for, even if a man could be justified and yet remain under the power of sin, he could not be happy, because sin contains in itself the seeds of misery, and such an one would certainly be incapable of participating in the joys of heaven, which require a holy nature to perceive or relish them. Therefore, our Lord said to Nicodemus, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It is not necessary to be very exact in distinguishing between regeneration and conversion, especially as the Scriptures appear to speak of both together. But, it may not be amiss to remark, that regeneration, which is the communication of spiritual life, is the act of God; conversion, which is a turning from sin to God, is our act, in consequence of the divine influence exerted on our minds. That God is the author of regeneration is evident from Scripture, and from the nature of the case. The same power that caused light to shine out of darkness must shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God. "Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And, as this work in the economy of salvation belongs to the Holy Spirit, it is said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That man cannot regenerate himself is too evident to need a remark. Life, in all cases, is the gift of God. If spiritual life be extinct in man, none but the power of God is adequate to rekindle it. It would be as reasonable to suppose that the human body, when deprived of animal life, could restore itself to activity and animation, as that a soul dead in sin should be able to perform the acts which appertain to spiritual life.

It is said that we are "born again by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," and, that God, of his own will, "begets us again by the word of truth." But the word, in this case, must be considered as an instrument in the hands of the Spirit; it can have no saving efficacy without a divine energy accompanying it. But how is the word a means of regeneration? To this two answers may be given, accordingly as we use the word regeneration in a stricter or wider sense. As the operation of God in the communication of life to the soul is an instantaneous act, there is no place for any instrumentality in producing the effect; and, as the word only produces a saving effect, when the heart is prepared by grace, the word is the means of regeneration only as God has connected the influences of the Spirit with the preaching and reading of the word. But, if we take the new birth in a wider sense, to include not merely the operation of God on the soul, but also the effects produced in the changed views and feelings of the soul, then we can easily understand how the word is a means of giving knowledge to the mind, and of exciting those exercises and affections, in which the spiritual life essentially consists. The word, alone, can never generate a true faith; but, when the Spirit of God has operated on the blind mind, the glorious truths of the gospel begin to appear in their true light, and become the object of a saving faith. So, also, when the beauty of holiness is perceived by means of the word, love is excited; and, when sin is viewed as exhibited in the word of God, as odious and abominable, true repentance is enkindled; and thus of every other exercise of the renewed nature. It may, therefore, be truly said, that in every act of the spiritual life, the word of truth is concerned; it presents the proper object and supplies the

persuasive motive. Indeed, if the mind were in a state free from blindness and corruption, the mere objective presentation of the truth, without any supernatural influences, would bring into exercise all holy acts and affections. In regeneration there is no new faculty created, understanding by the word faculty some constituent power of the soul; for, as by the fall man did not cease to be a moral agent, but retained all the faculties which belonged to him as man; so in regeneration, no new faculty is produced. The loss was not of any physical power, but of the moral excellence in which man was created. The same soul may be in ignorance, or filled with knowledge; actuated by holy desires and affections, or the contrary. The moral character is a kind of clothing of the soul, which may be essentially changed, while the essence of the soul, and its natural faculties, remain unchanged.

Although Almighty power is exerted in the regeneration of a sinner, yet man is only conscious of the effects, as they appear in the exercises of the renewed mind. And as the end accomplished in this change is the partial restoration of the lost image of God, or “knowledge” and “true holiness,” the evidences of regeneration are the same as the evidences of a holy nature. And as spiritual or holy exercises are specifically different from all others, there would be no difficulty in discerning the characteristics of piety in ourselves, were it not for the feebleness of these exercises, and the sad mixture of feelings of an opposite nature. The best way, therefore, to obtain a comfortable assurance that we are regenerated, is, to press on with assiduity and alacrity in the divine life. That which is obscure in itself will not become clear by poring over it ever so long; but, if we emerge from our darkness, and come forth into the light, we shall be able to discern clearly, what was before involved in obscurity. If we would know whether our faith and love and hope are genuine, we must seek to bring these graces into lively exercise, and then we cannot avoid perceiving their true character. But as faith is really the apprehension and reception of offered mercy, it is by directly believing in Christ, or actually rolling our burdens on him, that we experience peace and confidence. Where a good work is begun, it will be carried on. None but they who persevere to the end shall be saved. In concluding this article, we may adopt the language of the beloved disciple, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

CHAPTER XXIV("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Repentance Toward God and Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ

Paul gives “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” as a summary of his preaching, during his two years’ ministry at Ephesus; and, as comprehending the whole counsel of God, and as including whatever was profitable to the people.

Repentance literally signifies a change of mind for the better; but, in our Shorter Catechism, it is defined to be, “A saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience.” And in the same place, faith is defined to be, “A saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him (Jesus Christ) for salvation as he is freely offered in the gospel.” Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the precise meaning of these scriptural terms, all sound Christians will admit, that for popular and practical use, no language could be selected which would more perspicuously and properly convey to the reader a

true notion of these fundamental graces. And, as to the precedence of one before the other, it is a question as impertinent, as whether a whole precedes one of its parts, or is preceded by it. No man can give a sound definition of evangelical repentance which will not include faith. But, if the word repentance be used in a more restricted sense, for godly sorrow for sin and hatred of it, it must be preceded by a true faith, for seeing in a rational mind goes before feeling. There must be a perception of the holiness of the divine law, before the turpitude of sin can be so seen as to occasion hatred of it, and grief on account of it. But, if by faith be meant that cordial reception of Christ, which is mentioned in the words cited from the Catechism, then, certainly, there must be some true sense of sin, before we can appreciate Christ as a Saviour from sin. But, it is altogether wrong to perplex the minds of serious Christians with useless questions of this sort. Let the schoolmen discuss such matters to their heart's content, but let the humble Christian rest in the plain and obvious meaning of the words of Scripture. The effect of divine truth on the heart is produced by general views, and not by nice and metaphysical distinctions.

Both faith and repentance must be proved to be genuine by their fruits. "Faith works by love and purifies the heart." "Faith overcomes the world." James says, "show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Repentance is itself a turning from sin unto God. It is the commencement of a reformation from all sin. John the Baptist, when he inculcated repentance, at the same time called upon the people "to bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Repentance is no atonement for sin; but it is indissolubly connected with the pardon of sin. Therefore it was said, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

CHAPTER XXV("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \ "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Sanctification; or Growth in Grace

In regeneration, spiritual life is communicated; but this incipient principle is in its infancy, when first implanted. The vigour of spiritual life seems to be analogous to natural life, very different in different subjects. But in all it is imperfect, and needs to be assiduously cherished and nurtured, that it may daily gain strength, and gradually rise to maturity. There are various means of divine appointment conducive to this end, in the use of which growth is as certain as in the body when supplied with nutriment. In the former as well as in the latter, there may be seasons of decay, arising from various untoward causes; but, it may be assumed as a fact, that where the principle of piety is really radicated in the soul, there will be growth; the steady tendency will be to a state of maturity. And, although perfection is never attained in this life, yet there is in all true Christians a sincere desire after it, and there may be a constant approximation toward it, as long as they live. And such a state of piety may be attained, as, comparatively, may be termed a state of perfection, and is so termed in Scripture. From what has been said, it will be apparent, that sanctification does not differ specifically from regeneration; the one is the commencement, the other the continuance and increase of the same principle.

Two things are commonly intended by the word sanctification. The first is, the mortification of sin, the last, the increase of the vigour and constancy of the exercises of piety. But, although these may be distinguished, yet there is no need to treat of them separately, because the advancement of the one cannot but be accompanied with progress in the other. Like the two scales of a balance, when one is depressed the other rises. Just so in the divine life in the soul, if pride is humbled, humility is of necessity increased; if the undue love of the creature is mortified, the love of God will

be strengthened; and so of every other grace. Indeed, when we examine the subject accurately, we shall find, that all real mortification of sin is by the exercise of faith, and those holy affections which flow from it. By legal striving, however earnest, or by ascetic discipline, however rigid, very little headway is made against the stream of inherent corruption. It is right, indeed, to keep the body under, lest its blind appetites and impulses should hinder the exercises of religion; and occasional fasting, when free from superstition, does greatly aid the spiritual progress of the true Christian; and this is especially the fact, when he is in conflict with some fleshly lust, or easily besetting sin. A pampered body will ever be an enemy to growth in grace.

It must not be forgotten, that we are as dependent on the Holy Spirit for every holy act and exercise, as for the ability to put forth the first act of faith, when regenerated. We have no strength in ourselves, in consequence of our justification and conversion. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." He is the vine, and believers are the branches. "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, neither can ye except ye abide in me." Yet this does not take away or diminish our motives for exertion; so far from it, that it affords the only encouragement which we have for diligence in the use of means. For though the power is of God, that power is exerted through the means of divine appointment. Therefore, in Scripture, divine aid and human agency are constantly united. When Christians are exhorted "to work out their salvation," the reason assigned is, "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure." Where two opposite principles exist in the same person, there must be a conflict. When the whole current of the affections runs toward the world, there being no opposing principle, no conflict is experienced, except that which arises from the remonstrances of conscience; or from the discordant craving of conflicting desires of a sinful kind. But, in the true believer, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; so that he cannot do the things that he would." And often the spiritual man is made to groan in agony, and to cry out, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Although, in this warfare, the principle of grace is generally victorious, for it is written, "sin shall not have dominion over you;" yet, sometimes, by the power of temptation, and negligence in watchfulness, the man of God is cast down and degraded, and unless raised up by the hand of the Captain of his salvation, he would rise no more. But, as the work of grace was begun without any merit or co-operation of the believer, the same love which at first effectually called him away from his sins and from the world, still pursues him, and will not suffer the enemy ultimately to triumph over him. Satan shall never have the opportunity of boasting that he has accomplished the ruin of one whom God purposed to save, and to save whom Christ died, and who has been effectually called by the Holy Spirit. He may fall, but he shall rise again, for God hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And not unfrequently, the very falls of the children of God are overruled for their more rapid progress in future. Nothing more tends to humble the soul, and destroy self-confidence, than being overtaken by such faults. The means of sanctification may be comprehended under two general heads, the word of God and prayer. The first is the food which is provided for the nourishment of the soul, and by which it lives. Christ himself is indeed the bread of life—the manna that came down from heaven; but it is only in the word, that we can find Christ: there he is revealed—there his dignity and glory are manifested—there we behold his holy life, his miracles, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, ascension, and intercession. The whole object of faith, and love, and hope, is found in the word of God. Therefore, it is by the assiduous study of the word, and meditation on its truths, that we are to expect an increase of faith, and a real growth

in grace. The other principal means of growth is prayer; especially, prayer for the influences of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, as we have seen, there can be no progress; but this sum of blessings is graciously promised in answer to prayer. And these two means are harmonious; for the word is the “sword of the Spirit.” The Spirit operates only by the word. Therefore, though we read that sanctification is of the Spirit, we also read that effectual prayer of Jesus Christ, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.”

Although all the means of sanctification may be comprehended under the word of God and prayer, yet there are many subordinate means, which have a powerful efficacy in giving application and force to these. In this light may be considered the ministry, the reading of good books, attendance on the sacraments, and fasting. There is one means of grace of this class which we are not required to resort to, but which is often employed by our heavenly Father with great effect, in promoting the sanctification of his children; I mean the chastisements of his rod. The benefit of affliction is often celebrated in Scripture; and almost every child of God can, after a few years’ experience, adopt the language of the royal Psalmist, and say, “It was good for me that I was afflicted.” And Paul testifies, that though “no chastisement for the present is joyous but grievous, yet afterwards it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them who are exercised thereby.” Afflictions are often used as the means of recovering the children of God from a state of backsliding; as says David, “Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep thy testimonies.”

Though Christians do not arrive at sinless perfection in this life, yet it is a state to which every humble child of God shall attain at death. Christ will present his whole body before his Father’s throne, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

CHAPTER XXVI("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Good Works; or, Christian Duties

“Truth is in order to goodness;” and the great touchstone of truth, is, its tendency to promote holiness, according to the Saviour’s rule, “By their fruits shall ye know them.”

Good works are such as the law of God requires to be performed by all persons, according to the relations in which they stand, and the positive precepts which he has enjoined, and which are in force at the time. They have been commonly divided into three classes, the duties which we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves; but in strict propriety of speech, all our duties, whoever may be the object, are due to God. He is our Lawgiver, and we are under the moral government of no other.

Though Christ fulfilled the preceptive part of the law in the room of God’s chosen people, yet he did not thereby free them from the obligation of obedience to the moral law. Such a release from moral obligation is inconceivable; for it is impossible that a creature should not be under obligations to love and honour his Creator; but if such exemption from law were possible, it would be no blessing but a curse; for our happiness consists in conformity to the law of God. “In keeping thy commandments, there is a great reward.” As the obligation to obedience cannot be removed, so neither can the requisitions of the law, as some suppose, be lowered. Man must ever be as much bound to love God with the whole heart, as to love him at all. If man had fulfilled the condition of the first covenant, which required perfect obedience during his probation, he would not

have been free from moral obligation to obedience, in consequence of his justification. Angels, who are supposed to be now confirmed in happiness, are as much under obligation to love God as ever. Indeed, as has been hinted, holiness and happiness are inseparable. The Holy Scriptures abound in exhortations to Christians to be diligent, zealous, and persevering in the performance of the respective duties of their stations; in the performance of which, divine aid may be asked, and confidently expected.

Some duties are incumbent on all classes of people; such as the worship of God, doing good to men, and abstaining from every thing which would have a tendency to dishonour Christ, to injure our neighbour, or hinder our own usefulness and improvement. Two things especially are incumbent on all, in relation to their fellow-creatures residing on the earth with them. The first is, the communication of saving knowledge to such as are so unfortunate as to be destitute of this precious treasure. This is a duty of universal obligation, though the means proper to be used by different persons will vary, according to the variety of the circumstances in which they are placed. It is the duty of all Christians to "let their conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers." It is also made their duty to exhort and admonish one another, and that daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All Christians are bound also to teach by example as well as by precept, by exhibiting to the view of all who see them a holy life. "Let," says Paul, "your conversation be such as becometh the gospel." And our blessed Lord in his sermon on the mount, commands: "Let your light so shine, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven." It is evident from the very nature of this duty, which arises from our obligation to love our neighbour as ourselves, that all Christians are bound to send the gospel to those who are destitute of this necessary means of salvation; for, "how can they hear without a preacher, and how can they preach except they be sent?" All, therefore, according to their ability, should contribute toward this object, by supporting missionaries, aiding in the printing and circulation of Bibles and evangelical tracts, and maintaining institutions of learning for the training of ministers. But this duty of diffusing abroad the precious seed of divine truth, devolves especially on those who have been called to the holy ministry, who have been ordained for this very purpose, to publish to every creature the gospel of the grace of God. When a dispensation of the gospel is committed to any one, he will incur a fearful load of guilt if he turn aside to any secular employment. This may be learned from many things left on record by the apostle Paul. He calls God to witness that he was free from the blood of all men at Ephesus, because he had not ceased to declare unto them repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; evidently intimating, that if he had not been thus faithful and diligent, he would have incurred the guilt of their destruction; which is exactly in accordance with what is said respecting the unfaithful watchman in Ezekiel. The duty of preaching, to those who are called and have undertaken the office, is not optional, which is evident from what Paul says, in another place, "Wo is me, if I preach not the gospel."

Others, who have the instruction of youth committed to them, are under peculiar obligations to instil into their opening minds the doctrines of God's holy word. Parents, guardians of orphans, masters of servants or apprentices, and teachers of schools of every kind, are bound by this obligation, from which no human laws can exempt them.

Another duty of universal obligation is, to pray to God for his blessing on all the nations of the earth; and especially on kings and all that are in authority, not only that they may obtain salvation,

but that Christians under a wise and equitable administration of law, “may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.” All are bound to join cordially and fervently in the public prayers of the church, and not to neglect the assembling themselves together, as the manner of some is. We have encouragement also to agree together in smaller associations for prayer; and are assured that Christ will be present in such meetings, and that the concordant prayers there offered, will be graciously answered. And who can doubt, that, as we are commanded “to pray without ceasing,” and “to pray every where, lifting up holy hands.” family prayer is an incumbent duty? But in addition to all these, “we should enter into our closets, and shut the door, and pray to our Father in secret; and our Father who seeth in secret will reward us openly.”

Among the prescribed duties of Christians, there is none which is more solemnly and emphatically inculcated, than a compassionate regard to the poor and afflicted. Indeed, the phrase “good works,” is most commonly employed in Scripture, in relation to this single thing. In this we follow the example of Christ, “who went about doing good,” by preaching the gospel to the poor, and by relieving the distresses of the afflicted. And it is the assiduous performance of this duty which recommends the gospel to the judgment and conscience of men, more than any thing else. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Nothing more is necessary to convince us of the importance of this duty, than the representation given by our Saviour, of the process of the judgment recorded in Matthew 25:1-46, where the destiny of the assembled race of men is made to turn upon the kindness shown to the disciples of Christ. “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” And, in answer to their inquiry, when they had done any of these things to him? he said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” And to the wicked, the neglect of this duty is alone mentioned as the ground of condemnation.

Among the good works which Christians are required to perform, relative duties hold a very conspicuous place. These, indeed, in number, greatly exceed all other Christian duties, and no day passes in which every one has not duties of this kind to perform. But, as the relations of men are very much diversified by their condition in life, and standing in society, these duties are not the same to all persons. One is a parent, another a child; one is a magistrate, another a citizen; one is a pastor, another a member of his flock; one is a master, another a servant; one is a husband, another a wife. Besides these, there are particular professions and occupations in life; or offices in the church and state, all which relations give rise to duties, which are incumbent on all who sustain these various relations. It behoves the Christian to be conscientious and faithful in the discharge of all relative duties. And, as there is a necessity for intercourse and commerce among men, the virtues of justice and veracity should be constantly practised, “doing unto others as we would have them do unto us.” And, in social intercourse, to promote good fellowship, there should be real kindness, respectfulness, candour, and courtesy, assiduously cultivated. The standing rule should be, to do nothing and say nothing which would tend to the injury of our neighbour; but continually to seek to promote his best interests.

Man is utterly unable to perform works of supererogation. When he has done all that is commanded, he must acknowledge himself to be an unprofitable servant; having done no more than it was his duty to do.

CHAPTER XXVII("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \ "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Prayer

Prayer is a duty dictated by reason. If a child is hungry and wants bread, nature impels it to go to its parent for a supply; and the natural affections of parents to their offspring render them prompt to answer such requests. And, even if they intended beforehand to give the necessary food, in proper season; it is nevertheless pleasing to them that the child should feel its dependence, and come and ask for what it needs. And if this is seen by all to be reasonable and becoming in children toward earthly parents, how much more reasonable and becoming that we should feel our dependence for every good thing on our heavenly Father, and should go to him and ask him to grant to us such things as are necessary for our present and eternal welfare. And on this very principle does our Lord urge upon his disciples the duty of praying for the Holy Spirit, in which gift all spiritual blessings are comprehended. His words are, "And I say unto you, ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you, for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Prayer is no more inconsistent with the unchangeable purposes of God, than the use of any other means; for God in forming his purposes had respect to all appropriate means of producing the intended ends, and among these prayer has an important place.

It is a low idea of the efficacy of prayer, to confine it to the good effect which it is adapted to produce on the feelings of the person who offers it. Indeed, if this were believed to be the whole benefit derived from prayer, a great part of the good impression which it makes on the petitioner would be lost. As we obtain the things which we need from earthly parents, by asking; so also, we receive the blessings which we need from our heavenly Father, by praying for them. In how many instances did Moses, by his prayers, avert the judgments of God from the Israelites. The prophet Samuel also, by prayer, obtained a signal victory for the people of Israel over their enemies. But no single instance of the efficacy of prayer, recorded in Scripture, is more remarkable, than that of the prophet Elijah. This case is referred to, by the apostle James, in the following manner. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." In prayer may be properly comprehended all devotional acts of the mind, and the suitable expression of these sentiments in external gestures and words.

Adoration is one of the most suitable and solemn feelings of which a creature is capable, when he comes into the presence of the august majesty of Heaven.

Godly fear, or reverence is another feeling which must be experienced when any just idea is entertained of the Almighty power, terrible majesty, and awful holiness of the Creator. Penitent confession is so appropriate to sinners, in their approaches to God, that no one can have any sense of the divine character and presence, without falling down before him, under a deep impression of entire unworthiness. Even the holiest men, such as Isaiah, Daniel, and the apostle John, were overwhelmed with a feeling of unworthiness, when God manifested himself to them, with something of his majesty and glory.

Praise and thanksgiving are exercises of devotion which must be excited into lively exercise, in every pious mind, by the consideration of the wonderful works and munificent dispensations of our heavenly Father; and especially our praise and thanksgiving are due for redeeming love. This part of our devotional exercises will be continued through eternity. The song begun here, will rise to its noblest strains, when the saints in heaven, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and saved by his power, shall, in one grand chorus, sing, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to Him be glory and dominion, forever and ever, amen."

But, that which is more properly denominated prayer, is petition. We approach the throne of grace to ask for such things as we need—Prayer has therefore, been very correctly defined to be "the offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, for things agreeable to his will." Desire itself is not prayer, but the expression of our desires to God, is the essence of prayer. In this there are several things to be considered. When there is strong desire, there is a feeling of want. Man has nothing for which he is not dependent. He needs many things for the welfare and comfort of his body. These wants are supplied by the beneficent dispensations of divine providence. For these blessings he is permitted to ask: "Give us day by day our daily bread." As to the extent of earthly blessings, he should ask only for what is necessary, and may be for his own good, and the glory of God. When deprived of health or other temporal blessings, he may seek for deliverance and for a restoration of such favours as have been withheld; but as it is good to be afflicted, he should rather pray to have his sufferings sanctified, than removed. But our prayers should be chiefly offered for spiritual blessings, for ourselves and others. Here, we cannot be too importunate. We are taught, indeed, that it is importunity in prayer, which secures the blessing. This includes earnestness and perseverance. We should pray and not faint; be instant in prayer; yea, pray without ceasing. Prayer, to the spiritual life, is like breathing to the life of the body. We cannot live without prayer. Our prayers should not be confined to ourselves and our immediate connexions. These may properly hold a first place in our petitions; but we are bound to pray for rulers, and for all that are in authority, and for all sorts of men, that God would be merciful to them, and show them his salvation.

Prayer should be in the name of Christ. Faith is absolutely necessary in acceptable prayer, and faith always has respect to the Mediator. The humble penitent feels that he is unworthy to approach the throne of God in his own name, for he is defiled with sin. He can only come with liberty and confidence, when he beholds his great High Priest standing between him and the divine Majesty. The prayers of believers are rendered acceptable and efficacious, only through the intercession of Jesus Christ our advocate. This is the precious incense, which is offered with the prayers of all saints. But faith has respect also to the promises of God. On these it firmly relies, believing that what He hath said, he will faithfully perform. The person who prays in faith,

confidently expects to receive whatever God has promised to give, in answer to prayer. Christians should therefore watch for the answer to their petitions. They should be attentive to the providences of God, by which prayer is often answered.

Prayer was never intended to supersede the use of other means; effort should always follow our prayers. The more faithfully we labour, the better reason have we to expect an answer to prayer.

CHAPTER XXVIII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Assurance of Salvation

We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, both of the “assurance of faith,” and the “assurance of hope.” As faith is itself a belief of the truth, the assurance of faith can signify nothing else than a strong faith, an undoubting conviction of the truth. And, as hope is an expectation of future good, which may be more or less strong, as the evidence that the good hoped for shall be ours, the assurance of hope is a full persuasion that in due time we shall realize the blessing which we desire. According to this interpretation, the assurance of hope does not differ from the assurance of salvation. The relation between the assurance of faith and the assurance of hope, is hence manifest. The former is the necessary foundation of the latter. Unless we are fully persuaded that there is a full and suitable salvation in Christ, it is impossible that we should be assured that we shall obtain salvation through Him. But as God promises eternal life to every one who believes in Christ, when we do sincerely believe, and when our faith is strong, it is easy to draw the inference, that the salvation of the gospel is ours. The thing stands thus. God says, “he that believeth shall be saved.” I am conscious that I believe, therefore, I know that I shall be saved. The strength of this conclusion, or the assurance that I shall obtain salvation, depends first on the assurance which I have that there is salvation in Christ for every one that believes. If I receive this declaration with some degree of dubiety, then there being no assurance of faith, of course, there can be no assurance of salvation. But if this truth be received, without any wavering, then there is a solid foundation on which the assurance of hope may rest. In the next place, having believed in the promise of God, I must know certainly that I have believed, and that my faith is genuine. For although I believe ever so certainly in the truth of God's promise of eternal life to him that believeth, yet, if I doubt whether I have believed, or am uncertain whether my faith is of that kind to which the promise is made, I cannot possess assurance of salvation. And there seems to be some ground for a doubt of this kind, as we read of several kinds of faith which were not connected with salvation. And one species of faith which was not saving, is represented as being accompanied with joy and every appearance of being genuine, until being put to the trial, it was found to be deficient.

Again, it ought to be remarked here, that many persons have entertained a strong persuasion that they were the heirs of salvation, and yet their confidence was founded in error or delusion. Therefore, although at first view, it would seem the easiest thing in the world, for a true believer to arrive at assurance of salvation, yet, when we take into view the deceitfulness of the heart, and the power of Satan to transform himself into an angel of light, and also the numerous cases of actual deception which have occurred, we are so far from thinking it easy to arrive at assurance, that we are disposed to believe that an infallible, unwavering assurance, on solid scriptural grounds, can be acquired by no one, without the special witness of the Holy Spirit. Most Christians, at least in our day, do not possess an assurance of salvation which excludes all doubt and fear, as to their

future destiny. They have attained to a comfortable hope, but not to the assurance of hope; except at some favoured moments, when the love of God is shed abroad in their heart, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Then the Spirit witnesses with their spirits, that they are the children of God.

How this witness is given, is a matter concerning which there are different opinions. But as there are spurious joys which may be very extatic, it is safest to believe, that this assurance is commonly given, by bringing into lively exercise, faith, love, and joy; so that there can be no doubt of the existence of these exercises, as there can be none, that they are feelings peculiar to the children of God. The Spirit not only enlightens the mind to discern the beauty of holiness in the word, but to discern also, the image of the truth made on the heart, so that by his illumination, the believer is enabled to look back on his past experience, and to see, that, from time to time, he has exercised true faith, love, &c.; or, that he now actually is in the exercise of these graces. I do not, however, see any reason to doubt that God may sometimes, without any examination or comparison of its exercises with the marks of his word, fill the soul of the believer with a joyful persuasion of his love, and may so pour into it the spirit of adoption, that it shall be enabled, with filial confidence, to cry, Abba, Father. Many testimonies to this purpose might be collected from the experience of saints. But alas! many serious, conscientious persons are always more or less under a cloud of doubt and uncertainty, respecting their spiritual condition. These broken reeds must not be crushed, nor this smoking flax quenched, by any doctrine of ours; for often among these are found the truly contrite and humble spirits with whom Jehovah delights to take up his abode. Where doubting does not arise from any want of confidence in the truth of God's word, but altogether from diffidence of the genuineness of our own faith, it does not partake of the nature of unbelief; for there is so much reason to distrust our own hearts, that this timidity and uncertainty is often rather an evidence of self-knowledge and humility, than of unbelief. Still, such persons are deprived of much comfort, which Christians ought to enjoy. These doubts are very distressing, and do not qualify the person to exhibit the bright side of religion to those around him. No person should be contented to remain under this dark cloud which so obscures his future prospects. Assurance of salvation is attainable by all true believers who assiduously seek it. Let all then strive to obtain this inestimable blessing. The true doctrine of assurance is taught in the Westminster Larger Catechism, and is clearly expressed in the following words, "Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded on the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation."

Again, "Assurance of grace and salvation, not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and after the enjoyment hereof, may have it weakened and intermitted through manifold distempers, sins, temptations and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God, as keeps them from sinking into utter despair." That assurance of salvation is attainable in this life, is very evident from the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, all the saints, of whom any expression of their spiritual state is recorded, appear to have possessed a full sense of their reconciliation and acceptance with God. The only doubt is, whether they owed their assurance to that supernatural

inspiration which they possessed, or to clear revelations to them personally, that they were the adopted and beloved children of God. We know, that in some cases such communications were made to individual saints, as to Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaiah, and Daniel: but the mere possession of miraculous gifts furnished no decisive evidence of the spiritual state of the persons who had received these gifts. We know that Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, prophesied by the inspiration of God; and Judas, the traitor, received the same commission, to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to raise the dead, as the other disciples. Moreover, our Lord assures us, that at the last day, some will make this a plea for admittance into his heavenly kingdom, that, in his name, they had cast out devils, and done many wonderful works; but He will say unto them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you."

Paul's strong assurance seems to have been the effect of that faith which he possessed in common with other Christians. And he felt it to be necessary to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, and to keep his body under, lest after preaching to others, he himself should become a castaway. His assurance of a crown of life at the appearing of Christ, was founded on the consciousness of having fought a good fight and kept the faith. The faith of the apostles was of the same kind with that of Christians at the present time: the only difference was in its strength. And as the apostles had nothing but what they had gratuitously received, there is no reason known to us, why God may not grant as great grace to some persons, in modern times, as was bestowed on the primitive Christians, or even on the apostles. From the view of assurance which has been given above, it may be inferred, that the true reason why so many sincere Christians, in our day, live without assurance, is the feebleness of their faith. They need, therefore, to be exhorted, in the language of the apostle Peter, "Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." The apostle John teaches us how we may obtain this precious grace of assurance. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." "My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him."

Some exercised Christians fail to obtain assurance by mistaking the evidences of true piety; or rather by supposing that the working of inward corruption, of which they are conscious, is inconsistent with a state of grace. A correct knowledge of the marks and evidences of true religion, is of great importance, in order to our obtaining a settled assurance. And some humble Christians possess the blessing without giving it its proper name. The writer recollects a conversation which passed in his presence, between an eminent minister of the gospel, and an old lady who had been converted under the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Davies. This old lady had given indubitable evidence of eminent piety for more than half a century; but she said to the clergyman who was conversing with her, "I have never attained to the faith of assurance—mine is only the faith of reliance." To which the clergyman answered, "if you know you have the faith of reliance, you have the faith of assurance."

Some persons seem to expect assurance in some extraordinary way, by an immediate divine revelation, or by a voice from heaven. But this is enthusiasm. Mr. Flavel makes mention of a young man who most earnestly sought for some extraordinary evidence of his acceptance with God; and as he walked in the fields vainly hoped, that the very stones would speak, that he might know whether he was a child of God. But afterwards, convinced of his error, he sought this blessing in

the way of self-examination, reading the Scriptures and other appointed means, and was not disappointed; for, in the use of instituted means, he attained to a settled and comfortable assurance of his interest in Christ. It may be remarked here, that assurance is not always accompanied with joy. There may be a scriptural conviction, that a work of divine grace has been experienced; and at the same time there may be no high raised affections; nor any very vigorous actings of faith, at the moment. This may be called habitual assurance. But there is in the experience of many, at times, a joyful persuasion of the mercy and favour of God. This is probably what is meant by having "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Such seasons are very precious, but never last long.

It is a sad case, when assurance for a while enjoyed, is through sin or carelessness lost. This is often experienced by backsliders. Assurance can never be enjoyed by those who depart from God, even although the root of the matter be in them. And when a comfortable sense of the divine favour is lost, it is hard to be recovered. Such Christians often walk mourn fully, with their heads bowed down as a bulrush, to the close of life. David after his woful lapse, cries, "Cast me not away from thy presence, nor take thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit."—"Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

Many pious souls, there is reason to believe, are depressed, and their evidences beclouded, by a melancholy temperament. Physical causes necessarily have a powerful effect on the exercises of the mind; and this is felt in religion, as well as in other things

CHAPTER XXIX("tw:///self?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Perseverance of the Saints

This subject is intimately connected with the assurance of salvation. For if true believers may lose their faith, and totally and finally fall away, then, manifestly, there can be no such thing as assurance of salvation. A person may know assuredly that he is a child of God, and at present free from all condemnation; but upon this hypothesis, he cannot possibly be assured that he will continue in this happy state. In the exercise of his own free will, he may depart from God, renounce Christ and become a reprobate. If this doctrine be admitted, that all saints are liable to apostatize, and that there is no such thing promised as the grace of perseverance, then Paul's declarations, in which he expresses the fullest confidence that he should possess a crown of life, must be understood conditionally; provided he should persevere to the end. And in the same manner we must construe those triumphant expressions at the close of the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. "For I am persuaded, that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." According to this theory, we must understand the apostle to mean, that if he continued in the faith, none of these things should be able to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus. But who knows, whether Paul did persevere to the end? Who knows, but that his faith failed in the last extremity? We have no account, in the New Testament, of the circumstances of his death. Indeed, if the standing of believers depends on themselves, it would not be surprising, that any one should be overcome by temptation, and should finally fall from a state of grace. It is possible, then, that all the apostles might have fallen away in the time of persecution; for although Christ promises to go

and prepare a place for them, and that they should sit on thrones in his kingdom, yet all this must be understood on condition they persevered to the end!

Those who maintain, that all true believers will certainly persevere, do not ground their opinion on any ability which any of them have to stand. Left to themselves, they believe, that all of them would be sure to apostatize.

They attribute perseverance in grace, as they do the first conversion of the soul, to the love of God. They believe that the same power which brings the soul from death to life, is able to preserve it in life; and that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, that is, without change of purpose.

Again, as believers are intimately and spiritually united to Christ, so as to be members of his mystical body, and since in virtue of this union, they receive continual supplies of grace and strength as they need these blessings, they are of opinion, that Christ the Head, will never suffer any member actually united to Him, to be severed from his body and to perish for ever.

Surely the Spirit of all grace which dwells in believers, is sufficient to keep up that spiritual life which He has generated in them; and is able to keep them from the danger of apostacy; and if He can do it, he will do it; for whom he loves, he loves to the end.

Those whose names are written in heaven, in the Lamb's Book of Life, before the foundation of the world, will at last reach heaven. The kingdom which the saints shall inherit, was prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Not one link of Paul's glorious chain of salvation can be broken. "Whom He did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, and whom he predestinated, them he also called, and whom he called, he glorified." The apostle Paul was confident that He who had begun a good work in the Philippians would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Can it be believed, that the same love and power which effectually called believers from their death in sin, will not preserve them in a state of spiritual life when it has been commenced? In the days of the apostles there were many apostates; but John, in his first Epistle, clearly teaches, that such had never been sincere Christians. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they no doubt would have continued with us; but they went out that it might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." And the apostle Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, treating of the success of heretics in subverting the faith of some; that is, seducing them to embrace false doctrines; will by no means agree, that these persons who were thus led astray, or their teachers, had ever belonged to the foundation of God, or were among his approved people; for he says, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." But it is said, by the impugnors of this doctrine, that though God will not forsake his people, yet they may forsake Him; that the promises are made to the people of God, but when they cease to be his people, they cut themselves off from the blessings of the covenant of grace, which are all conditional, and made to believers. Now, we admit, that if any should cease to believe, they would be thus cut off; but what we maintain is, that their faith shall never fail. If God has made promises to this effect, then they are safe. Well, we know that Christ by his intercession did keep Peter's faith from utterly failing; for He said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And his intercessions were not only for Peter and the apostles, but for all who should through their word believe on his name. And in Jeremiah 32:40. we find an explicit promise, and solemn covenant, in which God engages to preserve his people from

falling: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good." This seems to be a very full promise, and a covenant in all things well-ordered and sure: but this is not all: He immediately adds, "And I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And this seems to be implied, when He promised, "I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts." In John 10:1-42, our blessed Lord speaks of himself as the good Shepherd. And he gives as the chief characteristic of a good shepherd, that he loves his sheep. And in his own case, his love was so great, that he was willing to lay down his life for the sheep. And he informs us, that those who were truly of the number of his sheep would hear his voice and follow him, while they would not hear the voice of strangers. His attention to the flock as their Shepherd, was so kind and compassionate, that he calls each one by his name and goes before the sheep, and leads them in the right way. From this description it might be inferred, that Christ would not forsake those on whom he had set his love; and that he would not suffer their enemies to carry them off. Those persons who were specially the purchase of his blood and his dying agonies, he would certainly be disposed to save from perdition. There can be no doubt of the desire of the great Shepherd, that these objects of his love, and for whom he had paid a price above all estimation, should not perish. But we are not left to our own inferences on this subject. Our blessed Lord has anticipated our conclusions, by his clear and positive declarations. His gracious words should never be forgotten. "My sheep hear my voice, and they know me, and follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." I do not know how the doctrine of the saints' perseverance could be expressed in stronger language. It must be evident, that if God is able to keep them from perishing, they will be saved. And who will dare to call in question the ability of Christ and his Father, to preserve whom he will, from apostatizing? Surely God is able to cause even the weakest of them to stand. Suppose the contrary; suppose that one of these given by the Father to his only begotten Son to be redeemed, should be overcome by Satan the enemy of God and his people, and should perish eternally. What a triumph to the grand adversary, and what a dishonour to the Redeemer! Shall it ever be said, in the world of wo, 'Here is one of the beloved of God—one specially given to the Son—one purchased with the blood of the Son of God—one raised from the death of sin by the power of his Spirit—one that heard his voice, loved and followed Him,—such an one is eternally lost! The Saviour was not able to preserve this soul from falling under the power of temptation. Satan in this contest gained the victory, and tore away one of Christ's beloved sheep—yea, dismembered his mystical body; for this soul, now damned, was once a member of the body of Christ. Reader, can you believe this? Do not these arguments convince you that such a thing as this never can occur?

Again, does not Christ appear in heaven, as the Advocate of his people? And does not the Father hear him always? And shall not his intercessions be effectual to obtain persevering grace for all those whose cause he pleads? "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." It is the continual intercession of Christ which preserves his disciples from falling away totally and finally. Peter in his self-confidence fell into an enormous and disgraceful sin; and if he had been left to himself, Satan would undoubtedly have overcome him and ruined him. And that Christ intercedes for believers as he does not for others, we learn from that remarkable intercessory prayer, which he offered before he left the world. "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them, which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. While I was in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition." Those who oppose the doctrine which we defend, think that in this last clause, the nerves of the argument drawn from this passage, are cut; and that as Judas was one of those given to Christ by his Father, and he perished, therefore believers may eternally perish. But can any impartial, intelligent Christian believe, that Judas was really included in the number of those given to Christ by the Father, and for whom he prayed? This construction would not only be dishonourable to Christ, but it would destroy the force and consistency of all that Christ uttered in this remarkable prayer. If Christ prayed not for the world, how came he to pray for Judas, who was a thief, and covetous from the time of his being first called to be an apostle? And Christ had perfect knowledge of his hypocrisy. And if he specially prayed for him, as much as for the other disciples, how came it to pass, that this prayer, in his case, was ineffectual? And if his special intercessions may be ineffectual, what solid ground have we to trust in him, and why was it declared that the Father hears him always? But it will be asked, how we get over the difficulty which this clause presents. If the original Greek be construed agreeably to the common usage of the language, there will remain no difficulty. The sentence is elliptical, and the true import undoubtedly is, And none of them is lost: but the son of perdition is lost, who was not of the number given. The very same construction is used, where our Lord says, "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Eliseus, but to none of them was he sent, but unto a widow of Sarepta." The but here excludes the widow of Sarepta, for she was not a widow of Israel, but belonged to the Canaanitish nation. And in the same connexion, "For there were many lepers in Israel, in the days of Eliseus, but to none of them was he sent, but unto Naaman the Syrian." Luke 4:27. Naaman was not one of the lepers of Israel, but a man of a foreign nation, just as Judas was not one whom the Saviour had kept, but was the son of perdition. This text, therefore, properly understood, furnishes no objection whatever, to the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, derived from this intercessory prayer of our Lord. And this prayer alone affords an impregnable foundation for this precious doctrine.

It is hard to believe, that those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, shall utterly and eternally perish. It is, indeed, promised to the saints of the church of Sardis, that their names shall not be blotted out of the book of life; and it is reasonable to think that the same promise is applicable to all true believers. If these names might be blotted out, there would be no great cause of rejoicing that they were written in heaven; but our Lord teaches his disciples to rejoice in this, above all things. (Luke 10:20.)

It is indeed said, "That if any one shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God will take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book." Revelation 22:19. The meaning is not that such a person ever had any part in this book, but that he never should have. It is not said, that the names of such were written in the book of life; but it is declared that it was a privilege of which they should never partake.

There is one view of this subject which I have not seen given by the authors which I have consulted. All accountable creatures are placed, when created, in a state of probation. When this probation is ended, they are confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness, and are never more exposed to any peril of their eternal life. Thus, when a part of the angels fell, the remaining hosts were confirmed, and are therefore called "elect angels." Whether they stood by their own inherent strength, or whether some gratuitous aid was afforded to them, which was not granted to those

who fell, as some suppose, we cannot certainly tell. But all seem to be agreed, that the holy angels are exposed now to no danger of perishing. In the case of mankind, if our federal head and representative had retained his innocence and finished his obedience, even to the end of the time appointed for his trial, it seems to be agreed by most, that there would have been no trial of each individual, but all the race would have been brought into existence in a justified state; not only in a state of innocence, but in a state of confirmed holiness, and liable to no danger of sinning or perishing. Now since the second Adam, the Representative and Surety of his chosen seed, has rendered a complete righteousness to the law, when the same is imputed to his people for their justification, will they not stand at least in as safe a condition, as they would have been in, had their first representative fulfilled the condition of the covenant of works? It appears reasonable to think, that no justified persons ever can fall away: that is, God is engaged to grant them eternal life, and has covenanted to prevent them, by his confirming grace, from falling into sin and ruin.

Adam before he sinned was not in a justified state, though in a state of innocence, because his probation was not yet ended. So also we suppose, that the fallen angels were never in a justified state; they fell also before their probation was finished. We know of no instance of a justified person ever perishing. And as believers are perfectly justified in Christ, they are no longer on probation for life; that is finished, and, therefore, they are included in the bonds of a covenant so well ordered, and so sure, that they can never perish.

Again, the sins of penitent believers are fully and absolutely pardoned; and it is promised that these sins shall be forever buried, and blotted out. But suppose one of these pardoned sinners to fall away from a state of grace, what will be his condition, in regard to the innumerable transgressions already pardoned? Will the guilt of these be laid upon the apostate, or not?

They who maintain the doctrine that true believers may finally fall away and perish, do also hold that God does all he consistently can to preserve them from apostatizing, and sincerely desires to bring them to the possession of eternal life. Now, I would ask, how is this consistent with acknowledged facts? Some Christians, while in the world, are exposed to much greater temptations than others. As God foreknew that certain persons would be unable to resist certain temptations by which they are supposed to be overcome, and caused finally to perish, why were they not by the divine providence preserved from such exposure? But this is not all: some Christians are called away by death soon after their conversion, and their salvation is secured; while others are left to be buffeted or seduced by temptations for many years, by which they are finally overcome, and are lost. Now if these had been taken out of the world at as early a period of their christian pilgrimage as the former, they would also have been saved. Where is the impartiality of which so much is said, in relation to these? This doctrine has been opposed on the principle that the belief of it tends to breed presumption, and to encourage negligence, in working out our salvation.

We do not assert that this doctrine has never been abused by unholy men: but what doctrine may not be thus abused? Certainly none more so, than the love and mercy of God. In answer to this objection, we would observe, that our doctrine is the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness. Just so far as any professor fails in the exercise of faith, and practice of holiness, he loses the evidence that he is a true Christian. According to this view of the subject, he never can persuade himself that he will persevere, unless he is in the exercise of grace, without which he

cannot possess the evidences of being a true believer. Again, fear is not the only, nor the most efficacious motive which urges the Christian to activity and energy in running the gospel race. Hope has more influence on him, than fear; and when his hope of final success arises to assurance, he is animated with the liveliest zeal, and impelled by the strongest motives, to lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before him. And this is consonant with experience in temporal matters. Suppose a man to have in prospect a journey, through a very difficult and dangerous country. If he could be assured, before setting out, that however many obstacles and enemies he should encounter, yet he would certainly reach the end of his journey, and come off triumphantly, how would such assurance encourage his heart, and nerve his body to go on courageously! whereas, if he entertained but small hope of success, discouragement would weaken all his efforts.

It is acknowledged there are some texts of Scripture, which viewed separately, seem to teach that true believers may fall from a state of grace; but the doctrine is so contrary to the great principles of the covenant of grace, that such an interpretation of any text as would favour it, cannot consistently with the analogy of divine truth be admitted. We must compare scripture with scripture, and thus endeavour to ascertain the mind of the Spirit. The apparent testimony of some texts of Scripture in favour of the apostacy of believers, led Augustin to adopt the opinion, that some persons, not of the number of the elect, were really converted; but that such never persevered to the end, but fell from the gracious state to which they had attained. He firmly maintained, however, that none of the elect could perish. Probably this opinion was adopted by Luther and some of his followers. And some few have believed, that though the saints might for a season fall totally away, which they suppose must have been the case with David, Solomon and Peter; yet they are always recovered, and never finally apostatize. It is not necessary to make any remarks on this opinion, as it has been held by few. There are no instances in Scripture of the final fall of real saints. To such professors as will be found at the left hand of the Judge at the last day, it will be said, however great their gifts, or high their privileges, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity i never knew you." How could this be said, if some of them had once been in union with Christ? The texts of Scripture which seem to favour the final apostacy of real Christians, we have not time nor space, to consider in detail. We think, however, that they may all be explained in consistency with the true doctrine, upon one or other of the following principles. First, that the persons spoken of as righteous, or as believers, are described according to the opinion which they entertained of themselves, and the profession which they made; or secondly, that the cases are hypothetical, not declaring that, in fact any should fall away; but stating what would be the consequence if such an event should take place: or thirdly, that the cases described are of those who under the external light of divine revelation, and under the common influences of the Holy Spirit, had advanced far in the doctrinal knowledge of Christianity, and had experienced lively impressions from the truth, without having undergone a radical change of heart. Such a case is described by our Saviour, in the parable of the sower, in regard to such as are represented by the seed which fell on stony ground; such as hear the word with joy, and for a season, give pleasing evidence of piety; but having no root in themselves, in the time of temptation fall away. And to the above cases, we may add that of those, who in apostolic times, received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; for these were not conferred only on real Christians, as we know from the case of Judas, and from the account given by our Lord, of the plea which will be made by some whom he will condemn at the last day. They are represented as saying, "Have we not in thy name cast out

devils, and done many wonderful works?" Combine these two last cases, and you have a satisfactory explanation of the character of those described in the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. In all ages of the church, there are persons, who greatly resemble true saints, not only in outward profession, but who have feelings and exercises which are well devised counterfeits of the genuine piety of the heart. But surely it never can be, that one of those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, and in time effectually called, and united to Christ, so as to become living members of his mystical body; and whose sins he bore on the cross, and to whom he has promised the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and whose names are in the book of life, should be finally lost. The enemy of God and man shall never, in the dark dominions over which he reigns, have it in his power, triumphantly to boast, that he has plucked from the hands of the great Shepherd one of the dear lambs of his flock. No: the elect of God can not be deceived to their ruin. Those whose names are in the book of life shall never be cast into outer darkness. "They shall never perish."

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The Sacraments

Sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace. They are also seals of God's covenant with men; just as in more solemn transactions among men, besides the words in which the substance of the compact, or treaty, or deed of conveyance is contained, it has been customary from the earliest times to have certain signs superadded, to give solemnity to the transaction, and to deepen the impression of the obligations or stipulations into which the parties had entered. And, frequently, such actions were performed as symbolically represented the consequences which would ensue from a violation of the contract, or a neglect of the duty promised. Thus, it was customary, not only in treaties between nations, but in the more important transactions among individuals, to have seals appended to bonds and contracts. So, of joining right hands, and other ceremonies in marriage, and wearing ribands or stars, as a sign of some military order. We learn from Scripture, that it was customary, anciently, in forming solemn covenants, to divide slaughtered animals, and to cause the parties to pass between the dissected parts, by which it would seem, an imprecation was implied, that if either of the contracting parties should prove unfaithful, he would in like manner, be cut to pieces. In accommodation to the nature and customs of men, God has, under every dispensation, appointed certain external rites, which have no signification but in connexion with the covenant to which they are appended. For these signs or symbolical actions, are never found but in connexion with solemn covenants, which they are intended to confirm, or render the ratification more solemn and impressive.

Another frequent use of institutions of this kind is, to serve as memorials of events and transactions, which it was important should not be forgotten. Many such we have in the Old Testament. But as there is a resemblance, readily conceived, between certain objects or actions and certain truths, which is the foundation of figurative language; so this resemblance is the principle, on which particular signs are adopted. Every body, even a child, can see that washing the body, or a part of it, with pure water, fitly represents the moral purification of the soul. And, as truth is gradually received, while some important things are future, it has pleased God to furnish a kind of faint prefiguration of such events, which would serve to give some vague idea of the matter. Thus, by the presentment of an animal of a certain species before the altar, and then by

the offerer confessing his sins over its head before it was slain, and by the sprinkling of blood by the priest, the vicarious atonement for sin was prefigured for ages before the real efficacious sacrifice was offered. And by this ceremony kept up daily before the eyes of the people, they were taught typically, to look for redemption by the shedding of blood, and to obtain pardon by having their sins transferred to another who would bear them away. Under the new dispensation there was less occasion for these ritual services; and, therefore, while the old ceremonial law was abolished, no new sacraments were instituted, except Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

According to the universal testimony of Jewish writers, baptism was practised by the Jews on the admission of proselytes, long before the advent of Jesus Christ. And, though circumcision was restricted to males, the ceremony of baptism was extended also to females, and, like circumcision, was administered to infants. When John, the harbinger of Messiah, was sent of God. he commenced his ministry by preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. The object of his mission was "to prepare the way of the Lord." by arousing the attention of the people, and bringing about a reformation in the nation. His baptism was a national baptism. It was the duty of all the people to repent and submit to this rite, which they generally did. The pharisees and lawyers, however, rejected the counsel of God, not being baptized of John. The disciples of Christ also, by his direction, administered baptism to such as acknowledged him to be the Messiah. But baptism, as a rite of the Christian church, was not in existence until the new dispensation commenced, which was not until after Christ's resurrection. Then a new commission was given to the apostles, "to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." This was properly the institution of Christian baptism; and differed from the rite as formerly administered, in two respects: first, in being in the name of the adorable Trinity, and, secondly, in being made a badge of discipleship in the Christian church, or a formal initiation into the visible church of Christ. "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him; but the children of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized."

CHAPTER XXXI("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Baptism

There has always been a tendency to make too much of these external rites, and to depend unduly upon them, as a ground on which to hope for salvation. Thus, the Jews so exalted the importance of the rite of circumcision, that they seem to have thought that being descended from Abraham, and having this sign in their flesh, insured their salvation: which false confidence Christ and his apostles laboured to overthrow. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the same error should arise in regard to baptism. In the New Testament, baptism is both a duty and a privilege; but no undue importance is given to it, nor any undue efficacy ascribed to it. Paul, indeed, spent little of his time in administering this rite. He avoided it at Corinth where there were divisions and factions, lest any should say that he baptized in his own name. And he says expressly, that Christ sent him "not to baptize but to preach the gospel;" which single declaration is a refutation of the opinion that internal grace, or regeneration, always accompanies baptism; for in that case, baptism was far more important than preaching. For Paul certainly could not convey grace by preaching; but if he could have regenerated all to whom he administered baptism, he should have given himself up entirely to this work. These sacramental institutions are not intended to be the means of conveying

grace to the subjects in some mysterious manner, but they are intended to operate on adults by the word of truth, which accompanies the ordinance.

Some lay a great stress on the mode in which baptism is administered, insisting that a total immersion of the body in water is essential to the right administration. In the ceremonies of a sacrament, some things belong to its essence, because they represent symbolically the truth intended to be impressed on the mind; other things are indifferent, because they are merely incidental, and do not affect the import of the sacrament. If it could be proved that the act of immersion was the thing in the ceremony which is principally significant of the truth intended to be inculcated, it would be essential; but if the mode of applying water has nothing to do with the emblematical signification of the ordinance, it is an indifferent circumstance; as much so as whether baptism be administered in a vessel or in a river; or whether in the Lord's Supper, leavened or unleavened bread be used; or whether we recline or sit upright in partaking of this ordinance. And in regard to indifferent, incidental circumstances, which do not enter into the essence of the sacrament, there is no obligation to follow what all know was the practice of Christ and the apostles; as it is certain that in the first institution of the sacred supper, they reclined on couches, used unleavened bread, and partook of it in the evening, but we do not feel bound to imitate any of these things. The baptism of the children of those who themselves were in covenant with God, though not expressly mentioned in Scripture, is a practice supported by good and sufficient reasons. It cannot be supposed that under the gospel dispensation, the privileges of the offspring of believers are less than under the Jewish. But we know that by God's command, circumcision, the sign of the covenant, was administered to all the males. They were thus brought externally within the bonds of the covenant; and although the external rite of initiation has been changed, there is no intimation given that the children of believers were to be henceforth excluded from the visible church.

Christ was displeased with his disciples for hindering little children to come unto him, "for," said he, "of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he took them in his arms and blessed them."

Household baptism was practised by the apostles, and children form a part of most households.

Infants are depraved and need the washing of regeneration, and are capable of being regenerated; and this renovation baptism does strikingly represent. The practice may be traced up to the earliest period of the church, and was then universal in all parts of the world. It is scarcely credible that so great a change should have become universal, in the church, without being noticed by any writer of ecclesiastical history.

CHAPTER XXXII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \ "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Lord's Supper

When Christ celebrated the passover for the last time with his disciples, at the close of the feast, he instituted another sacrament, bearing a strong analogy to this Jewish festival, to be perpetually observed in his church until he should come again. While they were reclining around the table, he took of the bread which remained and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." As this ordinance was intended to be social, that is, to be celebrated by the church when assembled, Paul

calls it a communion; "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Nothing can be plainer than the nature of the duty enjoined upon the disciples, and intended to be obligatory on all Christians to the end of the world; for the apostle Paul, who was not present at the institution of the eucharist, but received it, as he did the gospel, by immediate revelation, when he recites the words of institution, adds an important clause, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." From which it is evident, that it was intended to be a standing memorial of the death of Christ until his second advent. When Christ says, "this is my body," to suppose that he meant to teach, that the piece of bread which he held in his hand, was literally his material body, is an opinion so monstrous, and involving so many contradictions, that it never could have originated but in a dark and superstitious age. In the first place, it was contradicted by all the senses, for the properties of bread and wine remained after the words were spoken, just the same as before. In all other cases of miracles, the appeal is to the senses: no example can be adduced of men being required to believe any thing contrary to the testimony of their senses. But if the bread which Christ held in his hand was literally his body, he must have had two bodies; and if he partook of the bread, he must have eaten his own body. He says, "This is my body, which is broken for you." "This is my blood, which is shed for you:" if these words are taken literally, then Christ was already slain, and his blood already shed; he was, therefore, crucified before he was nailed to the cross. Moreover, if the bread is transubstantiated every time this sacrament is celebrated, Christ must have as many bodies as there are officiating priests: and while his body is glorified in heaven, it is offered as a sacrifice on earth, in thousands of different places. And while the glorified body in heaven is no longer composed of flesh and blood, the body made out of the bread and wine, is a real body of flesh containing blood, as when he tabernacled among men. And if the thing were possible, what spiritual benefit could be derived, from devouring flesh? From its nature, being material, it could not nourish the spiritual life. And when received into the stomach as food, what becomes of it? is it incorporated, like common food, into our bodies?—But I will not pursue the subject further. Before a man can believe in transubstantiation, he must take leave both of his reason and his senses. The withholding the cup from the laity is an open violation of our Lord's command, and a manifest mutilation of the ordinance; and the pretence for this presumptuous departure from the express command of Christ is both superstitious and impious; for it implies that Christ, in the institution of the cup was wanting in wisdom, or that he was regardless of the danger of having his blood desecrated, by being spilt. As the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the death of Christ, it should be celebrated often, that this great sacrifice, on which our salvation depends, may not be forgotten, but kept in lively remembrance in the Christian church.

If it be inquired, in what sense is Christ present in the eucharist? we answer, spiritually, to those who by faith apprehend and receive him. The idea of a bodily presence in, with, or under the bread and wine, is little less absurd than the doctrine of transubstantiation. Indeed, in some respects, it is even more impossible, for it requires and supposes the ubiquity of Christ's body. The truth then is, that only they who exercise faith in Christ, as exhibited in the eucharist, eat his flesh and drink his blood. A participation of the instituted signs, without faith to discern the Lord's body, is so far from being beneficial, that it involves the guilt of an awful crime; for "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself." He is guilty of the body and blood of the

Lord. "Let a man examine himself, therefore, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup." To make a matter of importance of mere indifferent circumstances in the celebration of the sacraments, has been the cause of useless and hurtful contentions; and to insist on any thing as necessary to a sacrament, which Christ has not expressly enjoined, is a wicked usurpation of his authority, by adding human inventions to divine ordinances. The value of the Lord's Supper is incalculable. It is admirably adapted to our nature. It is simple, and its meaning easily apprehended by the weakest minds. It is strongly significant and impressive. It has been called an epitome of the whole gospel, as the central truths of the system, in which all the rest are implied, are here clearly exhibited. And it ever has been signally blessed to the spiritual edification and comfort of the children of God. They, therefore, who neglect this ordinance, do at the same time, disobey a positive command of Christ, and deprive themselves of one of the richest privileges which can be enjoyed on this side of heaven.

CHAPTER XXXIII("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Lord's Day and Divine Worship

Reason teaches that there is a God, and that He ought to be worshipped. Had man remained in his primeval state of integrity, social worship would have been an incumbent duty. But, from a survey of the constitution of man, it is evident that continual worship, whatever may be the fact in heaven, would not have been required of him while on the earth. The book of nature was spread out before him; and it would have been his duty to read daily those lessons which were taught by the heavens and the earth, the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds. And we know, from express revelation, that it was appointed unto him to keep the garden of Eden, and dress it; and this would have required much attention, and vigorous exertion. It was never intended that man should lead an idle or inactive life. Employment would in innocency have been as necessary to his happiness, as it is now to the human race. He was also constituted lord of the inferior animals; and the exercise of this dominion would of necessity occupy a portion of his time and attention. From a deliberate consideration of the circumstances in which man was placed, it may be legitimately inferred, that in order to perform the primary duty of worshipping his Creator in that manner which was becoming and proper, he must have had some portion of his time appropriated to that service. The worship due to the great Creator requires time for the contemplation of his attributes, as revealed in his glorious works. It requires time, also, to recollect all the manifestations of his wisdom and goodness in the dispensations of his Providence, and to give vocal expression to feelings of gratitude for the benefits received, and the happiness bestowed. No doubt, devotional feelings were habitual in the hearts of our first parents. No doubt, they sent up, more formally, their morning and evening orisons; but more time is needed to draw off the thoughts from visible things, and to concentrate them on the great invisible First Cause—the Giver of existence, and of all its capacities and enjoyments. Short snatches of time are not sufficient to perform this noblest of all duties in a proper manner. A whole day, at certain periods, was needed, so that there might be time for the contemplation of divine things, and for the full and free exercises of devotion. And as man is a social being, and so constituted, that by uniting with others who have the same views and feelings, his own through sympathy are rendered more animating and pleasing, it is evident that it was intended that mankind should worship and praise God in a general and public, as well as in an individual and private capacity. Now, it is too obvious to need proof that social worship requires stated times, known to all the people, on which they may assemble for this divine employment.

What proportion of time should be consecrated to this service, the reason of man, prior to experience, could not have determined. If it had been left free by the law of God, it would have been difficult to agree on the proportion; and if agreed upon, the obligation to set apart the due proportion of time would not have been so binding and sacred, as if the Almighty Creator should designate the day which should be employed in his service. And behold the amazing condescension of God! With some view to this very thing, He was pleased to perform the work of creation in six days, and to rest on the seventh thus setting an example to his creature man; for He not only rested on the seventh day, but sanctified it; that is, set it apart to a holy use—to be employed, not in bodily labour or converse with the world, but in the contemplation of the works and attributes of God, and in holding delightful communion with his Maker. God could have commanded the world into existence, with all its various furniture, and with all its species of living creatures, in a single moment; but for man's sake, He created the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, the light, and the air, and vegetables, and animals, in six successive days, and then ceased to work; not that the Almighty could be weary or need rest; but for the purpose of teaching man that whilst he might lawfully spend six days in worldly employments, he must rest on the seventh day. This day, from the beginning, was a holy day. As the worship of God is the highest duty of man, the first express indication of the divine will in relation to man was, that the seventh part of his time should be sacred to the service of his Creator. The sabbath thus instituted, as the very first provision for man's religious services, was the seventh from the commencement of the work of creation; but as man was made on the sixth day, the sabbath was his first day, after he saw the light, and breathed the air of heaven. This deserves particular notice; for it may have a connexion with the change of the day of rest after the resurrection of Christ. The supposition is—and it is not given for a clearly revealed truth—that the first day of the week, according to human computation, was the day of rest from Adam to Moses; but that then, for some special reason, the day was changed to the seventh. Afterwards, when the Mosaic economy was terminated, at the resurrection of Christ, the original day, appointed at first to be the sabbath, was restored as a matter of course. Let every one exercise his own judgment on this point: it is no article of faith; but merely a probable conjecture.

It is wonderful to find learned commentators trying to prove that no day was sanctified at the beginning; but that Moses mentions it in his history of the creation, by way of prolepsis, or anticipation. But this is an unnatural and forced construction, and invented without any cogent reason; for what absurd consequence follows the obvious meaning of the text? No: the absurdity, as far as there is one, cleaves to this hypothesis: for when the fourth commandment was proclaimed from Sinai, and written by the finger of God on one of the stone tables, the reason given for sanctifying the sabbath day is, that “in six days God made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” If the contemplation of the work of creation was the object of setting apart this day, is it not far more reasonable to suppose that it would be observed from the very commencement of the world, than that this should commence two thousand years afterwards? The omission of any distinct mention of the sabbath during the period between Adam and Moses, furnishes no argument against the plain interpretation of Genesis 2:2-3; for many other things were omitted in the concise history which we have; and institutions which are regularly observed, do not require to be mentioned. Or, if we should suppose that, in the wickedness of antediluvian times, this original appointment was neglected, and not revived until Moses, this will account for its omission in the sacred history.

If, then, the sabbath was given to man while in Paradise, it is surely in force ever since; at least, where divine revelation has been enjoyed. It is also a well-ascertained fact, that in very ancient times, the seventh day was, among the heathen, reckoned sacred. The division of the week into seven days among all ancient nations, can only be accounted for by supposing an original institution of this kind. That the days of the week were named, among the heathen, from the sun, moon, and planets, does by no means furnish a satisfactory account of the division of time into weeks of seven days. The number of persons who knew any thing of the planets was small; and they never could have had influence, from the circumstance that there were seven celestial bodies, to have introduced the division of time into weeks of seven days. The true state of the fact no doubt was, that this division was received by tradition, as a thing of this kind can be handed down through numerous ages, without the aid of written records. And when the nations turned to idolatry, their principal deities were the sun, moon, and planets; to each of which they assigned a residence, and worshipped them on stated days of the week: in consequence of which, they gave the names of their gods to those days on which they were respectively worshipped. When the sabbath is first mentioned by Moses, after the exodus, there is no appearance of its being a new institution; but it is referred to as a day accustomed to be observed; or, at least, as one on which it was not lawful to perform the common labours of the week. The mention of it occurs in the account of the descent of the manna. It is said, "On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much as on other days. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the sabbath; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you, to be kept until the morrow. And Moses said, Eat that to-day, for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord. And so the people rested on the seventh day."—Exodus 16:23. Evidently, this was no part of the ceremonial law, which was not yet given; and no new institution was ever established in this incidental manner. It seems clear, that the reference is to a day of rest, of which the people had some knowledge. The decisive argument for the perpetual obligation of the sabbath is the fourth commandment. The ten commandments, as being of a moral nature, and therefore always binding, were promulgated in a very different manner from the other institutions of Moses. They were first uttered in a voice of thunder, from the midst of the fire on Sinai, and were then inscribed by the finger of God on two tables of hewn stone. Now, it is admitted, that all the other precepts of the Decalogue are moral; and would it not be an unaccountable thing that a ceremonial, temporary commandment should be inserted in the midst of these moral precepts? This is the law which Christ says he came not to destroy, but to fulfil. None of these commandments have been abrogated; and therefore the fourth, as well as the others remains in full force. And it is remarkable that the prophets, in denouncing the sins of the people, always mention the violation of the sabbath in the same catalogue with the transgression of moral precepts.

It may seem to cursory readers of the New Testament, that our Lord abrogated the sabbath, and in his own conduct disregarded it. But this is far from being a correct view of the fact. The Pharisees insisted on such a rigid observation of the day of rest, as to prohibit works of real necessity and mercy. This superstitious and over-scrupulous opinion, our Saviour denounced, and showed, that healing the sick, and satisfying the cravings of hunger, were things lawful to be done on the sabbath. And what renders it certain that this is a correct view of the matter is, that our Lord justifies his conduct by the practice of the saints in ancient times, when the sabbath was in full force by the acknowledgment of all, and by the provisions of the Levitical law itself, which required

the priests to perform double labour on the sabbath. And he, moreover, showed, that the accusation against him, for a violation of the sabbath, was hypocritical; because, the very persons who made it, would pull an ox or sheep out of a pit into which it had fallen, on the sabbath day; and also, because they thought it no violation of the sacredness of the sabbath, to lead an ox or ass to watering, though they objected to the disciples satisfying their hunger on that day. Our Lord was as much opposed to the perversion of the commandment as to disobedience. He had no respect for the superstitious and unduly rigorous opinions and practices of the self-righteous Pharisees. He ought—and exemplified it in his own conduct—that “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” One of his expressions has evidently been misunderstood, by some interpreters. It is where he says, that “the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath.” They have interpreted this to mean, that Christ claimed the right to do those things on the sabbath, which would be unlawful to others on that day. But this cannot be the meaning; for Christ was made under the law, and had bound himself to obey it. He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. A breach of the fourth commandment would have been sin in him, as much as in any other. I take the meaning to be, that as he appointed the sabbath, so he best knew how to interpret his own law.

There is a text in Paul's epistle to the Romans, which has been supposed to teach that it is a matter of indifference whether we observe the sabbath or not.—“One man esteemeth one day above another another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” But evidently, the question here discussed relates to the ceremonial law. It relates not to the sabbath; which, as we have seen, was no part of the ceremonial law, but belonged to the moral code. The ceremonial law was virtually abrogated by the death of Christ; but ah Christians were not yet enlightened to understand their Christian liberty; and such were indulged in their continued observance of these rites. The apostle is treating here of meats and drinks and festival days the binding obligation of which had ceased. But in the epistle to the Colossians, Paul says, “Let no man, therefore, judge you, in meat or drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or the sabbath days.” Here, again, the ceremonial law is obviously the subject of discourse. He is speaking of “meats,” “drinks,” “new moons,” and “sabbath days.” And the word sabbath relates to the numerous sabbaths of the ceremonial law, distinct from the weekly sabbath. Whenever a festival of the law continued eight days, the first and last were always kept as sabbaths. Or the reference might be to the sabbatical year, for the word days is not in the original. But on supposition that the weekly sabbath was intended, the meaning might be that the Jewish sabbath, namely, the seventh day of the week, was no longer obligatory on Christians, since they had, by divine direction, adopted the first day for their day of sacred rest and of holding public assemblies for the worship of God. This leads to the inquiry, what evidence have we that such a change was ever made by divine authority? The uniform practice of Christians, to meet on the first day of the week, from the very time of Christ's resurrection, is strong evidence that this change was introduced by Christ and the apostles. It was suitable, that as the worship of God by his people, would have principally respect to the work of redemption, it should be celebrated on that day on which it was made manifest that this glorious work was completed. Accordingly, Christ having risen from the dead, always met his disciples on this day. And afterwards, the apostles and the churches were accustomed to come together on this day, “to break bread,” that is to celebrate the Lord's supper. And when the apostle wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, it was already established as a custom, not only in the church of Corinth, but in the churches of Macedonia and

Galatia, that their contributions for the poor, should be collected on this day. From the apostolical practice, we rightly infer the divine authority for this change. So generally was the first day of the week observed, in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, and for the celebration of religious worship, that in the times of the apostles, it had obtained the significant denomination of the Lord's Day. That this appellation really was applied to the first day of the week by the apostle John, in the Apocalypse, is evident, because it can, with no appearance of reason, be applied to any other day; and also, because this became a common appellation of that day among Christians in all subsequent ages to this time, as appears by the testimony of Justin Martyr, and others.

It may still seem strange to some that, if the fourth commandment was of perpetual obligation, it should never have been expressly inculcated in the New Testament, nor the violation of this precept be placed in the many catalogues of immoralities found in the writings of the apostles. To remove this difficulty, it may be observed, that without a divine revelation, the heathen could not know what portion of time, or what particular day should be observed. They were bound to appropriate a due proportion of time to the worship of God, but what that proportion should be, reason could not determine. It can scarcely be considered, therefore, that they sinned in not observing the sabbath. Though this is, by the prophets, always charged on the Jews as a great sin, yet they do not denounce the Gentiles on account of their neglect of the sabbath. Yet such strangers as lived in Judea were bound to regard this day.

Again, at the time of our Saviour's advent, the external violation of the sabbath was not common among the Jews; but, on the contrary, their principal teachers—the Scribes and Pharisees—had inculcated a degree of rigour in keeping the sabbath which was contrary to its design, which superstition our Lord condemned, and showed, both by his discourses and his actions, that the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. And in regard to converts to Christianity from among the heathen, they would be so desirous to hear the word, and attend on the ordinances which were administered on this day, that they stood in no need of admonition on this subject. When any, however, began to grow cold, and to decline in their religious zeal, as was the case with many of the Hebrews, to whom Paul wrote, they also began to neglect the public assemblies, which were held on this day, and were admonished, by the apostle, in the following words:—"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."

Unless we had a particular day set apart, by divine authority for the worship of God, this important duty could never be performed in an edifying manner; and public worship would, for the most part, fall into disuse. And if a certain day should be agreed upon by the church, or by the civil government, it would want that authority and sanctity which are necessary to its general observance. As it is, we find how difficult it is to get men to cease from their earthly cares and pursuits on this day, although it has been almost demonstrated that they are rather losers than gainers, even in a worldly point of view, by the breach of this holy commandment. It was, therefore, wisely placed among the most binding precepts of the moral law.

It is unnecessary to dilate on the manifold blessings which the institution of the sabbath confers on man. This has been done, of late, in the clearest manner, by a reference to facts, derived in part from the experience of worldly men. This chapter shall, therefore, be concluded by a few directions for the observance of the Lord's day.

1. Let the whole day be consecrated to the service of God, especially in acts of worship, public and private. This weekly recess from worldly cares and avocations, affords a precious opportunity for the study of God's word, and for the examination of our own hearts. Rise early, and let your first thoughts and aspirations be directed to heaven. Meditate much and profoundly on divine things, and endeavour to acquire a degree of spirituality on this day which will abide with you through the whole week.

2. Consider the Lord's day an honour and delight. Let your heart be elevated in holy joy, and your lips be employed in the high praises of God. This day more resembles heaven, than any other portion of our time; and we should endeavour to imitate the worship of heaven, according to that petition of the Lord's prayer—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Never permit the idea to enter your mind, that the sabbath is a burden. It is a sad case, when professing Christians are weary of this sacred rest, and say, like some of old, "When will the sabbath be gone, that we may sell corn, and set forth wheat?" As you improve this day, so probably will you be prospered all the week.

3. Avoid undue rigour, and Pharisaic scrupulosity, for nothing renders the Lord's day more odious. Still keep in view the great end of its institution; and remember that the sabbath was instituted for the benefit of man, and not to be a galling yoke. The cessation from worldly business and labour is not for its own sake, as if there was any thing morally good in inaction, but we are called off from secular pursuits on this day, that we may have a portion of our time to devote uninterruptedly to the worship of God. Let every thing then be so arranged in your household, beforehand, that there may be no interruption to religious duties, and to attendance on the means of grace. There was undoubtedly a rigour in the law of the sabbath, as given to the Jews, which did not exist before; and which does not apply to Christians. They were forbidden to kindle a fire, or to go out of their place on the sabbath; and for gathering a few sticks, a presumptuous transgressor was stoned to death. These regulations are not now in force. As divine knowledge is the richest acquisition within our reach, and as this knowledge is to be found in the word of God, let us value this day, as affording all persons an opportunity of hearing and reading the word. And as the fourth commandment requires the heads of families to cause the sabbath to be observed by all under their control, or within their gates, it is very important that domestic and culinary arrangements should be so ordered, that servants and domestics should not be deprived of the opportunity of attending on the word and worship of God which this day affords, by being employed in preparing superfluous feasts, as is often the case. The sabbath is more valuable to the poor and unlearned than to others, because it is almost the only leisure which they have, and because means of public instruction are on that day afforded them by the preaching of the gospel. If we possess any measure of the true spirit of devotion, this sacred day will be most welcome to our hearts; and we will rejoice when they say, "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." To such a soul, the opportunity of enjoying spiritual communion with God will be valued above all price, and be esteemed as the richest privilege which creatures can enjoy upon earth.

4. Whilst you conscientiously follow your own sense of duty in the observance of the rest of the sabbath, be not ready to censure all who may differ from you in regard to minute particulars, which are not prescribed or commanded in the word of God. The Jews accused our Lord as a sabbath-breaker, on many occasions, and would have put him to death for a supposed violation of this law, had he not escaped out of their hands. Beware of indulging yourself in any practice which

may have the effect of leading others to disregard the rest and sanctity of the sabbath. Let not your liberty in regard to what you think may be done, be a stumbling-block to cause weaker brethren to offend, or unnecessarily to give them pain, or to lead them to entertain an unfavourable opinion of your piety.

5. As, undoubtedly, the celebration of public worship and gaining divine instruction from the divine oracles, is the main object of the institution of the Christian sabbath, let all be careful to attend on the services of the sanctuary on this day. And let the heart be prepared by previous prayer and meditation for a participation in public worship, and while in the more immediate presence of the Divine Majesty, let all the people fear before him, and with reverence adore and praise his holy name. Let all vanity, and curious gazing, and slothfulness, be banished from the house of God. Let every heart be lifted up on entering the sanctuary, and let the thoughts be carefully restrained from wandering on foolish or worldly objects, and resolutely recalled when they have begun to go astray. Let brotherly love be cherished, when joining with others in the worship of God. The hearts of all the church should be united in worship, as the heart of one man. Thus, will the worship of the sanctuary below, be a preparation for the purer, sublimer worship in the temple above.

CHAPTER XXXIV("tw://[self]?tid=19" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

Death

All the doctrines and duties of religion have relation to a future state. All religion is founded on the supposition that man will live after the death of the body. The importance of any doctrine or religious institution, depends very much on its bearing on the future destinies of men. Religion, therefore, teaches its votaries to be much occupied with the contemplation of the unseen world. It is especially the province of faith to fix the attention of the mind on these awful but invisible realities, and by this means to draw off the too eager affections from the objects of the present world. Of whatever else men may doubt, they cannot be sceptical in regard to death. The evidences of the certainty of this event to all, are so multiplied, and so frequently obtruded on our attention, that all know that it is appointed for them once to die; and yet, notwithstanding this certainty, and the frequent mementos which we have, most men are but slightly impressed with their mortality, until death actually comes near, and eternity, with its awful realities, begins to open before them.

Death is, according to Scripture, "the wages of sin." By sin death entered into the world. The death of the body is a part of the punishment of sin; except in the case of the believer, who is freed from the condemnation of the law; and to whom death, though frightful and painful, is no curse, but rather a blessing. For, by the death of Christ, as his Surety, the penalty of the law, has been exhausted. "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." To them "it is a gain to die." To them, the monster has no sting. To them, death is a deliverance from sin and suffering, and an entrance into perfect holiness and happiness. As soon as the true Christian departs, he is with Christ, and is like him, and beholds his glory. Therefore, Paul in his inventory of the rich possessions of the saints, reckons death as one: "For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or things present, or things to come, or life or death, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

All we know of death is, that it is a separation of the soul from the body; the consequence of which to the latter is, an immediate disorganization and corruption. As it was taken from the dust, so it returns to dust again. But as to the soul, being essentially living and active, it continues its conscious exercises, but in what way, when deprived of its usual organs, we cannot tell. As all our experience has been in connexion with bodily organs, we of course can know nothing of the exercises of mind in a state where no such organs are possessed. All attempts, therefore, to imagine what the condition of the soul in a separate state is, must be vain. But we need not be perplexed or troubled on account of our ignorance of the future state. We may well trust, in this case, as in others, our divine Redeemer and faithful Friend, to arrange all matters for his own glory, and for our benefit. The gracious declaration, that "all things work together for good to them who love God, and are the called according to his purpose," is not only true, in relation to their pilgrimage on earth, but also in regard to their passage through the valley of the shadow of death; so that they need fear no evil, for the great Shepherd has promised to be with them, and to comfort them, with his rod and his staff; "When heart and flesh fail, he will be the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Although little is revealed respecting the mode of existence and enjoyment in a separate state, for the plain reason, that no description could be understood by us; yet we may confidently trust our blessed Redeemer to provide for the guidance and comfort of the soul, when it enters an unknown world. When Lazarus died, angels stood ready to receive and convoy his departing spirit; and we have no reason to think that this favour was peculiar to this saint; but rather that it was recorded in this instance, to teach us, that the same might be expected in every case of the death of a true believer.

CHAPTER XXXV("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Resurrection

Leaving, therefore, the intermediate state between death and judgment, in that obscurity in which revelation has left it, let us proceed, briefly to contemplate those important events connected with our future existence, concerning which the Scriptures speak plainly: I mean the resurrection and judgment. The redemption purchased by the merit and death of Christ, respects the body as well as the soul. The redemption of the body is one of those things for which believers wait in hope. Although the threatening, that unto dust it shall return, will be verified; yet, the body itself shall rise again. Christ is "the resurrection and the life." "For," said Christ to the Jews, "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." "Since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead; for, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus." When it is asserted, that all must die, and be raised again, those must be excepted who shall be alive upon the earth when Christ shall come; for, "behold," says Paul, "I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." As to the difficulties which

reason may suggest in regard to the resurrection of the same body, we need give ourselves no trouble. Let us believe, that “with God all things are possible, and that what he hath promised he is able to perform.” “Why,” says Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, “why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”

CHAPTER XXXVI("tw://[self]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-")

The Judgment

Immediately after the resurrection, comes the judgment of men and devils. The time of this event is called, the “last day,” and the “day of judgment,” (2 Peter 3:7.)

“For he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained.” Acts 17:31. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 1 Corinthians 5:10. “I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom.” 2 Timothy 4:1. “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude 1:6. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. The end of appointing a day of judgment is, that the justice of God may be manifested, in his treatment of his creatures, and that the righteous may be vindicated from all those calumnies which, in this world, were heaped upon them. When the conduct of the wicked shall be disclosed, and all their secret motives and purposes brought to light, it will be manifest to the whole universe, that their condemnation is just, and especially, when it is seen, that punishment is exactly proportioned to the guilt of the offender. But the degree of guilt will not be measured by the enormity of the outward act alone; but the light and privileges enjoyed by some, will give such crimson colour to their crimes, that their punishment will be greater than that of much more atrocious sinners, who lived in ignorance of the truths of God; according to the wo pronounced by our Saviour, against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, when he says, that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for the first two cities, and more tolerable for Sodom than for the last.

Every one must perceive the fitness of appointing Christ to be the Judge, since all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him, and he is made head over all things to his church. As he was arraigned at a human tribunal and unjustly condemned, it is suitable that his enemies should behold him on the throne of his glory. It is on many accounts suitable that they who pierced him should see him coming in the clouds of heaven; and that all those who conspired his death, and who with wicked hands crucified the Prince of life, should be brought to answer for their atrocious crimes at the tribunal of Him whom they maliciously accused, unjustly condemned, and cruelly put to death. Another reason why God manifest in the flesh should be constituted Judge of quick and dead, is, that he can appear visibly in his proper person, which the Father cannot. And as his disciples can only be pronounced acquitted on account of his perfect righteousness, it is altogether suitable that he should be on the judgment-seat to acknowledge them. Their conduct will, also, be exhibited, not as answering the demands of the law, but as evidence of their sincere faith in his name; and also, because the reward bestowed on them will be measured by their good works.

Whether their secret sins will on that day be brought to light, has been disputed; but, as the glory of the Redeemer will be enhanced in proportion to the guilt and misery of the redeemed, there is no solid reason why the sins of believers should be kept secret, especially as many of their sins must be known even to the wicked. Those texts which speak of the sins of God's people as blotted out, as buried in the sea, as covered, &c., do all relate to the pardon of sin; but not to its concealment at the day of judgment.

CHAPTER XXXVII(["tw://\[self\]?tid=19&popup=0" \l "Bible_Truth_CONTENTS-"](#))

Heaven; or, The State of Glorification

Some things are hard to be believed, they are so good and glorious. That such poor, ignorant, imperfect, and unworthy creatures, should ever arrive at a state, in which they shall "know as they are known," and shall be free from all imperfection in their moral exercises, and shall be continually as happy as they are capable of being, is hard for us in our present state distinctly to conceive of; and therefore the glorious realities of another world make, commonly, but a feeble impression on the minds of Christians. Perhaps a more deep and vivid impression of the nearness and glory of the heavenly state would so absorb their minds as to render them unfit to perform the common business of this life. It is, however, exceedingly desirable, that the children of God should think more of the heavenly state, and have a more habitual impression of the felicity and purity of the celestial world, than they commonly possess. In this brief summary, our object shall be, in the simplest manner, to exhibit, without exaggeration or amplification, what is revealed in the sacred Scriptures respecting the condition of the righteous after the judgment is brought to a close. And may the Spirit of God enlighten our blind minds to perceive the reality, felicity, and glory of the heavenly state! The righteous, at the day of judgment, will be openly acknowledged and acquitted; and shall receive from the Judge a gracious welcome into his kingdom and glory; for then shall the King say to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Their minds will, no doubt, be wonderfully enlarged; and it is no extravagant idea, and is altogether consistent with analogy, to suppose, that we have now in our mental constitution, the germ of faculties which have never been developed in this world, because here their exercise was not needed; but which, upon our transition into the celestial world, will be brought into full activity, and will qualify us to participate in the social intercourse, and in the employments of the heavenly state. There, the glorious attributes of God will be clearly exhibited to the understanding. There, the whole current of the affections will be concentrated on Christ, through whom the Father manifests himself. There, every desire, every volition, every thought, will be in conformity with the divine will. Nothing will be wanting to that perfection of sublime and pure enjoyment, of which each individual is capable; for although the happiness of every one will be complete, yet there will be many degrees, as some will have larger capacities than others; as many vessels of different dimensions, cast into the sea, will all be full, yet their contents may be vastly different. As all rational happiness is founded in knowledge of objects suited to satisfy and fill the rational mind, it is reasonable to think, that in heaven there will be a gradual progress in knowledge; and as the object, even the divine attributes, is infinite, this progress may, indeed must, go on progressively through eternity. And hence we can understand why it is that the joys of heaven admit of no alloy from their long continuance, or constant repetition. New and interesting discoveries of celestial objects, will furnish continual novelty and variety to entertain the spiritual taste of the rational mind. The exercise of the social affections will be a source of pure and

unspeakable felicity. There, no envious, narrow, or selfish feelings will exist, to interrupt the sweet communion of kindred spirits. The unity and harmony of spirit in the continual praise of God, will be a source of the most pure and elevated enjoyment, far above what tongue can express or heart conceive. There, indeed, all believers will be melted down, as it were, into one, and will constitute one glorious body, Christ being the Head. The bodies of the saints will be exactly suited to the celestial world, and its delights and employments. These bodies of flesh and blood, created from the dust, will, at the resurrection, be so changed, that they will be fashioned like unto Christ's body, which undoubtedly, is the most glorious visible object in the universe. It would be vain and presumptuous for us to imagine what will be the structure, the organs, and the habiliments of the glorified bodies of the saints. The nearest approximation which we can make to a conception of this matter, will consist merely in removing from our minds all those weaknesses and imperfections which cleave to these earthly bodies. Paul has, with the pen of inspiration, written nothing more sublime, than in his discourse respecting the resurrection of the bodies of the saints: 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Further on, the Apostle adds, "So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." In heaven there is no sickness, no tears, no death, no sin, no weariness, no alloy, no sleep, no fear; but everlasting joy and glory shall crown the heads of the redeemed. And this felicity will not only be uninterrupted, but eternal in its duration; for while the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment the righteous shall go into life eternal.

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Hell; or, The State of Future Misery

The most incomprehensible of all mysteries is, that moral evil should have a place in the universe of an infinitely wise, holy, and powerful God. We could construct a very plausible argument, a priori, to prove from the above premises, that moral evil never could be permitted to exist in the world. But how futile are all reasonings against facts experienced every moment, and by every man. The philosopher who undertook to demonstrate that there could be no such thing as motion, received the right answer, when the person addressed, uttered not a word, but rose up and walked. So we may answer all arguments against the possibility of the existence of evil, by pointing to the prison, the hospital, and the grave. We need not go so far; we need only refer the sophist to his own experience. Now, if moral evil have an existence, it is evident that pain or natural evil must follow it, No conviction of the human mind is clearer or stronger than that crime should be visited by punishment. Every judgment of the moral faculty, every feeling of disapprobation at unprovoked injury, every twinge of remorse, furnishes indubitable proof that moral evil should be visited with punishment. From this law, written on the heart, no man can escape. "The wages of sin is death:" and the very practice of moral evil, involves misery in the very exercise. But some who cannot but admit that moral evil exists, and that as long as it does exist, there must be misery; yet cannot be reconciled to the doctrine of eternal misery, which seems to be clearly taught in the word of God. That any of God's rational creatures should be doomed to a state of everlasting sin and misery, is indeed an appalling idea; from which the benevolent sympathetic mind would gladly shrink; but as far as reason is concerned, the chief difficulty is admitted, when it is conceded, that sin and misery have an actual existence in the world, and have

had from a period near its commencement. For if evil may exist, as it has done, consistently with the Divine attributes, it may exist hereafter—it may exist for ever. When it is argued that sin cannot deserve such a punishment, something is assumed which cannot be known to be true. If sin may exist and be punished for ages, no man can prove that it may not exist for ever, and for ever be the cause of misery. The idea is indeed so painful to our feelings, that unless the will of God had been revealed too clearly to be mistaken, the doctrine of eternal misery would never have been received by any considerable number of persons; but revolting as it is to our sensibilities, it has been from the beginning, the belief of the whole Christian church, with a very few exceptions. We believe this doctrine, simply because we find it plainly written in innumerable passages of Scripture. If there is any art by which this array of testimony can be set aside, then it will be a legitimate inference, that no doctrine is or can be proved from the sacred word.

It is not intended to adduce all the Scripture proofs of this awful doctrine. They may be met with on almost every page of the New Testament. It may not be amiss, however, to cite a few passages, that the reader may have a specimen of the proof texts which may be adduced. There is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, neither in this world nor in the world to come. There was a person, concerning whom our Saviour said, it had been good for him if he had never been born; which can only be true on the supposition, that punishment will be eternal. There were some of whom Christ said, “ye shall die in your sins, and where I am thither ye cannot come.” It is said, that many “shall seek to enter into life and shall not be able.” Besides, we have not the least intimation that the lost can ever be rendered meet for the heavenly state. Certainly, the society and blasphemy of devils, have no tendency to fit the souls of the damned for the pure joys of the celestial world. And, in confirmation of the common doctrine, we have in Scripture every form of expression which could express eternity of misery. The same terms which are employed to teach the eternal existence of God, and the perpetuity of the happiness of the righteous, are also used to teach the endless sufferings of the finally impenitent. And, for aught we know, eternity is an immutable state of existence; and he who is doomed to punishment in another world, must suffer eternally, because the successions of time may have no existence there.

We are not more certainly assured of the perpetuity of future misery, than of the intensity of the torments which must be endured by the wretched creatures who shall be doomed to everlasting banishment from the comfortable presence of God. Whether the fire of hell is a material fire, is an inquiry of no importance. It matters not whether excruciating pain proceeds from a material or immaterial cause. The misery of lost sinners must be inconceivably dreadful, if they should be abandoned to their own feelings of remorse, despair, and the raging of malignant passions, then free from all restraint. This state of misery is spoken of as a place of outer darkness; a lake of fire and brimstone; and a place where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. Let every one who is within the reach of mercy, flee from the coming wrath, and take refuge under the outstretched wings of the divine mercy.

S. The Canon of the Old and New Testaments Ascertained, ...

THE

CANON

of the

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

ASCERTAINED,

or

THE BIBLE COMPLETE

without the

APOCRYPHA AND UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS

a new edition,

Revised for the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

BY ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

Professor in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

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PREFACE

In this edition, the work has been carefully revised by the author, and many additions made to the testimonies adduced in the former editions; and also several important documents not contained in the former editions have been placed in the appendix. Some alterations have also been made in particular passages, but not of sufficient importance to require specification. In the London edition of this work by the Rev. Doctor Morison, some complaint was made of the want of references sufficiently distinct, to the authors from which the testimonies have been taken. In most cases, the works from which they have been derived are mentioned; and in a popular treatise of this kind, which has more the character of a compilation than of a work of original research, it is not deemed important to burden the margin with many notes of reference; which indeed are seldom used when most abundant. The author has freely availed himself of all the information within his reach; but the authors to whom he is especially indebted are, Cosins's Scholastic History of the Canon of the Old Testament—Jones's New Method of Settling the Canon of the New Testament—and Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History—The Isagoge of Buddæus—The Thesaurus Philologicus of Hottinger, and Prideaux's Connection. Dr. Wordsworth's work on the Canon of the Old and New Testaments, and Routh's Reliquiæ have also been consulted. Several valuable works on the Canon have been published in Great Britain, and also in this country, since the first edition of this work; but, though more valuable for the scholar, none of them, in the judgment of the author, are such as to supersede this as a popular treatise, which can be read with advantage by the unlearned as well as the learned. In a Scotch edition of this work, a copy of which the author has seen, there is an important error in giving the author's Christian name in the title page. Instead of Archibald, they have put Alexander; making the first and second name the same. The only reason for mentioning this is, lest some doubt should hereafter arise respecting the genuine authorship of the volume. As the design of this work is to ascertain where the revelation of God is to be found, it is assumed usually that the whole of divine revelation has been committed to writing. But there are many under the Christian name who strenuously maintain, that an important part of the revealed will of God has been handed down through the Church by tradition. It therefore seemed necessary, in order to render the work complete, to examine the claims of tradition; in which the author has departed from the common method of treating this subject. And as the Jews, as well as the Romanists, pretend to have received an Oral Law, handed down from Moses by tradition, a chapter has been devoted to this subject, and another to the traditions of the Church of Rome. As the inspiration of the gospels of Mark and Luke had been called in question by John David Michaelis and others, and the author could find no satisfactory answer to the objections of this learned writer, he felt it to be a duty to endeavour to vindicate these books of the New Testament, and to prove that they have a right to a place in the Canon; where in fact they had always stood. And he has been gratified to learn that his arguments on this subject have received the approbation of learned and pious men. The Rev. Dr. T. H. Horne has inserted the substance of them in his "Introduction to the New Testament," and the Rev. Richard Watson has extracted a part of them and inserted them in his Theological Dictionary.

There never was a time when the friends of the Bible as an inspired volume had a more important duty to perform in its defence, than at the present. The assaults upon the plenary inspiration of the sacred Scriptures are, perhaps, more dangerous, because more plausible and insidious, than

when divine inspiration is openly denied. On this subject the friends of revelation must be firm, and not yield an inch of the ground hitherto occupied by the orthodox. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

If this volume may be in any measure useful in the defence of divine revelation, the author will not regret the labour bestowed upon it. With an humble prayer for its success he commits it to the Christian public.

A. Alexander.

Princeton, N. J., Jan. 1, 1851.

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THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THE TRUE CANON OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Bible includes a large number of separate books, published in different ages, during a space of more than fifteen hundred years. Each of these books when first published formed a volume; or at least, the writings of each author were, in the beginning, distinct; and if they had continued in that separate form, and had been transmitted to us in many volumes instead of one, their authority would not, on this account, have been less, nor their usefulness diminished. Their collection into one volume is merely a matter of convenience; and if any persons choose now to publish these books in a separate form, they cannot with propriety be charged with casting any indignity on the word of God.

Hence it appears that besides general arguments to demonstrate that the Bible contains a divine revelation, there is need of special proofs to evince that each of the books now included in that sacred volume, has a right to the place which it occupies; or does in reality contain a part of that revelation which God has given.

If, therefore, it could be shown (which however it never can) that some particular book, now included in the Bible, is not authentic, the conclusion thence derived would only affect that single production; unless it were recognized as divine by the writers of the other books. The credit of the whole volume would not be destroyed, even if it could be proved that one half the books of which it consists are spurious. Infidels have much more to effect in overthrowing the Bible than they commonly suppose. It is incumbent on them to demonstrate, not only that this or that book is false, but that every one of these productions is destitute of evidence, that it has been derived from the inspiration of God. On the other hand, it is manifest that the advocate of divine revelation is bound to defend the claims of every separate portion of this volume; or to reject from it that part which has no evidence of a divine origin. It is necessary that he should be able to render a good reason why he admits any particular book, to form a part of the inspired volume.

It is true that the antiquity of this collection claims for it a high degree of respect. The transmission of this volume to us, through so many centuries, as Holy Scripture, should teach us to be cautious

how we question what is so venerable for its antiquity. But this only furnishes one presumptive argument in favour of each book. It by no means renders all further investigation unnecessary; much less, impious.

It is easy to conceive that books not written by the inspiration of God, might, by some casualty or mistake, find a place in the sacred volume. In fact, we have a striking example of this very thing, in the Greek and Latin Bibles which are now in use, and held to be sacred by a large majority of those who are denominated Christians. These Bibles, besides the books which have evidence of being truly inspired, contain a number of other books, the claim of which to inspiration cannot be sustained by solid and satisfactory reasons. This inquiry, therefore, is far from being one of mere curiosity: it is in the highest degree practical, and concerns the conscience of every man capable of making the investigation. We agree, in the general, that the Bible is the word of God, and an authoritative rule; but the momentous question immediately presents itself, What belongs to the Bible? Of what books does this sacred volume consist? And it will not answer, to resolve to take it as it has come down to us, without further inquiry; for the Bible has come down to us, in several different forms. The Vulgate Latin Bible, which alone was in use for hundreds of years before the era of the Reformation, and also the Greek version of the Old Testament, contain many books not in the copies of the Hebrew Scriptures. Now, to determine which of these contains the whole of the inspired books given to the Jews before the advent of Christ and no more, requires research and accurate examination. The inquiry, therefore, is not optional, but forces itself upon every conscientious man; for as no one is at liberty to reject from the sacred volume one sentence, much less a whole book, of the revelation of God, so no one has a right to add anything to the word of God; and of consequence, no one may receive as divine what others have, without authority, added to the Holy Scriptures. Every man, therefore, according to his opportunity and capacity, is under a moral obligation to use his best endeavours to ascertain what books do, really, and of right, belong to the Bible. An error here, on either side, is dangerous; for, on the one hand, if we reject a part of divine revelation, we dishonour God, and deprive ourselves of the benefit which might be derived from that portion of divine truth; and on the other hand, we are guilty of an equal offence, and may suffer an equal injury, by adding spurious productions to the Holy Scriptures; for thus we adulterate and poison the fountain of life, and subject our consciences to the authority of mere men.

I think, therefore, that the importance and necessity of this inquiry must be evident to every person of serious reflection. But to some it may appear that this matter has been long ago settled on the firmest principles; and that it can answer no good purpose to agitate questions, which have a tendency to produce doubts and misgivings in the minds of common Christians, rather than a confirmation of their faith. In reply to the first part of this objection, I would say, that it is freely admitted that this subject has been ably and fully discussed long ago, and in almost every age until the present time; and the author aims at nothing more, in this short treatise, than to exhibit to the sincere inquirer, who may not enjoy better means of information, the subject of those discussions and proofs, which ought to be in the possession of every Christian. His object is not to bring forth anything new, but to collect and condense in a narrow space, what has been written by the judicious and the learned, on this important subject. But, that discussion tends to induce doubting is a sentiment unworthy of Christians, who maintain that their religion is founded on the best reasons, and who are commanded "to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in

them.” That faith which is weakened by discussion is mere prejudice, not true faith. They who receive the most important articles of their religion upon trust from human authority, are continually liable to be thrown into doubt; and the only method of obviating this evil is to dig deep and lay our foundation upon a rock. If this objection had any weight, it would discourage all attempts to establish the truth of our holy religion by argument; and would also damp the spirit of free inquiry on every important subject. It is true, however, that the first effect of free discussion may be to shake that easy confidence which most men entertain, that all their opinions are correct: but the beneficial result will be, that instead of a persuasion, having no other foundation than prejudice, it will generate a faith resting on the firm basis of evidence.

There is, undoubtedly, among Christians, too great a disposition to acquiesce, without examination, in the religion of their forefathers. There is too great an aversion to that kind of research, which requires time and labour; so that many who are fully competent to examine the foundation on which their religion rests, never take the pains to enter on the investigation; and it is to be regretted, that many who are much occupied with speculations on abstruse points of theology, waste the energies of their minds on subjects which can yield them no manner of profit, while they neglect entirely, or but superficially attend to, points of fundamental importance. The two great questions most deserving the attention of all men, are: first, whether the Bible and all that it contains is from God: secondly, what are those truths which the Bible was intended to teach us. These two grand inquiries are sufficient to give occupation and vigorous exercise to intellectual faculties of the highest order; and they are not removed entirely out of the reach of plain uneducated Christians. From the fountain of divine truth every one may draw according to his capacity. But these inquiries are neglected, not so much for want of time and capacity, as because we take no pleasure in searching for and contemplating divine truth. Just in proportion as men love the truth and value the Bible, they will take an interest in all inquiries which relate to the authenticity, canonical authority, and correct interpretation of the sacred books. The time will come, I doubt not, when these studies will occupy the minds of thousands, where they now engage the attention of one. The Bible will grow into importance in the estimation of men, just in the same proportion as true religion flourishes. It will not only be the fashion to associate for printing and circulating the Holy Scriptures; but it will become customary for men of the highest literary attainments, as well as others, to study the sacred pages with unceasing assiduity and prayer. And, in proportion as the Bible is understood in its simplicity and momentous import, the mere doctrines of men will disappear; and the dogmas of the schools and the alliance with philosophy being renounced, there will be among sincere inquirers after truth, an increasing tendency to unity of sentiment, as well as unity of spirit. The pride of learning and of intellect being sacrificed, and all distinctions counted but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, a thousand knotty questions, which now cause divisions and gender strifes, will be forgotten; and the wonder of our more enlightened posterity will be, how good men could have wasted their time and their talents in such unprofitable speculations; and, more especially, how they could have permitted themselves to engage in fierce and unbrotherly contentions about matters of little importance.

Then also men will no more neglect and undervalue the Scriptures, on pretence of possessing a brighter light within them, than that which emanates from the divine word. That spurious devotion which affects a superiority to external means and ordinances, will be exchanged for a simple,

sincere reliance on the revealed will of God; and those assemblies from which the sacred volume is now excluded, while the effusions of every heated imagination are deemed revelations of the Spirit, will become, under the influence of divine truth, churches of the living God. In those future days of the prosperity of Zion, the service of the most high God will be considered by men, generally, as the noblest employment; and the best talents and attainments will be consecrated on the altar of God; and the enterprises, and the labours which they now undertake to gratify an avaricious, ambitious, or voluptuous disposition, will be pursued from love to God and man. The merchant will plan, and travel, and traffic, to obtain the means of propagating the gospel in foreign parts, and promoting Christian knowledge at home; yea, the common labourer will cheerfully endure toil and privation, that he may have a mite to cast into the treasury of the Lord.

Now, many consider all that is given to circulate the Bible, and to send missionaries and tracts for the instruction of the ignorant, as so much wasted; but then, all expenditures will be considered as profuse and wasteful, which terminate in mere selfish gratification; and those funds will alone be reckoned useful, which are applied to promote the glory of God and the welfare of men.

These, however, may appear to many as the visions of a heated imagination, which will never be realized; but if the same change in the views and sentiments of men which has been going on for thirty years past, shall continue to advance with the same steady pace, half a century will not have elapsed from the present time, before such a scene will be exhibited to the admiring eyes of believers, as will fully justify the foregoing anticipations. But I have wandered wide of my subject—I will now recall the attention of the reader to the consideration of the exceeding great importance of ascertaining the true Canon of Holy Scripture. This investigation may, indeed, appear dry and unentertaining, but every thing which bears any relation to the great Charter of our privileges and our hopes, ought to be interesting to us. It has been my object, to bring this subject not only more conveniently within the reach of the theological student, but also to a level with the capacity of the common Christian. That this work may in some humble degree subserve the cause of the Bible, is the sincere prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

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EARLY USE AND IMPORT OF THE WORD CANON

The word Canon properly signifies a rule: and it is used in this sense several times in the New Testament, as Galatians 6:16; "As many as walk according to this rule." Php_3:16; "Let us walk by the same rule."* But in these passages there is no reference to the Scriptures as a volume. The word Canon, however, was early used by the Christian Fathers to designate the inspired Scriptures. Irenæus, speaking of the Scriptures, calls them "the Canon of truth." Clement of Alexandria, referring to a quotation of the gospel according to the Egyptians, says, "But they follow anything, rather than the true canonical gospels."

Eusebius says of Origen, "But in the first book of his commentaries on the gospel of Matthew, observing the ecclesiastical Canon, he declares that he knew of four gospels only."

Athanasius, in his Festal Epistle, speaks of three sorts of books; the canonical—such as were allowed to be read—and such as were Apocryphal. By the first he evidently means such as we now call canonical. The Council of Laodicea ordained, “that none but canonical books should be read in the church; that is, the books of the Old and New Testaments.”

Rufin, after enumerating the books of the Old and New Testaments, goes on to mention three classes of books. 1. Such as were included in the Canon. 2. Ecclesiastical, or such as were allowed to be read. 3. Apocryphal, such as were not permitted to be publicly read.* Jerome often speaks of the Canon of Scripture, and mentions books which might be read, but did not belong to the Canon. The third Council of Carthage ordained, “That nothing beside the canonical Scriptures be read in the church, under the name of the divine Scriptures.”

Augustine often makes mention of the canonical Scriptures, and the whole Canon of Scripture, meaning to designate all the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments. “We read of some,” says he, “that they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. What Scriptures, I pray, except the canonical Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets? To them have been since added, the Gospels, the Epistles of the Apostles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelation of John.”

Chrysostom says, “They fall into great absurdities, who will not follow the Canon of the divine Scripture, but trust to their own reasoning.”

Isidore of Pelusium observes, “That these things are so, we shall perceive, if we attend to the Canon of truth—the divine Scriptures.” And Leontius of Constantinople, having cited the whole catalogue of the books of sacred Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, concludes, “These are the ancient and the new books, which are received in the church as canonical.”

Eusebius informs us that Origen, in his Exposition on Matthew, “enumerates the books of Scripture according to the Canon of the Church.”*

Epiphanius, speaking of certain heretics, says, “They received the apocryphal Acts of Andrew and Thomas, rejecting the Canon received by the Church.”

Philastrus speaks of the distinction of Canonical and Apocryphal as well known in his time. From the authorities cited above, it will evidently appear, that at an early period the sacred Scriptures were carefully distinguished from all other writings, and formed a rule, which all Christians considered to be authoritative: and that this collection of sacred writings received the name of Canon. The division of the sacred books which is most ancient and universal, is, into the Old Testament, and the New Testament. The apostle Paul himself lays a foundation for this distinction; for, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 3:14, he uses the phrases Old Testament and New Testament; and in one instance, designates the Scriptures of the Law, by the former title: “For until this day,” says he, “remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament.”

It is our object, in this work, to inquire into the Canon, both of the Old and New Testament, and to discuss all the principal questions connected with this subject.

SECTION II("tw:///self?tid=18&popup=0" \ "Canon_Contents-")

CONSTITUTION OF THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BY EZRA—THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AS IT NOW EXISTS, SANCTIONED BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES—CATALOGUES OF THE BOOKS BY SOME OF THE EARLY FATHERS—AGREEMENT OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS ON THIS SUBJECT

The five books of Moses were, when finished, carefully deposited by the side of the ark of the Covenant, Deuteronomy 31:24-26. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." No doubt, copies of the sacred volume were made out, before it was deposited in the most holy place; for as it was there inaccessible to any but the priests, the people generally must have remained ignorant, had there been no copies of the law. But we know that copies were written, for it was one of the laws respecting the duty of a king, when such an officer should be appointed, that he should write out a copy of the law with his own hand. Deuteronomy 17:18-20, "And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein, all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel." It is related by Josephus, that by the direction of Moses, a copy of the law was prepared for each of the tribes of Israel.

It seems that the book of Joshua was annexed to the volume of the Pentateuch; for we read that "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God." See Joshua 1:8; Joshua 24:26. And the matters contained in this book were of public concern to the nation, as well as those recorded in the law. For, as in the latter were written statutes and ordinances, to direct them in all matters sacred and civil; so in the former was recorded the division of the land among the tribes. The possession of each tribe was here accurately defined, so that this book served as a national deed of conveyance. When other books were added to the Canon, no doubt, the inspired men who were moved by the Holy Spirit to write them, would be careful to deposit copies in the sanctuary, and to have other copies put into circulation. But on this subject we have no precise information. We know not with what degree of care the sacred books were guarded, or to what extent copies were multiplied. A single fact shows that the sacred autograph of Moses had well nigh perished, in the idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon, but was found, during the reign of the pious Josiah, among the rubbish of the temple. It cannot, however, be reasonably supposed, that there were no other copies of the law scattered through the nation. It does indeed seem that the young king had never seen the book, and was ignorant of its contents, until it was now read to him; but while the autograph of Moses had been misplaced, and buried among the ruins, many pious men might have possessed private copies. And although at the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, this precious volume was, in all probability, destroyed with the ark and all the holy apparatus of the sanctuary; yet we are not to credit the Jewish tradition, too readily received by the Christian Fathers, that, on this occasion, all the copies of the Scriptures were lost, and that Ezra restored the whole by a miracle. This is a mere Jewish fable, depending on no higher authority than a passage in the fourth book of Esdras, and is utterly inconsistent with facts

recorded in the sacred volume. We know that Daniel had a copy of the Scriptures, for he quotes them, and makes express mention of the prophecies of Jeremiah. And Ezra is called “a ready scribe in the law;” and it is said, in the sixth chapter of Ezra, that when the temple was finished, the functions of the priests and Levites were regulated, “as it is written in the book of Moses.” And this was many years before Ezra came to Jerusalem. And in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, it is said that Ezra, at the request of the people, “brought the law before the congregation, and he read therein from the morning until mid-day. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people.” It is evident, therefore, that all the copies of the Scriptures were not lost during the captivity. This story, no doubt, originated from two facts: the first, that the autographs in the temple, had been destroyed with that sacred edifice; and the second, that Ezra took great pains to have correct copies of the Scriptures prepared and circulated.

It seems to be agreed by all, that the forming of the present Canon of the Old Testament should be attributed to Ezra. To assist him in this work, the Jewish writers inform us, that there existed in his time a great synagogue, consisting of one hundred and twenty men, including Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; the prophets Haggai and Zechariah; and also Simon the Just. But it is very absurd to suppose that all these lived at one time, and formed one synagogue, as they are pleased to represent it: for, from the time of Daniel to that of Simon the Just, no less than two hundred and fifty years intervened.

It is, however, not improbable that Ezra was assisted in this great work, by many learned and pious men, who were cotemporary with him; and as prophets had always been the superintendents, as well as writers of the sacred volume, it is likely that the inspired men who lived at the same time as Ezra, would give attention to this work. But in regard to this great synagogue, the only thing probable is, that the men who are said to have belonged to it, did not live in one age, but successively, until the time of Simon the Just, who was made high priest about twenty-five years after the death of Alexander the Great. This opinion has its probability increased, by the consideration that the Canon of the Old Testament appears not to have been fully completed, until about the time of Simon the Just. Malachi seems to have lived after the time of Ezra, and therefore his prophecy could not have been added to the Canon by this eminent scribe; unless we adopt the opinion of the Jews, who will have Malachi to be no other than Ezra himself; maintaining, that while Ezra was his proper name, he received that of Malachi, from the circumstance of his having been sent to superintend the religious concerns of the Jews; for the import of that name is, a messenger, or one sent. But this is not all—in the book of Nehemiah,* mention is made of the high priest Jaddua, and of Darius Codomannus, king of Persia, both of whom lived at least a hundred years after the time of Ezra. In the third chapter of the first book of Chronicles, the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel is carried down, at least to the time of Alexander the Great. This book, therefore, could not have been put into the Canon by Ezra; nor much earlier than the time of Simon the Just. The book of Esther, also, was probably added during this interval. The probable conclusion, therefore, is that Ezra began this work, and collected and arranged all the sacred books which belonged to the Canon before his time, and that a succession of pious and learned men continued to pay attention to the Canon, until the whole was completed, about the time of Simon the Just. After which, nothing was added to the Canon of the Old Testament.

Most, however, are of opinion that nothing was added after the book of Malachi was written, except a few names and notes; and that all the books belonging to the Canon of the Old

Testament, were collected and inserted in the sacred volume by Ezra himself. And this opinion seems to be the safest, and is not incredible in itself. It accords also with the uniform tradition of the Jews, that Ezra completed the Canon of the Old Testament; and that after Malachi there arose no prophet who added anything to the sacred volume.*

Whether the books were now collected into a single volume, or were bound up in several codices, is a question of no importance. If we can ascertain what books were received as canonical, it matters not in what form they were preserved. It seems probable, however, that the sacred books were at this time distributed into three volumes, the Law; the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. This division, we know to be as ancient as the time of our Saviour, for he says, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:44. Josephus also makes mention of this division, and it is by the Jews, with one consent, referred to Ezra, as its author. In establishing the Canon of the Old Testament, we might labour under considerable uncertainty and embarrassment, in regard to several books were it not that the whole of what were called "the Scriptures," and which were included in the threefold division mentioned above, received the explicit sanction of our Lord. He was not backward to reprove the Jews for disobeying, misinterpreting, and adding their traditions to the Scriptures, but he never drops a hint that they had been unfaithful or careless in the preservation of the sacred books. This argument for the integrity of the books of the Old Testament was used by Origen, as we are informed by Jerome, who says: "Si aliquis dixerit Hebræos libros, a Judæis esse falsatos, audiat Origenem: Quod nunquam Dominus et Apostoli, qui cætera crimina in Scribis, de hoc crimine quod est maximum, reticissent." In Esai. cvi, tom. iii. p. 63. So far from this, he refers to the Scriptures as an infallible rule, which "must be fulfilled," Mark 14:49, and "could not be broken." John 10:35. "Search the Scriptures," John 5:39, said he, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The errors of the Sadducees are attributed to an ignorance of the Scriptures: and they are never mentioned but with the highest respect, and as the unerring word of God. The apostle Paul, also, referring principally, if not wholly, to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, says, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3:15-16. They are also called by this apostle, "the oracles of God;" "the lively oracles," "the word of God;" and when quotations are made from David, it is represented as "the Holy Ghost speaking by the mouth of David." Acts 1:16; Acts 4:25. The testimony of Peter is not less explicit, for he says, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21. And the apostle James speaks of the Scriptures with equal confidence and respect: "And receive with meekness," says he, "the ingrafted word which is able to save your souls." James 1:21-23. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith," &c. "Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain?" James 4:5, &c.

We have, therefore, an important point established with the utmost certainty, that the volume of Scripture which existed in the time of Christ and his apostles was uncorrupted, and was esteemed by them an infallible rule. Now, if we can ascertain what books were then included in the Sacred Volume, we shall be able to settle the Canon of the Old Testament without uncertainty. But here lies the difficulty. Neither Christ nor any of his apostles has given us a catalogue of the books which composed the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They have distinctly quoted a number of

these books, and, so far, the evidence is complete. We know that the law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms were included in their Canon. But this does not ascertain, particularly, whether the very same books which we now find in the Old Testament were then found in it and no others. It is necessary then, to resort to other sources of information. And, happily, the Jewish historian Josephus furnishes us with the very information which we want; not, indeed, as explicitly as we could wish, but sufficiently so to lead us to a very satisfactory conclusion. He does not name the books of the Old Testament, but he numbers them, and so describes them that there is scarcely room for any mistake. The important passage to which we refer is in his first book against Apion. "We have," says he, "only two-and-twenty books, which are justly believed to be of divine authority—of which five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the Prophets, who were the successors of Moses, have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the regulation of human life." Now, the five books of Moses are universally agreed to be Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The thirteen books written by the prophets will include Joshua, Judges, with Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah with Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve minor Prophets, Job, Ezra, Esther, and Chronicles. The four remaining books will be, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, which make the whole number twenty-two. The Canon then existing is proved to be the same as that which we now possess. It would appear, indeed, that these books might more conveniently be reckoned twenty-four; and this is the present method of numbering them by the modern Jews; but formerly the number was regulated by that of the Hebrew alphabet, which consists of twenty-two letters: therefore they annexed the small book of Ruth to Judges; and probably it is a continuation of this book by the same author. They added, also, the Lamentations of Jeremiah to his prophecy, and this was natural enough. As to the minor prophets, which form twelve separate books in our Bibles, they were, anciently, always reckoned one book, so they are considered in every ancient catalogue, and in all quotations from them. Josephus adds, to what is cited above, the following: "But as to the books which have been written since the time of Artaxerxes until our times, they are not considered worthy of the same credit as the former, because they do not contain accurate doctrine sanctioned by the prophets."*

It will not be supposed that any change could have occurred in the Canon from the time of our Saviour and his apostles, to that in which Josephus wrote. Indeed, he may be considered the contemporary of the apostles, as he was born about the time of Paul's conversion to Christianity, and was therefore grown up to man's age long before the death of this apostle; and the apostle John probably survived him. And it must be remembered that Josephus is here giving his testimony to a public fact: he is declaring what books were received as divine by his nation; and he does it without hesitation or inconsistency. "We have," says he, "only twenty-two books which are justly believed to be of divine authority."

We are able also to adduce other testimony to prove the same thing. Some of the early Christian Fathers, who had been brought up in Paganism, when they embraced Christianity, were curious in their inquiries into the Canon of the Old Testament; and the result of the researches of some of them still remains. Melito, bishop of Sardis, travelled into Judea, for the very purpose of satisfying himself, on this point. And although his own writings are lost, Eusebius has preserved his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament; from which it appears, that the very same books

were, in his day, received into the Canon, as are now found in our Hebrew Bibles. In the catalogue of Melito, presented by Eusebius, after Proverbs, the word Wisdom occurs, which nearly all commentators have been of opinion is only another name for the same book, and not the name of the book now called "The Wisdom of Solomon." There is, however, an omission of Esther and Nehemiah. As to the latter, it creates no difficulty, for Ezra and Nehemiah are commonly counted as one book; and some learned men are of opinion that Ezra being the author of Esther, this book also is included under the name Esdras. The interval between Melito and Josephus is not a hundred years, so that no alteration in the Canon can be reasonably supposed to have taken place in this period.

Very soon after Melito, Origen furnishes us with a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, which perfectly accords with our Canon, except that he omits the Minor Prophets; which omission must have been a mere slip of the pen, in him or his copyist, as it is certain that he received this as a book of Holy Scripture: and the number of the books of the Old Testament, given by him in this very place, cannot be completed without reckoning the twelve Minor Prophets as one.

After Origen, we have catalogues in succession, not only by men of the first authority in the church, but by councils, consisting of numerous bishops, all which are perfectly the same as our own. It will be sufficient merely to refer to these sources of information. Catalogues of the books of the Old Testament have been given by Athanasius; by Cyril; by Augustine; by Jerome; by Rufin; by the council of Laodicea, in their LX. Canon; and by the the council of Carthage. And when it is considered, that all these catalogues exactly correspond with our present Canon of the Hebrew Bible, the evidence, I think, must appear complete to every impartial mind, that the Canon of the Old Testament is settled upon the clearest historical grounds. There seems to be nothing to be wished for further in the confirmation of this point. But if all this testimony had been wanting, there is still a source of evidence to which we might refer with the utmost confidence, as perfectly conclusive on this point; I mean the fact that these books have been ever since the time of Christ and his apostles in the keeping of both Jews and Christians, who have been constantly arrayed in opposition to each other; so that it was impossible that any change should have been made in the Canon, by either party, without being immediately detected by the other. And the conclusive evidence that no alteration in the Canon has occurred is the perfect agreement of these hostile parties in regard to the books of the Old Testament at this time. On this point, the Jew and Christian are harmonious. There is no complaint of addition to, or diminution of, the sacred books on either side. The Hebrew Bible of the Jew is the Bible of the Christian. There is here no difference. A learned Jew and a Christian have even been united in publishing an excellent edition of the Hebrew Bible.* Now, if any alteration in the Canon has occurred, it must have been by the concert or collusion of both parties; but how absurd this idea is must be manifest to all.

I acknowledge what is here said of the agreement of Christians and Jews can only be said in relation to Protestant Christians. For as to those of the Romish and Greek communions they have admitted other books into the Canon, which Jews and Protestants hold to be apocryphal; but these books will form the subject of a particular discussion, in the sequel of this work. The fact is important, that a short time after the Canon of the Old Testament was closed, a translation was made of the whole of the books into the Greek language. This translation was made at Alexandria, in Egypt, at the request, it is said, of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, that he might have a copy of these sacred books in the famous library which he was engaged in collecting. It is called

the Septuagint, from its being made, according to the accounts which have been handed down, by seventy, or rather seventy-two men; six from each of the tribes of Israel. So many fabulous things have been reported concerning this version, that it is very difficult to ascertain the precise truth. But it is manifest from internal evidence, that it was not the work of one hand, nor probably of one set of translators: for, while some books are rendered with great accuracy, and in a very literal manner, others are translated with little care, and the meaning of the original is very imperfectly given. The probability is that the Pentateuch was first translated, and the other books were added from time to time by different hands; but when the work was once begun, it is not likely that it would be long before the whole was completed. Now this Greek version contains all the books which are found in our common Hebrew Bibles. It is a good witness therefore to prove that all these books were in the Canon when this version was made. The apocryphal books, which have long been connected with this version, will furnish a subject for consideration hereafter.

There is, moreover, a distinct and remarkable testimony to the antiquity of the five books of Moses in the Samaritan Pentateuch, which has existed in a form entirely separate from the Jewish copies, and in a character totally different from that in which the Hebrew Bible has been for many ages written. It has also been preserved and handed down to us by a people who have ever been hostile to the Jews. This Pentateuch has, without doubt, been transmitted through a separate channel ever since the ten tribes of Israel were carried captive. It furnishes authentic testimony to the great antiquity of the books of Moses, and shows how little they have been corrupted during the lapse of nearly three thousand years. The Samaritans were the people transplanted from other countries into the places vacated by the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel. At first, they were all idolaters; but being annoyed by wild beasts, they supposed it was because they knew not how to worship the God of the country. They, therefore, requested that a priest should be sent to them of the Israelitish nation to instruct them. Their request was granted; and this priest, no doubt, brought with him a copy of the law. At one time it was doubted whether a Samaritan Pentateuch was in existence, but a learned man going into Palestine, obtained several copies. And they have also a translation of the whole into the Samaritan language. The Pentateuch, though Hebrew, is written in Samaritan characters, which many learned men think was the original Hebrew character.

SECTION III("tw:///self?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS, THEIR ORIGIN—IMPORTANCE OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN CANONICAL AND APOCRYPHAL BOOKS—SIX BOOKS OF THIS CLASS PRONOUNCED CANONICAL BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT—NOT IN THE HEBREW, NOR RECEIVED BY THE JEWS, ANCIENT OR MODERN

The word Apocrypha signifies concealed, obscure, without authority. In reference to the Bible, it is employed to designate such books as claim a place in the sacred volume, but which are not canonical. It is said to have been first used by Melito, bishop of Sardis. An inquiry into this subject cannot be uninteresting to the friends of the Bible; for it behoves them to ascertain, on the best evidence, what books belong to the sacred volume, and also, on what grounds other books are rejected from the Canon. This subject assumes a higher importance from the fact, that Christians are much divided on this point; for, some receive as of canonical authority, books which others reject as spurious, or consider merely as human compositions. On such a point every Christian should form his opinion upon the best information which he can obtain. In controversy with the

Romanists this subject meets us at the very threshold. It is vain to dispute about particular doctrines of Scripture until it is determined what books are to be received as Scripture. This subject gave rise to a very unpleasant controversy between the British and Foreign Bible Society and some of the leading ministers of Scotland. The principle adopted at the beginning by the Bible Society was, to circulate nothing but the text of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment. But in order to get the Scriptures into the hands of the Romanists, Bibles containing the Apocrypha were circulated, which proceeding gave just offence to the ministers of the Church of Scotland, and to the efficient auxiliaries of that country. A strong remonstrance was therefore made to the Managers of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and their answer not being entirely satisfactory, the Scotch ministers withdrew from the Society in London, and established one independent of the mother Society; and this breach has never been healed. But it is due to the British and Foreign Bible Society to state, that in consequence of the discussion, they adopted a correct principle for their future proceedings. The whole subject was referred to a select and learned sub-committee; who, after mature deliberation, brought in a report which was adopted, and led to the following wise resolution in the General Committee, viz. "That the funds of the Society be applied to the printing and circulation of the canonical books of Scripture to the exclusion of those books which are termed apocryphal; and that all copies printed, either entirely or in part, at the expense of the Society, and whether such copies consist of the whole or of any part of such books, be invariably issued bound, no other book whatever being bound with them; and further, that all money grants to societies or individuals be made only in conformity with the principle of this regulation."

"In the sacred volume, as it is to be hereafter distributed by the Society, there is to be nothing but divine truth, nothing but what is acknowledged by all Christians to be such. Of course all may unite in the work of distribution, even should they regard the volume as containing but part of the inspired writings; just as they might in the circulation of the Pentateuch or the Book of Psalms, or the Prophets, or the New Testament. Such harmonious operation would not, however, be possible, if the books of the apocrypha were mingled or joined with the rest; and besides, those who have the strongest objection to the apocrypha, are, ordinarily, those who are most forward in active and liberal efforts to send the word of God to all people." This judicious decision of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society depends for its correctness on the supposition that the books of the apocrypha are not canonical; for, whatever may be said about circulating a part of the Bible, it was undoubtedly the original object of this Society to print and circulate the whole of the sacred volume. Hence appears the practical importance of the inquiry which we have here instituted, to ascertain whether these books have any claim whatever to a place in the sacred Canon. At a very early period of the Christian church, great pains were taken to distinguish between such books as were inspired and canonical, and such as were written by uninspired men. It has never been doubted among Christians, that the canonical books only were of divine authority, and furnished an infallible rule of faith and practice; but it has not been agreed what books ought to be considered canonical and what apocryphal. In regard to those which have already been enumerated, as belonging to the Old Testament, there is a pretty general consent of Jews and Christians, of Romanists and Protestants; but in regard to some other books there is a wide difference of opinion. The council of Trent, in their fourth session, gave a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, among which are included Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and two books of the Maccabees.* Besides, they include under the name Esther and Daniel, certain additional chapters, which are not found in the Hebrew copies. The book of Esther

is made to consist of sixteen chapters; and prefixed to the book of Daniel, is the History of Susannah; the Song of the Three Children is inserted in the third chapter; and the History of Bel and the Dragon is added at the end of this book. Other books which are found in the Greek or Latin Bibles, they rejected as apocryphal; as the third and fourth books of Esdras;* the third book of Maccabees; the 151 Psalm; the Appendix to Job; and the Preface to Lamentations.

Both these classes of books, all denominations of Protestants consider apocryphal; but as the English church, in her Liturgy, directs that certain lessons shall be read from the former, for the instruction of the people, but not for confirmation of doctrine, they are retained in the larger copies of the English Bible, but are not mingled with the canonical books, as in the Vulgate, but placed at the end of the Old Testament, under the title of Apocrypha. It is certainly to be regretted that these books are permitted to be included in the same volume which contains the lively oracles,—the word of God,—the Holy Scriptures; all of which were given by inspiration; and more to be regretted still, that they should be read in the church promiscuously with the lessons taken from the canonical books; especially as no notice is given to the people, that what is read from these books is apocryphal; and as in the Prayer Book of the Episcopal church the tables which refer to the lessons to be read, have this title prefixed—“Tables of lessons of Holy Scripture to be read at Morning and Evening Prayer, throughout the year.” The Rev. Doctor Wordsworth, in his work on the Canon, defends the practice of retaining in the Bible, and publicly reading in the church, certain lessons from the apocryphal books, principally because this was done by the ancient church; and he apologizes for the practice by saying, that these lessons are never read on the Lord’s day. But as he acknowledges that they are not inspired, and are not canonical, the inference is plain, that they ought not to be included in the same volume with canonical books, and ought not to be read as Scripture in the churches. Now, however good and instructive these apocryphal lessons may be, it never can be justified, that they should thus be put on a level with the word of God.* But it is our object at present to show, that none of these books, canonized by the Council of Trent, and inserted in our larger English Bibles, are canonical.

1. The first argument by which it may be proved that these books do not belong to the Canon of the Old Testament, is, that they are not found in the Hebrew Bible. They are not written in the Hebrew language, but in the Greek, which was not known to the Jews, until long after inspiration had ceased, and the Canon of the Old Testament was closed. It is rendered probable, indeed, that some of them were written originally in the Chaldaic. Jerome testifies this to be the fact, in regard to 1 Maccabees and Ecclesiasticus; and he says, that he translated the book of Tobit out of Chaldee into Latin; but this book is now found in the Greek, and there is good reason for believing that it was written originally in this language. It is certain, however, that none of these books were composed in the pure Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Hottinger, indeed, informs us, that he had seen the whole of the apocrypha in pure Hebrew, among the Jews; but he entertains no doubt that it was translated into that language, in modern times: just as the whole New Testament has recently been translated into pure Hebrew.

It is the common opinion of the Jews, and of the Christian Fathers, that Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. Books written by uncertain authors afterwards, have no claim to be reckoned canonical, and there is good reason for believing that those books were written long after the time of Ezra and Malachi, and some of them perhaps later than the commencement of the

Christian era.

2. These books, though probably written by Jews, have never been received into the Canon by that people. In this, the ancient and modern Jews are of the same mind. Josephus declares, "That no more than twenty-two books were received as inspired by his nation." Philo, who refers often to the Old Testament in his writings, never makes the least mention of them; nor are they recognized in the Talmud as canonical. Not only so, but the Jewish Rabbies expressly reject them.

Rabbi Azariah, speaking of these books, says, "They are received by Christians, not by us."

R. Gedaliah, after giving a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, with some account of their authors, adds these words, "It is worth while to know, that the nations of the world wrote many other books, which are included in their systems of sacred books, but not in our hands." To which he adds, "They say that some of these are found in the Chaldee, some in the Arabic, and some in the Greek language."

R. Azariah ascribed the book called the Wisdom of Solomon to Philo; and R. Gedaliah, in speaking of the same book, says, "That if Solomon ever wrote it, it must have been in the Syriac language, to send it to some of the kings in the remotest parts of the East. "But," says he, "Ezra put his hand only to those books which were published by the prophets, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and written in the sacred language; and our wise men prudently and deliberately resolved to sanction none, but such as were established and confirmed by him."

"This book," says he, "the Gentiles (i. e. Christians) have added to their Bible." "Their wise men," says Buxtorf, "pronounced this book to be apocryphal." The book called Ecclesiasticus, said to be written by the son of Sirach, is expressly numbered among apocryphal books in the Talmud. "In the book of the Son of Sirach, it is forbidden to be read."

Manasseh Ben Israel has this observation, "Those things which are alleged from a verse in Ecclesiasticus are nothing to the purpose, because that is an apocryphal book." Another of their writers says, "The book of the son of Sirach is added to our twenty-four sacred books by the Romans." This book also they call extraneous, which some of the Jews prohibit to be read. With what face then can the Romanists pretend that this book was added to the Canon not long before the time of Josephus?

"Baruch," says one of their learned men, "is received by Christians," (i. e. Romanists,) "but not by us." Of Tobit, it is said in Zemach David, "Know, then, that this book of Tobias is one of those which Christians join with the Hagiographa." A little afterwards, it is said, "know then, that Tobit, which is among us in the Hebrew tongue, was translated from Latin into Hebrew by Sebastian Munster." The same writer affirms of the history of Susannah, "That it is received by Christians but not by us." The Jews, in the time of Jerome, entertained no other opinion of these books than those who came after them; for, in his preface to Daniel, he informs us, "That he had heard one of the Jewish doctors deriding the history of Susannah, saying, 'It was invented by some Greek, he knew not whom.' " * The same is the opinion of the Jews respecting the other books, which we call apocryphal, as is manifest from all the copies of the Hebrew Bible extant; for, undoubtedly if they believed that any of these books were canonical, they would give them a place in their sacred volume. But will any ask, what is the opinion of the Jews to us? I answer, much on this point. The oracles of God were committed to them; and they preserved them with a religious care until the

advent of Messiah. Christ never censures them for adding to the sacred Scriptures, nor detracting from them. Since their nation has been in dispersion, copies of the Old Testament in Hebrew have been scattered all over the world, so that it was impossible to produce a universal alteration in the Canon. But it is needless to argue this point, for it is agreed by all that these books never were received by the Jewish nation.

3. The third argument against the canonical authority of these books is derived from the total silence respecting them in the New Testament. They are never quoted by Christ and his apostles. This fact, however, is disputed by the Romanists, and they even attempt to establish their right to a place in the Canon from the citations which they pretend have been made from these books by the apostles. They refer to Romans 11:1-36 and Hebrews 11:1-40, where they allege that Paul has cited passages from the Book of Wisdom. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" "For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." But both these passages are taken directly from the canonical books of the Old Testament. The first is nearly in the words of Isaiah; and the last from the book of Genesis; their other examples are as wide of the mark as these, and need not be set down.

It has already been shown that these books were not included in the volume quoted and referred to by Christ and his apostles, under the title of the Scriptures, and are entirely omitted by Josephus in his account of the sacred books. It would seem, therefore, that in the time of Christ, and for some time afterwards, they were utterly unknown or wholly disregarded.

SECTION IV("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

TESTIMONIES OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS, AND OF OTHER LEARNED MEN DOWN TO THE TIME OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, RESPECTING THE APOCRYPHA

The fourth argument is, that these books were not received as canonical by the Christian Fathers, but were expressly declared to be apocryphal.

Justin Martyr does not cite a single passage, in all his writings, from any apocryphal book. The first catalogue of the books of the Old Testament which we have, after the times of the apostles, from any Christian writer, is that of Melito, bishop of Sardis, before the end of the second century, which is preserved by Eusebius. The fragment is as follows: "Melito to his brother Onesimus, greeting. Since you have often earnestly requested of me, in consequence of your love of learning, a collection of the Sacred Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets, and what relates to the Saviour, and concerning our whole faith; and since, moreover, you wish to obtain an accurate knowledge of our ancient books, as it respects their number and order, I have used diligence to accomplish this, knowing your sincere affection towards the faith, and your earnest desire to become acquainted with the word; and that striving after eternal life, your love to God induces you to prefer these to all other things. Wherefore, going into the East, and to the very place where these things were published and transacted, and having made diligent search after the books of the Old Testament, I now subjoin and send you the following catalogue:—"Five books of Moses, viz., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Chronicles, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, or Wisdom,* Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Twelve [prophets] in one book, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra."†

Origen also says, "We should not be ignorant, that the canonical books are the same which the Hebrews delivered unto us, and are twenty-two in number, according to the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet." Then he sets down, in order, the names of the books, in Greek and Hebrew.

Athanasius, in his Synopsis, says, "All the Scriptures of us Christians are divinely inspired; neither are they indefinite in their number, but determined, and reduced into a Canon. Those of the Old Testament are, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Job, the twelve prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel."*

Hilary, who was contemporary with Athanasius, and resided in France, has numbered the canonical books of the Old Testament, in the following manner: "The five books of Moses, the sixth of Joshua, the seventh of Judges, including Ruth, the eighth of first and second Kings, the ninth of third and fourth Kings; the tenth of the Chronicles, two books; the eleventh, Ezra (which included Nehemiah;) the twelfth, the Psalms. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth; the twelve Prophets the sixteenth; then Isaiah and Jeremiah, including Lamentations and his Epistle, Daniel, Ezekiel, Job, and Esther, making up the full number of twenty-two." And in his preface he adds, that "these books were thus numbered by our ancestors, and handed down by tradition from them."

Gregory Nazianzen exhorts his readers to study the sacred books with attention, but to avoid such as were apocryphal; and then gives a list of the books of the Old Testament, and according to the Jewish method, makes the number two-and-twenty. He complains of some that mingled the apocryphal books with those that were inspired, "of the truth of which last," says he, "we have the most perfect persuasion; therefore it seemed good to me to enumerate the canonical books from the beginning; and those which belong to the Old Testament are two-and-twenty, according to the number of the Hebrew alphabet, as I have understood." Then he proceeds to say, "Let no one add to these divine books, nor take any thing away from them. I think it necessary to add this, that there are other books besides those which I have enumerated as constituting the Canon, which, however, do not appertain to it; but were proposed by the early Fathers, to be read for the sake of the instruction which they contain." Then, he expressly names as belonging to this class, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, and Tobit.*

Jerome, in his Epistle to Paulinus, gives us a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, exactly corresponding with that which Protestants receive: "Which," says he, "we believe agreeably to the tradition of our ancestors, to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit."

Epiphanius, in his book concerning Weights and Measures, distributes the books of the Old Testament into four divisions of five each. "The first of which contains the law, next five poetical books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs; in the third division he places Joshua, Judges, including Ruth, first and second Chronicles, four books of Kings. The last five, the twelve prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. Then there remain two, Ezra and Esther." Thus he makes up the number twenty-two.

Cyril of Jerusalem, in his Catechism, exhorts his catechumen diligently to learn from the church, what books appertain to the Old and New Testaments, and he says, "Read nothing which is

apocryphal. Read the Scriptures, namely, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, which were translated by the seventy-two interpreters." And in another place, "Meditate, as was said, in the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, and if you wish it, I will give you their names." Here follows a catalogue, agreeing with those already given, except that he adds Baruch to the list. When Baruch is mentioned as making one book with Jeremiah, as is done by some of the Fathers, it is most reasonable to understand those parts of Jeremiah, in the writing of which Baruch was concerned, as particularly the 52 chapter; for, if we understand them as referring to the separate book now called Baruch, the number which they are so careful to preserve will be exceeded. This apocryphal Baruch never existed in the Hebrew, and is never mentioned separately by any ancient author, as Bellarmine confesses. This book was originally written in Greek, but our present copies differ exceedingly from the old Latin translation. The Council of Laodicea forbade the reading of any books in the churches but such as were canonical; and that the people might know what these were, a catalogue was given, answering to the Canon which we now receive.

Origen barely mentions the Maccabees. Athanasius takes no notice of these books. Eusebius, in his *Chronicon*, speaks of the History of the Maccabees, and adds, "These books are not received as divine Scriptures."

Philastrius, an Italian bishop, who lived in the latter part of the fourth century, in a work on Heresy says, "It was determined by the apostles and their successors, that nothing should be read in the Catholic church but the law, prophets, evangelists," &c.—And he complains of certain Heretics, "That they used the book of Wisdom, by the son of Sirach, who lived long after Solomon."

Chrysostom, a man who excelled in the knowledge of the Scriptures, declares, "That all the divine books of the Old Testament were originally written in the Hebrew tongue, and that no other books were received." Hom. 4. in Gen. But Jerome, already mentioned, who had diligently studied the Hebrew Scriptures, by the aid of the best Jewish teachers, enters into this subject more fully and accurately than any of the rest of the Fathers. In his general Preface to his version of the Scriptures, he mentions the books which he had translated out of Hebrew into Latin; "All besides them," says he, "must be placed among the apocryphal. Therefore, Wisdom, which is ascribed to Solomon, the book of Jesus the son of Sirach, Judith, Tobit and Pastor, are not in the Canon. I have found the first book of Maccabees in Hebrew, (Chaldee;) the second in Greek, and, as the style shows, it must have been composed in that language." And in his Preface to Ezra and Nehemiah, (always reckoned one book by the Jews,) he says, "Let no one be disturbed that I have edited but one book under this name; nor let any one please himself with the dreams contained in the third and fourth apocryphal books ascribed to this author; for, with the Hebrews, Ezra and Nehemiah make but one book; and those things not contained in this are to be rejected, as not belonging to the Canon." And in his preface to the books of Solomon, he speaks of "Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus; the former of which," he says, "he found in Hebrew, (Chaldee,) but not the latter, which is never found among the Hebrews, but the style strongly savours of the Grecian eloquence." He then adds, "As the church reads the books of Judith, Tobit, and the Maccabees, but does not receive them among the canonical Scriptures, so, also, she may read these two books for the edification of the common people, but not as authority to confirm any of the doctrines of the church."

Again, in his preface to Jeremiah, he says, "The book of Baruch, the scribe of Jeremiah, is not read in Hebrew, nor esteemed canonical; therefore, I have passed it over." And in his preface to Daniel, "This book among the Hebrews has neither the history of Susanna, nor the Song of the three Children, nor the fables of Bel and the Dragon, which we have retained lest we should appear to the unskilful to have curtailed a large part of the Sacred Volume." In the preface to Tobit, he says, "The Hebrews cut off the book of Tobit from the catalogue of Divine Scriptures." And in his preface to Judith, he says, "Among the Hebrews, Judith is placed among the Hagiographa, which are not of authority to determine controversies."

Rufin, in his Exposition of the Creed, observes, "That there were some books which were not called canonical, but received by our ancestors, as the Wisdom of Solomon, and another Wisdom of the Son of Sirach; of the same order are the books of Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees."

Gregory the First, speaking of the testimony in the Maccabees, respecting the death of Eleazer, says, "Concerning which thing we do not act inordinately, although we bring our testimony from a book which is not canonical."

Augustine is the only one among the Fathers who lived within four hundred years after the apostles, who seems to favour the introduction of these six disputed books into the Canon. In his work *On Christian Doctrine*, he gives a list of the books of the Old Testament, among which he inserts Tobit, Judith, the two books of Maccabees, two of Esdras, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus. These two last mentioned, he says, "are called Solomon's, on account of their resemblance to his writings; although it is known that one of them was composed by the son of Sirach: which deserves to be received among the prophetical books." But this opinion he retracted afterwards.*

Augustine was accustomed to the Greek and Latin Bibles, in which those books had been introduced, and we must suppose, unless we would make him contradict himself, that he meant in this place merely to enumerate the books then contained in the sacred volume; for in many other places he clearly shows that he entertained the same opinion of the books of the Old Testament as the other Fathers. In his celebrated work of "The City of God," he expresses this opinion most explicitly—"In that whole period, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, after Malachi, Haggai, Zachariah and Ezra, they had no prophets, even until the time of the advent of our Saviour. As our Lord says, the law and the prophets were until John. And even the reprobate Jews hold that Haggai, Zachariah, Ezra, and Malachi, were the last books received into canonical authority." In his commentary on Psalms 40:1-17, he says, "If any adversary should say you have forged these prophecies, let the Jewish books be produced—The Jews are our librarians." And on Psalms 56:1-13, "When we wish to prove to the Pagans that Christ was predicted, we appeal to the writings in possession of the Jews; they have all these Scriptures." And again, in the work first cited, "The Israelitish nation, to whom the oracles of God were entrusted, never confounded false prophecies with the true, but all these writings are harmonious." Then in another work, in speaking of the books of the Maccabees, he says, "This writing the Jews never received in the same manner as the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, to which the Lord gave testimony as by his own witnesses." And frequently in his works, he confines the canonical books to those properly included in this threefold division. He also repeatedly declares that the canonical Scriptures, which are of most eminent authority, are the books committed to the Jews. But in the eighteenth book of the *City of God*, speaking of Judith, he says, "Those things which are written in this book, it is said,

the Jews have never received into the Canon of Scripture.” And in the seventeenth book of the same work, “There are three books of Solomon, which have been received into canonical authority, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles; the other two, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, have been called by his name, through a custom which prevailed on account of their similarity to his writings; but the more learned are certain that they are not his; and they cannot be brought forward with much confidence for the conviction of gainsayers.”

He allows that the Book of Wisdom may be read to the people, and ought to be preferred to all other tracts; but he does not insist that the testimonies taken from it are decisive. And respecting Ecclesiasticus, he says when speaking of Samuel’s prophesying after his death, “But if this book is objected to because it is not found in the Canon of the Jews,” &c. His rejection of the books of Maccabees from the Canon is repeated and explicit. “The calculation of the times after the restoring of the temple is not found in the Holy Scriptures, which are called canonical, but in certain other books, among which are the two books of Maccabees. The Jews do not receive the Maccabees as the Law and the Prophets.”

It may be admitted, however, that Augustine entertained too high an opinion of these apocryphal books, but it is certain that he did not put them on a level with the genuine canonical books. He mentions a custom which prevailed in his time, from which it appears that although the apocryphal books were read in some of the churches, they were not read as Holy Scripture, nor put on a level with the canonical books; for he informs us that they were not permitted to be read from the same desk as the Canonical Scriptures, but from a lower place in the church.

Innocent the first, who lived about the same time, is also alluded to as a witness to prove that these disputed books were then received into the Canon. But the epistle which contains his catalogue is extremely suspicious. No mention is made of this epistle by any writer for three hundred years after the death of Innocent. But it is noways necessary to our argument to deny that in the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, some individuals, and perhaps some councils, received these books as canonical, yet there is strong evidence that this was not the opinion of the universal church; for in the council of Chalcedon, which is reckoned to be œcumenical, the Canons of the council of Laodicea which contain a catalogue of the genuine books of the Old Testament, are adopted. And it has been shown already that these apocryphal books were excluded from that catalogue. But it can be proved that even until the time of the meeting of the Council of Trent, by which these books were solemnly canonized, the most learned and judicious of the Popish writers adhere to the opinions of Jerome and the ancients; or at least make a marked distinction between these disputed books and those which are acknowledged to be canonical by all. A few testimonies from distinguished writers, from the commencement of the sixth century down to the era of the Reformation, shall now be given.

It deserves to be particularly observed here that in one of the laws of the Emperor Justinian, concerning ecclesiastical matters, it was enacted, “That the Canons of the first four general councils should be received and have the force of laws.”

Anastasius, patriarch of Antioch, in a work on the Creation, makes “the number of books which God hath appointed for his Old Testament” to be no more than twenty-two; although he speaks in very high terms of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus.

Leontius, a learned and accurate writer, in his book against the Sects, acknowledges no other canonical books of the Old Testament, but those which the Hebrews received; namely, twelve historical books, five prophetical, four of Doctrine and Instruction, and one of Psalms; making the number twenty-two as usual; and he makes not the least mention of any others.

Gregory, who lived at the beginning of the seventh century, in his book of Morals, makes an apology for alleging a passage from the Maccabees, and says, "Though it be not taken from the canonical Scripture, yet it is cited from a book which was published for the edification of the church."

Isidore, bishop of Seville, divides the canonical books of the Old Testament into three orders, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa; and afterwards adds—"There is a fourth order of books which are not in the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament." Here he names these books, and says, "Though the Jews rejected them as apocryphal, the church has received them among the canonical Scriptures."

John Damascene, a Syrian Presbyter, who lived early in the eighth century, adheres to the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament, numbering only two-and-twenty books. Of Maccabees, Judith and Tobit, he says not one word; but he speaks of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, as "elegant and virtuous writings, yet not to be numbered among the canonical books of Scripture, never having been laid up in the ark of the Covenant."

Venerable Bede follows the ancient method of dividing the books of the Old Testament into three classes; but he remarkably distinguishes the Maccabees from the canonical books by classing them with the writings of Josephus and Julius the African.

Alcuin, the disciple of Bede, says, "The book of the son of Sirach was reputed an apocryphal and dubious Scripture."

Rupert, a learned man of the twelfth century, expressly rejects the book of Wisdom from the Canon.

Peter Mauritius, after giving a catalogue of the authentic Scriptures of the Old Testament, adds the six disputed books, and says, "They are useful and commendable in the church, but are not to be placed in the same dignity with the rest."

Hugo de S. Victore, a Saxon by birth, but who resided at Paris, gives a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, which includes no others but the two-and-twenty received from the Jews. Of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit and Judith, he says, "They are used in the church but not written in the Canon."

Richard de S. Victore, also of the twelfth century, in his Books of Collections, explicitly declares, "That there are but twenty-two books in the Canon; and that Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees, are not esteemed canonical although they are read in the churches."

Peter Lombard, in his Scholastic History, enumerates the books of the Old Testament, thus—Five books of Moses, eight of the prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa, which leaves no room for these six disputed books; but in his preface to Tobit he says expressly, that it is "in no order of the Canon;" and of Judith, that "Jerome and the Hebrews place it in the apocrypha." Moreover, he

calls the story of Bel and the Dragon a fable, and says that the history of Susannah is not as true as it should be. In this century also lived John of Salisbury, an Englishman, a man highly respected in his time. In one of his Epistles, he treats this subject at large, and professes to follow Jerome and undoubtedly to believe that there are but twenty-two books in the Canon of the Old Testament, all which he names in order, and adds, "That neither the book of Wisdom, nor Ecclesiasticus, nor Judith, nor Tobit, nor the Pastor, nor the Maccabees, are esteemed canonical." In the thirteenth century, the opinion of the learned was the same, as we may see by the Ordinary Gloss on the Bible, in the composition of which many persons were concerned, and which was high approved by all the doctors and pastors in the western churches. In the preface to this gloss, they are reproached with ignorance who hold all the books, put into the one volume of Scripture, in equal veneration. The difference between these books is asserted to be as great as between certain and doubtful works. The canonical books are declared, "To have been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; but who were the authors of the others is unknown." Then it is declared, "That the church permitteth the reading of the apocryphal books for devotion and instruction, but not for authority to decide matters of controversy in faith. And that there are no more than twenty-two canonical books of the Old Testament, and all besides are apocryphal." Thus we have the common judgment of the church, in the thirteenth century, in direct opposition to the decree of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth. But this is not all, for when the writers of this Gloss come to the apocryphal books, they prefix a caution, as—"Here begins the book of Tobit, which is not in the Canon;"—"Here begins the book of Judith, which is not in the Canon," and so of every one of them; and to confirm their opinion, they appeal to the Fathers.

Hugo, the Cardinal, who lived in this century, wrote commentaries on all the Scriptures, which were universally esteemed; in these he constantly keeps up the distinction between the canonical and ecclesiastical books: and he explicitly declares that "Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Judith, Tobit, and the Maccabees, are apocryphal,—dubious,—not canonical,—not received by the church for proving any matters of faith, but for information of manners."

Thomas Aquinas also, the most famous of the schoolmen, makes the same distinction between these classes of books. He maintains that the book of Wisdom was not held to be a part of the Canon, and ascribes it to Philo. The story of Bel and the Dragon, he calls a fable; and he shows clearly enough that he did not believe that Ecclesiasticus was of canonical authority. In the fourteenth century no man acquired so extensive a reputation for his commentaries on the Bible, as Nicholas Lyra, a converted Jew. In his preface to the book of Tobit, he says, "That having commented on all the canonical books, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, his intention now was to write on those books which are not canonical." Here he enumerates Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Judith, Tobit, and the Maccabees; and then adds, "The canonical books are not only before these in time but in dignity and authority." And again, "These are not in the Canon, but received by the church to be read for instruction in manners, not to be used for deciding controversies respecting the faith; whereas the others are of such authority that whatever they contain is to be held as undoubted truth." The Englishman, William Occam, of Oxford, accounted the most learned doctor of his age, in his Dialogues, acknowledges, "That that honor is due only to the divine writers of Scripture, that we should esteem them free from all error." Moreover, in his Prologues, he fully assents to the opinion of Jerome and Gregory, "That neither Judith, nor Tobit, nor the Maccabees, nor Wisdom, nor Ecclesiasticus, is to be received into the same place of

honour as the inspired books; “for,” says he, “the church doth not number them among the canonical Scriptures.” In the fifteenth century, Thomas Anglicus, sometimes called the Angelical Doctor on account of his excellent judgment, numbers twenty-four books of the Old Testament, if Ruth be reckoned separately from Judges, and Lamentations from Jeremiah.

Paul Burgensis, a Spanish Jew, who, after his conversion to Christianity, on account of his superior knowledge and piety, was advanced to be bishop of Burgos, wrote notes on the Bible, in which he retains the same distinction of books which has been so often mentioned. The Romanists have at last, as they suppose, found an authority for these disputed books in the Council of Florence, from the Acts of which they produce a decree in which the six disputed books are named and expressly said to be written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Though this Canon were genuine, the authority of a council sitting in such circumstances, as attended the meeting of this, would have very little weight; but Dr. Cosins has shown that in the large copies of the acts of this council no such decree can be found, and that it has been foisted into the abridgment by some impostor who omitted something else to make room for it, and thus preserved the number of Canons unchanged, while the substance of them was altered.

Alphonso Tostatus, bishop of Avila, who, on account of his extraordinary learning, was called the wonder of the world, has given a clear and decisive testimony on this subject. This learned man declares, “That these controverted books were not canonical, and that the church condemned no man for disobedience who did not receive them as the other Scriptures, because they were of uncertain origin, and it is not known that they were written by inspiration.” And again, “Because the church is uncertain whether heretics have not added to them.” This opinion he repeats in several parts of his works.”

Cardinal Ximenes, the celebrated editor of the Complutensian Polyglot, in the preface to that work, admonishes the reader that Judith, Tobit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees, with the additions to Esther and Daniel, which are found in the Greek, are not canonical Scriptures.

John Picus, the learned count of Mirandula, adhered firmly to the opinion of Jerome and the other Fathers on the subject of the Canon.

Faber Stapulensis, a famous doctor of Paris, acknowledges that these books are not in the Canon.

Ludovicus Vives, one of the most learned men of his age, in his commentaries on Augustine’s City of God, rejects the third and fourth books of Esdras, and also the history of Susannah, and Bel, as apocryphal. He speaks in such a manner of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus as to show that he did not esteem them canonical; for he makes Philo to be the author of the former, and the son of Sirach of the latter, who lived in the time of Ptolemy about an hundred years after the last of the Prophets; and of the Maccabees, he doubts whether Josephus was the author or not; by which he sufficiently shows that he did not believe that they were written by inspiration. But there was no man in this age who obtained so high a reputation for learning and critical skill as Erasmus. In his exposition of the Apostles’ Creed and the Decalogue, he discusses this question respecting the canonical books, and after enumerating the usual books of the Old Testament, he says, “The ancient Fathers admitted no more;” but of the other books afterwards received into ecclesiastical use, (naming the whole which we esteem apocryphal,) “It is uncertain what authority should be allowed to them; but the canonical Scriptures are such as without controversy are believed to have been

written by the inspiration of God.” And in his Scholia on Jerome’s preface to Daniel, he expresses his wonder that such stories as Bel and the Dragon should be publicly read in the churches. In his address to students of the Scriptures, he admonishes them to consider well, “That the church never intended to give the same authority to Tobit, Judith and Wisdom, which is given to the five books of Moses or the four Evangelists.” The last testimony which we shall adduce to show that these books were not universally nor commonly received, until the very time of the Council of Trent, is that of Cardinal Cajetan, the oracle of the church of Rome. In his commentaries on the Bible, he gives us this as the rule of the church—“That those books which were canonical with Jerome should be so with us; and that those which were not received as canonical by him should be considered as excluded by us.” And he says, “The church is much indebted to this Father for distinguishing between the books which are canonical and those which are not, for thus he has freed us from the reproach of the Hebrews, who otherwise might say that we had framed a new Canon for ourselves.” For this reason he would write no commentaries on these apocryphal books; “for,” says he, “Judith, Tobit, Maccabees, Wisdom, and the additions to Esther are all excluded from the Canon as insufficient to prove any matter of faith, though they may be read for the edifying of the people.” From the copious citations of testimonies which we have given, it is evident that the books in dispute are apocryphal, and have no right to a place in the Canon; and that the Council of Trent acted unwisely in decreeing, with an anathema annexed, that they should be received as divine. Surely no council can make that an inspired book which was not written by inspiration. Certainly these books did not belong to the Canon while the apostles lived, for they were unknown both to Jews and Christians. Sixtus Sinensis, a distinguished Romanist, acknowledges that it was long after the time of the apostles, that these writings came to the knowledge of the whole Christian church. But while this is conceded, it does not terminate the controversy, for among the many extraordinary claims of the Romish church, one of the most extraordinary is the authority to add to the Canon of Holy Scripture. It has been made sufficiently manifest that these apocryphal books were not included in the Canon during the first three centuries; and can it be doubted whether the Canon was fully constituted before the fourth century? To suppose that a Pope or a Council can make what books they please canonical, is too absurd to deserve a moment’s consideration. If, upon this principle, they could render Tobit and Judith canonical, upon the same they might introduce Herodotus, Livy, or even the Koran itself.

SECTION V("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT THESE BOOKS ARE NOT CANONICAL—THE WRITERS NOT PROPHETS, AND DO NOT CLAIM TO BE INSPIRED

I come now to the fifth argument to disprove the canonical authority of these books, which is derived from internal evidence. Books which contain manifest falsehoods; or which abound in silly and ridiculous stories; or contradict the plain and uniform doctrine of acknowledged Scripture, cannot be canonical. Now I will endeavour to show, that the books in dispute, are all, or most of them, condemned by this rule. In the book of Tobit, an angel of God is made to tell a palpable falsehood—“I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, and of thy brethren;”* by which Tobit was completely deceived, for he says, “Thou art of an honest and good stock.” Now in Tob_12:1-22 this same angel declares, “I am Raphael, one of the seven Holy Angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.”

Judith is represented as speaking scarcely anything but falsehood to Holofernes; but what is most inconsistent with the character of piety given her, is, that she is made to pray to the God of truth, in the following words, "Smite by the deceit of my lips, the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant." Who does not perceive, at once, the impiety of this prayer? It is a petition that he who holds in utter detestation all falsehood, should give efficacy to premeditated deceit. This woman, so celebrated for her piety, is also made to speak with commendation of the conduct of Simeon, in the cruel slaughter of the Shechemites; an act, against which God, in the Scriptures, has expressed his high displeasure. In the second book of Maccabees, Razis, an elder of Jerusalem, is spoken of with high commendation, for destroying his own life, rather than fall into the hands of his enemies; but, certainly, suicide is not, in any case, agreeable to the word of God. The author of the book of Wisdom, speaks in the name of Solomon, and talks about being appointed to build a temple in the holy mountain; whereas it has been proved by Jerome, that this book is falsely ascribed to Solomon. In the book of Tobit, we have this story: "And as they went on their journey they came to the river Tigris, and they lodged there; and when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him. Then the angel said unto him, Take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish and drew it to land. To whom the angel said, Open the fish, and take the heart, and the liver, and the gall, and put them up safely. So the young man did as the angel commanded him, and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it. Then the young man said unto the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart, and the liver, and the gall of the fish? And he said unto him, Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil, or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath whiteness in his eyes; and he shall be healed."* If this story does not savour of the fabulous, then it would be difficult to find anything that did. In the book of Baruch, there are also several things which do not appear to be true. Baruch is said to have read this book, in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the ears of the king, and all the people dwelling in Babylon, who upon hearing it, collected money and sent it to Jerusalem, to the priests. Now Baruch, who is here alleged to have read this book in Babylon, is said, in the canonical Scriptures, to have been carried captive into Egypt, with Jeremiah, after the murder of Gedaliah. Jeremiah 43:6. Again, he is represented to have read in the ears of Jeconias the king, and of all the people; but Jeconias is known to have been shut up in prison, at this time, and it is nowise probable that Baruch would have access to him, if he even had been in Babylon. The money that was sent from Babylon was to enable the priests to offer sacrifices to the Lord, but the temple was in ruins, and there was no altar. In the chapters added to the book of Esther, we read, that "Mardocheus, in the second year of Artaxerxes the Great, was a great man, being a servitor in the king's court." And in the same, "That he was also one of the captives which Nabuchodonosor carried from Jerusalem, with Jeconias, king of Judea." Now, between these two periods, there intervened one hundred and fifty years; so that, if he was only fifteen years of age, when carried away, he must have been a servitor in the king's court, at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years!

Again, Mardocheus is represented as being "a great man in the court, in the second year of Artaxerxes," before he detected the conspiracy against the king's life. Now, Artaxerxes and Ahasuerus were the same, or they were not; if the former, this history clashes with the Scriptural account, for there it appears, that Mordecai was not, before this time, a courtier, or a conspicuous man; if the latter, then this addition is manifestly false, because it ascribes to Artaxerxes, what the

Scriptures ascribe to another person.

Moreover, this apocryphal writing places the conspiracy against the king's life before the repudiation of Vashti and the marriage of Esther; but this is repugnant to the canonical Scriptures.

It is also asserted, in this book, (see chap. 16) that Mardocheus received honours and rewards for the detection of the conspiracy; whereas, in the Canonical book of Esther, it is declared, that he received no reward. And a different reason is assigned, in the two books, for Haman's hatred of Mordecai. In the canonical, it is his neglect of showing respect to this proud courtier; in the apocryphal, it is the punishment of the two eunuchs, who had formed the conspiracy. And finally, Haman, in this spurious work, is called a Macedonian; and it is said, that he meditated the design of transferring the Persian kingdom to the Macedonians. But this is utterly incredible. The kingdom of Macedon must have been, at that time, most obscure, and probably wholly unknown, at the Persian court. But this is not all: he who is here called a Macedonian, is in the canonical book said to be an Agagite. The proof of the apocryphal character of this addition to Esther, which has been adduced, is in all reason sufficient. The advocates of these books are greatly perplexed to find a place in the history of the Jewish nation, for the wonderful deliverance wrought by means of Judith. It seems strange that no allusion is made to this event in any of the acknowledged books of Scripture; and more unaccountable still, that Josephus, who was so much disposed to relate everything favourable to the character of his nation, should never make the least mention of it. Some refer this history to the period preceding the Babylonish captivity; while others are of opinion, that the events occurred in the time of Cambyses, king of Persia. But the name of the high priest here mentioned, does not occur with the names of the high priests contained in any of the genealogies. From the time of the building of the temple of Solomon, to its overthrow by the Assyrians, this name is not found in the list of high priests, as may be seen by consulting 1 Chronicles 6:1-81; nor, in the catalogue given by Josephus, in the tenth chapter of the tenth book of his Antiquities. That this history cannot be placed after the captivity, is manifest, from this circumstance, that the temple of Solomon was still standing when the transactions which are related in this book occurred.

Another thing in the book of Judith, which is very suspicious, is, that Holofernes is represented as saying, "Tell me now, ye sons of Canaan, who this people is, that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit." But how can it be reconciled with known history, that a prince of Persia should be wholly ignorant of the Jewish people?

It is impossible to reconcile what is said, in the close of the book, with any sound principles of chronology. Judith is represented as young and beautiful, when she slew Holofernes; but here it is said, "That she waxed old in her husband's house, being an hundred and five years old. And there was none that made the children of Israel any more afraid, in the days of Judith nor a long time after her death." In whose reign, or at what period, we would ask, did the Jews enjoy this long season of uninterrupted tranquillity?

Some writers who are fully convinced that the history of Judith cannot be reconciled with authentic history, if taken literally, are of opinion, that it contains a beautiful allegory;—that Bethulia, (the virgin,) represents the church of God; that the assault of Nebuchadnezzar signifies the opposition of the world and its prince; that the victory obtained by a pious woman, is intended to teach, that the church's deliverance is not effected by human might or power, but by the prayers and the piety

of the saints, &c. This, perhaps, is the most favourable view which we can take of this history: but take it as you will, it is clear that the book is apocryphal, and has no right to a place in the sacred Canon.

Between the first and second books of Maccabees, there is a palpable contradiction; for in the first book it is said, that "Judas died in the one hundred and fifty-second year:" but in the second, "that in the one hundred and eighty-eighth year, the people that were in Judea, and Judas, and the council, sent greeting and health unto Aristobulus." Thus, Judas is made to join in sending a letter, six-and-thirty years after his death! The contradiction is manifest. In the same first chapter of the second book, there is a story inserted which has very much the air of a fable. "For when our fathers were led into Persia, the priests that were then devout, took the fire of the altar privily and hid it in a hollow place of a pit without water, where they kept it sure, so that the place was unknown to all men. Now after many years, when it pleased God, Nehemias, being sent from the king of Persia, did send of the posterity of those priests that had hid it, to the fire: but when they told us they found no fire, but thick water, then commanded he them to draw it up and bring it, and when the sacrifice was laid on, Nehemias commanded the priests to sprinkle the wood and things laid thereon, with the water. When this was done and the time came that the sun shone, which before was hid in the clouds, a great fire was kindled." 2Ma_9:1-29. But the Jews were not carried to Persia but to Babylon, and the rest of the story has no foundation, whatever, in truth. In the second chapter we have another fabulous story of Jeremiah's taking the ark and altar, and altar of incense, to mount Pisgah, and hiding them in a hollow cave, and closing them up. This place Jeremiah declared should be unknown, "until the time that God gathered his people again together, and received them into mercy; when the cloud as it appeared unto Moses, should appear again." 1Ma_8:16.

There is another contradiction between these books of Maccabees, in relation to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. In the first, it is said, that he died at Elymais, in Persia, in the hundred and forty-ninth year; but, in the second book, it is related, that after entering Persepolis, with a view of overthrowing the temple and city, he was repulsed by the inhabitants; and while on his journey from this place, he was seized with a dreadful disease of the bowels, and died in the mountains. 1Ma_6:1-63; 2Ma_9:1-29.

Moreover, the accounts given of Nicanor, in the seventh chapter of the first book, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of the second book, are totally inconsistent. In the first book of Maccabees an erroneous account is given of the civil government of the Romans, where it is said, "That they committed their government to one man every year, who ruled over all their country, and that all were obedient to that one." Whereas, it is well known, that no such form of government ever existed among the Romans.

Finally, it is manifest that these books were not inspired, and therefore not canonical, because they were not written by prophets; but by men who speak of their labours in a way wholly incompatible with inspiration.

Jerome and Eusebius were of opinion, that Josephus was the author of the books of the Maccabees; but it has never been supposed by any, that he was an inspired man; therefore, if this opinion be correct, these books are no more canonical, than the Antiquities, or Wars of the Jews, by the same author.

It has been the constant tradition of Jews and Christians, that the spirit of prophecy ceased with Malachi, until the appearance of John the Baptist. Malachi has, on this account, been called by the Jews, "the seal of the prophets."

Josephus, in his book against Apion, after saying that it belonged to the prophets alone, to write inspired books, adds these words, "From the time of Artaxerxes, there were some among us, who wrote books even to our own times, but these are not of equal authority with the preceding, because the succession of prophets was not complete."

Eusebius, in giving a catalogue of the leaders of the Jews, denies that he can proceed any lower than Zerubbabel, "Because," says he, "after the return from captivity until the advent of our Saviour, there is no book which can be esteemed sacred."

Augustine gives a similar testimony. "After Malachi the Jews had no prophet, during that whole period, which intervened between the return from captivity and the advent of our Saviour."

Neither does Genebrard dissent from this opinion. "From Malachi to John the Baptist," says he, "no prophets existed."

Drusius cites the following words, from the Compiler of the Jewish History, "The rest of the discourses of Simon and his wars, and the wars of his brother, are they not written in the book of Joseph, the son of Gorion, and in the book of the Asmoneans, and in the books of the Roman kings?" Here the books of the Maccabees are placed between the writings of Josephus and the Roman history. The book of Wisdom does indeed claim to be the work of Solomon, an inspired man; but this claim furnishes the strongest ground for its condemnation. It is capable of the clearest proof from internal evidence, that this was the production of some person, probably a Hellenistic Jew, who lived long after the Canon of the Old Testament was completed. It contains manifest allusions to Grecian customs, and is tinctured with the Grecian philosophy. The manner in which the author praises himself is fulsome, and has no parallel in an inspired writer. This book has been ascribed to Philo Judæus; and if this conjecture be correct, doubtless it has no just claim to be considered a canonical book. But whoever was the author, his endeavouring to pass his composition off for the writing of Solomon, is sufficient to decide every question respecting his inspiration. If Solomon had written this book, it would have been found in the Jewish Canon, and in the Hebrew language. The writer is also guilty of shameful flattery to his own nation, which is entirely repugnant to the spirit of all the prophets. He has also, without any foundation, added many things to the sacred narration, contained in the canonical history; and has mingled with it much which is of the nature of poetical embellishment. And, indeed, the whole style of the composition savours too much of artificial eloquence, to be attributed to the Spirit of God; the constant characteristic of whose productions is, simplicity and sublimity.

Ecclesiasticus, which is superior to all the other apocryphal books, was written by one Jesus the son of Sirach. His grandfather, of the same name, it seems, had written a book, which he left to his son Sirach; and he delivered it to his son Jesus, who took great pains to reduce it into order; but he no where assumes the character of a prophet himself, nor does he claim it for the original author, his grandfather. In the prologue, he says. "My grandfather, Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the law and the prophets, and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein good judgment, was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to learning

and wisdom, to the intent that those which are desirous to learn, and are addicted to these things, might profit much more, in living according to the law. Wherefore let me entreat you to read it with favour and attention, and to pardon us wherein we may seem to come short of some words which we have laboured to interpret. For the same things uttered in Hebrew, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them. For in the eight-and-thirtieth year, coming into Egypt when Euergetes was king, and continuing there for some time, I found a book of no small learning: therefore I thought it most necessary for me to bestow some diligence and travail to interpret it; using great watchfulness, and skill, in that space, to bring the book to an end," &c. Surely there is no need of further arguments to prove that this modest author did not claim to be inspired. The author of the second book of the Maccabees professes to have reduced a work of Jason of Cyrene, consisting of five volumes, into one volume. Concerning which work, he says, "therefore to us that have taken upon us this painful labour of abridging, it was not easy, but a matter of sweat and watching." Again, "leaving to the author the exact handling of every particular, and labouring to follow the rules of an abridgment—to stand upon every point, and go over things at large, and to be curious in particulars, belongeth to the first author of the story; but to use brevity, and avoid much labouring of the work, is to be granted to him that maketh an abridgment." Is any thing more needed to prove that this writer did not profess to be inspired? If there was any inspiration in the case, it must be attributed to Jason of Cyrene, the original writer of the history;—but his work is long since lost, and we now possess only the abridgment which cost the writer so much labour and pains. Thus, I think it sufficiently appears, that the authors of these disputed books were not prophets; and that, as far as we can ascertain the circumstances in which they wrote, they did not lay claim to inspiration, but expressed themselves in such a way, as no man under the influence of inspiration ever did. The Popish writers, to evade the force of the arguments of their adversaries, pretend that there was a two-fold Canon; that some of the books of Scripture are proto-canonical; and others deuterio-canonical. If, by this distinction, they only meant that the word Canon was often used by the Fathers, with great latitude, so as to include all books that were ever read in the churches, or that were contained in the volume of the Greek Bible, the distinction is correct, and signifies the same, as is often expressed, by calling some books sacred and canonical, and others, ecclesiastical. But these writers make it manifest that they mean much more than this. They wish to put their deuterio-canonical books, on a level with the old Jewish Canon; and this distinction is intended to teach, that after the first Canon was constituted, other books were, from time to time, added: but when these books thus annexed to the Canon have been pronounced upon by the competent authority, they are to be received as of equal authority with the former. When this second Canon was constituted, is a matter concerning which they are not agreed; some pretend, that in the time of Shammai and Hillel, two famous rabbies, who lived before the advent of the Saviour, these books were added to the Canon. But why then are they not included in the Hebrew Canon? Why does Josephus never mention them? Why are they never quoted nor alluded to in the New Testament? And why did all the earlier Fathers omit to cite them, or expressly reject them? The difficulties of this theory being too prominent, the most of the advocates of the apocrypha, suppose, that these books, after having remained in doubt before, were received by the supreme authority of the church, in the fourth century. They allege, that these books were sanctioned by the council of Nice, and by the third council of Carthage, which met A. D. 397. But the story of the method pursued by the council of Nice, to distinguish between canonical and spurious books, is fabulous and ridiculous. There is nothing in the Canons of that

council relative to these books; and certainly, they cited no authorities from them, in confirmation of the doctrines established by them. And as to the third council of Carthage, it may be asked, what authority had this provincial synod to determine anything for the whole church, respecting the Canon? But there is no certainty that this council did determine anything on the subject; for in the same Canon, there is mention made of Pope Boniface, as living at that time, whereas he did not rise to this dignity, until more than twenty years afterwards; in which time, three other popes occupied the See of Rome; so that this Canon could not have been formed by the third council of Carthage. And in some copies it is inserted, as the fourteenth of the seventh council of Carthage. However this may be, we may be confident, that no council of the fourth century had any authority to add to the Canon of Scripture, books which were not only not received before, but explicitly rejected as apocryphal, by most of the Fathers. Our opponents say, that these books were uncertain before, but now received confirmation. How could there be any uncertainty, in regard to these books, if the church was as infallible, in the first three ages, as in the fourth. These books were either canonical before the fourth century, or they were not: if the former, how came it to pass that they were not recognized by the apostles? How came they to be overlooked and rejected by the primitive Fathers? But if they were not canonical before, they must have been made canonical by the decree of some council. That is, the church can make that an inspired book, which was never given by inspiration. This absurdity was mentioned before, but it deserves to be repeated, because, however unreasonable it may be, it forms the true, and almost the only ground, on which the doctrine of the Romish church, in regard to these apocryphal books, rests. This is, indeed, a part of the Pope's supremacy. Some of their best writers, however, deny this doctrine; and whatever others may pretend, it is most certain, that the Fathers, with one consent, believed that the Canon of sacred Scripture was complete in their time: they never dreamed of books not then canonical, becoming such, by any authority upon earth. Indeed, the idea of adding to the Canon, what did not, from the beginning, belong to it, never seems to have entered the mind of any person in former times. If this doctrine were correct, we might still have additions made to the Canon, and that too, of books which have existed for hundreds of years. This question may be brought to a speedy issue, with all unprejudiced judges. These books were either written by divine inspiration for the guidance of the church in matters of faith and practice, or they were not; if the former, they always had a right to a place in the Canon; if the latter, no act of a pope or council could render that divine, which was not so before. It would be to change the nature of a fact, than which nothing is more impossible.

It is alleged, with much confidence, that the Greek Bibles, used by the Fathers, contained these books; and, therefore, whenever they give their testimony to the sacred Scriptures, these are included. This argument proves too much, for the third book of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses were contained in these volumes, but these are rejected by the Romanists. The truth, however, is, that these books were not originally connected with the Septuagint; they were probably introduced into some of the later Greek versions, which were made by heretics. These versions, particularly that of Theodotion, came to be used promiscuously with that of the LXX; and to this day, the common copies contain the version of the book of Daniel by Theodotion, instead of that by the LXX. By some such means, these apocryphal books crept into the Greek Bible; but the early Fathers were careful to distinguish them from the canonical Scriptures, as we have already seen. That they were read in the churches, is also true; but not as Scripture; not for the confirmation of doctrine, but for the edification of the common people.

Some of the Fathers, it is true, cited them as authority, but very seldom, and the reason which rendered it difficult for them to distinguish accurately between ecclesiastical and canonical books has already been given. These pious men were generally unacquainted with Hebrew literature, and finding all these books in Greek, and frequently bound up in the same volume with the canonical Scriptures, and observing that they contained excellent rules for the direction of life and the regulation of morals, they sometimes referred to them, and cited passages from them, and permitted them to be read in the church, for the instruction and edification of the people. But the more learned of the Fathers, who examined into the authority of the sacred books with unceasing diligence, clearly marked the distinction between such books as were canonical, and such as were merely human compositions. And some of them even disapproved of the reading of these apocryphal books by the people; and some councils warned the churches against them. It was with this single view that so many catalogues of the canonical books were prepared and published.

Notwithstanding that we have taken so much pains to show that the books called apocrypha, are not canonical, we wish to avoid the opposite extreme of regarding them as useless, or injurious. Some of these books are important for the historical information which they contain; and, especially, as the facts recorded in them, are, in some instances, the fulfilment of remarkable prophecies.

Others of them are replete with sacred, moral, and prudential maxims, very useful to aid in the regulation of life and manners; but even with these, are interspersed sentiments, which are not perfectly accordant with the word of God. In short, these books are of very different value, but in the best of them there is so much error and imperfection, as to convince us, that they are human productions, and should be used as such: not as an infallible rule, but as useful helps in the attainment of knowledge, and in the practice of virtue. Therefore, when we would exclude them from a place in the Bible, we would not proscribe them as unfit to be read; but we would have them published in a separate volume, and studied much more carefully than they commonly have been. And while we would dissent from the practice of reading lessons from these books, as Scriptural lessons are read in the church, we would cordially recommend the frequent perusal, in private, of the first of Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, and above all Ecclesiasticus.

It is a dishonour to God, and a disparagement of his word, to place other books, in any respect on a level with the divine oracles; but it is a privilege to be permitted, to have access to the writings of men, eminent for their wisdom and piety. And it is also a matter of curious instruction to learn, what were the opinions of men, in ages long past, and in countries far remote. The infallibility of the church of Rome is clearly proved to be without foundation, by the decree of the Council of Trent, canonizing the apocrypha. If we have been successful in proving that these books are not canonical, the infallibility of both popes and councils is overthrown; for if they erred in one instance, it proves that the doctrine is false. One great inconvenience of this doctrine is, that when that church falls into any error, she can never retract it; for that would be to acknowledge her fallibility.

Some allege that the church of Rome is not now what she was in former years; but that she has laid aside opinions formerly entertained. But this allegation is inconsistent with her claim to infallibility. According to this, the church of Rome has never erred; what she has declared to be true at any time she must forever maintain to be true; or give up her pretensions to infallibility. In

regard to the Apocrypha, it is immaterial, whether the infallibility be supposed to reside in the pope or in a council; or in the pope and council united; for the council of Trent is considered to be an œcumenical council regularly constituted; and all its acts were sanctioned by the popes. Their error in pronouncing the apocrypha canonical, is decisive as to the infallibility of the church.

SECTION VI("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

NO CANONICAL BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HAS BEEN LOST

On this subject there has existed some diversity of opinion. Chrysostom is cited by Bellarmine, as saying, "That many of the writings of the prophets had perished, which may readily be proved from the history in Chronicles. For the Jews were negligent, and not only negligent but impious, so that some books were lost through carelessness, and others were burned, or otherwise destroyed." In confirmation of this opinion, an appeal is made to 1 Kings 4:32-33, where it is said of Solomon, "That he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop, that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." All these productions, it is acknowledged, have perished.

Again it is said in 1 Chronicles 29:29-30. "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer; with all his reign, and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries." The book of Jasher, also, is twice mentioned in Scripture. In Joshua 10:13, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" And in 2 Samuel 1:18, "And he bade them teach the children of Israel the use of the bow: behold it is written in the book of Jasher." The book of the Wars of the Lord is referred to, in Numbers 21:14. But we have in the Canon no books under the name of Nathan and Gad: nor any book of Jasher; nor of the Wars of the Lord.

Moreover, we frequently are referred, in the sacred history, to other chronicles or annals, for a fuller account of the matters spoken of, which Chronicles are not now extant. And in 2 Chronicles 9:29, it is said, "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?" Now it is well known, that none of these writings of the prophets are in the Canon; at least, none of them under their names.

It is said also in 2 Chronicles 12:15, "Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer, concerning genealogies?" Of which works nothing remains, under the names of these prophets.

1. The first observation which I would make on this subject, is, that every book referred to, or quoted in the sacred writings, is not necessarily an inspired, or canonical book. Because Paul cites passages from the Greek poets, it does not follow that we must receive their poems as inspired.

2. A book may be written by an inspired man, and yet be neither inspired nor canonical. Inspiration was not constantly afforded to the prophets, but was occasional, and for particular important purposes. In common matters, and especially in things noways connected with religion, it is

reasonable to suppose, that the prophets and apostles were left to the same guidance of reason and common sense, as other men. A man, therefore, inspired to deliver some prophecy, or even to write a canonical book, might write other books, with no greater assistance than other good men receive. Because Solomon was inspired to write some canonical books, it does not follow, that what he wrote on natural history, was also inspired. The Scriptures, however, do not say, that his three thousand proverbs, and his discourses on natural history, were ever committed to writing. It only says, that he spake these things. But supposing that all these discourses were committed to writing, which is not improbable, there is not the least reason for believing that they were inspired, any more than Solomon's private letters to his friends, if he ever wrote any. Let it be remembered, that the prophets and apostles were only inspired on special occasions, and on particular subjects, and all difficulties respecting such works as these will vanish. How many of the books referred to in the Bible, and mentioned above, may have been of this description, it is now impossible to tell; but probably several of them belong to this class. No doubt there were many books of annals, much more minute and particular in the narration of facts, than those which we have. It was often enough to refer to these state papers, or public documents, as being sufficiently correct, in regard to the facts on account of which the reference was made. There is nothing derogatory to the word of God, in the supposition that the books of Kings and Chronicles, which we have in the Canon, were compiled by the inspired prophets from these public records. All that is necessary for us, is, that the facts are truly related; and this could be as infallibly secured on this hypothesis, as on any other. The book of the Wars of the Lord, might for aught that appears, have been merely a muster roll of the army. The word translated book has so extensive a meaning in Hebrew, that it is not even necessary to suppose, that it was a writing at all. The book of Jasher, (or of rectitude, if we translate the word,) might have been some useful compend taken from Scripture, or composed by the wise, for the regulation of justice and equity, between man and man.

Augustine, in his City of God, has distinguished accurately on this subject. "I think," says he, "that those books which should have authority in religion were revealed by the Holy Spirit, and that men composed others by historical diligence, as the prophets did these by inspiration. And these two classes of books are so distinct, that it is only of those written by inspiration, that we are to suppose God, through them, to be speaking unto us. The one class is useful for fulness of knowledge; the other for authority in religion; in which authority the Canon is preserved."

3. But again, it may be maintained, without any prejudice to the completeness of the Canon, that there may have been inspired writings which were not intended for the instruction of the church in all ages, but composed by the prophets for some special occasion. These writings, though inspired, were not canonical. They were temporary in their design, and when that was accomplished, they were no longer needed. We know that the prophets delivered, by inspiration, many discourses to the people, of which we have not a trace on record. Many true prophets are mentioned, who wrote nothing that we know of; and several are mentioned, whose names are not even given. The same is true of the apostles. Very few of them had any concern in writing the canonical Scriptures, and yet they all possessed plenary inspiration. And if they wrote letters, on special occasions, to the churches planted by them; yet these were not designed for the perpetual instruction of the universal church. Therefore Shemaiah, and Iddo, and Nathan, and Gad, might have written some things by inspiration, which were never intended to form a part of the Sacred Volume. It is not asserted, that there certainly existed such temporary inspired writings: all that is

necessary to be maintained, is, that supposing such to have existed, which is not improbable, it does not follow that the Canon is incomplete, by reason of their loss. As this opinion may be startling to some, who have not thoroughly considered it, I will call in to its support the opinions of some distinguished theologians.

"It has been observed," says Francis Junius, "that it is one thing to call a book sacred, another to say that it is canonical; for every book was sacred which was edited by a prophet, or apostle; but it does not follow that every such sacred book is canonical, and was designed for the whole body of the church. For example, it is credible that Isaiah the prophet wrote many things, as a prophet, which were truly inspired, but those writings only were canonical, which God consecrated to the treasure of the church, and which by special direction were added to the public Canon. Thus Paul and the other apostles may have written many things, by divine inspiration, which are not now extant; but those only are canonical, which were placed in the Sacred Volume, for the use of the universal church: which Canon received the approbation of the apostles, especially of John, who so long presided over the churches in Asia."* The evangelical Witsius, of an age somewhat later, delivers his opinion on this point, in the following manner: "No one, I think, can doubt, but that all the apostles in the diligent exercise of their office, wrote frequent letters to the churches under their care, when they could not be present with them; and to whom they might often wish to communicate some instruction necessary for them in the circumstances in which they were placed. It would seem to me to be injurious to the reputation of those faithful and assiduous men, to suppose, that not one of them ever wrote any epistle, or addressed to a church, any writing, except those few, whose epistles are in the Canon. Now, as Peter, and Paul, and James, and John, were induced to write to the churches, on account of the need in which they stood of instruction, why would not the same necessity induce the other apostles to write to the churches under their care? Nor is there any reason why we should complain of the great loss which we have sustained, because these precious documents have perished; it is rather matter of gratitude, that so many have been preserved by the provident benevolence of God towards us, and so abundantly sufficient to instruct us, in the things pertaining to salvation."*

Although I have cited this passage from this excellent and orthodox theologian, in favour of the sentiment advanced; yet I do not feel at liberty to go the whole length of his opinion, here expressed. There is no reason to think, that any of the other apostles composed such works, as those which constitute the Canon of the New Testament. If they had, some of them would have been preserved, or at least, some memorial of such writings would have been handed down, in those churches to which they were addressed. These churches received and preserved the canonical books of those whose writings we have, and why should they neglect, or suffer to sink into oblivion, similar writings of apostles, from whom they first received the gospel?

Indeed, after all, this argument is merely hypothetical, and would be sufficient to answer the objections which might be made, if it could be proved, that some inspired writings had perished; but, in fact, there is no proof that any such ever existed. It is, therefore, highly probable, that we are in actual possession of all the books penned under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The last remark which I shall make in relation to the books of the Old Testament supposed to be lost, is, that it is highly probable that we have several of them now in the Canon, under another name. The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, were, probably, not written by one, but by a succession of prophets.

There is reason to believe, that until the Canon of the Old Testament was closed, the succession of prophets was never interrupted. Whatever was necessary to be added, by way of explanation, to any book already received into the Canon, they were competent to annex; or, whatever annals or histories, it was the purpose of God to have transmitted to posterity, they would be directed and inspired to prepare. Thus, different parts of these books might have been penned by Gad, Nathan, Iddo, Shemaiah, &c. That some parts of these histories were prepared by prophets, we have clear proof, in one instance; for, Isaiah has inserted in his prophecy several chapters, which are contained in 2 Kings, and which, I think, there can be no doubt, were originally written by himself. See 2 Kings 18:1-37, 2 Kings 19:1-27, 2 Kings 20:1-21, compared with Isaiah 36:1-22, Isaiah 37:1-38, Isaiah 38:1-22. The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the book of Jasher, is one of the books of the Pentateuch, or the whole law. The book of the Wars of the Lord has by many been supposed to be no other than the book of Numbers.

Thus, I think, it sufficiently appears, from an examination of particulars, that there exists no evidence, that any canonical book of the Old Testament has been lost. To which we may add, that there are many general considerations of great weight, which go to prove, that no part of the Scriptures of the Old Testament has been lost. The first is, that God by his providence would preserve from destruction books given by inspiration, and intended for the perpetual instruction of his church. It is reasonable to think, that he would not suffer his gracious purpose to be frustrated; and this argument, a priori, is greatly strengthened by the fact, that a remarkable providential care has been exercised in the preservation of the Sacred Scriptures. It is truly wonderful, that so many books should have been preserved unmutated, through hundreds and thousands of years; and during vicissitudes so great; and especially when powerful tyrants were so desirous of annihilating the religion of the Jews, and used their utmost exertions to destroy their sacred books.

Another consideration of great weight is, the religious, and even scrupulous care, with which the Jews, as far as we can trace the history of the Sacred Scriptures, have watched over their preservation. There can, I think, be little doubt, that they exercised the same vigilance during that period of their history of which we have no monuments. The translation of these books into Greek, is sufficient to show, that the same books existed nearly three hundred years before the advent of Christ. And above all, the unqualified testimony to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, by Christ and his apostles, ought to satisfy us, that we have lost none of the inspired books of the Canon. The Scriptures are constantly referred to, and quoted as infallible authority, by them, as we have before shown. These oracles were committed to the Jews as a sacred deposit, and they are never charged with unfaithfulness in this trust. The Scriptures are declared to have been written for our learning; and no intimation is given that they had ever been mutilated, or in any degree corrupted.

SECTION VII("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

THE ORAL LAW OF THE JEWS WITHOUT FOUNDATION

However the Jews may seem to agree with us, in regard to the Canon of the Old Testament, this concord relates only to the written law; for they obstinately persist in maintaining, that besides the law which was engraven on tables of stone, and the other precepts, and ordinances, which were communicated to Moses, and were ordered to be written, God gave unto him another Law, explanatory of the first, which he was commanded not to commit to writing, but to deliver down by oral tradition. The account which the Jewish doctors give of the first communication and

subsequent delivery of this law, is found in the Talmud. It is there stated, that during the whole day, while Moses continued on the mount, he was learning the written law, but at night he was occupied in receiving the oral law. When Moses descended from the mount, they say, that he first called Aaron into his tent, and communicated to him all that he had learned of this oral law; then he placed him on his right hand. Next he called in Eliezer and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, and repeated the whole to them; on which they also took their seats, the one on his right hand, the other on his left. After this the seventy elders entered, and received the same instruction as Aaron and his sons. And finally, the same communication was made to the whole multitude of people. Then Moses arose and departed, and Aaron, who had now heard the whole four times, repeated what he had learned, and also withdrew. In the same manner, Eliezer and Ithamar, each in turn, went over the same ground, and departed. And finally, the seventy elders repeated the whole to the people; every one of whom delivered what he had heard to his neighbour. Thus, according to Maimonides, was the oral law first given. The Jewish account of its transmission to posterity is no less particular. They pretend that Moses, when forty years had elapsed from the time of the Israelites leaving Egypt, called all the people, and telling them that his end drew near, requested that if any of them had forgotten aught of what he had delivered to them, they should repair to him, and he would repeat to them anew what they might have forgotten. And they tell us, that from the first day of the eleventh month, to the sixth day of the twelfth, he was occupied in nothing else than repeating and explaining the law to the people.

But, in a special manner, he committed this law to Joshua, by whom it was communicated, shortly before his death, to Phineas, the son of Eliezer; by Phineas, to Eli; by Eli, to Samuel; by Samuel, to David and Ahijah; by Ahijah, to Elijah; by Elijah, to Elisha; by Elisha, to Jehoiada; by Jehoiada, to Zechariah; by Zechariah to Hosea; by Hosea, to Amos; by Amos, to Isaiah; by Isaiah, to Micah; by Micah, to Joel; by Joel, to Nahum; by Nahum, to Habakkuk; by Habakkuk, to Zephaniah; by Zephaniah, to Jeremiah; by Jeremiah, to Baruch; by Baruch, to Ezra, the president of the great synagogue. By Ezra, this law was delivered to the high priest Jaddua; by Jaddua, to Antigonus; by Antigonus, to Joseph son of John, and Joseph son of Jehezer; by these to Aristobulus, and Joshua the son of Perechiah; by them to Judah son of Tibœus, and Simeon son of Satah. Thence to Shemaiah—to Hillel—to Simeon his son, supposed to have been the same who took our Saviour in his arms, in the temple, when brought thither to be presented by his parents. From Simeon, it passed to Gamaliel, the preceptor, as it is supposed, of Paul. Then to Simeon his son; and finally, to the son of Simeon, Judah Hakkadosh, by whom it was committed to writing.

But, although, the above list brings down an unbroken succession, from Moses to Judah the Holy, yet to render the tradition still more certain, the Jewish doctors inform us, that this oral law was also committed, in a special manner, to the high priests, and handed down, through their line, until it was committed to writing.

Judah Hakkadosh was the president of the Academy at Tiberias, and was held in great reputation for his sanctity, from which circumstance he received his surname, Hakkadosh the Holy. The temple being now desolate, and the nation scattered abroad, it was feared lest the traditionary law might be lost; therefore it was resolved to preserve it by committing it to writing. Judah the Holy, who lived about the middle of the second century, undertook this work, and digested all the traditions he could collect in six books, each consisting of several tracts. The whole number is sixty-three. But these tracts are again subdivided into numerous chapters. This is the famous

Mishna of the Jews. When finished, it was received by the nation with the highest respect and confidence; and their doctors began, forthwith, to compose commentaries on every part of it. These comments are called the Gemara, or the Completion; and the Mishna and Gemara, together, form the Talmud. But as this work of commenting on the text of the Mishna was pursued, not only in Judea, but in Babylonia, where a large number of Jews resided, hence it came to pass, that two Talmuds were formed; the one called the Jerusalem Talmud, the other, the Babylonish Talmud. In both these, the Mishna, committed to writing by Judah, is the text; but the commentaries are widely different. The former was completed before the close of the third century of the Christian era; the latter was not completed until towards the close of the fifth century. The Babylonish Talmud is much the larger of the two; for while that of Jerusalem has been printed in one folio volume, this fills twelve folios. This last is also held in much higher esteem by the Jews than the other; and, indeed, it comprehends all the learning and religion of that people, since they have been cast off for their unbelief and rejection of the true Messiah.

Maimonides has given an excellent digest of all the laws and institutions enjoined in this great work. The Jews place fully as much faith in the Talmud as they do in the Bible. Indeed, it is held in much greater esteem, and the reading of it is much more encouraged. It is a saying of one of their most esteemed Rabbies, "That the oral law is the foundation of the written; nor can the written law be expounded, but by the oral." Agreeably to this, in their confession, called the Golden Altar, it is said, "It is impossible for us to stand upon the foundation of our holy law, which is the written law, unless it be by the oral law, which is the exposition thereof." In the Talmud it is written, "That to give attention to the study of the Bible is some virtue; but he who pays attention to the study of the Mishna, possesses a virtue which shall receive a reward; and he who occupies himself in reading the Gemara, has a virtue, than which there is none more excellent." Nay, they go to the impious length of saying, "That he who is employed in the study of the Bible and nothing else, does but waste his time." They maintain, that if the declarations of this oral law be ever so inconsistent with reason and common sense, they must be received with implicit faith—"You must not depart from them," says Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, "if they should assert that your right hand is your left, or your left your right." And in the Talmud it is taught, "That, to sin against the words of the scribes, is far more grievous than to sin against the words of the Law." "My son, attend rather to the words of the scribes, than to the words of the Law." "The text of the Bible is like water, but the Mishna is like wine;" with many other similar comparisons.

Without the oral law, they assert, that the written law remains in perfect darkness; for, say they, "There are many things in Scripture, which are contradictory, and which can in no way be reconciled, but by the oral law, which Moses received on Mount Sinai." In conformity with these sentiments, is the conduct of the Jews until this day. Their learned men spend almost all their time in poring over the Talmud; and he, among them, who knows most of the contents of this monstrous farrago of lies and nonsense, is esteemed the most learned man. In consequence of their implicit faith in this oral law, it becomes almost useless to reason with the Jews out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is a matter of real importance, therefore, to show that this whole fabric rests on a sandy foundation; and to demonstrate that there is no evidence whatever that any such law was ever given to Moses on Sinai. To this subject, therefore, I would now solicit the attention of the reader.

Here, then, let it be observed, that we have no controversy with the Jews concerning the written law, Moral, Ceremonial, or Political; nor do we deny that Moses received from God, on Mount Sinai, some explication of the written law. But what we maintain is, that this exposition did not form a second distinct law; that it was not the same as the oral law of the Jews, contained in the Talmud; that it was not received by Moses in a distinct form from the written law, and attended with a prohibition to commit it to writing. In support of these positions, we solicit the attention of the impartial reader to the following arguments:

1. There is not the slightest mention of any such law in all the sacred records; neither of its original communication to Moses, nor of its transmission to posterity, in the way pretended by the Jews. Now, we ask, is it probable, that if such a law had been given, there should never have been any hint of the matter, nor the least reference to it, in the whole Bible? Certainly, this total silence of Scripture is very little favourable to the doctrine of an oral law. Maimonides does indeed pretend to find a reference to it in Exodus 24:12. "I will give you, saith the Lord, a law and commandment;" by the first of these he understands the written law, and by the last the oral. But if he had only attended to the words next ensuing, he would never have adduced this text in confirmation of an oral law; "which I have written that thou mayst teach them." And we know that it is very common to express the written law by both these terms, as well as by several others of the same import. Now, if no record exists of such a law having been given to Moses, how can we, at this late period, be satisfied of the fact? If it was never heard of for more than two thousand years afterwards, what evidence is there that it ever existed?

2. Again, we know that in the time of king Josiah, the written law, which had been lost, was found again. How great was the consternation of the pious king and his court, on this occasion! How memorable the history of this fact! But what became of the oral law during this period? Is it reasonable to think, that this would remain uninjured through successive ages of idolatry, when the written law was so entirely forgotten? If they had lost the knowledge of what was in their written law, would they be likely to retain that which was oral? If the written law was lost, would the traditionary law be preserved? And if this was at any time lost, how could it be recovered? Not from the written law, for this does not contain it; not from the memory of man, for the supposition is, that it was thence obliterated. If, then, this law, by any chance, was once lost, it is manifest that it could never be recovered, but by divine revelation. And when we survey the history of the Jews, is it conceivable, that such a body of law, as that contained in the Talmud, immensely larger than the written law, could have been preserved entire, through so many generations, merely by oral communication? The Jews, indeed, amuse us with a fable on this subject. They tell us that while the Israelites mourned on account of the death of Moses, they forgot three thousand of these traditions, which were recovered by the ingenuity of Othniel the son of Kenaz. This is ridiculous enough. What a heap of traditions must that have been, from which three thousand could be lost at once! And how profound the genius of Othniel, which was able to bring to light such a multitude of precepts, after they had been completely forgotten! But the proof of this fact is more ludicrous still. It is derived from Joshua 15:16-17. "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-Sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife." The unlearned reader should be informed that Kirjath-Sepher, means the city of the book. But who retained the oral law safely preserved in his memory during the long reign of Manasseh, and during the reign of Amon, and of

Josiah? Where was that law, during the seventy years captivity in Babylon? Have we not a word to inform us of the fate of this law in all the histories of those times? What! is there not a hint concerning the preservation of a deposit so precious as this law is pretended to be? We must say again, that this continued silence of Scripture, through a period of so many hundred years, speaks little in favour of the unwritten law.

3. The Jews again inform us, that this law was prohibited to be written; but whence do they derive the proof of the assertion? Let the evidence, if there be any, be produced. Must we have recourse to the oral law itself, for testimony? Be it so. But why then is it now written, and has been, for more than fifteen hundred years? In the Talmud, it is said, "The words of the written law, it is not lawful for you to commit to oral tradition; nor the words of the oral law to writing." And Sol. Jarchi says, "Neither is it lawful to write the oral law." Now we say, there was a law containing such a prohibition, or there was not. If the former, then the Talmudists have transgressed a positive precept of this law, in committing it to writing; if the latter, then their Talmud and their rabbies speak falsely. Let them choose in this dilemma.

4. But it can be proved, that whatever laws Moses received from God, the same he was commanded to write. It is said, "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." Exodus 24:3-4. And again, it is said, "And the Lord said to Moses, Write these words, for according to these words have I made a covenant with you and with Israel." Exodus 34:27-28. And it is worthy of particular observation, that whenever the people are called upon to obey the law of the Lord, no mention is made of any other than the written law. Thus Moses, when his end approached, made a speech unto the people; after which, it is added, "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read it before all Israel in their hearing." Deuteronomy 31:9, Deuteronomy 31:24.

Here, observe, there is no mention of any other but the written law. There is no direction to repeat the oral law, at this time of leisure; but surely it was more necessary to command the people to do this, if there had been such a law, than to hear the written law which they might read from time to time. In the time of Ahaz, the sacred historian informs us, "That the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent unto you by my servants the prophets." 2 Kings 17:13, 2 Kings 17:37.

Now, it is very manifest that the law which they are reproved for breaking, was the written law; for in the same chapter we have the following exhortation: "And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandments which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore." The prophets continually refer the people "to the law and to the testimony," and declare, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." When Jehoshaphat set about reforming and instructing the people, and set on foot an important mission, consisting of princes and Levites, to teach them, they confined themselves to what was written in the Scriptures, "And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about through

all the cities of Judah, and taught the people." 2 Chronicles 17:9. So also Ezra, when he instructed the people who had returned from Babylon, made use of no other than the written law; "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding. And he read therein before the street, that was before the water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand: and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and Ezra opened the book in sight of all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And the priests and the Levites caused the people to understand the law; and they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." Nehemiah 8:2-5, Nehemiah 8:7-8.

5. Besides, the written law is pronounced to be perfect, so that nothing need, or could be added to it; therefore the oral law was superfluous. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalms 19:8. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you." Deuteronomy 4:1-2.

It is not a valid objection which they bring against this argument, that Christians add the gospel to the law; for this is not, properly speaking, a new law. The gospel is a promise of grace and salvation. The precepts of the law are, indeed, specially employed in the gospel, to a purpose for which they were not originally intended; but the gospel, in whatever light it may be viewed, is committed to writing, and no part of it left to depend on oral tradition.

6. In the numerous exhortations and injunctions of Almighty God, recorded in the Old Testament, there is not an instance of any one being commanded to do anything not contained in the written law, which proves, that either there was no other law in existence, or that obedience to it was not required; and if obedience was not required, then, certainly, there was no law.*

Moreover, many of the Jews themselves concur with us in rejecting the oral law. The chief advocates of traditions were the Pharisees, who arose out of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, who lived after the times of the Maccabees. On this subject, we have the testimony of Jerome, who says, "Shammai and Hillel, from whom arose the Scribes and Pharisees, not long before the birth of Christ; the first of whom was called the Dissipator, and the last, Profane; because, by their traditions, they destroyed the law of God." Isaiah 8:1-22. But on this point, the Sadducees were opposed to the Pharisees, and, according to Josephus, rejected all traditions, adhering to the Scriptures alone. With them agreed the Samaritans, and Essenes. The Karaites, also, received the written word, and rejected all traditions; although in other respects, they did not agree with the Sadducees. And in consequence of this, they are hated and reviled by the other Jews, so that it is not without great difficulty that they will receive a Karaite into one of their synagogues. Of this sect, there are still some remaining in Poland, Russia, Turkey, and Africa.

It now remains to mention the arguments by which the Jews attempt to establish their oral law. These shall be taken from Manasseh ben Israel,* one of their most learned and liberal men. He argues from the necessity of an oral law, to explain many parts of the written law. To confirm this opinion, he adduces several examples, as Exodus 12:2. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year." On this text he remarks, "That the name of the month is not mentioned. It is not said, whether the months were lunar or solar, both of

which were in ancient use; and yet without knowing this, the precept could not be observed. The same difficulty occurs in regard to the other annual feasts.”

“Another example is taken from Leviticus 11:13, where it is commanded, that unclean birds shall not be eaten, and yet we are not furnished with any criteria, by which to distinguish the clean from the unclean, as in the case of beasts. A third example is from Exodus 16:29, ‘Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day,’ and yet we are not informed, whether he was forbidden to leave his house, his court, his city, or his suburbs. So, in Leviticus 21:12, the priest is forbidden ‘to go out of the Sanctuary,’ and no time is limited; but we know that the residence of the priests was without the precincts of the temple, and that they served there in rotation.”

“Again, in Exodus 20:10, all work is prohibited on the Sabbath, but circumcision is commanded to be performed on the eighth day; and it is nowhere declared, whether this rite should be deferred, when the eighth day occurred on the Sabbath. The same difficulty exists in regard to the slaying of the paschal lamb, which was confined by the law to the fourteenth day of the month, and we are nowhere informed what was to be done when this was the Sabbath.” “In Deuteronomy 24:1-22 we have many laws relating to marriage, but we are nowhere informed what was constituted a legal marriage.” “In the Feast of the Tabernacles, beautiful branches of trees are directed to be used, but the species of tree is not mentioned. And in the Feast of Weeks, it is commanded, ‘That on the fiftieth day, the wave-sheaf should be offered from their habitations;’ but where it should be offered is not said. And, finally, among prohibited marriages, the wife of an uncle is never mentioned.” In these, and many other instances, the learned Jew observes, that the law could only be understood by such oral tradition as he supposes accompanied the written law.

Now, in answer to these things, we observe first, in the general, that however many difficulties may be started respecting the precise meaning of many parts of the law, these can never prove the existence of an oral law. The decision on these points might have been left to the discretion of the worshippers, or to the common sense of the people. Besides, many things may appear obscure to us, which were not so to the ancient Israelites; so that they might have needed no oral law to explain them.

Again, it is one thing to expound a law, and another to add something to it; but the oral law for which they plead, is not a mere exposition, but an additional law.

It is one thing to avail ourselves of traditions to interpret the law, and another to receive them as divine and absolutely necessary. We do not deny that many things may be performed according to ancient custom, or the traditions of preceding ages, in things indifferent; but we do deny that these can be considered as divine or necessary. But particularly, we answer, that the alleged difficulty about the name of the month has no existence, for it can be very well ascertained from the circumstances of the case; and in Exodus 13:1-22 the month is named. The civil year of the Jews began with the month Tisri, but the ecclesiastical with Abib. There is, in fact, no greater difficulty here, than in any other case, where the circumstance of time is mentioned. There was no need of understanding the method of reducing solar and lunar years into one another, to decide this matter. And if the Talmud be examined on this point, where the oral law is supposed to be now contained, there will be found there no satisfactory method of computing time. And, indeed, the Talmudic doctors are so far from being agreed on this subject, that anything else may be found sooner than a law regulating this matter in the Talmud. And in regard to the unclean birds, why

was it necessary to have criteria to distinguish them, since a catalogue of them is given in the very passage to which reference is made? And I would ask, does the pretended oral law contain any such criteria, to direct in this case? Nothing less. The difficulty about the people leaving their place on the Sabbath, and the priests leaving the temple, is really too trifling to require any serious consideration. And as to what should be done when the day of circumcising a child, or of killing the passover, happened on the Sabbath, it is a point easily decided. These positive institutions ought to have been observed, on whatever day they occurred. The question respecting matrimony should rather provoke a smile, than a serious answer; for who is ignorant what constitutes a lawful marriage? Or who would suppose that the ceremonies attendant on this transaction ought to be prescribed by the law of God; or, that another law was requisite for the purpose? As well might our learned Jew insist on the necessity of an oral law, to teach us how we should eat, drink, and perform our daily work.

If the law prescribed beautiful branches of trees to be used in the Feast of Tabernacles, what need was there of an oral law to teach anything more? If such branches were used, it was of course indifferent whether they were of this or that species.

Equally futile are the other arguments of the author, and need not be answered in detail.

It appears, therefore, that there is no evidence that God ever gave any law to Moses, distinct from that which is written in the Pentateuch. And there is good reason to believe, that the various laws found in the Mishna, were never received from God, nor derived by tradition from Moses; but were traditions of the fathers, such as were in use in the time of our Saviour, who severely reprehends the Scribes and Pharisees, for setting aside, and rendering of no effect, the word of God, by their unauthorized traditions. The internal evidence is itself sufficient to convince us that the laws of the Talmud are human inventions, and not divine institutions; except that those circumstances of divine worship which were left to the discretion of the people, and which were regulated by custom, may be often found preserved in this immense work.

PART II("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

SECTION I("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

METHOD OF SETTLING THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

After what has been said, in the former part of this work, respecting the importance of settling the Canon on correct principles, it will be unnecessary to add anything here on that subject, except to say, that this inquiry cannot be less interesting in regard to the Old Testament than to the New. It is a subject which calls for our utmost diligence and impartiality. It is one which we cannot neglect with a good conscience; for the inquiry is nothing less than to ascertain what revelation God has made to us, and where it is to be found. As to the proper method of settling the Canon of the New Testament, the same course must be pursued as has been done in respect to the Old. We must have recourse to authentic history, and endeavour to ascertain what books were received as genuine by the primitive church and early Fathers. The contemporaries, and immediate successors of the apostles, are the most competent witnesses in this case. If, among these, there is found to have been a general agreement, as to what books were canonical, it will go far to

satisfy us respecting the true Canon; for it cannot be supposed, that they could easily be deceived in a matter of this sort. A general consent of the early Fathers, and of the primitive church, therefore, furnishes conclusive evidence on this point, and is that species of evidence which is least liable to fallacy or abuse. The learned Huet, has, therefore, assumed it as a maxim, "That every book is genuine, which was esteemed genuine by those who lived nearest to the time when it was written, and by the ages following, in a continued series."* The reasonableness of this rule will appear more evident, when we consider the great esteem with which these books were at first received; the constant public reading of them in the churches, and the early version of them into other languages. The high claims of the Romish church, in regard to the authority of fixing the Canon, have already been disproved, as it relates to the books of the Old Testament; and the same arguments apply with their full force to the Canon of the New Testament, and need not be repeated. It may not be amiss, however, to hear from distinguished writers of that communion, what their real opinion is on this subject. Heuman asserts, "That the sacred Scriptures, without the authority of the church, have no more authority than Æsop's Fables." And Baillie, "That he would give no more credit to Matthew than to Livy, unless the church obliged him." To the same purpose speak Pighius, Eckius, Bellarmine, and many others of their most distinguished writers. By the authority of the church, they understand a power lodged in the church of Rome, to determine what books shall be received as the word of God; than which it is scarcely possible to conceive of anything more absurd. In avoiding this extreme, some Protestants have verged towards the opposite, and have asserted, that the only, or principal evidence of the canonical authority of the sacred Scriptures is, their internal evidence. Even some churches went so far as to insert this opinion in their public confessions.*

Now it ought not to be doubted, that the internal evidence of the Scriptures is exceedingly strong; and that when the mind of the reader is truly illuminated, it derives from this source the most unwavering conviction of their truth and divine authority; but that every sincere Christian should be able, in all cases, by this internal light, to distinguish between canonical books and such as are not, is surely no very safe or reasonable opinion. Suppose that a thousand books of various kinds, including the canonical, were placed before any sincere Christian, would he be able, without mistake, to select from this mass the twenty-seven books of which the New Testament is composed, if he had nothing to guide him but the internal evidence? Would every such person be able at once to determine, whether the book of Ecclesiastes, or of Ecclesiasticus, belonged to the Canon of the Old Testament, by internal evidence alone? It is certain, that the influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary to produce a true faith in the word of God; but to make this the only criterion by which to judge of the canonical authority of a book is certainly liable to strong objections. The tendency of this doctrine is to enthusiasm, and the consequence of acting upon it, would be to unsettle, rather than establish, the Canon of Holy Scripture; for it would be strange, if some persons, without any other guidance than their own spiritual taste, would not pretend that other books besides those long received were canonical, or would not be disposed to reject some part of these. If this evidence were as infallible as some would have it to be, then the authenticity of every disputed text, as well as the canonical authority of every book, might be ascertained by it. But, it is a fact, that some eminently pious men doubted for a while respecting the canonical authority of some genuine books of the New Testament. And if the internal evidence were the only criterion of canonical authority to which we could resort, there would remain no possibility of convincing any person of the inspiration of a book, unless he could perceive in it the internal evidence of a divine

origin. In many cases this species of evidence can scarcely be said to exist, as when for wise purposes God directs or inspires a prophet to record genealogical tables; or even in the narration of common events, I do not see how it can be determined from internal evidence, that the history is written by inspiration; for the only circumstance in which an inspired narrative differs from a faithful human history, is that the one is infallible, and the other is not; but the existence of this infallibility, or the absence of it, is not apparent from reading the books. Both accounts may appear consistent, and it is only, or chiefly, by external evidence that we can know that one of them is inspired. Who could undertake to say, that from internal evidence alone, he could determine that the book of Esther, or the Chronicles, were written by inspiration? Besides, some books are obscure and not easily understood; now, how could any one discern the internal evidence of a book, the meaning of which he did not yet understand? The evidence arising from a general view of the Scriptures, collectively, is most convincing, but is not so well adapted to determine whether some one book, considered separately, was certainly written by divine inspiration.

It is necessary, therefore, to proceed to our destined point in a more circuitous way. We must be at the pains to examine into the history of the Canon, and, as was before said, to ascertain what books were esteemed canonical by all those who had the best opportunity of judging of this matter; and when the internal evidence is found corroborating the external, the two, combined, may produce a degree of conviction which leaves no room to desire any stronger evidence. The question to be decided is a matter of fact. It is an inquiry respecting the real authors of the books of the New Testament, whether they were written by the persons whose names they bear, or by others under their names. The inspiration of these books, though closely allied to this subject, is not now the object of inquiry. The proper method of determining a matter of fact, evidently is to have recourse to those persons who were witnesses of it, or who received their information from others who were witnesses. It is only in this way that we know that Homer, Horace, Virgil, Livy, and Tully, wrote the books which now go under their names. The early Christians pursued this method of determining what books were canonical. They searched into the records of the church, before their time, and from these ascertained what books should be received, as belonging to the sacred volume. They appeal to that certain and universal tradition, which attested the genuineness of these books. Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, Cyril, and Augustine, have all made use of this argument, in establishing the Canon of the New Testament. The question is often asked, When was the Canon of the New Testament constituted, and by what authority? Many persons who write and speak on this subject, appear to entertain a wrong impression in regard to it; as if the books of the New Testament could not be of authority, until they were sanctioned by some Ecclesiastical Council, or by some publicly expressed opinion of the Fathers of the church; and as if any portion of their authority depended on their being collected into one volume. But the truth is, that every one of these books was of authority, as far as known, from the moment of its publication; and its right to a place in the Canon, is not derived from the sanction of any church or council, but from the fact, that it was written by inspiration. And the appeal to testimony is not to prove that any council of bishops, or others, gave sanction to the book, but to show that it is indeed the genuine work of Matthew, or John, or Peter, or Paul, who we know were inspired. The books of the New Testament were, therefore, of full authority, before they were collected into one volume; and it would have made no difference if they had never been included in one volume, but had retained that separate form in which they were first published. And it is by no means certain, that these books were, at a very early period, bound in one volume. As far as we have any testimony on the subject, the

probability is, that it was more customary to include them in two volumes: one of which was called the Gospel, and the other, the Apostles. Some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament extant, appear to have been put up in this form; and the Fathers often refer to the Scriptures of the New Testament, under these two titles. The question, When was the Canon constituted? admits therefore of no other proper answer than this,—that as soon as the last book of the New Testament was written and published, the Canon was completed. But if the question relates to the time when these books were collected together, and published in a single volume, or in two volumes, it admits of no definite answer; for those churches which were situated nearest to the place where any particular books were published, would, of course, obtain copies much earlier than churches in a remote part of the world. For a considerable period, the collection of these books, in each church, must have been necessarily incomplete; for it would take some time to send to the church, or people, with whom the autographs were deposited, and to have fair copies transcribed. This necessary process will also account for the fact, that some of the smaller books were not received by the churches so early, nor so universally, as the larger. The solicitude of the churches to possess immediately the more extensive and important books of the New Testament, would, doubtless, induce them to make a great exertion to acquire copies; but, probably, the smaller would not be so much spoken of, nor would there be so strong a desire to obtain them, without delay. Considering how difficult it is now, with all our improvements in the typographical art, to multiply copies of the Scriptures with sufficient rapidity, it is truly wonderful, how so many churches as were founded during the first century, to say nothing of individuals, could all be supplied with copies of the New Testament, when there was no speedier method of producing them than by writing every letter with the pen! “The pen of a ready writer” must then, indeed, have been of immense value. The idea entertained by some, especially by Dodwell, that these books lay for a long time locked up in the coffers of the churches to which they were addressed, and totally unknown to the world, is in itself most improbable, and is repugnant to all the testimony which exists on the subject. Even as early as the time when Peter wrote his second Epistle, the writings of Paul were in the hands of the churches, and were classed with the other Scriptures.* And the citations, from these books by the earliest Christian writers, living in different countries, demonstrate, that from the time of their publication, they were sought after with avidity, and were widely dispersed. How intense the interest which the first Christians felt in the writings of the apostles can scarcely be conceived by us, who have been familiar with these books from our earliest years. How solicitous would they be, for example, who had never seen Paul, but had heard of his wonderful conversion, and extraordinary labours and gifts, to read his writings! And probably they who had enjoyed the high privilege of hearing this apostle preach, would not be less desirous of reading his Epistles. As we know, from the nature of the case, as well as from testimony, that many uncertain accounts of Christ’s discourses and miracles had obtained circulation, how greatly would the primitive Christians rejoice to obtain an authentic history from the pen of an apostle, or from one who wrote precisely what was dictated by an apostle! We need no longer wonder, therefore, that every church should wish to possess a collection of the writings of the apostles; and knowing them to be the productions of inspired men, they would want no further sanction of their authority. All that was requisite was, to be certain that the book was indeed written by the apostle whose name it bore. And this leads me to observe, that some things in Paul’s Epistles, which seem to common readers to be of no importance, were of the utmost consequence. Such as, “I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle,” &c.—“The salutation, with mine own

hand.”—“So I write in every epistle.”—“You see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.”—“The salutation by the hand of me, Paul.”—“The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle.”* This apostle commonly employed an amanuensis; but that the churches to which he wrote might have the assurance of the genuineness of his Epistles, from seeing his own hand-writing, he constantly wrote the salutation himself; so much care was taken to have these sacred writings well authenticated, on their first publication. And on the same account it was, that he and the other apostles were so particular in giving the names, and the characters, of those who were the bearers of their Epistles. And it seems, that they were always committed to the care of men of high estimation in the church; and commonly, more than one appears to have been intrusted with this important commission.

If it be inquired, what became of the autographs of these sacred books, and why they were not preserved; since this would have prevented all uncertainty respecting the true reading, and would have relieved the Biblical critic from a large share of labour; it is sufficient to answer, that nothing different has occurred, in relation to these autographs, from that which has happened to all other ancient writings. No man can produce the autograph of any book as old as the New Testament, unless it has been preserved in some extraordinary way, as in the case of the manuscripts of Herculaneum; neither could it be supposed, that in the midst of such vicissitudes, revolutions, and persecutions, as the Christian church endured, this object could have been secured by anything short of a miracle. And God knew, that by a superintending providence over the sacred Scriptures, they could be transmitted with sufficient accuracy, by means of apographs, to the most distant generations. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that the Christians of early times were so absorbed and impressed with the glory of the truths revealed, that they gave themselves little concern about the mere vehicle by which they were communicated. They had matters of such deep interest, and so novel, before their eyes, that they had neither time, nor inclination, for the minutiae of criticism. It may be, therefore, that they did not set so high a value on the possession of the autograph of an inspired book as we should, but considered a copy, made with scrupulous fidelity, as equally valuable with the original. And God may have suffered these autographs of the sacred writings to perish, lest in process of time, they should have become idolized, like the brazen serpent; or lest men should be led superstitiously to venerate the mere parchment and ink, and form and letters, employed by an apostle. Certainly, the history of the church renders such an idea far from being improbable.

But, although little is said about the originals of the apostles' writings, we have a testimony in Tertullian, that the Authentic Letters of the apostles might be seen by any that would take the pains to go to the churches to which they were addressed. Some, indeed, think that Tertullian does not mean to refer to the autographs, but to authentic copies; but why then send the inquirer to the churches to which the Epistles were addressed? Had not other churches, all over the world, authentic copies of these Epistles also? There seems to be good reason, therefore, for believing, that the autographs, or original letters of the apostles, were preserved by the churches to which they were addressed, in the time of Tertullian.* But although the autographs of the books of the New Testament are not extant, we have beautiful copies of the whole penned as early as the fourth or fifth century, and some think that our oldest manuscripts of the New Testament have a still earlier origin; and we have versions which were made at a period still earlier, so that we have lost nothing by the disappearance of the autographs of the New Testament.

CATALOGUES OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—CANONICAL BOOKS ALONE
CITED AS AUTHORITY BY THE FATHERS, AND READ IN THE CHURCHES AS SCRIPTURE

Having declared our purpose, to place the settling of the Canon of the New Testament on the footing of authentic testimony, we will now proceed to adduce our authorities, and shall begin with an examination of the ancient catalogues of the New Testament. The slightest attention to the works of the Fathers will convince any one that the writings of the apostles were held, from the beginning, in the highest estimation; that great pains were taken to distinguish the genuine productions of these inspired men from all other books; that they were sought out with uncommon diligence, and read with profound attention and veneration, not only in private, but publicly in the churches; and that they are cited and referred to, universally, as decisive on every point of doctrine, and as authoritative standards for the regulation of faith and practice. This being the state of the case, when the books of the New Testament were communicated to the churches, we are enabled, in regard to most of them, to produce testimony of the most satisfactory kind, that they were admitted into the Canon, and received as inspired, by the universal consent of Christians in every part of the world. And as to those few books, concerning which some persons entertained doubts, it can be shown, that as soon as their claims were fully and impartially investigated, they also were received with universal consent; and that other books, however excellent as human compositions, were never put upon a level with the canonical books of the New Testament; that spurious writings, under the names of the apostles, were promptly and decisively rejected, and that the churches were repeatedly warned against such apocryphal books. To do justice to this subject, will require some detail, which may appear dry to the reader, but should be interesting to every person who wishes to know assuredly, that what he receives as sacred Scripture, is no imposture, but the genuine, authentic productions of those inspired men, whom Christ appointed to be his witnesses to the world, and to whom was committed the sacred deposit of divine truth, intended for the instruction and government of the church in all future ages. In exhibiting the evidence of the canonical authority of these books, we shall first attend to some general considerations, which relate to the whole volume, and then adduce testimony in favour of each book now included in the Canon. And here, as in the case of the Old Testament, we find that at a very early period, catalogues of these books were published, by most of the distinguished Fathers whose writings have come down to us; and that the same has been done, also, by several councils, whose decrees are still extant.

These catalogues are, for the most part, perfectly harmonious. In a few of them, some books now in the Canon are omitted, for which omission a satisfactory reason can commonly be assigned. In the first circulation of the sacred Scriptures, there was great need of such lists; as the distant churches and common Christians were liable to be imposed on by spurious writings, which seem to have abounded in those times. It was, therefore, a most important part of the instruction given to Christians, by their spiritual guides, to inform them accurately, what books belonged to the Canon. Great pains were taken, also, to know the truth on this subject. Pious bishops, for this single purpose, travelled into Judea, and remained there for some time, that they might learn, accurately, every circumstance relative to the authenticity of these writings.

1. The first regular catalogue of the books of the New Testament, which we find on record, is by Origen, whose extensive Biblical knowledge highly qualified him to judge correctly in this case. He had not only read much, but travelled extensively, and resided a great part of his life on the confines of Judea, in a situation favourable to accurate information from every part of the church, where any of these books were originally published. Origen lived and flourished about one hundred years after the death of the apostle John. He was, therefore, near enough to the time of the publication of these books, to obtain the most certain information of their authors. Most of the original writings of this great and learned man have perished, but his catalogue of the books of the New Testament has been preserved by Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History.* It was contained in Origen's Homilies on the gospel of Matthew; and was repeated in his Homilies on the gospel of John. In this catalogue he mentions the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, fourteen Epistles of Paul, two of Peter, three of John, and the Book of Revelation. This enumeration includes all the present Canon, except the Epistles of James and Jude, but these were omitted by accident, not design; for in other parts of his writings, he acknowledges these Epistles as a part of the Canon. And while Origen furnishes us with so full a catalogue of the books now in the Canon, he inserts no others, which proves, that in his time the Canon was well settled among the learned; and that the distinction between inspired writings and human compositions was as clearly marked, as at any subsequent period. In the work entitled, Apostolical Constitutions, ascribed to Clement of Rome, there is a catalogue of the books of the New Testament; but as this work is not genuine, and of an uncertain author and age, I will not make use of it.

There has been preserved a fragment of a very ancient writing on the Canon, ascribed to Caius the presbyter, which may be seen in Routh's Reliquiæ, an abridgment of which is here given in a literal version from the Latin. What is said by the author concerning the first two evangelists is lost. The fragment commences by saying, "The third is the gospel according to Luke. Luke was that physician who, after the ascension, consorted with Paul.... Although he had never seen Christ in the flesh, yet having acquired a knowledge of his life, he commences his narrative from the nativity of John.

"The fourth gospel was written by John, one of the disciples. To his fellow disciples, and to the bishops, who exhorted him [to write,] he said, 'Fast with me three days, from this day, and whatever shall be revealed to any of us, we will declare to one another.' The same night it was revealed to Andrew, that John, under his own name should describe all things, so that they might be recognized by all. And so, though various elements are taught in the several gospels, yet the faith of believers is not diverse, since with one pervading spirit all things are declared by all concerning the nativity, the passover, the resurrection, and concerning his conversation with his disciples, and his double advent; the first, when he was seen in a state of humiliation ... in the second, with glorious regal power, which is yet future.... But the Acts of all the Apostles, Luke to Theophilus has comprehended in a single book. The Epistles of Paul declare to all who wish to know, on what account, and from what place they were written. Paul, following the example of his predecessor John, wrote Epistles to the following seven named churches:—First, to the Corinthians; the second to the Ephesians; the third to the Philippians; the fourth to the Colossians; the fifth to the Galatians; the sixth to the Thessalonians; and the seventh to the Romans. But to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians, he wrote, for the sake of correction, a second time. One church is known, diffused through the whole world.

“And John, in the Apocalypse, although he addressed himself to seven churches, yet speaks to all. Moreover, there is one [epistle] to Philemon; one to Titus, and two to Timothy, on account of his affection and care; which, however, are in honour of the Catholic Church, and sanctified to the ordaining ecclesiastical discipline.

“There is one [epistle of Paul] carried about to the Laodiceans, and one to the Alexandrians under the name of Paul, forged to support the heresy of Marcion, and many others which ought not to be received into the Catholic Church. For it is unsuitable that gall should be mixed with honey. Indeed, the Epistle of Jude and two [smaller epistles] under the name of John are in the possession of the church. Also the book of Wisdom, written by the friends of Solomon in honour of him. There is an Apocalypse of John, and one of Peter; the church receives only the former, and some are unwilling that this should be read in the church.” From this ancient fragment of the second century, we have nearly a complete catalogue of the canonical books of the New Testament, and the rejection of some spurious books which, even at that early age, were put into circulation. This fragment is not noticed by Lardner. It was discovered by Muratorius, and has been largely commented on by several learned authors. Muratorius ascribes it to the presbyter Caius; but others to Papias. Routh considers it altogether uncertain who is the author; but all agree in referring it to the second century. The catalogue ascribed to the Council of Nice, is not genuine, and is connected with a story which bears every mark of superstitious credulity.* This, therefore, shall be likewise omitted. We stand in no need of suspicious testimony on this subject. Witnesses of the most undoubted veracity, and distinguished intelligence, can be found in every successive age.

2. The next catalogue of the books of the New Testament to which I will refer, is that of Eusebius, the learned historian of the church; to whose diligence and fidelity, in collecting ecclesiastical facts, we are more indebted, than to the labours of all other men, for that period which intervened between the days of the apostles and his own times. Eusebius may be considered as giving his testimony about one hundred years after Origen. His catalogue may be seen in his Ecclesiastical History.* In it, he enumerates every book which we have now in the Canon, and no others; but he mentions that the Epistle of James, the second of Peter, and second and third of John, were doubted of by some; and that the Revelation was rejected by some, and received by others; but Eusebius himself declares it to be his opinion, that it should be received without doubt.

There is no single witness among the whole number of ecclesiastical writers, who was more competent to give accurate information on this subject than Eusebius. He had spent a great part of his life in searching into the antiquities of the Christian church; and he had an intimate acquaintance with all the records relating to the ecclesiastical affairs, many of which are now lost; and almost the only information which we have of them has been transmitted to us by this diligent compiler. (See Appendix Note D.)

3. Athanasius, so well known for his writings and his sufferings in defence of the divinity of our Saviour, in his Festal Epistle, and in his Synopsis of Scripture, has left a catalogue of the books of the New Testament, which perfectly agrees with the Canon now in use.

4. Cyril, in his Catechetical work, has also given us a catalogue, perfectly agreeing with ours, except that he omits the book of Revelation. Why that book was so often left out of the ancient catalogues and collections of the Scriptures, shall be mentioned hereafter. Athanasius and Cyril

were contemporary with Eusebius; the latter, however, may more properly be considered as twenty or thirty years later.

5. Then, a little after the middle of the fourth century, we have the testimony of all the bishops assembled in the Council of Laodicea. The catalogue of this council is contained in their sixtieth Canon, and is exactly the same as ours, except that the book of Revelation is omitted. The decrees of this council were, in a short time, received into the Canons of the universal church; and among the rest, this catalogue of the books of the New Testament. Thus, we find, that as early as the middle of the fourth century, there was a universal consent, in all parts of the world to which the Christian church extended, as to the books which constituted the Canon of the New Testament, with the single exception of the book of Revelation; and that this book was also generally admitted to be canonical, we shall take the opportunity of proving in the sequel of this work.

6. But a few years elapsed from the meeting of this council, before Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, in the island of Cyprus, published his work "on Heresies," in which he gives a catalogue of the canonical books of the New Testament, which, in every respect, is the same as the Canon now received.

7. About the same time, Gregory Nazianzen, bishop of Constantinople, in a Poem, "on the True and Genuine Scriptures," mentions distinctly all the books now received, except Revelation.

8. A few years later, we have a list of the books of the New Testament in a work of Philastrius, bishop of Brixia, in Italy, which corresponds in all respects with those now received; except that he mentions no more than thirteen of Paul's Epistles. If the omission was designed, it probably relates to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

9. At the same time lived Jerome, who translated the whole Bible into Latin. He furnishes us with a catalogue answering to our present Canon, in all respects. He does, however, speak doubtfully about the Epistle to the Hebrews, on account of the uncertainty of its author. But, in other parts of his writings, he shows, that he received this book as canonical, as well as the rest.* 10. The catalogue of Rufin varies in nothing from the Canon now received.

11. Augustine, in his work on "Christian Doctrine," has inserted the names of the books of the New Testament, which, in all respects, are the same as ours.

12. The Council of Carthage, at which Augustine was present, have furnished a catalogue which perfectly agrees with ours. At this council, forty-four bishops attended. The list referred to, is found in their forty-eighth Canon.

13. The unknown author, who goes under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, so describes the books of the New Testament, as to show that he received the very same as are now in the Canon.

Another satisfactory source of evidence, in favour of the Canon of the New Testament, as now received, is the fact, that these books were quoted as sacred Scripture by all the Fathers, living in parts of the world the most remote from each other. The truth of this assertion will fully appear, when we come to speak particularly of the books which compose the Canon. Now, how can it be accounted for, that these books, and these alone, should be cited as authority in Asia, Africa and Europe? No other reason can be assigned, than one of these two; either, they knew no other

books which claimed to be canonical; or, if they did, they did not esteem them of equal authority with those which they cited. On either of these grounds the conclusion is the same, that the books quoted as Scripture are alone the canonical books. To apply this rule to a particular case—"the first Epistle of Peter" is canonical, because it is continually cited by the most ancient Christian writers, in every part of the world; but the book called "The Revelation of Peter," is apocryphal, because none of the early Fathers have taken any testimonies from it. The same is true of "the Acts of Peter," and "the Gospel of Peter." These writings were totally unknown to the primitive church, and are therefore spurious. This argument is perfectly conclusive, and its force was perceived by the ancient defenders of the Canon of the New Testament. Eusebius repeatedly has recourse to it, and, therefore, those persons who have aimed to unsettle our present Canon, as Toland and Dodwell, have attempted to prove that the early Christian writers were in the habit of quoting indifferently, and promiscuously, the books which we now receive, and others which are now rejected as apocryphal. But this is not correct, as has been shown by Nye, Richardson, and others. The true method of determining this matter, is by a careful examination of all the passages in the writings of the Fathers, where other books besides those now in the Canon have been quoted. Some progress was made in collecting the passages in the writings of the Fathers, in which any reference is made to the apocryphal books, by the learned Jeremiah Jones, in his "New Method of settling the Canon of the New Testament," but the work was left incomplete. This author, however, positively denies that it is common for the Fathers to cite these books as Scripture, and asserts, that there are only a very few instances, in which any of them seem to have fallen into this mistake. A third proof of the genuineness of the Canon of the New Testament, may be derived from the fact, that these books were publicly read as Scripture, in all the Christian churches. As the Jews were accustomed to read the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament in their Synagogues, so the early Christians transferred the same practice to the church; and it seems to have been in use even in the apostles' days, as appears by Colossians 4:16, where Paul speaks of reading the Epistles addressed to the churches, as a thing of course, "And when this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea."

Justin Martyr explicitly testifies, that this was the custom in the beginning of the second century. "On the day," says he, "which is called Sunday, there is a meeting of all (Christians) who live either in cities, or country places, and the memoirs of the apostles, and writings of the prophets, are read."*

Tertullian is equally explicit; for, in giving an account of the meetings of Christians for worship, he says, "They assemble to read the Scriptures, and offer up prayers;" and in another place, among the solemn exercises of the Lord's Day, he reckons, "Reading the Scriptures, singing Psalms," &c. The same account is given by Cyprian, and by the ancient author under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite; and by several other ancient authors. Now this practice of reading the sacred Scriptures in the Christian churches, began so early that it is scarcely possible that they could have been imposed on by supposititious writings. A more effectual method of guarding against apocryphal writings obtaining a place in the Canon, could not have been devised. It afforded all the members of the church an opportunity of knowing what books were acknowledged as canonical, and precluded all opportunity of foisting in spurious works; since, if this had been done in some one church, the practice of all other churches would quickly have exposed the imposture.

Accordingly, the Fathers often referred to this custom, as the guide to the people, respecting the books which they should read. "Avoid apocryphal books," says Cyril to his catechumen, "and study carefully those Scriptures only which are publicly read in the church." Again, having given a catalogue of the books of Scripture, he adds: "Let others be rejected; and such as are not read in the churches, neither do you read in private."

It was decreed in the Council of Laodicea, "That no private Psalms should be read in the churches, nor any books without the Canon; but only the canonical writings of the Old and New Testament." The same thing was determined in the Council of Carthage. But notwithstanding these decrees, and the opinions of learned Fathers, there were some pieces read in some of the churches which were not canonical. Thus, Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in the second century, in a letter to the church of Rome, tells them, "That they read in their assemblies, on the Lord's day, Clement's Epistle." And Eusebius declares, "That in his, and the preceding times, it was almost universally received, and read in most churches." He says also, "That the Shepherd of Hermas was read in many churches," which is confirmed by Athanasius and Rufin. Whilst these books, which are not now in the Canon, were publicly read in many churches, the book of Revelation was not, according to Cyril, read in the churches; nor commanded to be read by the Council of Laodicea. It would seem, therefore, at first view, that the application of this rule would exclude the book of Revelation from the Canon, and take in "the Epistle of Clement," and "the Shepherd of Hermas." But the rule does not apply to everything which was read in the churches, but to such books as were read as sacred Scripture. It has appeared in a former part of this work, that several books, not in the Canon of the Old Testament, were nevertheless read in the churches; but the Fathers carefully distinguished between these and the canonical books. They were read for instruction and for the improvement of manners, but not as authority in matters of faith. They distinguished the books read, in the churches, into Canonical and Ecclesiastical; of the latter kind, were the books mentioned above, and some others. The reason why the book of Revelation was not directed to be read publicly, shall be assigned, when we come to treat particularly of the canonical authority of that book. A fourth argument to prove that our Canon of the New Testament is substantially correct, may be derived from the early versions of this sacred book into other languages.

Although the Greek language was extensively known through the Roman empire, when the apostles wrote, yet the Christian church was in a short time extended into regions, where the common people, at least, were not acquainted with it, nor with any language except their own vernacular tongue. While the gift of tongues continued, the difficulty of making known the Gospel, would in some measure be obviated; but when these miraculous powers ceased, the necessity of a version of the Gospels and Epistles into the language of the people would become manifest. As far, therefore, as we may be permitted to reason from the nature of the case, and the necessities of the churches, it is exceedingly probable, that versions of the New Testament were made shortly after the death of the apostles, if they were not begun before. Can we suppose that the numerous Christians in Syria, Mesopotamia, and the various parts of Italy, would be long left without having these precious books translated into a language which all the people could understand? But we are not left to our own reasonings on this subject. We know, that at a very early period, there existed Latin versions of the New Testament, which had been so long in use before the time of Jerome, as to have become considerably corrupt, on which account he undertook a new version, which soon superseded those that were more ancient. Now, although nothing remains of these

ancient Latin versions, but uncertain fragments, yet we have good evidence that they contained the same books, as were inserted in Jerome's version, now denominated the Vulgate.

But, perhaps, the Old Syriac version of the New Testament, called Peshito, furnishes the strongest proof of the canonical authority of all the books which are contained in it. This excellent version has a very high claim to antiquity; and, in the opinion of some of the best Syriac scholars, who have profoundly examined this subject, was made before the close of the first century. The arguments for so early an origin, are not, indeed, conclusive, but they possess much probability, whether we consider the external, or internal evidence. The Syrian Christians have always insisted that this version was made by the apostle Thaddeus; but without admitting this claim, which would put it on a level with the Greek original, we may believe that it ought not to be brought down lower than the second century. It is universally received by all the numerous sects of Syrian Christians, and must be anterior to the existence of the oldest of them. Manes, who lived in the second century, probably had read the New Testament in the Syriac, which was his native tongue; and Justin Martyr, when he testifies that the Scriptures of the New Testament were read in the Assemblies of Christians, on every Sunday, probably refers to Syrian Christians, as Syria was his native place; where, also, he had his usual residence. And Michaelis is of opinion, that Melito, who wrote about A. D. 170, has expressly declared, that a Syrian version of the Bible existed in his time. Jerome also testifies, explicitly, that when he wrote, the Syriac Bible was publicly read in the churches; for, says he, "Ephrem the Syrian is held in such veneration, that his writings are read in several churches, immediately after the Lessons from the Bible. It is also well known that the Armenian version, which itself is ancient, was made from the Syriac.

Now, this ancient version contains the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul including that to the Hebrews, the First Epistle of John, the First Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of James. Thus far, then, the evidence of the present Canon is complete; and as to those books omitted in this version, except Revelation, they are few, and small, and probably were unknown to the translator or the evidence of their genuineness was not ascertained by him. And as it relates to the book of Revelation, the same reasons which excluded it from so many ancient catalogues, probably operated here. It was judged to be too mysterious to be read in the churches, and by common Christians, and, therefore, was not put into the volume which was read publicly in the churches. The arguments for a Latin origin of this version possess, in my judgment, very little force.* On the general evidence of the genuineness of our Canon, I would subjoin the following remarks:

1. The agreement among those who have given catalogues of the books of the New Testament, from the earliest times, is almost complete. Of thirteen catalogues, to which we have referred, seven contain exactly the same books, as are now in the Canon. Three of the others differ in nothing but the omission of the book of Revelation, for which they had a particular reason, consistent with their belief of its canonical authority; and in two of the remaining catalogues, it can be proved, that the books omitted, or represented as doubtful, were received as authentic by the persons who have furnished the catalogues. It may be asserted, therefore, that the consent of the ancient church, as to what books belonged to the Canon of the New Testament, was complete. The sacred volume was as accurately formed, and as clearly distinguished from other books, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, as it has ever been since.

2. Let it be considered, moreover, that the earliest of these catalogues was made by Origen, who lived within a hundred years after the death of the apostle John, and who, by his reading, travels, and long residence in Palestine, had a full knowledge of all the transactions and writings of the church, until his own time. In connection with this, let it be remembered, that these catalogues were drawn up by the most learned, pious, and distinguished men in the church; or by councils; and that the persons furnishing them resided in different and remote parts of the world. As, for example, in Jerusalem, Cesaræa, Carthage and Hippo in Africa, Constantinople, Cyprus, Alexandria in Egypt, Italy, and Asia Minor. Thus, it appears, that the Canon was early agreed upon, and that it was everywhere the same; therefore, we find the Fathers, in all their writings, appealing to the same Scriptures; and none are charged with rejecting any canonical book, except heretics.

3. It appears from the testimony adduced, that it was never considered necessary, that any council, or bishop, should give sanction to these books, in any other way, than as witnesses, testifying to the churches, that these were indeed the genuine writings of the apostles. These books, therefore, were never considered as deriving their authority from the Church, or from Councils, but were of complete authority as soon as published; and were delivered to the churches to be a guide and standard in all things relating to faith and practice. The Fathers would have considered it impious, for any bishop or Council, to pretend to add anything to the authority of inspired books; or to claim the right to add other books to those handed down from the apostles. The church is founded on "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone;" but the sacred Scriptures are noway dependent for their authority on any set of men who lived since they were written.

4. We may remark, in the last place, the benignant providence of God towards his church, in causing these precious books to be written, and in watching over their preservation, in the midst of dangers and persecutions; so that, notwithstanding the malignant designs of the enemies of the church, they have all come down to us unmutated, in the original tongue in which they were penned by the apostles. Our liveliest gratitude is due to the great Head of the church for this divine treasure, from which we are permitted freely to draw whatever is needful for our instruction and consolation. And it is our duty to prize this precious gift of divine revelation above all price. On the Law of the Lord, we should meditate day and night. It is a perfect rule; it shines with a clear light; it exercises a salutary influence on the heart; it warns us when we are in danger, reclaims us when we go astray, and comforts us when in affliction. The word of the Lord is "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb." Psalms 19:10. They who are destitute of this inestimable volume call for our tenderest compassion, and our exertions in circulating the Bible should never be remitted, until all are supplied with this divine treasure. But they who possess this sacred volume, and yet neglect to study it, are still more to be pitied, for they are perishing in the midst of plenty. In the midst of light, they walk in darkness. God has sent to them the word of life, but they have lightly esteemed the rich gift of his love. O that their eyes were opened, that they might behold wondrous things in the law of the Lord!

SECTION III("tw:///self?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—TIME OF THE GOSPELS BEING WRITTEN—NOTICE OF THE EVANGELISTS

The order of the books of the New Testament is not uniform, in the manuscripts now extant, nor as they are mentioned by the Fathers. Eusebius arranges them thus: the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, the First Epistle of John, and the Revelation of John. "These," says he, "were received (except the last mentioned) by all Christians." Then, he mentions those which were not unanimously received; as, the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, the Second of Peter, and the Second and Third of John.

Irenæus, who lived long before Eusebius, has not given a regular catalogue of the books of the New Testament, but he seems to have followed the same order. But Athanasius, in his Festal Epistle, has given the following order: The Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Seven Catholic Epistles, the Fourteen Epistles of Paul, and the Revelation. The ancient and celebrated Alexandrian Manuscript follows the same order; as also does Cyril of Jerusalem, but he does not mention Revelation. The arrangement, in the catalogue of the Council of Laodicea, is exactly the same as that of Cyril; the book of Revelation being left out. John Damascene, and Leontius, follow the same order. The order of the Syrian catalogues as given by Ebedjesu, is—The Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Three Catholic Epistles, (their Canon at first contained no more,) and the Fourteen Epistles of Paul.

Rufin's order is—The Gospels, the Acts, Paul's Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation. The Council of Carthage has the same. Gregory Nazianzen the same; only the Revelation is omitted. Amphilochius the same, and the book of Revelation, mentioned as doubtful. Nicephorus of Constantinople, the same, and Revelation omitted.

This, therefore, appears to have been the order in which the books of the New Testament succeeded each other in most ancient copies; and is the one now in general use. But Epiphanius has an order different from any of these, as follows—The Four Gospels, Paul's Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, the Seven Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation. Jerome follows the same order; and also Euthalius.

Augustine varies in his arrangement of the sacred books. In one place, he puts the Acts last, except Revelation; and in another, he places it after Revelation. He also varies in his arrangement of the Epistles of Paul, and of the Catholic Epistles. The order of Innocent the First, bishop of Rome, is: The Four Gospels, Paul's Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, the Acts, and Revelation.

Isidore of Seville has, in his writings, given several catalogues, in all of which he pursues the order last mentioned. The same writer informs us, that the books of the New Testament were usually included in two divisions, or volumes; the first containing the Gospels; the second, the Acts and the Epistles; the book of Revelation being omitted.

Chrysostom follows an order which appears to be peculiar: he places first, the Fourteen Epistles of Paul; next, the Four Gospels; then, the Acts; and in the last place, the Catholic Epistles. Gelasius places Revelation before the Catholic Epistles. The Apostolical Canon, as it is called, contains the following catalogue: The Four Gospels, Fourteen Epistles of Paul, Seven Catholic Epistles, Two Epistles of Clement, the Constitutions, and the Acts. If this were, indeed, the genuine Canon of the apostles, as the title imports, it would be decisive, and all other authorities would be superfluous; but it is acknowledged by all good critics, that it is spurious, and of no authority in settling the early Canon. The order of the Four Gospels has generally been, as in our copies, Matthew, Mark, Luke,

John. Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, the Council of Laodicea, Gregory Nazianzen, Amphilochius, the Syrian Catalogues, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, the Alexandrian Manuscript with most others, agree in this order. But that this order was not uniform, appears from Tertullian, who arranges them thus—Matthew, John, Luke, Mark. And the same order of the Gospels is followed, in the very ancient Manuscript, commonly called, Codex Cantabrigiensis.

There is very little variation observed in the arrangement of Paul's Epistles. They are generally found in the same order as we have them in our copies; but this is not universally the case: for in some copies, the Epistle to the Hebrews occupies the fourteenth place among Paul's Epistles, and in others the tenth. But in all copies, the Epistle to the Romans stands first, though not first in the order of time. With respect to the time when the gospels were written, no precise information can be obtained, as ancient authors differ considerably on the subject. It seems to be agreed, however, that they were not published immediately after the ascension of Christ: nor all at the same time. The best thing which we can do is to place before the reader the principal testimonies of the Fathers, and leave him to judge for himself.* The earliest writer who says anything explicitly on this subject is Irenæus; but he does not inform us what time intervened between the resurrection of Christ, and the writing of these gospels. His words are; "For we have not received the knowledge of the way of salvation, from any others than those by whom the gospel has been brought to us, which gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that for time to come it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith. Nor, may any say that they preached before they had a competent knowledge of the gospel; for after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they were endued, from above, with the power of the Holy Ghost, which had come down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace; having all of them, and every one of them, the gospel of God."

Now let it be considered, that Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of the apostle John, and this testimony will have great weight in confirming the fact, that the gospels were written by the apostles, some time after they began to preach; and that, wherever the apostles went, they preached the same gospel to the people.

Eusebius, to whom we are obliged so often to have recourse as a witness of ancient ecclesiastical facts, does not fail us here; "Those admirable and truly divine men," says he, "the apostles of Christ, did not attempt to deliver the doctrine of their master, with the artifice and eloquence of words.... Nor were they concerned about writing books, being engaged in a more excellent ministry, which is above all human power. Insomuch that Paul, the most able of all, in the furniture of words and ideas, has left nothing in writing but a few Epistles. Nor were the rest of our Saviour's followers unacquainted with these things, as the seventy disciples, and many others besides the twelve apostles. Nevertheless, of all the disciples of our Lord, Matthew and John only have left us any Memoirs; who, also, as we have been informed, were impelled to write, by a kind of necessity."*

Theodore of Mopsuesta, who lived in the latter part of the fourth century, has left us the following testimony; "After the Lord's ascension to heaven, the disciples stayed a good while at Jerusalem, visiting the cities in the vicinity, and preaching chiefly to the Jews: and the great Paul was appointed, openly to preach the gospel to the Gentiles." "In process of divine Providence, they, not

being allowed to confine themselves to any one part of the earth, were conducted to remote countries. Peter went to Rome; the others elsewhere. John took up his abode at Ephesus, visiting, however, other parts of Asia.... About this time, the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, published their gospels, which were soon spread over the world, and were received by all the faithful with great regard.... Numerous Christians in Asia having brought these gospels to John, earnestly entreated him to write a further account of such things as were needful to be known, and had been omitted by the rest; with which request he complied." By divers Christian writers of antiquity, it has been asserted, that Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, at the earnest request of the brethren at Rome, wrote a short gospel, according to what he had heard related by Peter. This testimony, among others, is given by Jerome in his book of Illustrious Men.

It is probable that Peter did not visit Rome before the reign of Nero; perhaps not until Paul had returned a second time to that city, which must have been as late as the year A. D. 63 or 64. Now, as the brethren requested of Mark to give them in writing the substance of Peter's preaching, his gospel could not have been written at an earlier period. And, it would seem, if this fact be undoubted, that they had, until this time, never seen a written gospel; and, probably, did not know that there was one in existence. The Jewish war, according to Josephus, began in the year of our Lord 66, and ended in September of the year 70; when the city and temple were brought to desolation. Now, there is strong probable evidence, that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, were finished before this war commenced; that is, before the year of our Lord sixty-six. Each of them contains the predictions of our Lord respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, and there is no hint in any of them, that the remarkable events connected with this overthrow had begun to make their appearance. But there are some expressions in these gospels, which probably indicate, that the writers thought that these wonderful events were at hand; such as the following admonition, "Let him that readeth understand."

It is certain that the Acts of the Apostles could not have been finished before A. D. 62 or 63, because the history which it contains comes down to that time. The gospel by Luke was probably written a short time before. At least, this seems to be the common opinion of learned men. Jerome supposes that he composed his gospel at Rome. Grotius thinks, that when Paul left Rome Luke went into Greece, and there wrote his gospel and the Acts. From the introduction to Luke's gospel, it would seem that he knew nothing of any authentic written gospel at that time; for he cannot be supposed to refer to such, when he says, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us;" and if he had known that Matthew had written a gospel, he could not easily have avoided some reference to it in this place. But the inference of Lardner from this fact, that no authentic gospel had been written before this time, is unauthorized, and repugnant to all the testimony which we have on the subject. The gospel of Matthew might have been circulating for some time among the churches in Judea, and yet not be known to Luke, whose labours and travels led him, in company with Paul, to visit the Gentile countries and cities. If we pay any regard to the opinions of those, who lived nearest the times of the apostles, we must believe that the gospel of Matthew was first written, and in the vernacular dialect of Judea, commonly called Hebrew. The writer of this gospel is also called Levi, the son of Alphaeus. He was a Galilean by nation, and a publican by profession. When called to follow Christ, he was sitting at the receipt of custom, where the taxes were paid, but he immediately left all these temporal concerns, and attached himself to Christ, who afterwards

selected him as one of the twelve. From this time he seems to have been constantly with Christ until his crucifixion, of which event he was doubtless a witness; as he was also of the resurrection and ascension of his Lord. On the day of Pentecost, he was present with his brethren, and partook of the rich spiritual endowments, which were then bestowed on the apostles. But afterwards there is no explicit mention of him in the New Testament. In his own catalogue of the twelve, his name occupies the eighth place, as it does in the Acts; but in the lists of the apostles, contained in the gospels of Luke and Mark, it occupies the seventh place.

There is an almost total obscurity resting on the history of this apostle and evangelist. The scene of his labours, after he left Judea, seems to have been in regions of which we possess very little accurate information to this day. But whether he had Parthia and Persia, or Ethiopia, for the field of his apostolical labours, the ancients are not agreed. It is by no means impossible that he should have preached the gospel, and planted churches, in each of these countries. The historian Socrates, in his distribution of the apostles among the countries of the globe, assigns Ethiopia to Matthew, Parthia to Thomas, and India to Bartholomew. The testimony of Eusebius is as follows: "This then was the state of the Jews, but the apostles and disciples of our Lord, being dispersed abroad, preached in the whole world, Thomas in Parthia; Andrew in Scythia, John in Asia, who having lived there a long time, died at Ephesus. Peter preached to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia; at length, coming to Rome, he was there crucified, with his head turned down towards the earth, at his own request. Paul also died a martyr at Rome, as we are informed by Origen, in the third tome of his work on Genesis." But Eusebius makes no mention of the apostle Matthew; nor does Jerome, in his account of Illustrious Men.*

Clement of Alexandria mentions a circumstance of this apostle's mode of life, but nothing more: he says, "That he was accustomed to use a very spare diet, eating vegetables, but no flesh."

Chrysostom, in one of his Homilies, gives the character of Matthew, but furnishes us with no facts.

It is probable, therefore, that very little was known in the west, respecting the lives, labours and death, of those apostles who travelled far to the east. None of them, it is probable, ever returned; and there existed no regular channels for the communication of intelligence from those distant regions. The honour of martyrdom has been given to them all, and the thing is not improbable; but there are no authentic records, from which we can derive any certain information on this subject. The Fathers, whose writings have come down to us, seem to have been as much in the dark as we are, respecting the preaching and death of the majority of the apostles. There are, it is true, traditions in Ethiopia and the east, in regard to some of them, but they are too uncertain to deserve any serious consideration.

SECTION IV("tw:///self?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

TESTIMONIES TO MATTHEW'S GOSPEL—TIME OF PUBLICATION—LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT WAS ORIGINALLY COMPOSED

But while we know so little of the apostolical labours of the Evangelist Matthew, it is pleasing to find that the testimonies respecting the genuineness of his gospel are so early and full. To these we will now direct our attention.

Barnabas, the companion of Paul, is said by the ancient ecclesiastical writers, to have left an Epistle of some length. This is mentioned by Origen, Jerome and Eusebius, and is frequently quoted by Clement of Alexandria. An Epistle under his name is still extant, but whether written by this apostolic man is very much disputed. Whoever was the author, it seems to have been written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, and by a zealous Christian. In this Epistle, there are many sentences found in the gospel of Matthew, but no reference to any book of the New Testament. In some of them, however, there are evident signs that these passages which are found in the gospel were quotations. One of these is in Matthew 20:16. And in this Epistle it is thus introduced; "Let us, therefore, beware, lest it should happen unto us, as it is written, There are many called, but few chosen." As the Christians who lived at the beginning of the gospel, did not receive their instruction from written gospels, but from the preaching of the apostles, they would often express in their writings the same things in substance which we read in the Evangelists, so that unless they use marks of quotation, it cannot be certainly known that these phrases are cited from any book. They may have learnt them from hearing the apostles, or even Christ himself. But when they in the text cited, say, as it is written, it may fairly be inferred, that when found in one of the gospels it was taken from it. The circumstance above mentioned furnishes a satisfactory reason for the fact, that in the writings of the apostolical Fathers, there is so seldom any reference to the books of the New Testament. These men received their knowledge of Christianity before any of the books of the New Testament were written; and although they existed when they wrote, they would not be so likely to refer to them as if they had derived their knowledge from them.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who was acquainted with the Apostle John, expressly mentions Matthew's gospel; and asserts, "That he wrote the divine oracles in Hebrew."*

Justin Martyr, who lived in the middle of the second century, has in many places cited the very words of the gospel of Matthew, but without mentioning his name. One instance will be sufficient: "And it is written in the gospel, that he said, All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither the Father, save the Son, and they to whom the Son will reveal him." This is taken from the gospel of Matthew 11:27.*

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who was born in Asia, and was acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of the apostle John, gives the following testimony: "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others, than those through whom the gospel has come down to us; which gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, transmitted to us in writing, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith."—"For after our Lord had risen from the dead, and they were clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit descending upon them from on high, were filled with all gifts, and possessed perfect knowledge, they went forth to the ends of the earth, spreading the glad tidings of those blessings which God has conferred on us, and announcing peace from heaven to men; having all, and every one alike, the gospel of God. Matthew among the Hebrews published a gospel in their own language; while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome and founding a church there. And after their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself delivered to us in writing what Peter preached; and Luke, the companion of Paul, recorded the gospel preached by him. Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon his breast, likewise published a gospel, while he dwelt at Ephesus, in Asia. And all these have taught us, that there is one God, the maker of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ, the Son of God." In another place Irenæus characterizes all the four

gospels, by setting down the beginning of each; where of Matthew he says, "Matthew proclaims his human generation, saying, The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." In another place he says, "The gospel of Matthew was delivered to the Jews." This early testimony from a learned man living so near the times of the apostles is invaluable, and must be satisfactory to every candid mind of the genuineness of the four gospels. Other decisive testimonies might be adduced from the same author, but they are unnecessary.

Hegesippus, who also lived and flourished in the second century, was the author of an Ecclesiastical History extending from the death of Christ to his own times, which unhappily has not come down to us. All that remains is a few fragments preserved by Eusebius. In one of these he cites a passage from the gospel of Matthew 13:16, "Blessed are your eyes which see, and your ears which hear."

Athenagoras also was a writer of the second century. He wrote two books, one on the Resurrection, the other, an Apology for the Christians. Of this man Philip Sidetes says, "that he was a heathen and determined to write against Christianity, but by reading the gospels was converted. He has citations from nearly all the books of the New Testament. From the gospel of Matthew he quotes the following words; "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust." Matthew 5:44-45.

Origen, who was born in the second century, and wrote and flourished in the beginning of the third, has left us the following testimony: "According to the traditions received by me, the first gospel was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards a disciple of Jesus Christ, who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in the Hebrew language." And in another place he says, "Matthew wrote for the Hebrews."

Eusebius, who lived about a hundred years later than Origen, informs us, that "Matthew, having first preached the gospel to the Hebrews, when about to go to other people, delivered to them, in their own language, the gospel written by himself; by that supplying the want of his presence with them, whom he was about to leave."* In the Synopsis, which has been ascribed to Athanasius, it is said, "Matthew wrote his gospel in the Hebrew, and published it at Jerusalem." Cyril of Jerusalem testifies, "That Matthew wrote in Hebrew." Epiphanius says the same, and adds, "Matthew wrote first, and Mark soon after him, being a follower of Peter at Rome." Gregory Nazianzen says, "That Matthew wrote for the Hebrews." Ebedjesu, the Syrian, "That Matthew, the first Evangelist, published his gospel in Palestine, written in Hebrew."

Jerome, in his Commentary on Matthew, testifies that "The first Evangelist is Matthew, the publican, surnamed Levi, who wrote his gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language, chiefly for the Jews who believed in Jesus, and did not join the shadow of the law with the truth of the gospel."

Again, in his book of Ecclesiastical Writers, he says, "Matthew, called also Levi, of a publican made an apostle, first of all wrote a gospel in the Hebrew language, for the sake of those in Judea who believed. By whom it was afterwards translated into Greek is uncertain."

Chrysostom, in his introduction to this gospel, writes, "Matthew is said to have written his gospel at the request of the Jewish believers, who desired him to put down in writing what he had said to

them by word of mouth; and it is said he wrote in Hebrew.”

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, lived in the latter part of the second century, and wrote several works. Jerome in his prologue to the gospel of Matthew, says, “I have read the commentaries of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch.” In another place he says: “Theophilus, the seventh bishop of Antioch after Peter, who collected into one the words of the four gospels.”

It would be unnecessary to adduce any testimonies from later writers; but as they mention some circumstances probably received by tradition, and not contained in the earlier testimonies, I will subjoin a few of them.

Cosmas, who lived in the sixth century, reports, that “Matthew is the first that wrote a gospel. A persecution having arisen after the stoning of Stephen, and he having resolved to go from that place, the believers entreated him to leave with them a written instruction; with which request he complied.”

Another author of this century, who wrote a discourse on Matthew, has left this testimony: “The occasion of Matthew’s writing is said to have been this—there being a great persecution in Palestine, so that there was danger lest the faithful should be dispersed; that they might not be without teaching, they requested Matthew to write for them an accurate history of all Christ’s words and works; that wherever they should be, they might have with them the ground of their faith.” In the Paschal Chronicle, written in the seventh century, it is intimated, that Matthew published his gospel about fifteen years after our Lord’s ascension.

Euthymius, in the beginning of the twelfth century, says, “That this gospel was first written in the Hebrew language for the Jewish believers, eight years after our Lord’s ascension.” From these testimonies, it appears, that the Fathers had no certain knowledge of the exact time when Matthew wrote his gospel. Irenæus refers it to the period when Paul and Peter were preaching at Rome, but he speaks vaguely on the subject. The writers who mention a precise time, lived at too late a period to give testimony on this subject. But all agree, that this was the first gospel written.

Among the moderns, there is much diversity of opinion, as might be expected, where there is little else than conjecture to guide them. Lardner and Basnage supposed that this gospel was not written before A. D. 64. Cave thought that it was written fifteen years after the ascension of Christ. Jeremiah Jones is in favour of that opinion which places it eight years after the ascension. Grotius and G. J. Vossius are of the same opinion. So also is Wetstein. But Tillemont carries it up to the third year after the crucifixion of our Saviour.* Lardner and Percy have adduced arguments for a late origin of this gospel, derived from internal evidence, but they are of very inconsiderable weight. As it is agreed that it was written before Matthew left Judea to preach the gospel in foreign parts, and as this event seems to have occurred after the persecution which was raised at Judea against the church, it seems probable, that they are nearest the truth, who place it about eight years after the ascension of Christ; which date unites more writers in its support than any other. Not only the date, but the original language of this gospel has been made a subject of controversy. By the testimonies already cited, it seems that there was but one opinion among the ancients in regard to this matter. With one voice they inform us, that it was written in Hebrew; or in the vernacular tongue of the Jews, which in the Scriptures, and by the Christian Fathers, is called Hebrew. This language is now called Syro-Chaldaic, or Western Aramean, but it consisted chiefly

of words derived from Hebrew origin, and was, in fact, the Hebrew corrupted by a large mixture of foreign words, and by various changes in the prefixes and affixes of the words. This was the language in which Jesus Christ spoke and delivered all his discourses; and which the apostles were accustomed to speak from their childhood.

Although the Greek language was understood by all the learned in Judea at this time, and by many of the people, yet it was not the vernacular language of the Jews dwelling in Palestine. In a book composed for the immediate use of the churches in Judea, it was necessary that it should be in that language which they all understood; which was neither pure Hebrew nor Greek. The testimony of the Fathers is, therefore, strengthened by a consideration of the nature of the case. And if it were not so, yet when the judgment of modern critics stands opposed to the universal testimony of the ancients, in regard to a matter of fact, which occurred not long before their time, there ought to be no hesitation which is most deserving of credit.

There is, however, one difficulty attending this opinion, which is, that it supposes that the original of this gospel is lost, and we have now nothing but a translation, which opinion would lessen its canonical authority.

It must be confessed, that this is a consequence of a serious kind, and one which ought not to be received respecting any canonical book without necessity. But does this conclusion necessarily follow from the admission, that this gospel was originally composed in the Hebrew language? Might there not have been a version immediately prepared by the writer himself, or by some other person under his superintendence? This being the first gospel that was composed, it would naturally be in great request with all Christians who knew of its existence; and as none but the Jewish Christians could understand it, as first published, it is exceedingly probable, that a request was made of the author to publish an edition of it in Greek, also, by those who did not understand the Hebrew; or, by such as were going to preach the gospel in countries where the Greek language was in common use.

It has been considered a strong objection to the Hebrew original of this gospel, that no person, whose writings have come down to us, has intimated that he had ever seen it; and from the earliest times it seems to have existed in the Greek language. But this fact is perfectly consistent with the supposition now made; for the desolation of Judea, and dispersion of the Jewish Christians, having taken place within a few years after the publication of Matthew's gospel, the copies of the original Hebrew would be confined to the Jewish converts; and as other Christians had copies in the Greek, of equal authenticity with the Hebrew, no inquiries would be made after the latter. These Jewish Christians, after their removal, dwindled away in a short time, and a large part of them became erroneous in their faith; and though they retained the Hebrew gospel of Matthew, they altered and corrupted it to suit their own heretical opinions. There is reason to believe, that the gospel of the Nazarenes, was the identical gospel of Matthew, which in process of time was greatly mutilated and corrupted by the Ebionites. Of this gospel much is said by the Fathers, and, in the proper place, we shall give some account of it.* The only remaining objection of any weight against the ancient opinion, is, that the gospel according to Matthew, as we now have it, has no appearance of being a translation, but has the air and style of an original. But if the hypothesis, suggested above be adopted, this objection also will vanish; for according to this the Greek is an original, as well as the Hebrew, it having been written by Matthew himself, or by some

disciple under his direction. But whether the Greek of Matthew was written by himself or not, it is certain that it was not later than the apostolic age, and received the approbation of apostles or apostolic men, which is sufficient to establish its authenticity.*

SECTION V("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

GOSPEL OF MARK—ON WHAT OCCASION PUBLISHED—ASCRIBED TO THE DICTATION OF PETER BY ALL THE FATHERS

The author of the second gospel, as they stand in the Canon, was Mark; the same who is mentioned in the first Epistle of Peter, (1 Peter 5:13) but whether he was the same as John Mark, of Jerusalem, who travelled for a while with Paul and Barnabas, has been doubted by Grotius, Cave, Dupin and Tillemont; but the common opinion is in its favour, and the objections to it are not of much weight: and as there is no clear evidence, that there were two persons of this name mentioned in Scripture, I shall consider all that is said of Mark, as having reference to the same person.

Paul was offended at him because he declined accompanying him and Barnabas on the whole tour which they made, to preach the gospel; for, when they came to Perga, Mark departed from them, and returned to Jerusalem. And when Paul and Barnabas were about to undertake a second journey together, the latter insisted on taking Mark as their minister, but Paul would by no means consent to it, because he had forsaken them on their first mission. This difference of opinion gave rise to a sharp altercation, which terminated in the separation of these venerable colleagues. Mark now travelled with Barnabas, but, probably, soon afterwards attached himself to Peter, with whom he seems to have continued until the death of that apostle. But Paul himself seems to have been reconciled to Mark, and to have valued his assistance in the work of the ministry; for, in his second Epistle to Timothy, he writes, "Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable unto me for the ministry." 2 Timothy 4:11. He also mentions him in his Epistle to Philemon. Philemon 1:24. When this gospel was composed, has not been particularly mentioned by any ancient author, except that it is said to have been after Peter came to Rome, which could not be much earlier than A. D. 62 or 63. It is stated, that Mark was requested by the brethren at Rome to put down in writing the substance of Peter's preaching; and on this account, this gospel among the primitive Christians was as familiarly known by the name of the gospel of Peter as of Mark. This circumstance has led some to assert, that Mark wrote his gospel in Latin, as this was the language of Rome; but in those days almost all the Romans understood Greek. And the Jewish converts, who composed a large portion of the first churches, understood Greek much better than Latin. But there is no need to argue this point. There is no ancient author who testifies that Mark wrote in Latin. The testimony is uniform that he wrote in Greek.

Baronius is almost the only learned man who has advocated the Latin origin of the gospel of Mark, and he has nothing to produce in favour of this opinion from antiquity, except the subscription to the Syriac, Arabic and Persic versions of the New Testament, where, at the end of Mark's gospel, it is said, "He spoke and preached in Latin at Rome;" but this does not say that he wrote his gospel in Latin. But these subscriptions are of very little authority in matters of this kind. No one knows when, or by whom they were placed there; and, although three versions are mentioned, they make up no more than one witness, for, probably all the others borrowed this inscription from the Syriac.

Augustine called Mark “the abridger of Matthew;” and it must be confessed, that he often uses the same words, and tells more concisely what the other had related more copiously; yet, there is satisfactory evidence, that Mark’s gospel is an original work. It contains many things which are not in the gospel of Matthew, and some mentioned by that Evangelist are here related with additional circumstances.

All authors do not agree that Mark wrote his gospel at Rome, but some think at Alexandria: the former opinion, however, was received with almost universal consent. See the testimony of Irenæus before cited. To which may be added what he says in another place, that, “Mark begins with the prophetic spirit which came down from above to men, saying, the beginning of the gospel of Christ.”

Some of the testimonies of the Fathers respecting this gospel will now be given.

Eusebius out of Papias, and a lost work of Clement of Alexandria, relates, “That when Peter in the reign of Claudius, had come to Rome, and had defeated Simon Magus, the people were so inflamed with love for the Christian truths, as not to be satisfied with the hearing of them, unless they also had them written down. That accordingly they, with earnest entreaties, applied themselves to Mark, the companion of Peter, and whose gospel we now have, praying him that he would write down for them, and leave with them an account of the doctrines which had been preached to them; that they did not desist in their request, till they had prevailed on him, and procured his writing that which is now the gospel of Mark; that when Peter came to know this, he was, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, pleased with the request of the people, and confirmed the gospel which was written for the use of the churches.”* The same Eusebius relates in another part of his works, what Papias had testified concerning Mark’s gospel, “That Mark, who was Peter’s interpreter, exactly wrote down whatsoever he remembered, though not in the same order of time in which the several things were said or done by Christ; for he neither heard nor followed Christ, but was a companion of Peter, and composed his gospel, rather with the intent of the people’s profit, than writing a regular history; so that he is in no fault, if he wrote some things according to his memory, he designing no more than to omit nothing which he had heard, and to relate nothing false.”

Another testimony from Clement of Alexandria is given by Eusebius, in which it is said, “When Peter was publicly preaching the gospel at Rome, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, many of the converts desired Mark, as having been long a companion of Peter, and who well remembered what he preached, to write down his discourses: that upon this he composed his gospel, and gave it to those who made this request; which when Peter knew, he neither obstructed nor encouraged the work.”*

Irenæus says, “That after the death of Peter and Paul who had been preaching at Rome, Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter, wrote down what he had heard him preach.” Tertullian informs us, “That the gospel published by Mark may be reckoned Peter’s, whose interpreter he was.” Origen adds, “That Mark wrote his gospel according to the dictates of Peter.” Jerome tells us, “That Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter, wrote a short gospel from what he had heard of Peter, at the request of the brethren at Rome, which when Peter knew, he approved and published in our churches, commanding the reading of it by his own authority.”

Besides these testimonies which are very explicit, and all go to show that Mark received his gospel from the preaching of Peter, there are some internal evidences which look the same way. There are in the other Evangelists several circumstances and facts which make very much for the credit of Peter, not one of which is hinted at in this gospel. Particular instances of this kind may be read in the third volume of "Jones' New Method of Settling the Canon." Of the canonical authority of this gospel no one of the ancients, I believe, ever entertained a doubt. Some of the moderns, however, have questioned whether we have any evidence, that Mark and Luke wrote by a plenary inspiration since they were not apostles. But that Mark's gospel is canonical, is established by all the rules applicable to the case. It was always contained in the early catalogues; was read as Scripture in the churches; was quoted as Scripture by the Fathers; was inserted in the earliest versions; and never doubted formerly, by any Christian writer. But this subject will be resumed hereafter.

Eusebius reports, "That Peter, out of the abundance of his modesty, did not think himself worthy to write a gospel; but Mark, who was his friend and disciple, is said to have recorded Peter's relations, and the acts of Jesus." And again, "Peter testifies these things of himself, for all things recorded by Mark are said to be memoirs of Peter's discourses." In the Synopsis ascribed to Athanasius it is said, "That the gospel according to Mark was dictated by Peter at Rome, and published by Mark, and preached by him in Alexandria, Pentapolis and Libya." The testimony of Epiphanius is, "That Matthew wrote first, and Mark soon after him, being a companion of Peter at Rome; that Mark was one of the seventy disciples, and likewise one of those who were offended at the words of Christ, recorded in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John; that he then forsook the Saviour, but was afterwards reclaimed by Peter, and being filled with the Spirit wrote a gospel."

Gregory Nazianzen says, "That Mark wrote his gospel for the Italians." Chrysostom testifies, that "Mark wrote in Egypt at the request of the believers there;" but in another place, he says, "It cannot be ascertained in what place each of the Evangelists wrote." Victor informs us, "That Mark was also called John, and was the son of Mary; that he wrote a gospel after Matthew; that for a while he accompanied Paul and Barnabas his relation, but when he came to Rome he joined Peter. When he was obliged to quit Rome, he was requested by the brethren to write a history of his preaching, and of his heavenly doctrine; with which request he readily complied."

Cosmas of Alexandria writes, "That Mark the second Evangelist wrote a gospel at Rome, by the dictation of Peter." Œcumenius says, "This John who also is called Mark, nephew to Barnabas, wrote the gospel which goes by his name; and was also the disciple of Peter."

Theophylact informs us, "That the gospel according to Mark was written at Rome, ten years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, at the request of the believers there; for this Mark was a disciple of Peter. His name was John, and he was nephew to Barnabas, the companion of Paul."

Euthymius concurs exactly in this testimony. His words are, "The gospel of Mark was written about ten years after our Lord's ascension, at the request of the believers at Rome, or, as some say, in Egypt; that Mark was, at first, much with his uncle Barnabas and Paul, but afterwards went with Peter to Rome, from whom he received the whole history of his gospel." Nicephorus says, "Only two of the twelve have left memoirs of our Lord's life, and two of the seventy, Mark and Luke." And a little after, "Mark and Luke published their gospels, by the direction of Peter and Paul." Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria, has the following words: "In the time of Nero, Peter, the prince

of the apostles, making use of Mark, wrote a gospel at Rome, in the Roman language.” The reader will recollect, that this last writer lived as late as the tenth century, which will account for his calling Peter the prince of the apostles, a language entirely foreign to the early ecclesiastical writers. And Selden is of opinion, that by the Roman language he meant the Greek, which was then in common use at Rome; and it is well known, that in our times the modern Greek language is called Romaic. Jones and Lardner concur in the opinion of Selden.

SECTION VI("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

GOSPEL OF LUKE—TESTIMONIES OF THE FATHERS RESPECTING IT

The third gospel is that of Luke. He is mentioned in scripture as the companion of Paul in his travels; and when that apostle was sent a prisoner to Rome this evangelist accompanied him, and continued with him during his two years' confinement in that city, as may be gathered from Paul's Epistles, written during this period. Whether he was the same as "the beloved physician," Colossians 4:14, mentioned by Paul, is uncertain, but the general opinion is in favour of it. It is also disputed, whether or not he was one of the seventy disciples. Without undertaking to decide these points, I will proceed to lay before the reader the principal testimonies of the Fathers respecting this gospel and its author.

Irenæus asserts, "That Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him." Again, he says, "Luke was not only a companion but a fellow-labourer of the apostles, especially of Paul." He calls him, "a disciple and fellow-labourer of the apostles." "The apostles," says he, "envying none, plainly delivered to all the things which they had heard from the Lord." So likewise Luke, envying no man, has delivered to us what he learned from them, as he says, "even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of his word."*

Eusebius informs us, that Clement of Alexandria bore a large testimony to this, as well as to the other gospels; and he mentions a tradition concerning the order of the gospels, which Clement had received from presbyters of more ancient times—"That the gospels containing the genealogies were written first."

Tertullian speaks of Matthew and John as disciples of Christ; of Mark and Luke as disciples of the apostles; however, he ascribes the same authority to the gospels written by them as to the others. "The gospel," says he, "which Mark published, may be said to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was; and Luke's digest is often ascribed to Paul. And indeed it is easy to take that for the Master's which the disciples published." Again, "Moreover, Luke was not an apostle, but an apostolic man; not a master but a disciple: certainly less than his master; certainly so much later, as he is a follower of Paul, the last of the apostles."

Origen mentions the gospels in the order commonly received—"The third," says he, "is that according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts." In his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which we now have in a Latin version only, he writes, "Some say Lucius is Lucas, the evangelist, as indeed it is not uncommon to write names, sometimes according to the original form; sometimes according to the Greek and Roman termination."

Eusebius has left us the following testimony concerning Luke the evangelist—"And Luke who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, who had, likewise, more than a slight acquaintance with the other apostles, has left us, in two books, divinely inspired, evidences of the art of healing souls, which he had learned from them. One of them is the gospel which he professeth to have written, as they delivered it to him, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of his word." "With all whom," he says, "he had been perfectly acquainted from the first." And in another place, he says, "Luke hath delivered, in his gospel, a certain account of such things as he had been assured of by his intimate acquaintance and familiarity with Paul, and his conversation with the other apostles."* In the Synopsis ascribed to Athanasius, it is said, "That the gospel of Luke was dictated by the apostle Paul, and written and published by the blessed apostle and physician Luke." Gregory Nazianzen says, "That Luke wrote for the Greeks;" and Gregory Nyssen, "That Luke was as much a physician for the soul as the body." The testimony of Jerome concerning Luke is as follows: "Luke, who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, not unskilful in the Greek language, a disciple of the apostle Paul, and the constant companion of his travels, wrote a gospel, and another excellent volume, entitled, the Acts of the Apostles.... It is supposed that Luke did not learn his gospel from the apostle Paul only, who had not conversed with the Lord in the flesh, but also from other apostles, which likewise he owns at the beginning of his volume, saying, 'Even as they delivered them unto us who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.' Therefore, he wrote the gospel from the information of others; but the Acts he composed from his own knowledge."* The same writer in his preface to his commentary on Matthew, says, "The third evangelist is Luke the physician, a Syrian of Antioch, who was a disciple of the apostle Paul, and published his gospel in the countries of Achaia and Bœotia." In another place he observes, "That some said that Luke had been a proselyte to Judaism, before his conversion to Christianity." Chrysostom, in his first homily on the gospel of Matthew, has this remark: "Luke had the fluency of Paul, Mark the conciseness of Peter, both learning of their masters."

Isidore of Seville, says, "Of the four evangelists, the first and last relate what they had heard Christ say, or had seen him perform. Matthew wrote his gospel first in Judea; then Mark in Italy; Luke, the third, in Achaia; John, the last, in Asia." And again, "of all the evangelists, Luke, the third in order, is reckoned to have been the most skilful in the Greek tongue. For he was a physician, and wrote his gospel in Greek." In Theophylact's preface to Matthew's gospel, it is said, "There are four evangelists, two of whom, Matthew and John, were of the apostles; the other two, Mark and Luke, were of the number of the seventy. Mark was a disciple and companion of Peter; Luke of Paul.... Luke wrote fifteen years after Christ's ascension." In his commentary on Luke he observes, "That it appears from Luke's Introduction, that he was not from the beginning a disciple, but only afterwards. For others were disciples from the beginning, as Peter, and the sons of Zebedee, who delivered to him the things which they had seen or heard."

Euthymius says, "Luke was a native of Antioch, and a physician. He was a hearer of Christ, and, as some say, one of his seventy disciples, as well as Mark. He was afterwards very intimate with Paul. He wrote his gospel, with Paul's permission, fifteen years after our Lord's ascension."

Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, has handed down the following account: "In the time of the same emperor, (Nero) Luke wrote his gospel in Greek, to a notable and wise man of the Romans, whose name was Theophilus; to whom also he wrote the Acts, or the history of the disciples. The

evangelist Luke was a companion of the apostle Paul, going with him wherever he went. For which reason the apostle Paul, in one of his epistles, says, 'Luke the physician salutes you.' " The same arguments by which the canonical authority of the gospels of Matthew and Mark were established, apply with their full force to the gospel of Luke. It was universally received as canonical by the whole primitive church—has a place in every catalogue of the books of the New Testament, which was ever published—is constantly referred to and cited by the Fathers as a part of sacred Scripture—and was one of the books constantly read in the churches, as a part of the rule of faith and practice for all believers.

Marcion, the heretic, it is true, had a gospel according to Luke, which differed essentially from that in the Canon, but his authority has no weight.

SECTION VII("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

THE OBJECTIONS OF J. D. MICHAELIS TO THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE GOSPELS OF MARK AND LUKE, CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED

J. D. Michaelis, in his introduction to the New Testament, as translated from the German by Bishop Marsh, in the third section of the third chapter, speaking of the gospels of Mark and Luke, and of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the grounds of placing them in the Canon, says, "I must confess that I am unable to find a satisfactory proof of their inspiration, and the more I investigate the subject, and the oftener I compare their writings with those of Matthew and John, the greater are my doubts." He then goes on to say, that in a former edition of this work he had stated the arguments on both sides of the question, but although uncertain which he should prefer, yet he had rather inclined to the affirmative. But now he tells us, that he is strongly inclined to the negative. The first argument for the inspiration of these gospels, which the learned professor considers, is derived from the fact, that Mark and Luke were companions and assistants of the apostles. This, he says, can afford no proof of their inspiration, even if it could be shown that they were endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which, however, there is no historical proof. Because a disciple might possess these gifts, and yet his writings not be inspired. And if we ground the argument for their inspiration on the character of an apostle's assistant, then we must receive as canonical the genuine epistle of Clement of Rome, and the writings of other apostolical Fathers. The next argument which he considers is, that the apostles themselves have recommended these gospels as canonical in their epistles. That the passages depended on for proof, do refer to these or any other written gospels, the professor denies: but even if they did, he considers the evidence unsatisfactory; for he supposes that they might have commended a book as containing genuine historical accounts, without vouching for its inspiration. The testimony of the Fathers, that these gospels were approved by Peter and Paul respectively, and with Matthew's gospel were shown to the apostle John, the learned professor sets aside with very little ceremony.

And, finally, he demurs, in regard to the evidence of the canonical authority of these books, derived from the testimony of the whole primitive church, by which they were undoubtedly received into the Canon; and suggests, that the apostles might have recommended them and the primitive church have accepted them, as works indispensable to a Christian on account of the importance of their contents, and that by insensible degrees they acquired the character of being inspired. On these reasonings and objections against the inspiration and canonical authority of several important books, which have hitherto held an unquestioned place in the Canon of the New

Testament, and coming from the pen of a man, too, of such extensive Biblical learning, I think it necessary to detain the reader with some remarks, which I hope will have the effect of counteracting the pernicious influence of the opinions which have been exhibited above.

1. In the first place, then, I would observe, that it will be admitted that Mark and Luke were humble, pious men; also that they were intelligent, well informed men, and must have known that the committing to writing the facts and doctrines comprehended in the gospel, was not left to the discretion or caprice of every disciple, but became the duty of those only who were inspired by the Holy Ghost to undertake the work. Now, if these two disciples had been uninspired, or not under the immediate direction of apostles who possessed plenary inspiration, it would have argued great presumption in them, without any direction, to write gospels for the instruction of the church. The very fact of their writing, is, therefore, a strong evidence that they believed themselves to be inspired. There is then little force in the remark of the learned professor, that neither Mark nor Luke have declared in any part of their writings that they were inspired; for such a declaration was unnecessary; their conduct in undertaking to write such books, is the best evidence that they believed themselves called to this work. And the objection to this argument, from the writings of other apostolical men, is not valid; for none of them ever undertook to write gospels for the use of the church. All attempts at writing other gospels than the four were considered by the primitive church as impious; because the writers were uninspired men.

2. But the universal reception of these books by the whole primitive church as canonical, and that while some of the apostles were living, is the evidence, which to my mind is conclusive, that they were not mere human productions, but compared by divine inspiration. That they were thus universally received, I think is manifest, from the testimonies which have already been adduced. There is not in all the writings of antiquity a hint, that any Christian belonging to the church ever suspected that these gospels were inferior in authority to the others. No books in the Canon appear to have been received with more universal consent, and to have been less disputed. They are contained in every catalogue which has come down to us. They are cited as Scripture by all that mention them; and are expressly declared by the Fathers to be canonical and inspired books.

Now, let it be remembered, that this is the best evidence which we can have that any of the books of the New Testament were written by inspiration. I know, indeed, that Michaelis places the whole proof of inspiration on the promise made by Christ to his apostles; but while it is admitted that this is a weighty consideration, it does not appear to be equal in force to the testimony of the universal church, including the apostles themselves, that these writings were penned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; for it is not perfectly clear, that the promise referred to was confined to the twelve. Certainly Paul, who was not of that number, was inspired in a plenary manner, and much the larger part of the twelve never wrote anything for the Canon. There is nothing in the New Testament which forbids our supposing, that other disciples might have been selected to write for the use of the church. We do not wish that this should be believed, in regard to any persons without evidence; but we think that the proof exists, and arises from the undeniable fact, that the writings of these two men were from the beginning received as inspired. And this belief must have prevailed before the death of the apostles; for all the testimonies concur in stating, that the gospel of Mark was seen by Peter, and that of Luke by Paul, and approved by them respectively. Now, is it credible, that these apostles, and John who survived them many years, would have recommended to the Christian church the productions of uninspired men? No doubt all the

churches at that time looked up to the apostles for guidance in all matters that related to the rule of their faith; and a general opinion that these gospels were canonical could not have obtained without their concurrence. The hypothesis of Michaelis, that they were recommended as useful human productions, and by degrees came to be considered as inspired writings is in itself improbable, and repugnant to all the testimony which has come down to us on the subject. If this had been the fact, they would never have been placed among the books universally acknowledged, but would have been doubted of, or disputed by some. The difference made between inspired books, and others in those primitive times, was as great as at any subsequent period; and the line of distinction was not only broad, but great pains were taken to have it drawn accurately; and when the common opinion of the church respecting the gospels was formed, there was no difficulty in coming to the certain knowledge of the truth. For thirty years and more before the death of the apostle John these two gospels were in circulation.

If any doubt had existed respecting their canonical authority, would not the churches and their Elders have had recourse to this infallible authority? The general agreement of all Christians over the whole world, respecting most of the books of the New Testament, doubtless, should be attributed to the authority of the apostles. If, then, these gospels had been mere human productions they might have been read privately, but never could have found a place in the sacred Canon. The objection to these books comes entirely too late to be entitled to any weight. The opinion of a modern critic, however learned, is of small consideration when opposed to the testimony of the whole primitive church, and to the suffrage of the universal church in every age since the days of the apostles. The rule of the learned Huet already cited is sound, viz. "That all those books should be deemed canonical and inspired, which were received as such by those who lived nearest to the time when they were published."

3. But if we should for the sake of argument concede that no books should be considered as inspired, but such as were the productions of apostles, still these gospels would not be excluded from the Canon. It is a fact, in which there is a wonderful agreement among the Fathers, that Mark wrote his gospel from the mouth of Peter; that is, he wrote down what he had heard this apostle every day declaring in his public ministry. And Luke did the same in regard to Paul's preaching. These gospels, therefore, may, according to this testimony, be considered as more probably belonging to these two apostles, than to the evangelists who penned them. They were little more it would seem, if we give full credit to the testimony which has been exhibited, than amanuenses to the apostles on whom they attended. Paul we know dictated several of his Epistles to some of his companions; and if Mark and Luke heard the gospel from Peter and Paul so often repeated, that they were perfect masters of their respective narratives, and then committed the same to writing, are they not virtually the productions of these apostles which have been handed down to us? And this was so much the opinion of some of the Fathers, that they speak of Mark's gospel as Peter's, and of Luke's as Paul's. But this is not all. These gospels were shown to these apostles and received their approbation. Thus speak the ancients as with one voice; and if they had been silent, we might be certain from the circumstances of the case, that these evangelists would never have ventured to take such an important step as to write and publish the preaching of these inspired men, without their express approbation. Now let it be considered, that a narrative prepared by a man well acquainted with the facts related, may be entirely correct without inspiration; but of this we cannot be sure, and therefore it is of great importance to have a history of facts from men who

were rendered infallible by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It should be remembered, however, that the only advantage of inspiration in giving such a narrative, consists in the proper selection of facts and circumstances, and in the infallible certainty of the writing. Suppose, then, that an uninspired man should prepare an account of such transactions as he had seen or heard from eyewitnesses of undoubted veracity, and that his narrative should be submitted to the inspection of an apostle, and receive his full approbation; might not such a book be considered as inspired? If in the original composition there should have crept in some errors, (for to err is human,) the inspired reviewer would of course point them out and have them corrected; now, such a book would be for all important purposes an inspired volume; and would deserve a place in the Canon of Holy Scripture. If any credit then is due to the testimony of the Christians Fathers, the gospels of Mark and Luke are canonical books; for, as was before stated, there is a general concurrence among them, that these evangelists submitted their works to the inspection, and received the approbation of the apostles Peter and Paul.

4. Finally, the internal evidence is as strong in favour of the gospels under consideration, as of any other books of the New Testament. There is no reason to think that Mark and Luke were capable of writing with such perfect simplicity and propriety without the aid of inspiration, or the assistance of inspired men. If we reject these books from the Canon, we must give up the argument derived from internal evidence for the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures altogether. It is true the learned professor whose opinions we are opposing, has said, "The oftener I compare their writings (Mark's and Luke's) with those of Matthew and John, the greater are my doubts." And speaking in another place of Mark, he says, "In some immaterial instances he seems to have erred," and gives it as his opinion, "That they who undertake to reconcile Mark with Matthew, or to show that he is nowhere corrected by John, experience great difficulty, and have not seldom to resort to unnatural explanations." But the learned professor has not mentioned any particular cases of irreconcilable discrepancies between this evangelist and Matthew; nor does he indicate in what statements he is corrected by John. Until something of this kind is exhibited, general remarks of this sort are deserving of no consideration. To harmonize the evangelists has always been found a difficult task, but this does not prove that they contradict each other, or that their accounts are irreconcilable. Many things which, at first sight, appear contradictory, are found, upon closer examination, to be perfectly harmonious; and if there be some things which commentators have been unable satisfactorily to reconcile, it is no more than what might be expected in narratives so concise, and in which a strict regard to chronological order did not enter into the plan of the writers. And if this objection be permitted to influence our judgment in this case, it will operate against the inspiration of the other evangelists as well as Mark; but in our apprehension, when the discrepancies are impartially considered, and all the circumstances of the facts candidly and accurately weighed, there will be found no solid ground of objection to the inspiration of any of these gospels;—certainly nothing which can counterbalance the strong evidence arising from the style and spirit of the writers. In what respects these two evangelists fall short of the others, has never been shown; upon the most thorough examination and fair comparison of these inimitable productions, they appear to be all indited by the same Spirit, and to possess the same superiority to all human compositions.

Compare these gospels with those which are acknowledged to have been written by uninspired men, and you will need no nice power of discrimination to see the difference; the first appear in

every respect worthy of God; the last betray, in every page, the weakness of man.

I beg leave here to use the words of an excellent writer, in a late work: "The gospel of Luke was always, from the very moment of its publication, received as inspired as well as authentic. It was published during the lives of John, Peter, and Paul, and was approved and sanctioned by them as inspired; and received as such by the churches, in conformity to the Jewish Canon, which decided on the genuineness or spuriousness of the inspired books of their own church, by receiving him as a prophet, who was acknowledged as such by the testimony of an established prophet. On the same grounds Luke must be considered as a true evangelist; his gospel being dictated and approved by an apostle, of whose authority there can be no question. There is, likewise, sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusions of Whitby—that both Mark and Luke were of the number of the seventy, who had a commission from Christ to preach the gospel, not to the Jews only, but to the other nations—that the Holy Ghost fell on these among the numbers of the seventy, who formed a part of the hundred and twenty, assembled on the day of Pentecost, and from that time they were guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit, in writing or preaching the gospel. And if the universal church, from the first ages, received this gospel as divinely inspired, on these satisfactory grounds, distance of time cannot weaken the evidences of truth, and we are required to receive it on the same testimony. That which satisfied those who had much better means of judging, should certainly satisfy us at this time."*

There is something reprehensible, not to say impious, in that bold spirit of modern criticism, which has led many eminent Biblical scholars, especially in Germany, first to attack the authority of particular books of Scripture, and next to call in question the inspiration of the whole volume. To what extent this licentiousness of criticism has been carried, I need not say; for it is a matter of notoriety, that of late the most dangerous enemies of the Bible have been found occupying the place of its advocates; and the critical art which was intended for the correction of the text, and the interpretation of the sacred books, has, in a most unnatural way, been turned against the Bible; and finally, the inspiration of all the sacred books has not only been questioned, but scornfully rejected by Professors of Theology! And these men, while living on endowments which pious benevolence had consecrated for the support of religion, and openly connected with churches whose creeds contain orthodox opinions, have so far forgotten their high responsibilities, and neglected the claims which the church had on them, as to exert all their ingenuity and learning to sap the foundation of that system which they were sworn to defend. They have had the shameless hardihood to send forth into the world, books under their own names, which contain fully as much of the poison of infidelity as ever distilled from the pens of the most malignant deists, whose writings have fallen as a curse upon the world. The only effectual security which we have against this new and most dangerous form of infidelity, is found in the spirit of the age, which is so superficial and cursory in its reading, that, however many elaborate critical works may be published in foreign languages, very few of them will be read, even by theological students, in this country.

Even among those who profess to be orthodox in doctrine, a new and dangerous opinion of the nature and degree of inspiration possessed by the writers of the New Testament, has been broached. It is, that all true Christians as they possess the Holy Spirit, are, in a measure, inspired; and that the inspiration of the apostles differed from that of other Christians only in degree. But that such plenary inspiration as precludes the possibility of error, was never granted to any man.

According to this theory, inspiration differs not at all from that spiritual illumination which is granted to every true Christian. But this brings no new truths to light, and secures none from all error in his opinions, and in his manner of communicating them. It is a theory which destroys the certainty and infallibility of the rule of faith. For if the apostles were subject to error, every man when he finds anything in their writings which he dislikes, will be at liberty to suppose that the sacred writer has, in that particular, fallen into error. Unless the sacred Scriptures can be referred to as an infallible standard, their use is in a great measure destroyed. No inspiration but that which is infallible will at all answer the purpose for which the Bible was written.

SECTION VIII("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN—LIFE OF THIS EVANGELIST—OCCASION AND TIME OF HIS WRITING—CANONICAL AUTHORITY INDISPUTABLE

The fourth gospel was written by John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, who was originally a fisherman of Galilee, and brother of James; and, we may suppose, was the younger of the brothers, as he is generally mentioned last, and is commonly reported to have been the youngest of all Christ's disciples. They were plain uneducated men, as their occupation sufficiently indicates. Probably they had been disciples of John the Baptist, and some have conjectured that John the Evangelist was one of the two to whom John the Baptist pointed out Jesus, and who went after him to his lodging. The other we know was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; and John, in other cases, has concealed his own name, where anything is mentioned which could be interpreted to his honour.

Why these two brothers were surnamed Boanerges, by the Lord, does not clearly appear, unless we suppose that the names were prophetic of the manner of their preaching, when commissioned as apostles. But there are no facts recorded, from which any inference can be drawn in relation to this subject. John has been long celebrated for his affectionate temper, and for the suavity of his manners, which appear very remarkably in all his writings; but there is no evidence that he was naturally of a meek temper. The facts in the gospel history would seem to indicate that both he and his brother were of a fiery temper, and by nature very ambitious; and some have supposed that their surname had relation to this ardour of temper,—but this is not very probable.

We know that John was the bosom friend of Jesus, the disciple whom he loved with a peculiar affection; and that he was admitted to all those scenes of a very interesting nature, from which most of the other disciples were excluded.

It is also certain that he was present at the crucifixion; stood near the cross in company with Mary the mother of our Lord; and that he remained at the place until the body of Jesus, now dead, was pierced with a spear. On the morning of the resurrection John visited the sepulchre, in company with Peter, and was present when Christ made his first appearance to the eleven; and when he manifested himself to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias. After Pentecost he was with Peter in the temple, when the lame man was healed; he accompanied Peter also to Samaria, and was present at the council of Jerusalem. From the book of Revelation we learn, that this evangelist was for a time an exile in the island of Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus, where he was favoured with wonderful visions and communications from the Lord.

It seems to have been intimated to him by his Lord, at the sea of Tiberias, that he should survive the destruction of Jerusalem; for when Peter asked, "Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" which saying gave rise to an opinion among the disciples that that disciple should not die: "Yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" And this accords very well with the testimonies of the ancients, who inform us that John lived to a great age.

Irenæus, in two places of his work against Heretics, says, "That John lived to the time of Trajan," which will bring us down to A. D. 98. Eusebius understands Clement of Alexandria to say the same thing. Origen also testifies, "That John having lived long in Asia was buried at Ephesus." Polycrates, who wrote in the second century, and was bishop of Ephesus, asserts, "That John was buried in that city."

Jerome, in his book of Illustrious Men, and in his work against Jovinian, says, "That the apostle John lived in Asia to the time of Trajan; and dying at a great age, in the sixty-eighth year of our Lord's passion, was buried near the city of Ephesus." This account would bring down the death of John to A. D. 100, in which year it is placed by this writer in his Chronicon. The testimonies for the genuineness of the gospel of John are as full and satisfactory as could be desired.

Irenæus tells us, "That the evangelist John designed, by his gospel, to confute the errors which Cerinthus had infused into the minds of the people, and had been infused by those who were called Nicolaitons; and to convince them that there was one God, who made all things by his Word; and not, as they imagined, one who was the Creator, and another who was the Father of our Lord; one who was the Son of the Creator, and another who was the Christ, who continued impassible, and descended upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator."

Jerome fully confirms this testimony of Irenæus, and says, "That when St. John was in Asia, where there arose the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus, and others, who denied that Christ was come in the flesh—that is, denied his divine nature, whom he, in his Epistle, calls Antichrists, and St. Paul frequently condemns in his Epistles—he was forced by almost all the bishops of Asia, and the deputations of many other churches, to write more plainly concerning the divinity of our Saviour, and to soar aloft in a discourse on the Word, not more bold than happy."

"It is related in ecclesiastical history, that John, when solicited by the brethren to write, answered, that he would not do it unless a public day of fasting and prayer was appointed to implore God's assistance; which being done, and the solemnity being honoured with a satisfactory revelation from God, he broke forth into these words, In the beginning was the Word," &c.

Jerome in his book of Illustrious Men, says, "John wrote a gospel at the desire of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus, and other heretics, especially the doctrines of the Ebionites, then springing up, who say that Christ did not exist before the birth of Mary: for which reason he was obliged to declare his divine nativity. Another reason of his writing is also mentioned, which is, that after having read the volumes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he expressed his approbation of their history as true: but observed, that they had recorded an account of but one year of our Lord's ministry, even the last after the imprisonment of John, (the Baptist) in which also he suffered. Omitting therefore that year, (in a great measure) the history of which had been written by the other three, he related the acts of the preceding time, before John was shut up in prison, as may

appear to those who read the four evangelists, which may serve to account for the seeming difference between John and the rest.”

Augustine, in conformity with the account of Jerome, says, “That this evangelist wrote concerning the co-eternal divinity of Christ against heretics.” Lampe has called in question these early testimonies respecting the occasion of writing this gospel, and has attempted to prove by argument that John had no view to any particular heretics, in the commencement of his gospel. Lardner has taken the same side, and adduces several arguments in favour of Lampe’s opinion. Titman adopts the same opinion. But the probable reasonings of ingenious men when opposed to such a weight of ancient testimony, in relation to a matter of fact which occurred at no long distance before their time, deserve very little consideration. And, indeed, after reading Lardner’s arguments, I must say that they appear to me to have no high degree of plausibility. That Cerinthus lived in the time of the apostle John, and was known to him, is evident from another testimony of Irenæus, which has been often quoted. It is a story which, he says, some persons in his time had from Polycarp, the disciple of John; which is as follows: “John going to a certain bath at Ephesus, and perceiving that Cerinthus, that noted arch-heretic, was in the bath, immediately leaped out, and said, Let us go home lest the bath should fall down upon us, having in it such a heretic as Cerinthus, that enemy of truth.” For the testimony of Irenæus see remarks on the gospel of Matthew. To which we may here add the fanciful reason given by Irenæus why the number of gospels was four, and no more nor less. “Nor can there be more or fewer gospels than these. For as there are four regions of the world in which we live, and four cardinal winds, and the church is spread over all the earth, and the gospel is the pillar and support of the church, and the breath of life, in like manner it is fit it should have four pillars, breathing on all sides incorruption and refreshing mankind, whence it is manifest that the Logos, the maker of all things, who sits upon the cherubim, and holds together all things, having appeared to men, has given us a gospel four-fold in its form, but held together by one Spirit.”* In another part of this work this Father gives characteristics of this gospel, thus—

“The gospel according to John declares his princely, complete, and glorious generation from the Father, saying, ‘In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.’ ”

Augustine, moreover, asserts, “That John is the last of the evangelists.” Chrysostom supposes, that John did not write his gospel till after the destruction of Jerusalem. Paulinus says, “It had been handed down by tradition, that John survived all the other apostles, and wrote the last of the four evangelists, and so as to confirm their most certain history.” Again, he observes, “That in the beginning of John’s gospel all heretics are confuted.”

Cosmas of Alexandria, informs us, “That when John dwelt at Ephesus, there were delivered to him by the faithful the writings of the other three evangelists. Receiving them, he said, that what they had written was well written; but some things were omitted by them which were needful to be related. And being desired by the faithful, he also published his writing, as a kind of supplement to the rest.”

Isidore of Seville, says, “That John wrote the last in Asia.” Theophylact computed that John wrote about two and thirty years after Christ’s ascension. Euthymius says, “That this gospel was not written until long after the destruction of Jerusalem.” Nicephorus, “That John wrote last of all, about

six and thirty years after our Lord's ascension to heaven." Having exhibited the testimonies of the ancients, it may not be amiss to set down the opinions of some of the moderns, relative to the time when this gospel was written.

Mill, Fabricius, Le Clerc, Jones, and many others, agree that John wrote his gospel about the year of our Lord 97. Wetstein thinks it might have been written about thirty-two years after the ascension. Basnage and Lampe are inclined to believe that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Whiston and Lardner adopt the same opinion. The gospel of John is cited by Clement of Rome; by Barnabas; by Ignatius; by Theophilus of Antioch; by Irenæus; and by Clement of Alexandria, in more than forty instances. And by all those writers who lived with, or immediately after the apostles, this gospel is appealed to as inspired Scripture; and the same is the fact in regard to Origen, Jerome Augustine, and all the Fathers, who came after this period. Nearly the whole of this gospel could be made up from citations of the writers of the first four centuries. It was never excluded from any church, or any catalogue of the books of the New Testament, and therefore possesses every evidence of being canonical, which any reasonable man could demand. That the number of genuine gospels was four and no more, is evident from the testimony of all the Fathers who have spoken of them; and especially from the fanciful reason assigned by Irenæus to prove that there could be no more nor fewer. The same is manifest from the fact that Tatian, a learned disciple of Justin, who afterwards became the founder of a sect of ascetics, out of the four gospels formed a volume called Diatessaron.* In this, however, he left out such things as did not suit his views. But the existence of such a book which is attested by Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerome and Theodoret, shows that the number of gospels commonly received by heretics, as well as catholics, was four and no more. The same might be proved from the writings of Julian the apostate.

SECTION IX("tw:///self?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—LUKE THE AUTHOR—CANONICAL AUTHORITY UNDISPUTED BY THE FATHERS—REJECTED ONLY BY HERETICS

That the Acts of the Apostles is the writing of Luke the evangelist, is manifest from the dedication to Theophilus, in which reference is made to his gospel, which was first written. And it is also evident from the uniform testimony of all antiquity; the fact never having been once questioned by any member of the catholic church. All that has been argued in vindication of the inspiration and canonical authority of Luke's gospel, is applicable to the Acts of the Apostles, and need not be here repeated. But it is pleasant to read the explicit testimonies of the Fathers to the sacred books of the New Testament: I will, therefore, bring forward the most important.

Irenæus repeatedly cites passages from this book, saying, "Luke, the disciple and follower of Paul, says thus." "Luke, the inseparable companion and fellow labourer of Paul, wrote thus." He takes particular notice of Luke's using the first person plural, "we endeavoured—we came—we went—we sat down—we spoke," &c.; and enters into some discussion to prove "Luke's fitness for writing a just and true history." In another place he shows, "That Luke's Acts of the Apostles ought to be equally received with his gospel; for that in them he has carefully delivered to us the truth, and given to us a sure rule for salvation." Again he says, "Paul's account of his going to Jerusalem exactly agrees with Luke's in the Acts."

Clemens Alexandrinus citing Paul's speech at Athens, introduces it thus, "So Luke in the Acts of the Apostles relates." Tertullian cites several passages out of the Acts of the Apostles which he calls, "Commentarius Lucæ, The Commentary of Luke." Origen ascribes the Acts of the Apostles to Luke. Eusebius says, "Luke has left us two inspired volumes, The Gospel and The Acts." Jerome expressly asserts, "That the Acts was the composition of Luke." The Syriac Version of the New Testament ascribes the Acts to Luke; and in some very ancient manuscripts of the New Testament his name is prefixed to this book. To this uniform body of ancient testimony there is nothing which can be objected, except that the author of the Synopsis, commonly ascribed to Athanasius, says, "Peter dictated the Acts of the Apostles, but Luke wrote them." But if this were true it would not in the least detract from the authority of the book, but rather increase it. One testimony, however, can be of no avail against so many; and we know that Luke knew most of the facts recorded in this book by his own personal observation, and needed no one to dictate them to him. Besides, Peter was not an eyewitness of the greater number of the facts related in this book. The time when the Acts of the Apostles was written may be determined pretty accurately, by the time when the history which it contains terminates; that is about A. D. 62; for no doubt he began to write soon after he left Rome. That the Acts of the Apostles is of canonical authority, is proved from its having a place in all the ancient catalogues of the books of the New Testament. The same is evinced by the numerous citations from this book by the early Fathers, who explicitly appeal to it as of divine authority—as an inspired book. It is plainly referred to in more instances than one by Clement of Rome, the fellow-labourer of Paul. Polycarp the disciple of John also cites a passage from the Acts, in his Epistle to the Philippians. It is cited by Justin Martyr in his Exhortation to the Greeks. It is distinctly cited by Irenæus more than thirty times, in some of which instances it is expressly called Scripture; and the credit and authority of the book are largely discussed in his work against heretics. The citations of Tertullian from this book are too numerous to be particularized. He also quotes it expressly under the name of Scripture; "Which part of Scripture," says he, "they who do not receive, must deny the descent of the Holy Ghost, and be ignorant of the infant state of the Christian church."* This book was also constantly read as Scripture in the weekly assemblies of Christians all over the world. From the testimonies adduced above it will appear, with convincing evidence, how unfounded is the opinion of some learned men, that the Acts in the early period of the church was very little known comparatively, and very little esteemed. This opinion has been favoured by such men as Father Simon and Dr. Mill; and has no other foundation than a passage in the Prolegomena to the Acts, ascribed to Chrysostom, the genuineness of which is very doubtful. But if Chrysostom was the author of this passage, how little can it weigh against such a host of witnesses? The passage referred to is, "This book is not so much as known to many; they know neither the book nor by whom it was written." Now the same might be asserted respecting all the books in the Canon. There are many persons ignorant of what they contain and unacquainted with their object. But there is no need to dwell longer on this objection. The Acts of the Apostles, therefore, has an indisputable claim to a place in the sacred Canon. No better or stronger evidence can be desired. It is true that some of the earliest heretics did not receive this book as canonical. Tertullian informs us that it was rejected by Cerdo, the master of Marcion, and some others whom he does not name, but whom he refutes.

Philastrus informs us that the Cerinthians did not receive this book. And Augustine tells us, that the Manichees did not, because they considered Manes to be the Paraclete, promised by the Saviour; but in the Acts, it is declared to have been the Holy Ghost which descended on the

apostles on the day of Pentecost.

“But,” says Father Simon, “let us leave these enthusiasts, who had no other reason for rejecting the books received by the whole church, except that they did not suit with the idea which they had formed of the Christian religion.”

SECTION X("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

TESTIMONIES TO THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE FOURTEEN EPISTLES OF PAUL

On the subject of Paul's epistles, there is a universal consent among the ancients, except as it relates to the epistle to the Hebrews; which having been published without the apostle's name and usual salutation, many conjectured that it was the production of another person; and while some ascribed it to Barnabas, others thought that either Clement or Luke was the writer. There seems to have been a difference between the eastern and western churches on this subject; for the Greeks appear to have entertained no doubts in regard to Paul's being the author of this epistle: it was only among the Latins that its genuineness was a matter of uncertainty. And the most learned among these adopted the opinion, that it was the production of Paul; and by degrees its authority was fully established in the west as well as the east. The true state of the case will, however, appear more clearly by citing the testimonies of the Fathers, than by any general representation.

Although Clement, the fellow-labourer of Paul, frequently cites passages from the gospels and epistles, yet he never expressly mentions any book of the New Testament, except Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians; to whom also Clement's epistle was addressed. His words are, “Take into your hands the epistle of blessed Paul the apostle. What did he at first write to you in the beginning of the gospel? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas and Apollos, because that even then you did form parties.” There are in this epistle of Clement many other passages in which the words of Paul are cited, but this is the only one in which his name is mentioned.

Hermas and Ignatius also often quote the words of Paul's epistles, but the books from which they are taken are not designated.

Polycarp, the disciple of the apostle John and bishop of Smyrna, who suffered martyrdom in extreme old age, about the middle of the second century, after sentence of death was pronounced upon him, wrote an epistle to the Philippians, in which he makes express mention of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians—“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world, as Paul teaches?” See 1 Corinthians 6:2.

He also quotes a passage from the epistle to the Ephesians, under the name of Holy Scripture. “For I trust,” says he, “that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scripture—as in these Scriptures it is said, ‘Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.’ ” Ephesians 4:26. Polycarp also cites passages from the second epistle to the Corinthians; from the epistle to the Galatians; from the first and second to the Thessalonians; from the epistle to the Hebrews; and from both the epistles to Timothy; but, as is usual with the apostolical Fathers, he does not refer to the books or authors from which he makes his citations.

Justin Martyr quotes many passages in the very words of Paul, without mentioning his name. But Irenæus distinctly and frequently quotes thirteen of Paul's epistles. He takes nothing, indeed, from

the short epistle to Philemon, which can easily be accounted for by the brevity of this letter, and the special object which the apostle had in view in penning it.

It would fill a large space to put down all the passages cited by Irenæus from the epistles of Paul. Let it suffice to give one from each as quoted in his work "Against Heresies."—"This same thing Paul has explained writing to the Romans, 'Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, separated to the gospel of God.' Romans 1:1. And again writing to the Romans concerning Israel, he says, 'Whose are the fathers and of whom concerning the flesh, Christ came who is God over all, blessed for evermore.' " Romans 9:5. "This also Paul manifestly shows in his epistle to the Corinthians, saying, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud.' 1 Corinthians 10:1. Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians, says, 'In whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.' " 2 Corinthians 4:4. "The apostle Paul says, in his epistle to the Galatians, 'Wherefore then serveth the law of works? It was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.' " Galatians 3:10. "As also the blessed Paul says, in his epistle to the Ephesians, 'For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.' " Ephesians 5:30. "As also Paul says to the Philippians, 'I am full, having received of Epaphroditus, the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.' " Php_4:13. "Again Paul says, in his epistle to the Colossians, 'Luke the beloved physician saluteth you.' " Colossians 4:14. "The apostle in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, says, 'And the God of peace sanctify you wholly.' " 1 Thessalonians 5:23. "And again, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, 'And then shall that wicked one be revealed.' " 2 Thessalonians 2:8. In the beginning of his work against heresies, he says, "Whereas some having rejected the truth, bringing in lying words, and 'vain genealogies, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith,' 1 Timothy 1:4, as saith the apostle." This epistle is often quoted by Irenæus, in the work above mentioned. Speaking of Linus bishop of Rome, he says, "Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in his epistle to Timothy, 'Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus.' " 2 Timothy 4:21. "As Paul says, 'A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject.' " Titus 3:10. Thus, we have seen that Irenæus who lived in the age immediately succeeding that in which Paul lived and wrote, has borne explicit testimony to all the epistles of that apostle which have his name prefixed, except the short epistle to Philemon, from which it is probable he had no occasion to take any authorities, as it is very concise, and addressed to a friend on a particular subject in which Paul felt deeply interested. As to the epistle to the Hebrews, which is anonymous, there is ample evidence that Irenæus was acquainted with it; but it is doubtful whether he esteemed it to be the production of Paul, or some other person. As he resided in France, it is very possible that he participated in the prejudice of the western church on this point. Eusebius informs us, that he had seen a work of Irenæus which has not reached our times, in which he cites passages from the epistle to the Hebrews; but he does not say that he quoted them as Paul's. And in his works, which are still extant, there are several passages cited from this epistle, but without direct reference to the source whence they were derived.

Athenagoras quotes from several of Paul's epistles; but, as has been seen to be the custom of the early Fathers, he commonly uses the words, without informing the reader, from what author they were borrowed. There is, however, a passage in which he refers to both the first and second epistles to the Corinthians, as being the production of the apostle Paul. "It is manifest, therefore," says he, "that according to the apostle, 'this corruptible and dissipated must put on incorruption,

that the dead being raised up, and the separated and even consumed parts being again united, every one may receive justly, the things he hath done in the body, whether they be good or bad.' " 1 Corinthians 15:54; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Clement, of Alexandria, abounds in quotations from Paul's epistles; a few of which will be sufficient for our purpose. "The apostle, in the epistle to the Romans, says, 'Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God.' " "The blessed Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, says, 'Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice, be ye children, but in understanding be ye men.' " 1 Corinthians 14:20. He has also many quotations from the second to the Corinthians—"The apostle," says he, "calls the common doctrine of the faith, 'a savour of knowledge,' in the second to the Corinthians." 2 Corinthians 2:14. "Hence, also, Paul says, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our hearts from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness, in the fear of God.' " 2 Corinthians 7:1. "Whereupon Paul, also writing to the Galatians, says, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.' " Galatians 4:19. "Whereupon the blessed apostle says, 'I testify in the Lord that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk.' Ephesians 4:17-18. Again, 'submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.' " Ephesians 5:21. He quotes part of the first and second chapters of the epistle to the Philippians expressly; and in another place he quotes the same epistle, after this manner: "The apostle of the Lord also exhorting the Macedonians, says, 'the Lord is at hand, take heed that we be not found empty.' " Php_4:5.

Clement also quotes the epistle to the Colossians, and the epistles to the Thessalonians. From the first epistle to Timothy he cites this passage, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which some professing, have erred concerning the faith." 1 Timothy 6:20-21. On which he observes, "Heretics confuted by this saying, reject both epistles to Timothy." The epistle to Titus is also quoted several times; and he remarks, in one place, "that Paul had cited Epimenides, the Cretan, in his epistle to Titus, after this manner, 'One of themselves, a poet of their own, said, the Cretans are always liars.' " Titus 1:12-13. The epistle to the Hebrews is also distinctly quoted, and is ascribed to Paul as its author. "Wherefore, writing to the Hebrews, who were declining from the faith to the law, Paul says, 'Have ye need that any teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such, as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' " Hebrews 5:12.

Tertullian frequently, and expressly quotes most of Paul's epistles. In one place he says, "I will, therefore, by no means say, God, nor Lord, but I will follow the apostles; so that if the Father and the Son are mentioned together, I will say, God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Lord. But when I mention Christ only, I will call him God, as the apostle does, 'Of whom Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.' " Romans 9:5. "Paul, in his first epistle, to the Corinthians, speaks of those who doubted, or denied the resurrection." In his Treatise on Monogamy, he computes that it was about one hundred and sixty years from Paul's writing this epistle, to the time when he wrote. "In the second epistle to the Corinthians, they suppose the apostle Paul to have forgiven the same fornicator, who in the first, he declared, ought to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." "But of this, no more need be said, if it be the same Paul, who, writing to the Galatians, reckons heresy among the works of the flesh; and who directs Titus to reject a man that is a heretic, after the first admonition, 'knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.' " "I pass," says he, "to another epistle, which we have inscribed to the

Ephesians; but the heretics, to the Laodiceans.” Again, “According to the true testimony of the church, we suppose this epistle to have been sent to the Ephesians, and not to the Laodiceans; but Marcion has endeavoured to alter this inscription, upon pretence of having made a more diligent search into this matter. But the inscriptions are of no importance, for the apostle wrote to all, when he wrote to some.”

Speaking of the Christian's hope, he says, “Of which hope and expectation, Paul to the Galatians says, ‘For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.’ He does not say we have obtained it, but he speaks of the hope of the righteousness of God in the day of judgment, when our reward shall be decided. Of which being in suspense, when he wrote to the Philippians, he said, ‘If by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect.’ Php_3:11-12. The apostle, writing to the Colossians, expressly cautions against philosophy, ‘Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after the instruction of the Spirit.’ ” Colossians 2:8. “And in the epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle adds, ‘But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.’ ” 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3. “And in his second epistle to the same persons, he writes with greater solicitude: ‘But I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2. “And this word, Paul has used in writing to Timothy, ‘O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.’ ” 1 Timothy 6:20. That remarkable passage of Tertullian, in which he is supposed to refer to the existing autographs of the epistles of Paul, although referred to already, may with propriety be here introduced. “Well,” says he, “if you be willing to exercise your curiosity profitably, in the business of your salvation, visit the apostolical churches, in which the very chairs of the apostles still preside, in which their very authentic letters (*authenticæ literæ*) are recited, sending forth the voice, and representing the countenance of each one of them. Is Achaia near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi—you have Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia, you have Ephesus. But if you are near to Italy, you have Rome, from whence also we may be easily satisfied.”

There are three opinions respecting the meaning of this phrase *authenticæ literæ*; authentic letters; The first is, that it signifies the original manuscripts of the apostles—the autographs which were sent severally to the churches named, to all of which Paul addressed epistles. The second opinion is, that Tertullian meant to refer his readers to the original Greek of these epistles, which they had been accustomed to read in a Latin version. And the third is, that this phrase means well authenticated letters; epistles which, by application to these churches, could be proved to be genuine writings of the apostles.

Now, that the first of these is the true sense of Tertullian's words, will, I think, appear very probable, if we consider, that if those autographs were preserved, even with common care, they would have been extant in the time of Tertullian, who reckons only 160 years from the time of Paul's writing to his own time. And again, unless he meant this, there is no reason why he should direct his readers only to those cities which had received epistles; for doubtless many other churches, which might be more accessible, had authentic copies in the Greek language. Such copies undoubtedly existed in Africa, where Tertullian lived. They need not, however, have been directed to go to Rome, or Corinth, or Ephesus, or Philippi, or Thessalonica, to see the epistles of

Paul in Greek. Neither was it necessary to take a journey to these cities to be fully convinced, that the letters which had been received by them were genuine; for the evidence of this fact was not confined to these distinguished places, but was diffused all over the Christian world. From these considerations I conclude, that in Tertullian's time these churches had in possession, and preserved with care, the identical epistles sent to them by Paul. This sense is confirmed by what he says, of their being able to hear the voice, and behold the countenance of the apostles, and see the very seats on which they had been accustomed to sit when they presided in the church. These seats were still occupied by the bishops, and seemed to preside, as they were venerable from having been once occupied by the apostles.

Tertullian was acquainted with the epistle to the Hebrews, for he quotes several passages from the sixth chapter, but he ascribes it to Barnabas, and not to Paul. In this opinion, I believe, he is singular.

Theophilus of Antioch quotes the following passage from the epistle to the Romans, but seems to have quoted from memory, "He will search out all things, and will judge justly; rendering to all according to the desert of their actions. To them that by patient continuance in well-doing seek for immortality, he will give eternal life, joy, peace, rest, and many good things, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. But to the unbelieving, and the despisers, and them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish; and in a word, eternal fire shall be the portion of such." This passage is evidently taken from Romans 2:6-9, and as evidently cited from memory. It also contains a quotation from 1 Corinthians 2:9. This early and learned Father has also cited, in the same loose manner, passages from the epistles to the Ephesians—to the Philippians—to the Colossians—to Timothy—to Titus—and from the epistle to the Hebrews, but without naming the book from which the passages are taken; which is in accordance with the practice of all the apostolic Fathers. The following passage is worthy of notice, not only because it contains an undoubted reference to the second epistle of Peter; but because it shows what opinion was in that early age entertained of the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures: "But men of God, filled with the Holy Ghost, and becoming prophets, inspired by God himself, and being enlightened were taught of God, and were holy and righteous, wherefore they obtained the honour to become the organs of God."*

Clement of Alexandria lived and wrote toward the close of the second century. After Pantæus he was president of the Alexandrian school. Several of his works have come down to us, from which the following citations from Paul's epistles are taken. "Behold, therefore," saith Paul, "the goodness and severity of God." Romans 16:19. "The blessed Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, says, 'Brethren, be not children in understanding, but in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men.' And he says, the apostle in the second epistle to the Corinthians, calls the gospel 'a savour of knowledge,' 2 Corinthians 11:14. "Again, Paul says, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' 2 Corinthians 7:1. He cites the following from the epistle to the Ephesians: "As blessed Paul saith, 'Walk not as other Gentiles walk.' Ephesians 6:17, and 'submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.' Ephesians 5:21. He also cites the following words from the epistle to the Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you." Galatians 4:19. And from the Philippians, these words, "Not as though I

had already attained or were already perfect," Php_3:12. He also cites texts frequently from the epistles to the Colossians and Thessalonians, and always quotes them as written by Paul. From the first epistle to Timothy, 1 Timothy 6:20, he has the following, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called." He also refers to the second epistle to Timothy, and the epistle to Titus he quotes several times. It is satisfactory to have the testimony of so early and so learned a Father in favour of the canonical authority of the epistle to the Hebrews, and of its having Paul as its author. "Blessed Paul, writing to such as were declining, says, 'Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not strong meat.' " Hebrews 5:12.

Origen quotes Paul's epistles, as expressly and frequently as is done by almost any modern writer. To transcribe all the passages cited by him, would be to put down a large portion of the writings of this apostle. A few instances will be sufficient. In one passage, in his work against Celsus, he mentions several of Paul's epistles together, in the following manner—"Do you, first of all, explain the epistles of him who says these things, and having diligently read, and attended to the sense of the words there used, particularly in that to the Ephesians, to the Thessalonians, to the Philippians, to the Romans, &c." The epistle to the Ephesians is elsewhere quoted by Origen with the inscription which it now bears.

After employing an argument founded on a passage quoted from the epistle to the Hebrews, he observes: "But possibly some one, pressed with this argument, will take refuge in the opinion of those who reject this epistle as not written by Paul. In answer to such we intend to write a distinct discourse, to prove this to be an epistle of Paul." In his citations of this epistle, therefore, he constantly ascribes it to Paul in such expressions as these, "Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews," "In the epistle to the Hebrews, the same Paul says." But Origen not only expresses his own opinion on this subject, but asserts, that by the tradition received by the ancients it was ascribed to Paul. His words are, "For it is not without reason that the ancients have handed it down to us as Paul's." Now, when we take into view that Origen lived within one hundred years of the time of the apostles, and that he was a person of most extraordinary learning, and that he had travelled much through different countries, his testimony on this point is of great weight; especially, since his opinion is founded on the testimony of the ancients, by whom he must mean the contemporaries of the apostles. At the same time, however, he mentions, that some ascribed it to Luke, and others to Clement of Rome.

Cyprian often quotes the epistles of Paul. "According," says he, "to what the blessed apostle wrote in his epistle to the Romans, 'Every one shall give account of himself to God, therefore, let us not judge one another.' " Romans 14:12. In his first book of Testimonies, he says, "In the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, it is said, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea.' 1 Corinthians 10:1. Likewise, in the second epistle to the Corinthians, it is written, 'Their minds were blinded unto this day.' 2 Corinthians 3:15. In like manner, blessed Paul, by the inspiration of the Lord, says, 'Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, that ye may be enriched in all things.' 2 Corinthians 9:10. Likewise Paul to the Galatians says, 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.' " Galatians 4:4.

Cyprian expressly quotes the epistle to the Ephesians under that title. "But the apostle Paul, speaking of the same thing more clearly and plainly, writes to the Ephesians, and says, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water.' Ephesians 5:25-26. So also, Paul to the Philippians says, 'Who being appointed in the form of God, did not earnestly affect to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking on him the form of a servant; and being made in the likeness of man, and found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Php_2:6-8. In the epistle of Paul to the Colossians, it is written, 'Continue in prayer, watching in the same.' Colossians 4:2. Likewise, the blessed apostle Paul, full of the Holy Ghost, sent to call and convert the Gentiles, warns and teaches, 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, &c.' " Colossians 2:8. He also quotes both the epistles to the Thessalonians. In his book of Testimonies he says, "If the apostle Paul writing to Timothy, said, 'Let no man despise thy youth,' 1 Timothy 4:12, much more may it be said of you and your colleagues, 'Let no man despise thy age.' " "Therefore the apostle writes to Timothy and exhorts, 'that a bishop should not strive, but be gentle, and apt to teach.' " 2 Timothy 2:24. These two epistles are elsewhere quoted distinctly, as the first and second to Timothy. He also quotes from the epistle to Titus, the passage, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." Titus 3:10.

Cyprian nowhere quotes the epistle to the Hebrews. It is probable, therefore, that he, like some others of the Latin Fathers, did not believe it to be Paul's, or was doubtful respecting it. Neither does he cite the epistle to Philemon; of this no other reason need be sought, but its contents and brevity. How many Christian authors have written volumes, without any citation of that epistle! Victorinus, who lived near the close of the third century, often quotes Paul's Epistles; and among the rest, he cites the epistle to the Hebrews, which he seems to have believed to be the production of Paul. Dionysius of Alexandria, also a contemporary of Origen, and a man of great learning, in the few fragments of his works which remain, often refers to Paul's Epistles. Novatus, presbyter of the church of Rome, who flourished about the middle of the third century, expressly cites from the epistle to the Romans, that famous testimony to Christ's divinity, so often quoted by the Fathers, "Whose are the fathers, of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." And it deserves to be recollected, that although so many, beginning with Irenæus, have cited this passage, yet none of them appear to have thought the words capable of any other meaning, than the plain obvious sense, which strikes the reader at first. That it was a mere exclamation of praise, seems never to have entered their minds. Novatus also quotes the first and second epistles to the Corinthians, the epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians. From this last epistle he cites these remarkable words: "Who being in the form of God," Php_2:6, and interprets the following clause in exact accordance with another of the Fathers, "did not earnestly seek to be like God, or to be equal with God." He quotes from the epistle to the Colossians these words: "Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, things visible and invisible, by him all things consist." Colossians 1:16-17. The epistles to Timothy and to Titus are also cited by this author.

Methodius, who lived in the latter part of the third century, quotes Paul's epistle to the Romans, first and second to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, the first to the Thessalonians, and the first to Timothy. He has also taken several passages from the epistle to the Hebrews, and quotes it in such a manner, as to render it highly

probable that he esteemed it to be a part of sacred Scripture, and ascribed it to Paul.

Eusebius, the learned historian, undoubtedly received thirteen epistles of Paul as genuine; and he seems to have entertained no doubt respecting the canonical authority of the epistle to the Hebrews; but he sometimes expresses himself doubtfully of its author, while at other times he quotes it as Paul's, without any apparent hesitation. In speaking of the universally acknowledged epistle of Clement of Rome, he observes: "In which, inserting many sentiments of the epistle to the Hebrews, and also using some of the very words of it, he plainly manifests that epistle to be no modern writing. And hence it has, not without reason, been reckoned among the other writings of the apostle; for Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the Evangelist Luke, others, that this very Clement translated it; which last is the more probable of the two, there being a resemblance between the style of the epistle of Clement, and that to the Hebrews; nor are the sentiments of these two writings very different." In his Ecclesiastical History, he speaks, "of the epistle to the Hebrews, and divers other epistles of Paul." And Theodoret positively asserts, that Eusebius received this epistle as Paul's, and that he manifested that all the ancients, almost, were of the same opinion. It seems, from these facts, that in the time of Eusebius, the churches with which he was acquainted, did generally receive the epistle to the Hebrews as the writing of Paul.

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, received fourteen epistles of Paul. Jerome received as undoubted all Paul's epistles, except that to the Hebrews, concerning which he says in his letter to Evangelius, "That all the Greeks and some of the Latins received this epistle." And in his letter to Dardanus, "That it was not only received as Paul's by all the churches of the east, in his time, but by all the ecclesiastical writers in former times, though many ascribe it to Barnabas, or Clement." He also says, "that it was daily read in the churches; and if the Latins did not receive this epistle, as the Greeks rejected the Revelation of John, he received both; not being so much influenced by present times, as by the judgment of ancient writers, who quote both; and that not as they quote apocryphal books, and even heathen writings, but as canonical and ecclesiastical."

Jerome, in speaking of the writings of Paul, gives the following very full and satisfactory testimony: "He wrote," says he, "nine epistles to seven churches. To the Romans, one; to the Corinthians, two; to the Galatians, one; to the Philippians, one; to the Colossians, one; to the Thessalonians, two; to the Ephesians, one; to Timothy, two; to Titus, one; to Philemon, one. But the epistle called to the Hebrews is not thought to be his, because of the difference of argument and style; but rather Barnabas's, as Tertullian thought; or Luke's, according to some others; or Clement's, who was afterwards bishop of Rome; who being much with Paul, clothed and adorned Paul's sense in his own language. Or if it be Paul's, he might decline putting his name to it in the inscription, for fear of offending the Jews. Moreover, he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, it being his own language; whence it came to pass, that being translated, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles. This they say is the reason of its differing from Paul's other writings. There is also an epistle to the Laodiceans, but it is rejected by every body." Jerome commonly quotes the epistle to the Hebrews as the apostle Paul's; and, as we have seen before, this was his prevailing opinion, which is not contradicted in the long passage just cited.

Augustine received fourteen epistles of Paul, the last of which, in his catalogue, is the epistle to the Hebrews; he was aware, however, that some in his time thought it of doubtful authority. "However,"

says he, "I am inclined to follow the opinion of the churches of the east, who receive it among the canonical Scriptures." The time when each of these epistles was written cannot be ascertained with any exactness. It is not even agreed among the learned which was the first of Paul's epistles. Generally, indeed, it has been thought that the two epistles to the Thessalonians were composed earlier than the others; but of late some learned men have given precedence to the epistle to the Galatians. And this opinion is not altogether confined to the moderns, for Tertullian mentions this epistle as among the first of Paul's writings. But the more common opinion is, that it was written during the long abode of this apostle at Corinth. Among the advocates of this opinion, we find L'Enfant, Beausobre, Lardner, &c., while Grotius, Capel, Witsius, and Wall, suppose that it was written at Ephesus. These last, together with Fabricius and Mill, place the date of the epistle to the Galatians, after that to the Romans. Macknight maintains that it was written from Antioch, after the Council of Jerusalem; and offers in support of his opinions several plausible arguments, which, if they do not prove all that he wishes, seem to render it probable that the time of this epistle being written was soon after the Council of Jerusalem. Semler, however, is of opinion that this epistle was written prior to the Council of Jerusalem. From these various opinions, it is sufficiently evident that the precise date of the epistle to the Galatians cannot be ascertained. If we take the opinion of those who give the earliest date, the time of writing will not be later than A. D. 47. But if we receive as more probable the opinions of those who think that it was written after the Council of Jerusalem, we shall bring it down to the year 50; while, according to the opinion more commonly adopted, its date will be A. D. 52 or 53. And if we prefer the opinions of those who assign the latest date to this epistle, we shall bring it down several years later, and instead of giving it the first place, will give it the ninth or tenth.

There seem to be better data for determining that the first epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Corinth, about the year 51; and the second epistle to the Thessalonians was probably written a few months afterwards from the same place. Michaelis and Dr. Hales unite in giving the next place in the order of time to the epistle to Titus. Lardner, however, places it considerably later; and Paley assigns to it a date later than any other author. On this subject there is little else than conjecture to guide us. The year in which this epistle was written, according to Michaelis and Hales, was 53; according to Lardner, 56; according to Barrington, 57; and according to Whitby, Pearson, and Paley, 65. The epistle next in order is the first to the Corinthians, the date of which can be determined with considerable precision from the epistle itself. "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." 1 Corinthians 16:8. These words teach where this epistle was written, and by a comparison with other passages of Scripture, that it was penned near the close of Paul's long residence at Ephesus, from which place he departed about A. D. 57. This then is the proper date of this epistle. The first epistle to Timothy will stand next, if we follow the opinion most commonly entertained by learned men; and its date will be A. D. 57 or A. D. 58. This opinion is supported by the authority of Athanasius, Theodoret, Baronius, Capellus, Blondel, Hammond, Grotius, Salmasius, Lightfoot, Benson, Barrington, Michaelis, Doddridge, and others. But Pearson, Rosenmuller, Macknight, Paley, Tomline, &c., place it as low as the year of our Lord 64 or 65. The second epistle to the Corinthians was written probably about a year after the first, which will bring it to A. D. 58. In the same year it is thought that Paul wrote his very important epistle to the Romans. On this point, however, there is some diversity of opinion. But the epistle itself contains internal evidence that it was written at Corinth, when the apostle was preparing to take the contributions of the churches to Jerusalem. The date of the epistles to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, and to the

Colossians, can be ascertained pretty nearly, from the circumstance, that Paul was prisoner at Rome when they were written. The epistle to the Ephesians may, with much probability, be referred to A. D. 61; the epistle to the Philippians to A. D. 62; and the epistle to the Colossians to the same year. The short epistle to Philemon was written, as appears by several coincidences, about the same time as those just mentioned. The epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written about the termination of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. Its date, therefore, may without danger of mistake be referred to A. D. 62 or A. D. 63.

J. D. Michaelis who, as has been seen, has done much to unsettle the Canon of Scripture, by calling in question the genuineness of some of the books, as well as the inspiration of some of the writers, has, in an elaborate essay, (vol. iv.) endeavoured to lessen the authority of this epistle. For an answer to the arguments of this learned, but sceptical Professor, I would refer the reader to Townsend's New Testament, arranged in chronological and historical order.

Paul's second epistle to Timothy seems to have been written during his second imprisonment at Rome, and shortly before his death, A. D. 66.

SECTION XI("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE SEVEN CATHOLIC EPISTLES

The first epistle of Peter, and the first of John, are quoted by Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias, but not expressly as the writings of these apostles. For the particular passages cited the reader is referred to Lardner. Justin Martyr has a saying which is nowhere found in Scripture, except in the second of Peter: it is, "that a day of the Lord is a thousand years." Diognetus quotes several passages from the first of Peter, and the first of John. Irenæus quotes the first epistle of Peter expressly; "And Peter says, in his epistle, Whom having not seen ye love." And from the second he takes the same passage which has just been cited, as quoted by Justin Martyr. The first and second of John are expressly quoted by this Father, for after citing his gospel he goes on to say, "Wherefore also in his epistle, he says, Little children, it is the last time." And again, "In the forementioned epistle the Lord commands us to shun those persons who bring false doctrine, saying, "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an Antichrist. Look to yourselves that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought." Now these words are undoubtedly taken from John's second epistle. Irenæus seems, indeed, to quote them from the first, but this was probably a slip of the memory.

Several passages out of the epistle of James are also cited by this father, but without any distinct reference to the source whence they are derived. Athenagoras also has some quotations which appear to be from James and 2 Peter. Clement of Alexandria often quotes 1 Peter, and sometimes 2 Peter. The first epistle of John is often cited by him. Jude also is quoted several times expressly, as, "Of these and the like heretics, I think Jude spoke prophetically, when he said, 'I will that ye should know, that God having saved the people out of Egypt,' " &c. He has a remark on Jude's modesty, that he did not style himself the brother of our Lord, although he was related to him, but begins his epistle, "Jude the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James."

Tertullian often quotes the first epistle of John; but he has in none of his remaining writings cited anything from James, 2 Peter or 2 John. He has, however, one express quotation from Jude, "Hence it is," says he, "that Enoch is quoted by the apostle Jude."

Origen, in his commentary on John's gospel, expressly quotes the epistle of James in the following passage, "For though it be called faith, if it be without works, it is dead, as we read in the epistle ascribed to James." This is the only passage in the remaining Greek works of this father where this book is quoted; but in his Latin works, translated by Rufin, it is cited as the epistle of James the apostle and brother of our Lord; and as "divine Scripture," The first epistle of Peter is often quoted expressly. In his book against Celsus, he says, "As it is said by Peter, 'Ye as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.' Again, Peter in his Catholic epistle, says, 'Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit.' " According to Eusebius, Origen considered the second of Peter as doubtful, and in his Greek works there are no clear citations from it; but there are found a few in his Latin works. In the passage preserved by Eusebius, he says, that some were doubtful respecting the second and third of John, "but for my part," says he, "let them be granted to be his."

Origen has cited several passages from Jude, which are found in no other part of Scripture; and in one place remarks, "Jude wrote an epistle of few lines indeed, but full of powerful words and heavenly grace, who at the beginning, says, 'Jude the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.' " In another place, he shows, that some were doubtful of this epistle, for he says, "But if any one receives also the epistle of Jude, let him consider what will follow, from what is there said." This epistle is cited in his Latin works also; and several times in a Latin epistle ascribed to Origen.

Cyprian nowhere quotes the epistle of James; but the first of Peter is often cited. Several times he speaks of it as the epistle of Peter to the people of Pontus. He expressly ascribes it to "Peter the apostle," "the apostle of Christ," &c. The second of Peter he never quotes. The first of John is often quoted by Cyprian. "The apostle John," says he, "mindful of this command, writes in this epistle, 'Hereby we perceive that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' " The second and third of John he never mentions, nor the epistle of Jude. The opinion of Eusebius of Cesaræa, respecting the epistle of James, was, that it was written by one of Christ's disciples by the name of James, but he makes three of that name. Although he admits that the writer of this epistle was the brother of our Lord, who was made the first bishop of Jerusalem, yet he will not allow that he was one of the twelve. In his commentary on the Psalms, he says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms, as the sacred apostle says." In other parts of his works, he speaks very doubtfully of this epistle, and in one passage, where he distributes the books into classes, he mentions it among the books which he calls spurious; by which, however, he only means that it was not canonical. In his ecclesiastical history, he speaks of the epistles of Peter in the following manner, "One epistle of Peter called his first, is universally received. This the presbyters of ancient times have quoted in their writings as undoubtedly genuine; but that called his second epistle, we have been informed, has not been received into the Testament. Nevertheless, appearing to many to be useful, it has been carefully studied with the other Scriptures." And in another passage, he says, "That called the first of John and the first of Peter are to be esteemed authentic. Of the controverted, yet well known or approved by the most, are, that called the epistle of James, and that of Jude, and the second of Peter, and the second and third of John, whether they were written by the evangelist, or by another."

Athanasius quotes the epistle of James as written by the apostle James. The first epistle of Peter is frequently quoted by him; and he also cites passages from the second epistle, and ascribes

them to Peter. Both the first and second epistles of John are distinctly and expressly quoted: the third is not mentioned. He also, in two instances, cites the words of Jude.

Jerome's testimony concerning the epistle of James is full and explicit. His words are, "James, called the Lord's brother, surnamed Justus, as some think son of Joseph, by a former wife; but as I rather think, the son of Mary, the sister of our Lord's mother, mentioned by John in his gospel, (soon after our Lord's passion ordained by the apostles bishop of Jerusalem) wrote but one epistle, which is among the seven Catholic epistles; which too has been said to have been published by another in his name; but gradually, in process of time, it has gained authority. This is he of whom Paul writes in the epistle to the Galatians, and he is often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and also several times in the gospel, called, "according to the Hebrews," lately translated by me into Greek and Latin."

Augustine received all the Catholic epistles. He quotes James as an apostle. He often cites both the epistles of Peter. He also refers to John's three epistles, and quotes Jude, and calls him an apostle. In the works of Ephrem, the Syrian, who lived, and wrote voluminously, in the fourth century, there are express quotations from the epistle of James, from the second of Peter, the second and third of John, and from Jude, as well as from those Catholic epistles which were undisputed. Rufin received all the books as canonical, which are now so esteemed by Christians generally. Why these epistles have received the appellation of Catholic, various reasons have been assigned. Some have supposed that they were so called, because they contain the one catholic doctrine which was delivered to the churches by the apostles of our Saviour, and which might be read by the universal church. Others are of opinion that they received this appellation, because they were not addressed to one person, or church, like the epistles of Paul, but to the Catholic church. This opinion seems not to be correct, for some of them were written to the Christians of particular countries, and others to individuals. A third opinion, advanced by Dr. Hammond, and adopted by Dr. Macknight, and which has some probability, is, that the first of Peter, and first of John, being received by all Christians, obtained the name of Catholic, to distinguish them from those which at first were not universally received; but, in process of time, these last, coming to be universally received, were put into the same class with the first, and the whole thenceforward had the appellation of Catholic. This denomination is as old as the time of Eusebius, and probably older, for Origen repeatedly called John's first epistle Catholic; and the same is done by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria. The same appellation was given to the whole seven by Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Jerome. Of these, it is probable, that the epistle of James was first written, but at what precise time, cannot be determined. As there were two disciples of the name of James, it has been much disputed to which of them this epistle should be attributed. Lardner and Macknight have rendered it exceedingly probable that this epistle was written by James the Less, who is supposed to have been related to our Lord, and who seems for a long time to have had the chief authority in the church at Jerusalem; but Michaelis is of a different opinion, and says, that he sees "no reason for the assertion, that James, the son of Zebedee, was not the author of this epistle." But the reasons which he assigns for his opinion have very little weight. The date of this epistle may, with considerable probability, be referred to the year 62; for it is supposed that James was put to death in the following year. Its canonical authority and divine inspiration, although called in question by some, in ancient as well as modern times, ought to be considered as undoubted. One strong evidence that it was thus received by early Christians, may be derived

from the old Syriac version of the New Testament; which, while it leaves out several other books, contains this.

It seems not to have been as well known in the western churches as most other books of Scripture; but learned men have observed, that Clement of Rome has quoted it no less than four times; and it is also quoted by Ignatius, in his genuine epistle to the Ephesians; and we have already shown that it was received as the writing of the apostle James, by Origen, Athanasius, and Jerome. The first epistle of Peter has ever been considered authentic, and has been cited by Clement of Rome, Polycarp, the Martyrs of Lyons, Theophilus Bishop of Antioch, Papias, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. The only matter of doubt respecting it is, what place we are to understand by Babylon, where Peter was when he wrote. On this subject there are three opinions: the first, that by this name a place in Egypt is signified; the second, that Babylon in Assyria, properly so called, is meant; and the third, which is generally maintained by the Romanists, and some Protestants, is, that Rome is here called Babylon. Eusebius and Jerome understood that this epistle was written from Rome. The time of its being written was probably about the year of our Lord 65 or 66. The date of the epistle of Jude may as well be placed about the same period, as at any other time, for we have no documents which can guide us to any certain decision. The objection to the canonical authority of this epistle, derived from the author's having quoted the apocryphal book of Enoch, is of no validity; for the fact is, that Jude makes no mention of any book, but only of a prophecy, and there is no evidence that the apocryphal book of Enoch was then in existence; but if he did quote a truth from such a book, it argues no more against his inspiration than Paul's quoting Epimenides does against his being an inspired man. The three epistles of John were probably written about the year 96 or 97. It has commonly been supposed that the Apocalypse was the last written book of the New Testament, but Townsend insists that the three epistles of John were last written.—See Townsend's New Testament, vol. ii.

SECTION XII("tw:///self?tid=18&popup=0" \ "Canon_Contents-")

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Hermas gives many indications of having read the Revelation, for he often imitates John's description of the New Jerusalem, and sometimes borrows his very words. He speaks of the Book of Life and of those whose names are written in it. He speaks also of the saints whom he saw, being clothed in garments white as snow. Papias also, doubtless, had seen the book of Revelation; for some of his opinions were founded on a too literal interpretation of certain prophecies of this book. But neither Papias nor Hermas expressly cites the Revelation.

Justin Martyr is the first who gives explicit testimony to the Apocalypse. His words are, "And a man from among us by name John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the Revelation made to him, has prophesied that the believers in our Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that, shall be the general and indeed eternal resurrection and judgment of all men together." In the epistle of the Church of Lyons and Vienne, in France, which was written about the year of our Lord one hundred and eighty, there is one passage cited from the book of Revelation: "For he was indeed a genuine disciple of Christ, 'following the Lamb whithersoever he goes.' "

Irenæus expressly quotes the Revelation, and ascribes it to John the apostle. And in one place, he says, "It (the Revelation,) was seen no long time ago in our age, at the end of the reign of

Domitian.” And in the passage preserved by Eusebius, he speaks of the exact and ancient copies of this book; which he says, “was confirmed, likewise, by the concurring testimony of those who had seen John.”

Theophilus of Antioch, also, as we are assured by Eusebius, cited testimonies from the Apocalypse of John, in his book against Hermogenes. And in his works which are extant, there is one passage which shows that he was acquainted with the Revelation. “This Eve,” says he, “because she was deceived by the serpent—the evil demon, who is also called Satan, who then spoke to her by the serpent—does not cease to accuse: this demon is also called the Dragon.” The Revelation of John is often quoted by Clement of Alexandria. In one passage, he says, “Such an one, though here on earth he be not honoured with the first seat, shall sit upon the four and twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Revelation.” That Clement believed it to be the work of the apostle John is manifest, because in another place he expressly cites a passage, as the words of an apostle; and we have just seen that he ascribes the work to John.

Tertullian cites many things from the Revelation of John; and he seems to have entertained no doubt of its being the writing of the apostle John, as will appear by a few quotations; “John in his Apocalypse, is commanded to correct those who ate things sacrificed to idols, and commit fornication.” Again, “The apostle John in the Apocalypse, describes a sharp two-edged sword, coming out of the mouth of God.”—“We have churches, disciples of John, for though Marcion rejects his Revelation, the succession of bishops, traced to the original, will assure us that John is the author.” And in another place he has a long quotation from the book of Revelation.

Hippolytus, who lived in the third century, and had great celebrity, both in the eastern and western churches, received the Revelation as without doubt the production of the apostle John. Indeed, he seems to have written a comment on this book, for Jerome, in the list of his works, mentions one, “On the Revelation.” Hippolytus was held in so high esteem, that a noble monument was erected to him in the city of Rome, which, after lying for a long time buried, was dug up near that city, A. D. 1551. His name, indeed, is not now on the monument, but it contains a catalogue of his works, several of which have the same titles as those ascribed to Hippolytus by Jerome and Eusebius, together with others not mentioned by them; among which is one “of the gospel of John and the Revelation.”

Origen calls the writer of the Apocalypse, “evangelist and apostle;” and, on account of the predictions which it contains, “prophet” also. In his book against Celsus he mentions “John’s Revelation, and divers other books of Scripture.” It was Origen’s intention to write a commentary on this book, but whether he ever carried his purpose into execution is unknown. Nothing of the kind has reached our times.

Dionysius of Alexandria, who lived about the middle of the third century, and was one of the most learned men of his time, has entered into a more particular discussion of the canonical authority of the book of Revelation than any other ancient author. From what has been said by him, we learn on what account it was that this book, after having been universally received by the earlier Fathers, fell with some into a certain degree of discredit. About this time the Chiliasts, or Millennarians, who held that Christ would reign visibly on earth with his saints for a thousand years, during which period all manner of earthly and sensible pleasures would be enjoyed, made their appearance. This opinion they derived from a literal interpretation of some passages in the

book of Revelation; and as their error was very repugnant to the feelings of most of the Fathers, they were led to doubt of the authority, or to disparage the value of the book from which it was derived. The first rise of the Millennarians, of the grosser kind, seems to have been in the district of Arsinoe, in Egypt, where one Nepos composed several works in defence of their doctrine; particularly a book "Against the Allegorists." Dionysius took much pains with these errorists, and entered with them into a free and candid discussion of their tenets, and of the true meaning of the book of Revelation; and had the satisfaction to reclaim a number of them from their erroneous opinions. His own opinion of the Revelation he gives at large, and informs us, that some who lived before his time had utterly rejected this book, and ascribed it to Cerinthus; but, for his own part, he professes to believe that it was written by an inspired man, whose name was John, but a different person from the apostle of that name; for which opinion he assigns several reasons, but none of much weight. His principal reason is, that the language of this book is different from that of the apostle John in his other writings. To which Lardner judiciously answers, that supposing this to be the fact, it will not prove the point, for the style of prophecy is very different from the epistolary or historical style. But this laborious and learned collector of facts denies that there is such a difference of style, as to lay a foundation for this opinion; and, in confirmation of his own opinion, he descends to particulars, and shows that there are some striking points of resemblance between the language of the Apocalypse and the acknowledged writings of the apostle John. The opinion of those persons who believed it to be the work of Cerinthus, is utterly without foundation; for this book contains opinions expressly contrary to those maintained by this heretic; and even on the subject of the millennium his views did not coincide with those expressed in the Revelation. Caius seems to have been the only ancient author who attributed this book to Cerinthus, and to him Dionysius probably referred when he spoke of some, before his time, who held this opinion. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, received the book of Revelation as of canonical authority, as appears by the manner in which he quotes it. "Hear," says he, "in the Revelation, the voice of thy Lord, reproving such men as these, 'Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' " Revelation 3:17. Again, "So in the Holy Scriptures, by which the Lord would have us to be instructed and warned, is the harlot city described." Revelation 17:1-3. Finally, "That waters signify people, the divine Scriptures show in the Revelation."

Victorinus, who lived towards the close of the third century, often cites the book of Revelation, and ascribes it to John the apostle. That Lactantius received this book is manifest, because he has written much respecting the future destinies of the church, which is founded on the prophecies which it contains.

Until the fourth century, then, it appears that the Revelation was almost universally received; not a writer of any credit calls it in question; and but one hesitates about ascribing it to John the apostle; but even he held it to be written by an inspired man. But, about the beginning of the fourth century, it began to fall into discredit with some on account of the mysterious nature of its contents, and the encouragement which it was supposed to give to the Chiliasts. Therefore Eusebius of Cesaræa, after giving a list of such books as were universally received, adds, "After these, if it be thought fit, may be placed the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall observe the different opinions at a proper time." And again, "There are, concerning this book, different opinions." This is the first doubt expressed by any respectable writer concerning the canonical authority of this book; and

Eusebius did not reject it, but would have it placed next after those which were received with universal consent. And we find at this very time, the most learned and judicious of the Fathers received the Revelation without scruple, and annexed it to their catalogues of the books of the New Testament. Thus Athanasius, after giving an account of the twenty-two canonical books of the Old Testament, proceeds to enumerate the books of the New Testament, in the following manner, which he makes eight in number:—1. Matthew's gospel; 2. Mark's; 3. Luke's; 4. John's; 5. The Acts; 6. The Catholic epistles; 7. Paul's fourteen epistles; and 8. the Revelation, given to John the evangelist and divine in Patmos.

Jerome, in giving an account of the writings of John the evangelist, speaks also of another John, called the presbyter, to whom some ascribed the second and third epistles under the name of John. And we have already seen that Dionysius of Alexandria ascribed the Revelation to another John. This opinion, we learn from Jerome, originated in the fact, that two monuments were found at Ephesus, each inscribed with the name John; but he says, "Some think that both the monuments are of John the evangelist." Then he proceeds to give some account of the Revelation. "Domitian," says he, "in the fourteenth year of his reign, raising the second persecution after Nero, John was banished into the isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation, which Justin Martyr and Irenæus explain." Augustine, also, received the book of Revelation, and quotes it very frequently. He ascribes it to the same John who wrote the gospel and the epistles. From the view which has been taken of the testimonies in favour of the book of Revelation, I think it must appear manifest to every candid reader, that few books in the New Testament have more complete evidence of canonical authority. The only thing which requires explanation is, the omission of this book in so many of the catalogues of the Fathers, and of ancient councils. Owing to the mysterious nature of the contents of this book, and to the abuse of its prophecies, by the too literal construction of them by the Millennarians, it was judged expedient not to have this book read publicly in the churches. Now, the end of forming these catalogues was to guide the people in reading the Scriptures; and as it seems not to have been desired, that the people should read this mysterious book, it was omitted by many in their catalogues. Still, however, a majority of them have it; and some who omitted it, are known to have received it as canonical. This also will account for the fact, that many of the manuscripts of the New Testament are without the Revelation; so that there are extant, comparatively, few copies of this book. But the authenticity and authority of the Apocalypse stand on ground which can never be shaken; and the internal evidence is strong in favour of a divine origin. There is a sublimity, purity, and consistency in it, which could not have proceeded from an impostor. In addition to all which, we observe, that the fulfilment of many of the predictions of this book is so remarkable, that to many learned men who have attended to this subject, the evidence from this source alone is demonstrative of its divine origin. And there is every reason to believe, that in the revolution of events this book, which is now to many sealed with seven seals, will be opened, and will be so explained, that all men will see and acknowledge that it is indeed "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass—and sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:1-2.

SECTION XIII("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

THE TITLES GIVEN TO THE SACRED SCRIPTURES BY THE FATHERS—THESE BOOKS NOT CONCEALED, BUT PARTIALLY KNOWN AND REFERRED TO BY ENEMIES AS WELL AS FRIENDS—CITATIONS—ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS—REMARKS OF RENNELL

After having given a particular account of the several books of the New Testament, it may be useful to subjoin a few general remarks on the testimony exhibited.

1. The writings of the apostles, from the time of their first publication, were distinguished by all Christians from all other books. They were spoken of by the Fathers, as "Scripture;" as "divine Scripture;" as "inspired of the Lord;" as, "given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost." The only question ever agitated, respecting any of these books, was, whether they were indeed the productions of the apostles. When this was clear, no man disputed their divine authority, or considered it lawful to dissent from their dictates. They were considered as occupying the same place, in regard to inspiration and authority, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and in imitation of this denomination they were called the New Testament. The other names by which they were distinguished, were such as these, the gospel;—the apostles;—the divine gospels;—the evangelical instrument;—the Scriptures of the Lord;—holy Scriptures;—evangelical voice;—divine Scriptures;—Oracles of the Lord;—divine fountains;—fountains of the divine fulness.

2. These books were not in obscurity, but were read with veneration and avidity by multitudes. They were read not only by the learned, but by the people; not only in private, but constantly in the public assemblies of Christians, as appears by the explicit testimony of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius, Cyprian, and Augustine. And no other books were thus venerated and read. If some other pieces were publicly read, yet the Fathers always made a wide distinction between them and the sacred Scriptures.

3. In all the controversies which arose in the church, these books were acknowledged by all to be decisive authority, unless by some few of the very worst heretics, who mutilated the Scriptures, and forged others for themselves, under the names of the apostles. But most of the heretics endeavoured to support their opinions by an appeal to the writings of the New Testament. The Valentinians, the Montanists, the Sabellians, the Artemonites, the Arians, received the Scriptures of the New Testament. The same was the case with the Priscillianists and the Pelagians. In the Arian controversy, which occupied the church so long and so earnestly, the Scriptures were appealed to by both parties; and no controversy arose respecting the authenticity of the books of the New Testament.

4. The avowed enemies of Christianity, who wrote against the truth, recognized the books which are now in the Canon, as those acknowledged by Christians in their times, for they refer to the matters contained in them, and some of them mention several books by name; so that it appears from the accounts which we have of these writings, that they were acquainted with the volume of the New Testament. Celsus, who lived and wrote less than a hundred years after the apostles, says, as is testified by Origen, who answered him, "I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and those too different from what is written by the disciples of Jesus, but I purposely omit them." That Celsus here refers to the gospels there can be no doubt. In another place, he says, "These things then we have alleged to you out of your own writings." And that the gospels to which he referred were the same as those which we now possess, is evident from his reference to matters contained in them.

Porphyry in the third century wrote largely, and professedly, against the Christian religion; and although his work has shared the same fate as that of Celsus, yet, from some fragments which have been preserved, we can ascertain that he was well acquainted with the four gospels, for the things to which he objects are still contained in them. But the emperor Julian expressly mentions Matthew and Luke, and cites various things out of the gospels. He speaks also of John, and alleges that none of Christ's disciples beside ascribed to him the creation of the world;—and also, “that neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, has dared to call Jesus, God;”—“that John wrote later than the other evangelists, and at a time when a great number of men in the cities of Greece and Italy were converted.” He alludes to the conversion of Cornelius and Sergius Paulus; to Peter's vision, and to the circular letter sent by the apostles at Jerusalem to the churches; which things are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.*

Now, if the genuineness of these books could have been impugned on any plausible grounds; or if any doubt had existed respecting this matter, surely such men as Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, could not have been ignorant of the matter, and would not have failed to bring forward everything of this kind which they knew; for their hostility to Christianity was unbounded. And it is certain, that Porphyry did avail himself of an objection of this kind in regard to the book of Daniel. Since then not one of the early enemies of Christianity ever suggested a doubt of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, we may rest assured that no ground of doubt existed in their day; and that the fact of these being the genuine writings of the men whose names they bear, was too clearly established to admit any doubt. The genuineness of the books of the New Testament having been admitted by friends and enemies—by the orthodox and heretics, in those ages when the fact could be ascertained easily, it is too late in the day now for infidels to call this matter in question.

5. But the testimony which we possess, is not only sufficient to prove that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they bear, but also that these books, in the early ages of the church, contained the same things which are now read in them. Omitting any particular notice of about half a dozen passages, the genuineness of which is in dispute, I would remark, that when we compare the numerous and copious quotations from these books, which are found in the writings of the Fathers, with our own copies, the argument is most satisfactory. It is true, indeed, that the Fathers do sometimes apparently quote from memory; and in that case, the words of the sacred writer are a little changed or transposed, but the sense is accurately retained. In general, however, the quotations of Scripture, in the writings of the Fathers, are verbally exact; there being no other variation, than what arises from the different idiom of the language which they use. I suppose that almost every verse, in some books of the New Testament, has been cited by one or another of the Fathers; so that if that book were lost, it might be restored by means of the quotations from it in other books. But besides these quotations, we have versions of the whole New Testament into various languages, some of which were made very early, probably not much later than the end of the first, or beginning of the second century. Now, on a comparison, all these versions contain the same discourses, parables, miracles, doctrines, precepts, and divine institutions. Indeed, so literal have been most versions of the New Testament, that they answer to one another, and to the original, almost word for word.

Besides, there are in existence hundreds and thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament, which were written in different ages of the church, from the fourth or fifth century until the

sixteenth. Most of these have been penned with great care, and in the finest style of calligraphy. The oldest are written on beautiful parchment, in what are called uncial, or capital letters. Some of these manuscripts contain all the books of the New Testament; others only a part; and in some instances, a single book. Some are in a state of good preservation, while others are worn and mutilated, and the writing so obscure as to be scarcely legible. And what is very remarkable, some copies of the New Testament on parchment have been found written over again with other matter, after the original words had been as fully obliterated as could easily be done. This seems a very strange practice, considering that good copies of the Bible must have been always too few; but the scarcity of parchment was so great, that men who were anxious to communicate their own lucubrations to the public, would resort to any shift to procure the materials for writing. And this is not more culpable or more wonderful than what has been known to take place in our own land and times, where the leaves of Walton's Polyglot Bible have been torn and used for wrapping paper. The exact age of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament cannot be accurately ascertained, as they have no dates accompanying them which can safely be depended on; but as it is pretty well known at what period Greek accents were introduced, and also when the large uncial letter, as it is called, was exchanged for the small letter now in common use; if a manuscript is found written in the old fashion, in large letters, without intervals between the words, and without accents, it is known that it must be more ancient than the period when the mode of writing was changed. Now, it is manifest, that when these manuscripts were penned, the Canon was settled by common consent, for they all contain the same books, as far as as they go.

I will sum up my observations on the Canon of the New Testament, by quoting a sensible and very appropriate passage from the late learned Mr. Rennel. It is found in his Remarks on Hone's Collection of the apocryphal writings of the apostolic age.

"When was the Canon of Scripture determined? It was determined immediately after the death of John, the last survivor of the apostolic order. The Canon of the gospels was indeed determined before his death, for we read in Eusebius, that he gave his sanction to the three other gospels, and completed this part of the New Testament with his own. By the death of John, the catalogue of Scripture was completed and closed. We have seen, both from the testimony of themselves and of their immediate successors, that the inspiration of writing was confined strictly to the apostles, and accordingly we find that no similar pretensions were ever made by any true Christian to a similar authority.

"By whom was the Canon of Scripture determined? It was determined not by the decision of any individual, nor by the decree of any council, but by the general consent of the whole and every part of the Christian church. It is, indeed, a remarkable circumstance, that among the various disputes which so early agitated the church, the Canon of Scripture was never a subject of controversy. If any question might be said to have arisen, it was in reference to one or two of those books which are included in the present Canon; but with respect to those which are out of the Canon no difference of opinion ever existed.

"The reason of this agreement is a very satisfactory one. Every one who is at all versed in Ecclesiastical History is aware of the continual intercourse which took place in the apostolical age between the various branches of the church universal. This communication, as Mr. Nolan has well observed, arose out of the Jewish polity, under which various synagogues of the Jews which were

dispersed throughout the gentile world, were all subjected to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and maintained a constant correspondence with it. Whenever then an epistle arrived at any particular church, it was first authenticated; it was then read to all the holy brethren, and was subsequently transmitted to some other neighbouring church. Thus we find that the authentication of the epistles of Paul was, 'the salutation with his own hands,' by which the church to which the epistle was first addressed might be assured that it was not a forgery. We find also a solemn adjuration of the same apostle, that his epistle 'should be read to all the holy brethren.' 'When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.' 2 Thessalonians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:6. From this latter passage we infer, that the system of transmission was a very general one, as the epistle which Paul directs the Colossians to receive from the Laodiceans was not originally directed to the latter, but was sent to them from some other church. To prevent any mistake or fraud, this transmission was made by the highest authority, namely, by that of the bishop. Through him official communications were sent from one church to another, even in the remotest countries. Clement, the bishop of Rome, communicated with the church at Corinth; Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, wrote an epistle to the Philippians; Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, corresponded with the churches of Rome, of Magnesia, of Ephesus, and others. These three bishops were the companions and immediate successors of the apostles, and followed the system of correspondence and intercourse which their masters had begun. Considering all these circumstances, we shall be convinced how utterly improbable it was, that any authentic work of an apostle should have existed in one church without being communicated to another. It is a very mistaken notion of Dodwell, that the books of the New Testament lay concealed in the coffers of particular churches and were not known to the rest of the world until the late days of Trajan. This might have been perfectly true, with respect to the originals, which were doubtless guarded with peculiar care, in the custody of the particular churches to which they were respectively addressed. But copies of these originals, attested by the authority of the bishop, were transmitted from one church to another with the utmost freedom, and were thus rapidly dispersed throughout the Christian world. As a proof of this, Peter, in an epistle addressed generally to the churches in Asia, speaks of 'all the epistles of Paul,' as a body of Scripture, universally circulated and known.

"The number of the apostles, including Paul and Barnabas, was but fourteen. To these, and these alone, in the opinion of the early church, was the inspiration of writing confined: out of these, six only deemed it necessary to write; what they did write, was authenticated with the greatest caution, and circulated with the utmost rapidity; what was received in any church as the writing of an apostle, was publicly read; no church was left to itself, or to its own direction, but was frequently visited by the apostles, and corresponded with by their successors. All the distant members of the church universal, in the apostles' age, being united by frequent intercourse and communication, became one body in Christ. Taking all these things into consideration, we shall see with what ease and rapidity the Canon of Scripture would be formed, there being no room either for fraudulent fabrication on the one hand, or for arbitrary rejection on the other. The case was too clear to require any formal discussion, nor does it appear that there was any material forgery that could render it necessary.

"The writings of the apostles, and of the apostles alone, were received as the word of God, and were separated from all others, by that most decisive species of authority, the authority of a

general, an immediate, and an undisputed consent. This will appear the more satisfactory to our minds if we take an example from the age in which we live. The letters of Junius, for instance, were published at intervals within a certain period. Since the publication of the last authentic letter, many under that signature have appeared, purporting to have been written by the same author. But this circumstance throws no obscurity over the matter, nor is the Canon of Junius, if I may transfer the term from sacred to secular writing, involved in any difficulty or doubt. If it should be hereafter inquired, at what time, or by what authority the authentic letters were separated from the spurious, the answer will be, that such a separation never took place; but that the Canon of Junius was immediately determined after the last letter. To us, who live so near the time of publication, the line of distinction between the genuine and spurious is so strongly marked, and the evidence of authenticity on the one side, and of forgery on the other, is so clear and convincing, that a formal rejection of the latter is unnecessary. The case has long since been determined by the tacit consent of the whole British nation, and no man in his senses would attempt to dispute it.

“Yet how much stronger is the case of the Scriptural Canon! The author of Junius was known to none. He could not therefore of himself bear any testimony to the authenticity of his works; the authors of the New Testament were known to all, and were especially careful to mark, to authenticate, and to distinguish their writings. The author of Junius had no personal character which could stamp his writing with any high or special authority; whatever proceeded from the apostles of Christ, was immediately regarded as the offspring of an exclusive inspiration. For the Canon of Junius we have no external evidence, but that of a single publisher: for the Canon of Scripture, we have the testimony of churches which were visited, bishops who were appointed, and converts innumerable, who were instructed by the apostles themselves. It was neither the duty nor the interest of any one, excepting the publisher, to preserve the volume of Junius from spurious editions: to guard the integrity of the sacred volume was the bounden duty of every Christian who believed that its words were the words of eternal life.

“If then, notwithstanding these and other difficulties which might be adduced, the Canon of Junius is established beyond controversy or dispute, by the tacit consent of all who live in the age in which it was written, there can be no reason why the Canon of Scripture, under circumstances infinitely stronger, should not have been determined in a manner precisely the same; especially when we remember, that in both cases the forgeries made their appearance subsequently to the determination of the Canon. There is not a single book in the spurious department of the apocryphal volume which was even known when the Canon of Scripture was determined. This is a fact which considerably strengthens the case. There was no difficulty or dispute in framing the Canon of Scripture, because there were no competitors whose claims it was expedient to examine; no forgeries, whose impostures it was necessary to detect. The first age of the church was an age of too much vigilance, of too much communication, of too much authority for any fabrication of Scripture, to hope for success. If any attempt was made it was instantly crushed. When the authority of the apostles and of apostolic men had lost its influence, and heresies and disputes had arisen, then it was that forgeries began to appear.... Nothing, indeed, but the general and long determined consent of the whole Christian world, could have preserved the sacred volume in its integrity, unimpaired by the mutilation of one set of heretics, and unincumbered by the forgeries of another.”

SECTION XIV("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

NO CANONICAL BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS BEEN LOST

This was a subject of warm dispute between the Romanists and Protestants at the time of the Reformation. The former, to make room for their farrago of unwritten traditions, maintained the affirmative; and such men as Bellarmine and Pineda asserted roundly, that some of the most valuable parts of the canonical Scriptures were lost. The Protestants, on the other hand, to support the sufficiency and perfection of the Holy Scriptures, the corner stone of the Reformation, strenuously and successfully contended, that no part of the canonical volume had been lost. But the opinion, that some inspired books, which once belonged to the Canon, have been lost, has been maintained by some more respectable writers than those Romanists just mentioned. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Calvin, and Whitaker, have all, in some degree, countenanced the same opinion, in order to avoid some difficulty, or to answer some particular purpose. The subject, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, has already been considered; it shall now be our endeavour to show that no canonical book of the New Testament has been lost. And here I am ready to concede, as was before done, that there may have been books written by inspired men that have been lost: for inspiration was occasional, not constant; and confined to matters of faith, and not afforded on the affairs of this life, or in matters of mere science. If Paul or Peter, or any other apostle, had occasion to write private letters to their friends, on subjects not connected with religion, there is no reason to think that these were inspired; and if such writings have been lost, the Canon of Scripture has suffered no more by this means than by the loss of any other uninspired books. But again, I am willing to go further and say, that it is possible, (although I know no evidence of the fact,) that some things written under the influence of inspiration for a particular occasion, and to rectify some disorder in a particular church, may have been lost without injury to the Canon. For as much that the apostles preached by inspiration is undoubtedly lost, so there is no reason why every word which they wrote must necessarily be preserved and form a part of the canonical volume. For example, suppose that when Paul said, 1 Corinthians 5:9, "I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators," he referred to an epistle which he had written to the Corinthians before the one now called the first, it might never have been intended that this letter should form a constituent part of the Canon; for although it treated of subjects connected with Christian faith or practice, yet, an occasion having arisen, in a short time, of treating these subjects more at large, every thing in that epistle, (supposing it ever to have been written,) may have been included in the two epistles to the Corinthians which are now in the Canon. Or, to adopt for illustration, the ingenious hypothesis of Dr. Lightfoot, the epistle referred to, which was sent by Timothy, who took a circuitous route through Macedonia, might not have reached them until Paul wrote the long and interesting epistle called the first to the Corinthians, and thus the former one would be superseded. But we adduce this case merely for illustration, for we will attempt presently to show that no evidence exists that any such epistle was ever written.

1. The first argument to prove that no canonical book has been lost, is derived from the watchful care of Providence over the sacred Scriptures.

Now, to suppose that a book written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and intended to form a part of the Canon, which is the rule of faith to the church, should be utterly and irrecoverably lost, is surely not very honourable to the wisdom of God, and no way consonant with the ordinary method of his dispensations in regard to his precious truth. There is good reason to think that if God saw it needful, and for the edification of the church, that such books should be written under

the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by his providence he would have taken care to preserve them from destruction. We do know that this treasure of divine truth has been in all ages, and in the worst times, the special care of God, or not one of the sacred books would now be in existence. And if one canonical book might be lost through the negligence or unfaithfulness of men, why not all? And thus the end of God in making a revelation of his will might have been defeated. But whatever other corruptions have crept into the Jewish or Christian churches, it does not appear that either of them, as a body, ever incurred the censure of having been careless in preserving the oracles of God. Our Saviour never charges the Jews, who perverted the sacred Scriptures to their own ruin, with having lost any portion of the sacred deposit intrusted to them.

History informs us of the fierce and malignant design of Antiochus Epiphanes to abolish every vestige of the sacred volume; but the same history assures us that the Jewish people manifested a heroic fortitude and invincible patience in resisting and defeating his impious purpose. They chose rather to sacrifice their lives, and suffer a cruel death, than to deliver up the copies of the sacred volume in their possession. And the same spirit was manifested, and with the same result, in the Dioclesian persecution of the Christians. Every effort was made to obliterate the sacred writings of Christians, and multitudes suffered death for refusing to deliver up the New Testament. Some, indeed, overcome by the terrors of a cruel persecution did, in the hour of temptation, consent to surrender the holy book; but they were ever afterwards called traitors; and it was with the utmost difficulty that any of them could be received again into the communion of the church after a long repentance, and the most humbling confessions of their fault. Now, if any canonical book was ever lost, it must have been in these early times when the word of God was valued far above life, and when every Christian stood ready to seal the truth with his blood.

2. Another argument which appears to me to be convincing is, that in a little time all the sacred books were dispersed over the whole world. If a book had, by some accident or violence, been destroyed in one region, the loss could soon have been repaired by sending for copies to other countries. The considerations just mentioned would, I presume, be satisfactory to all candid minds, were it not that it is supposed, that there is evidence that some things were written by the apostles which are not now in the Canon. We have already referred to an epistle to the Corinthians which Paul is supposed to have written to them previously to the writing of those which we now possess. But it is by no means certain, or even probable, that Paul ever did write such an epistle; for not one ancient writer makes the least mention of any such letter; nor is there any where to be found any citation from it, or any reference to it. It is a matter of testimony in which all the Fathers concur, as with one voice, that Paul wrote no more than fourteen epistles, all of which we now have. The testimony of Clement of Rome is clear on this subject; and he was the friend and companion of Paul, and must have known which was the first epistle addressed by him to the Corinthian church. He says, in a passage before cited, "Take again the epistle of the blessed apostle Paul into your hands. What was it that he first wrote to you, in the beginning of his epistle? He did truly by the Spirit write to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even at that time you were formed into divisions or parties." The only objection which can be conceived to this testimony is, that Clement's words, when literally translated, read, "Take again the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) of the blessed apostle Paul;" but it is well known that the early Fathers called any book containing the doctrines of Christ the gospel; and in this case, all reasonable doubt is precluded, because Clement identifies the writing to which he referred, by mentioning some of its contents, which are

found in the first epistle to the Corinthians, and no where else. But still, Paul's own declaration, stands in the way of our opinion, "I wrote to you in an epistle." 1 Corinthians 5:9, 1 Corinthians 5:11. The words in the original are, Εγράψα ■μιν εν τη επιστολη, the literal version of which is, "I have written to you in the epistle, or in this epistle;" that is, in the former part of it; where in fact we find the very thing which he says that he had written. See 1 Corinthians 5:2, 1 Corinthians 5:5-6, of this same fifth chapter. But it is thought by learned and judicious commentators, that the words following, Νυνι δε εγραψα ■μιν "but now I have written unto you," require that we should understand the former clause as relating to some former time; but a careful attention to the context will convince us that this reference is by no means necessary. The apostle had told them, in the beginning of the chapter, to avoid the company of fornicators, &c.; but it is manifest, from the tenth verse, that he apprehended that his meaning might be misunderstood, by extending the prohibition too far, so as to decline all intercourse with the world, therefore he repeats what he had said, and informs them, that it had relation only to the professors of Christianity, who should be guilty of such vices. The whole may be thus paraphrased: "I wrote to you above, in my letter, that you should separate from those who were fornicators, and that you should purge them out as old leaven; but fearing lest you should misapprehend my meaning, by inferring that I have directed you to avoid all intercourse with the heathen around you, who are addicted to these shameful vices, which would make it necessary that you should go out of the world, I now inform you that my meaning is, that you do not associate familiarly with any who make a profession of Christianity, and yet continue in these evil practices." In confirmation of this interpretation we can adduce the old Syriac version, which having been made soon after the days of the apostles, is good testimony in relation to this matter of fact. In this venerable version, the meaning of the 11th verse is thus given, "This is what I have written unto you," or, "The meaning of what I have written unto you."* Dr. Whitby understands this passage in a way different from any that has been mentioned; the reader is referred to his commentary on the place. And we have before mentioned the ingenious conjecture of Dr. Lightfoot, to which there is no objection, except that it is totally unsupported by evidence.

It deserves to be mentioned here, that there is now extant a letter from Paul to the Corinthians, distinct from those epistles of his which we have in the Canon; and also an epistle from the church of Corinth to Paul. These epistles are in the Armenian language, but have been translated into Latin. The epistle ascribed to Paul is very short, and undoubtedly spurious. It contains no prohibitions relative to keeping company with fornicators. It was never cited by any of the early writers, nor indeed heard of until within a century past. It contains some unsound opinions concerning the speedy appearance of Christ, which Paul, in some of his epistles, took pains to contradict. The manner of salutation is very different from that of Paul; and this apostle is made to declare, that he had received what he taught them from the former apostles, which is contrary to his repeated solemn asseverations in several of his epistles. In regard to the epistle under the name of the church of Corinth, it does not properly fall under our consideration, for though it were genuine it would have no claim to a place in the Canon. The curious reader will find a literal translation of both these epistles in Jones's "New Method of settling the Canon."* The only other passage in the New Testament, which has been thought to refer to an epistle of Paul not now extant is that in Colossians 4:16. "And when this epistle is read among you, cause also that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

Now, there is clear evidence, that so early as the beginning of the second century there existed an epistle under this title; but it was not received by the church, but was in the hands of Marcion, who was a famous forger and corrupter of sacred books. He was contemporary with Polycarp, and therefore very near to the times of the apostles, but was stigmatized as an enemy of the truth; for he had the audacity to form a gospel, according to his own mind, which went by his name; and also an apostolicon, which contained only ten of Paul's epistles; and these altered and accommodated to his own notions. These, according to Epiphanius, were, "The epistle to the Galatians, the two to the Corinthians, to the Romans, the two to the Thessalonians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Philippians.—And," says he, "he takes in some part of that which is called 'the epistle to the Laodiceans,' and this he styles the eleventh of those received by Marcion."

Tertullian, however, gives a very different account of this matter. He asserts, "that Marcion and his followers called that the epistle to the Laodiceans, which was the epistle to the Ephesians: which epistle," says he, "we are assured, by the testimony of the church, was sent to the Ephesians, and not to the Laodiceans; though Marcion has taken upon him falsely to prefix that title to it, pretending therein to have made some notable discovery." And again, "I shall say nothing now of that other epistle, which we have inscribed to the Ephesians, but the heretics entitle it 'to the Laodiceans.' " This opinion, which, by Tertullian, is ascribed to Marcion, respecting the true title of the epistle to the Ephesians, has been adopted, and ingeniously defended by several distinguished moderns, as Grotius, Hammond, Whitby, and Paley. They rely principally on internal evidence; for unless Marcion be accepted as a witness, I do not recollect that any of the early writers can be quoted in favour of that opinion; but in the course of this work, we have put down the express testimony of some of the most respectable and learned of the Fathers, on the other side; and all those passages in the epistle which seem inconsistent with its being addressed to the Ephesians, and neighbouring churches of Asia, can easily be explained.—See Lardner and Macknight. But there is also an epistle to the Laodiceans, now extant, against which nothing can be said, except that almost everything contained in it is taken out of Paul's other epistles, so that if it should be received, we add nothing in reality to the Canon; and if it should be rejected, we lose nothing. The reader may find a translation of this epistle inserted in the notes at the end of the volume.* But what evidence is there that Paul ever wrote an epistle to the Laodiceans? The text on which this opinion has been founded, in ancient and modern times, correctly interpreted, has no such import. The words in the original are, *καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας βιβλίαν καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνώτε*. "And that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." Colossians 4:16. These words have been differently understood; for by them some understand, that an epistle had been written by Paul to the Laodiceans, which he desired might be read in the church at Colosse. Chrysostom seems to have understood them thus; and the Romish writers, almost universally have adopted this opinion. "Therefore," says Bellarmine, "it is certain that Paul's epistle to the Laodiceans is now lost." And their opinion is favoured by the Latin Vulgate, where we read, *Eamque Laodicensium*—that which is of the Laodiceans; but even these words admit of another construction.

Many learned Protestants, also, have embraced the same interpretation; while others suppose that Paul here refers to the epistle to the Ephesians, which they think he sent to the Laodiceans, and that the present inscription is spurious. But that neither of these opinions is correct may be rendered very probable. In regard to the latter, we have already said as much as is necessary; and

that Paul could not intend by the language used in the passage under consideration an epistle written by himself, will appear by the following arguments.

1. Paul could not with any propriety of speech have called an epistle written by himself, and sent to the Laodiceans, an epistle from Laodicea. He certainly would have said, *προς Λαοδιχείαν*, or some such thing. Who ever heard of an epistle addressed to any individual, or to any society, denominated an epistle from them?

2. If the epistle referred to in this passage had been one written by Paul, it would have been most natural for him to call it his epistle, and this would have rendered his meaning incapable of misconstruction.

3. All those best qualified to judge of the fact, and who were well acquainted with Paul's history and writings, never mention any such epistle: neither Clement, Hermas, nor the Syriac interpreter, knew anything of such an epistle of Paul; and no one seems to have had knowledge of any such writing, except Marcion, who probably forged it to answer his own purposes. But whether Marcion did acknowledge an epistle different from all that we have in the Canon, rests on the authority of Epiphanius, who wrote a criticism on the apostolicon of Marcion; but as we have seen, Tertullian tells us a different story. It is of little importance to decide which of these testimonies is most credible: for Marcion's authority, at best, is worthless on such a subject. But it may be asked, To what epistle then does Paul refer? To this inquiry various answers have been given, and perhaps nothing determinate can now be said. Theophylact was of opinion, that Paul's first epistle to Timothy was here intended. But this is not probable. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that it was the first epistle of John, which he supposes was written from Laodicea. Others have thought that it was the epistle of Paul to Philemon. But it seems safest, in such a case, where testimony is deficient, to follow the literal sense of the words, and to believe that it was an epistle written by the Laodiceans, probably to himself, which he had sent to the Colossians, together with his own epistle, for their perusal. That the epistle which is now extant is not the same as that which formerly existed, at least as early as the fourth century, is evident from the quotations from the ancient epistle, by Epiphanius; for no such words as he cites are in that now extant. But candour requires that it be mentioned that they are contained in the epistle to the Ephesians. Let this weigh as much as it is worth in favour of the opinion, that the apostle, in the passage under consideration, refers to the epistle to the Ephesians. This opinion, however, is perfectly consistent with our position, that no canonical book of the New Testament has been lost. This proposition, we hope, will now appear to the reader sufficiently established.

SECTION XV("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

RULES FOR DETERMINING WHAT BOOKS ARE APOCRYPHAL—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS WHICH HAVE BEEN LOST—ALL OF THEM CONDEMNED BY THE FOREGOING RULES—REASON OF THE ABOUNDING OF SUCH BOOKS

Of the apocryphal books of the New Testament, the greater part have long since sunk into oblivion, but a few of them are still extant. All of them can be proved to be spurious, or at least not canonical. Their claims have so little to support them, that they might be left to that oblivion, into which they have so generally fallen, were it not that, from time to time, persons unfriendly to our present Canon bring forward these books, and pretend that some of them, at least, have as good

claims to canonical authority as those which are received. It will be satisfactory to the reader, therefore, to know the names of these books, and to understand the principles on which they have been uniformly rejected by the church. In the first place, then, I will mention the rules laid down by the Rev. Jeremiah Jones, by which it may be determined that a book is apocryphal, and then I will give some account of the books of this class which have been lost; and finally, consider the character of those which are still extant.

1. That book is certainly apocryphal which contains manifest contradictions. The reason of this rule is too evident to need any elucidation.
2. That book is apocryphal, which contains any doctrine or history, plainly contrary to those which are certainly known to be true. This rule is also too clear to require anything to be said in confirmation of its propriety.
3. That book is apocryphal which contains anything ludicrous or trifling, or which abounds in silly and fabulous stories. This rule is not only true, but of great importance, in this inquiry; as on examination it will be found, that the largest part of apocryphal books may be detected by the application of this single rule.
4. That book is apocryphal which mentions things of a date much later than the time in which the author, under whose name it goes, lived. This rule does not apply to predictions of future events, which events occurred long after the death of the prophet; but to a reference to facts, or names of places, or persons, as existing when the book was written, which are known to have existed, only at a period long since the time when the supposed author lived. The rule will be better understood, if illustrated by particular examples. The book entitled, "The Constitutions of the Apostles," speaks of the controversy which arose in the third century, respecting the rebaptization of heretics, therefore, it is not the work of Clement of Rome, to whom it has been ascribed; nor was it written in his time, but long afterwards.

Again, the book under the name of Hegesippus is not genuine, for it mentions Constantine and Constantinople, which had no existence until long after the death of Hegesippus.

Moreover, in "The Constitutions of the Apostles," there is mention of rites and ceremonies, relative to baptism, fasting, celibacy, &c. which it is certain had no existence in the times of the apostles, therefore this book was not written by an apostolical man, nor in the days of the apostles, but centuries afterwards.

5. That book is apocryphal, the style of which is entirely different from the known style of the author to whom it is ascribed.

It is easy to counterfeit an author's name, age, country, opinions, &c.; but it will be found almost impossible to imitate his style. An author, it is true, may vary his style to suit different subjects, but there is commonly some peculiarity by which he may be distinguished from all others. "Jerome," says Sixtus, "writes one way in his epistles, another in his controversies, a third in his commentaries;—one way when young, another when old, yet he always so writes that you may know him to be the same Jerome still, as a man knows his friend under all the various casts and turns of his countenance." Thus Augustine says of Cyprian, "His style has a certain peculiar face by which it may be known."

It should be remembered, however, that this rule, although it may often furnish a certain detection of spurious writings is one which requires much caution in the application. There is need of a long and intimate acquaintance with the style of an author, before we are competent to determine whether a book could have been written by him: and the difference ought to be very distinctly marked before we make it the ground of any important judgment, respecting the genuineness of a work ascribed to him, especially if there be external evidence in its favour. In fact, too free an application of this rule has led to many errors, both in ancient and modern times.

6. That book is spurious and apocryphal, whose idiom and dialect are different from those of the country to which the reputed author belonged. The idiom and dialect of a language are very different from the style of an author. Every language is susceptible of every variety of style, but the idiom is the same in all who use the language: it is the peculiarity, not of an individual, but of a whole country. But as every writer has a style of his own, which cannot easily be imitated by another, so every country has an idiom, which other nations, even if they learn the language, cannot, without great difficulty, acquire. And for the same reason that a writer cannot acquire the idiom of a foreign tongue, he cannot divest himself of the peculiarities of his own. An Englishman can scarcely write and speak the French language, so as not to discover by his idiom that it is not his vernacular tongue. Hence also, a North Briton can be distinguished, not only from the peculiarity of his pronunciation, but by his idiom. And this is the reason that modern scholars can never write Latin, in the manner of the classic authors. This rule, therefore, is of great importance in detecting the spuriousness of a book, when the real author lived after the time of the person whose name is assumed, or in a country where a different language, or a different dialect was in use. It will be found almost impossible to avoid phrases and modes of speech, which were not in use in the time of the person under whose name the work is edited: and the attempt at imitating an idiom which is not perfectly familiar, leads to an affectation and stiffness of manner which usually betrays the impostor. The influence of native idiom appears nowhere more remarkably than in the writings of the New Testament. These books, although written in the Greek tongue, contain an idiom so manifestly different from that of the language in common use at that time, that it cannot but be observed by all who have even a superficial acquaintance with Grecian literature. The fact is, as has often been observed by learned men, that while the words of these books are Greek the idiom is Hebrew. The writers had, from their infancy, been accustomed to the Syro-Chaldaic language, which is a corruption of the ancient Hebrew. Now, this peculiarity of idiom could never have been successfully imitated by any native Greek; nor by any one, not early conversant with the vernacular tongue of Palestine at that time. When, therefore, men of other countries, and other times, undertook to publish books under the name of the apostles, the imposture was manifest at once, to all capable of judging correctly on the subject; because, although they could write in the same language as the apostles, they could not possibly imitate their idiom. This, therefore, furnishes a most important characteristic, to distinguish between the genuine writings of the apostles and such as are supposititious.

7. That book is spurious which exhibits a disposition and temper of mind very different from that of the person to whom it is ascribed. This rule depends on a principle in human nature well understood, and needs no particular elucidation.

8. That book is not genuine, which consists principally of mere extracts from other books. This is also so evident, that it requires no illustration.

9. Those books which were never cited, nor referred to as Scripture, by any writer of credit for the first four hundred years after the apostles' days, are apocryphal.

10. Those books which were expressly rejected by the Fathers of the first ages as spurious, and attributed by them to heretics, are apocryphal. By the application of the foregoing rules, it can be shown, that every book which claims canonical authority, not included in our present Canon, is apocryphal. When we denominate all books apocryphal which are not canonical, we do not mean to reduce them all to the same level. A book which is not canonical may be a very instructive and useful book. As a human composition it may deserve to be highly esteemed; and as the writing of a pious and eminent man of antiquity it may claim peculiar respect. The ancient method of division was more accurate than ours. They divided all books into three classes; first, the canonical; secondly, the ecclesiastical; and thirdly, the spurious. And there is reason to believe that some books which were written without the least fraudulent design, by anonymous authors, have, by the ignorance of their successors, been ascribed to the wrong persons. That the Fathers did sometimes cite apocryphal books, in their writings, is true; but so did Paul cite the heathen poets. If these books are sometimes mentioned, without any note of disapprobation annexed, it can commonly be clearly ascertained from other places in the same author, that he held them to be apocryphal. Thus Origen, in one place, quotes "the gospel according to the Hebrews," without any expression of disapprobation; but in another place he rejects it as spurious, and declares, "That the church receives no more than four gospels."

Sometimes the Fathers cited these apocryphal books, to show that their knowledge was not confined to their own books, and that they did not reject others, through ignorance of their contents. Remarkably to this purpose are the words of Origen. "The church," says he, "receives only four gospels: heretics have many, such as the gospel of the Egyptians, the gospel of Thomas, &c.: these we read, that we may not seem to be ignorant to those who think they know something extraordinary, if they are acquainted with those things which are recorded in these books." To the same purpose speaks Ambrose; for, having mentioned several of these books, he says, "We read these that they may not be read by others: we read them, that we may not seem ignorant; we read them, not that we receive them, but that we may reject them; and may know what those things are, of which they make such a boast." In some instances, it seems probable that some of the Fathers took passages out of these books, because they were acknowledged by those against whom they were writing; being willing to dispute with them on their own principles and to confute them by their own books.

It may perhaps be true also, that one or two of the Fathers cited passages from these books, because they contained facts not recorded in the canonical gospels. The apostle John informs us that our Lord performed innumerable miracles, besides those which he had recorded; "The which, if they should be written every one, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books which should be written." Now, some tradition of some of these things would undoubtedly be handed down as low as to the second century, and might find its way into some of the apocryphal gospels, and might be cited by persons who did not believe the book to be of canonical authority; just as we refer to any profane author for the proof of such facts as are credibly related by them. There is, at least, one example of this. Jerome refers to the gospel according to the Hebrews for a fact; and yet he most explicitly rejects this book as apocryphal. The only books which were ever read in the churches, besides the canonical, were a few written by apostolical men; which, although not

written by a plenary inspiration, were the genuine writings of the persons whose names they bore, and were pious productions, and tended to edification; such as, the "Epistle of Clement," the "Shepherd of Hermas," and the "Epistle of Barnabas;" but no spurious books were ever read in the churches.

None of the writings falsely ascribed to Christ and his apostles, ever acquired so much authority, as to be publicly read in any church, as far as we know. Indeed, although the apocryphal books of the New Testament were very numerous, yet they did not appear in the age of the church next after the times of the apostles. In the first century no books of this description are referred to, unless we suppose that Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, intends to speak of such. In the second century a few spurious writings began to be first put into circulation, as, "the Gospel according to the Hebrews;" "the Gospel of Truth," used by the Valentinians; "the Preaching of Peter;" "the Traditions of Matthias;" "the Acts of Paul and Thecla;" "the Gospel of Marcion;" "the Revelation of Cerinthus;" and a few others of less note. But in the third century the number of apocryphal books was considerably increased; and in the fourth and fifth centuries they were exceedingly multiplied.

If it be inquired, how it happened that so many apocryphal books were written, it may confidently be answered, that the principal cause was the abounding of heresies. Almost all the spurious writings, under the names of the apostles, are the productions of heretics, as we learn from the testimony of those Fathers who have made mention of them. It is however true, that some mistaken well-meaning people thought that they could add honour to the apostles, or contribute to the edification of the church, by resorting to (what have improperly been called) pious frauds. They imagined, also, that they could recommend Christianity to the Gentiles, by inventing stories, which they rashly pretended were sayings or actions of Christ: thus adopting the pernicious maxim, so peremptorily denounced by Paul, "that we may do evil that good may come;" or that the goodness of the end will sanctify the badness of the means. Of this we have one remarkable example, in the spurious book still extant, entitled, "the Acts of Paul and Thecla," which a certain Asiatic presbyter confessed that he had forged, and assigned, as his reason for this forgery, that he wished to show respect to Paul. But, in connection with this fact, we have satisfactory proof of the vigilance of the church, in guarding the sacred Canon from corruption; for the book was no sooner published, than a strict inquiry was instituted into its origin, and the presbyter mentioned above, having been detected as the author, was deprived of his office in the church. This account is given by Tertullian; and Jerome adds that the detection of this forgery was made by the apostle John.

It is probable, also, that some of these books were written without any evil purpose, by weak men, who wrote down all the stories they had received by tradition; for, no doubt, a multitude of traditions respecting Christ and his apostles, with extravagant distortions and additions, would be handed down for several generations. By all these means, the number of apocryphal books of the New Testament was greatly multiplied. But by far the greater number of these have perished; yet there is no difficulty in determining, that none of them had any just claim to a place in the Canon. By one or more of the rules laid down above, they can all be demonstrated to have been apocryphal: and indeed most of them are never mentioned by any ancient author, in any other light than as spurious writings. There is a famous decree of pope Gelasius, in which at least twenty-five of these books are named, and declared to be apocryphal. It is not certain, indeed, whether this decree ought to be ascribed to Gelasius, or to one of his predecessors, Damasus; but there can

be no doubt that it is very ancient. It is by most supposed to have been formed in the council which met at Rome, A. D. 494. A translation of this decree, extracted from Jones, will be found in the notes at the end of the volume.*

SECTION XVI("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS WHICH ARE STILL EXTANT—LETTER OF ABGARUS KING OF EDESSA TO JESUS, AND HIS ANSWER—EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS—LETTERS OF PAUL TO SENECA—PROTEVANGELION OF JAMES—THE GOSPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR'S INFANCY—THE ACTS OF PILATE—THE ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA

We come now to consider those apocryphal books which are still extant, and concerning which, therefore, we can speak more particularly. The first of these is, "the letter of Abgarus, king of Edessa, addressed to Jesus, and sent by his footman Ananias."

Eusebius is the first who makes mention of this epistle, and the sum of his account is, that our Saviour's miraculous works drew innumerable persons to him, from the most remote countries, to be healed of their diseases;—that Abgarus, a famous king beyond the Euphrates, wrote to him, because he was afflicted with a malady incurable by human art. Our Lord promised to send one of his disciples to him, and Thaddeus, one of the seventy disciples, was sent by Thomas after the ascension of Jesus, by an intimation given him from heaven. For the truth of this story, Eusebius appeals to the public records of the city of Edessa, where, he says, all the transactions of the reign of Abgarus are preserved in the Syriac language, out of which he translated these epistles, and the accompanying history. He proceeds to relate that Thaddeus having come to Edessa wrought many miracles, and healed many that were diseased. Abgarus, supposing that this was the person whom Christ had, in his letter, promised to send to him, as soon as Thaddeus was introduced to him, perceiving something extraordinary in his countenance, fell down before him, at which his nobles were greatly surprised. The king having inquired whether he was the person sent by Christ, he answered, that on account of the faith of Christ he was sent, and assured him that all things should be according to his faith. To which the king replied, that he believed so much in Christ, that he was resolved, had it not been for fear of the Romans, to have made war with the Jews for crucifying him. Thaddeus informed him of the ascension of Christ to his Father. The king replied, I believe in him, and in his Father also: on which the apostle said, I lay my hand on you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the king was instantly cured of his disease. He also cured others who were diseased; and, on the morrow, the king ordered all the city to meet together, to hear the apostle preach. The king offered him gold and silver, which he refused, saying, "We have left our own, and should we take that which is another's?"

These epistles are also mentioned by Ephrem, the Syrian, who was a deacon in the church of Edessa, in the latter end of the fourth century. His account of this matter, as given by Dr. Grabe, is as follows: "Blessed be your city, and mother Edessa, which was expressly blessed by the mouth of the Lord, and his disciples, but our apostles; for when Abgarus the king, who built that city, thought fit to send and acknowledge Christ, the Lord and Saviour of all, in his pilgrimage on earth; saying, I have heard all things which are done by you, and how much you have suffered by the Jews, who condemn you, wherefore, come hither, and take up your residence with me; I have a little city which shall be equally yours and mine; hereupon the Lord admiring his faith sent by messengers a blessing unto the city, which should abide for ever, till the Holy One be revealed

from heaven, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God of God.” No other writer of the first four centuries makes any explicit mention of this epistle; but Procopius, in the sixth century, in his history of the Persian war, relates, “That Abgarus had been long afflicted with the gout, and finding no relief from the physicians, but hearing of the miracles of Christ, sent to him, and desired that he would come and live with him; and that upon his receiving an answer from Christ, he was immediately cured; and that our Saviour, in the end of his letter, gave Abgarus assurance, that his city should never be taken by enemies.”

Evagrius, in the latter end of the sixth century, appeals to this account of Procopius, and confirms the story that the city never should be taken by enemies, by a reference to some facts, particularly the failure of Chosroes to take the city, when he laid siege to it. But this author adds a circumstance, which has much the air of a fable, that this failure of capturing the city was brought about by a picture of Christ's face, which he had impressed on a handkerchief, and sent to Abgarus, at his earnest request.

Cedrenus adds to all the rest that Christ sealed his letter with a seal consisting of seven Hebrew letters, the meaning of which was, “the divine miracle of God is seen.”

Among the moderns, a very large majority are of opinion that this epistle is apocryphal. Indeed, the principal advocates of its genuineness are a few learned Englishmen, particularly Dr. Parker, Dr. Cave, and Dr. Grabe, but they do not speak confidently on the subject; while on the other side are found almost the whole body of learned critics, both Protestants and Romanists. Now, that this epistle and history existed in the archives of Edessa in the time of Eusebius, there is no room to doubt, unless we would accuse this respectable historian of the most deliberate falsehood; for he asserts that he himself had taken them thence. His words, however, must not be too strictly interpreted, as though he had himself been at Edessa, and had translated the epistle from the Syriac; for there is reason to believe that he never visited that place, and that he was not acquainted with the Syriac tongue. The words will be sufficiently verified, if this document was translated and transmitted to him through an authentic channel from Edessa.

It is probable, therefore, that this story has some foundation in truth. Probably Thaddeus, or some other apostle, did preach the gospel and perform miracles in that city; but how much of the story is credible, it is not now easy to determine. But I think it may be shown that this epistle was never penned by Jesus Christ, for the following reasons:

1. It is never mentioned in the genuine gospels; nor referred to by any writer of the first three centuries.
2. If this account had been true, there never could have been any hesitation among the apostles about preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.
3. It is unreasonable to believe that if Christ had been applied to by this king for healing, he would have deferred a cure until he could send an apostle after his ascension. This does not correspond with the usual conduct of the benevolent Saviour.
4. It seems to have been a tradition universally received that Christ never wrote anything himself; and if he had written this letter, it would have been more prized than any other portion of Scripture, and would have been placed in the Canon, and everywhere read in the churches.

5. After it was published by Eusebius, it never gained so much credit as to be received as a genuine writing of Christ. As it was unknown in the first three centuries, so in the fourth when published it was scarcely noticed by any writer.

6. The plain mention of our Lord's ascension in the epistle, is an evidence of its spuriousness; for in all his discourses, recorded by the evangelists, there is no such explicit declaration of this event; and it cannot be supposed that he would speak more explicitly to a heathen king than to the persons chosen to be witnesses of his actions, and dispensers of his doctrine.

There is, however, nothing in the sentiments expressed in this epistle unsuitable to the humble and benevolent character of the Saviour; but learned men have supposed that there are several internal evidences of spuriousness besides the one just mentioned. I conceive, however, that the reasons already assigned will be considered as sufficient to prove that this letter forms no part of the sacred Canon. It is excluded by several of the rules laid down above; and even if it were genuine, it seems that it ought rather to be received as a private communication than as intended for the edification of the whole church. The history which accompanies the letter has several strong marks of spuriousness, but as this does not claim to be canonical, we need not pursue the subject further. It may, however, not be amiss to remark that the story of the picture of our Saviour impressed on a handkerchief and sent to Abgarus, is enough of itself to condemn the history as fabulous. This savours not of the simplicity of Christ, and has no parallel in anything recorded in the gospel.

II. There is now extant an epistle under the title of "Paul to the Laodiceans," and it is known that as early as the beginning of the second century, a work existed under this name which was received by Marcion the heretic. But there is good reason for thinking that the epistle now extant is an entirely different work from the one which anciently existed; for the present epistle does not contain the words which Epiphanius has cited from that used by Marcion; and what renders this clear is, that the ancient epistle was heretical, and was rejected by the Fathers of the church with one consent; whereas, the one which we now have contains nothing erroneous; for it is a mere compilation from the other epistles of Paul with a few additional sentences which contain no heretical doctrine. As the epistle is short, a translation of it will be given in the notes at the end of the volume.*

Concerning the ancient epistle under this title Philastrius says, "That some were of opinion that it was written by Luke; but because the heretics have inserted some (false) things, it is for that reason not read in the churches. Though it be read by some, yet there are no more than thirteen epistles of Paul read to the people in the church, and sometimes that to the Hebrews." "There are some," says Jerome, "who read an epistle, under the name of Paul to the Laodiceans, but is rejected by all." And Epiphanius calls it "an epistle not written by the apostles." The epistle now extant never having been received into the ancient catalogues, read in the churches, or cited as Scripture, is of course apocryphal. It is also proved not to be genuine, because it is almost entirely an extract from the other epistles of Paul.

III. Another writing which has been ascribed to Paul is, "Six Letters to Seneca," with which are connected "Eight Letters from Seneca to Paul." These letters are of undoubted antiquity, and several learned men of the Jesuits have defended them as genuine, and allege that they are similar to other epistles received into the Canon which were addressed to individuals. That such

letters were in existence as early as the fourth century appears from a passage in Jerome's Catalogue of Illustrious Men, where he gives the following account of Seneca: "Lucius Annæus Seneca, born at Corduba, a disciple of Sotio, a Stoic, uncle of Lucan the poet, was a person of very extraordinary temperance, whom I should not have ranked in my Catalogue of Saints, but that I was determined to it by the "epistles of Paul to Seneca," and "Seneca to Paul," which are read by many. In which, though he was at that time tutor to Nero, and made a very considerable figure, he saith he wishes to be of the same repute among his countrymen, as Paul was among the Christians. He was slain by Nero two years before Peter and Paul were honoured with martyrdom."

There is also a passage in Augustine's 54th epistle to Macedonius, which shows that he was not unacquainted with these letters. His words are, "It is true, which Seneca, who lived in the times of the apostles, and who wrote certain epistles to Paul which are now read, said, 'he who will hate those who are wicked must hate all men.' "

There is no authentic evidence that these letters have been noticed by any of the rest of the Fathers. Indeed, it has been too hastily asserted by several eminent critics, that Augustine believed that the letters of Paul to Seneca were genuine; but the fact is, that he makes no mention whatever of Paul's letters; he only mentions those of Seneca to Paul. The probability is that he never saw them, for had he been acquainted with them, it is scarcely credible that he would have said nothing respecting them in this place.

Neither does Jerome say anything from which it can with any certainty be inferred that he received these letters as genuine. He gives them the title by which they were known, and says they were read by many; but if he had believed them to be genuine letters of Paul, would he not have said much more? Would he not have claimed for them a place among Paul's canonical epistles? And what proves that this Father did not believe them to be genuine is, that in this same book he gives a full account of Paul and his writings, and yet does not make the least mention of these letters to Seneca. But the style of these letters sufficiently demonstrates that they are not genuine. Nothing can be more dissimilar to the style of Paul and of Seneca, than that of these epistles. "The style of those attributed to Seneca," says Dupin, "is barbarous, and full of idioms that do not belong to the Latin tongue." "And those attributed to Paul," says Mr. Jeremiah Jones, "have not the least tincture of the gravity of the apostle, but are rather compliments than instructions." The subscriptions of these letters are very different from those used by these writers in their genuine epistles. Seneca is made to salute Paul by the name of brother; an appellation not in use among the heathen, but peculiar to Christians. By several of these letters it would appear that Paul was at Rome when they were written, but from others the contrary may be inferred. It seems strange if they were both in the city, that they should date their letters by consulships; and, indeed, this method of dating letters was wholly unknown among the Romans; and there are several mistakes in them in regard to the consuls in authority at the time. Their trifling contents is also a strong argument of spuriousness. "They contain nothing," says Dupin, "worthy either of Seneca or of Paul; scarcely one moral sentiment in the letters of Seneca, nor anything of Christianity in those of Paul." What can be more unlike Paul than the fifth letter, which is occupied with a servile apology for putting his own name before Seneca's, in the inscription of his letters, and declaring this to be contrary to Christianity? These letters, moreover, contain some things which are not true, as "that the emperor Nero was delighted and surprised at the thoughts in Paul's epistles to the churches:—and that

Nero was both an admirer and favourer of Christianity.” But very incongruous with this, and also with Paul’s character is that which he is made to say in his fourth epistle, where he entreats Seneca to say no more to the emperor respecting him or Christianity, lest he should offend him. Yet, in the sixth letter he advises Seneca to take convenient opportunities of insinuating the Christian religion, and things favourable to it to Nero and his family. But for further particulars the reader is referred to the epistles themselves, a translation of which may be found in “Jones on the Canon.”

IV. There is extant a spurious gospel entitled, the “Protevangelion of James,” in the Greek language, which was brought from the east by Postell, who asserts that it is held to be genuine by the oriental churches, and is publicly read in their assemblies with the other Scriptures. This learned man, moreover, undertakes the defence of this gospel as the genuine production of the apostle James, and insists that it ought at least to have a place in the Hagiographa. But his arguments are weak, and have been fully refuted by Fabricius and Jones. This apocryphal book, however, appears to be ancient; or at least there was formerly a book under the same name, but that it is not canonical is easily proved. It is quoted by none of the ancient Fathers except Epiphanius, who explicitly rejects it as apocryphal. It is found in none of the catalogues, and was never read in the primitive church. It contains many false and trifling stories; and in its style and composition is a perfect contrast to the genuine gospels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. From the Hebraisms with which it abounds, it has been supposed to be the work of some person who was originally a Jew; but as it was anciently used by the Gnostics, there can be little doubt that the author when he wrote, belonged to some one of the heretical sects which so abounded in primitive times.

There is also another work which has a near affinity with this, called “The Nativity of Mary.” And although these books possess a similar character, and contain many things in common, yet in other points they are contradictory to each other, as they both are to the evangelical history. The internal evidence is itself sufficient to satisfy any candid reader of their apocryphal character.*

V. The largest apocryphal gospel extant is entitled “The Gospel of our Saviour’s Infancy.” There is also remaining a fragment of a gospel ascribed to Thomas, which probably was originally no other than the one just mentioned. These gospels were never supposed to be canonical by any Christian writer. They were forged and circulated by the Gnostics, and altered from time to time according to their caprice. The “Gospel of our Saviour’s Infancy,” seems to have been known to Mohammed, or rather to his assistants; for according to his own account, in the Koran, he was unable to read. Many of the things related in the Koran, respecting Christianity, are from this apocryphal work. This gospel is condemned by almost every rule laid down for the detection of spurious writings; and if all other evidence were wanting, the silly, trifling and ludicrous stories, with which it is stuffed, would be enough to demonstrate, that it was spurious and apocryphal. To give the curious reader an opportunity of contrasting these apocryphal legends with the gravity and simplicity of the genuine gospels, I have inserted some of the miracles recorded in this book, at the end of the volume.*

It seems highly probable that this “Gospel of the Saviour’s Infancy,” and the book of the “Nativity of Mary,” were originally parts of the same work; an evidence of which is, that in the Koran, there is a continued and connected story, which is taken partly from the one, and partly from the other. The

same thing is proved by the fact, that Jerome in one place speaks of a preface which he had written to the "Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy," in which he condemns it, because it contradicts the gospel of John, and in another place, he uses the same words, and says they are in the preface to the "Nativity of Mary."

Both these apocryphal books have been formerly ascribed to Lucius Charinus, who lived in the latter part of the third century, and who rendered himself famous, by forging spurious works under the name of the apostles.

VI. There is another apocryphal gospel, entitled, "the Gospel of Nicodemus," or, "the Acts of Pilate," which was probably forged about the same time as the one last treated of, and it is very likely by the same person. That it was the custom for the governors of provinces in the Roman empire, to transmit to the emperors an account of all remarkable occurrences under their government, is capable of proof from the Roman history, and Eusebius expressly informs us that this was customary: and Philo Judæus speaks of "the daily memoirs which were transmitted to Caligula, from Alexandria." That Pontius Pilate transmitted some account of the crucifixion of Christ, and of his wonderful works, is, therefore, in itself, highly probable; but it is rendered certain, by the public appeal made to these "Acts of Pilate," both by Justin Martyr and Tertullian, in their Apologies; the one addressed to the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, and the other probably to the Roman senate. The words of Justin Martyr are, "And of the truth of these facts you may be informed, out of the acts which were written by Pontius Pilate." And in the same apology he refers to these acts for proof, "That our Saviour cured all sorts of diseases, and raised the dead."

Tertullian, in two places of his Apology, appeals to records which were transmitted to Tiberius from Jerusalem. His testimony is remarkable in both places, and deserves to be transcribed: "Tiberius," says he, "in whose time the Christian name became first known in the world, having received information from Palestine in Syria, that Jesus Christ had there given manifest proof of the truth of his divinity, communicated it to the senate, insisting upon it as his prerogative, that they should assent to his opinion in that matter; but the senate not approving it refused. Cæsar continued in the same opinion, threatening those who were accusers of the Christians." In the other passage, after enumerating many of the miracles of Christ, he adds, "All these things, Pilate himself, who was in his conscience for following Christ, transmitted to Tiberius Cæsar; and even the Cæsars themselves had been Christians, if it had been consistent with their secular interests." Both Eusebius and Jerome, cite this testimony of Tertullian as authentic. It seems therefore certain, that some account of Christ and his actions was transmitted by Pilate to the emperor. "For," to use the words of an eminent man, "Tertullian, though a Christian writer, durst never have presumed to impose upon the senate themselves, with such a remarkable story, if he was not able to prove it; and that he was, is evident from Justin Martyr, who often appeals to the Acts of Pilate, concerning the history of our Saviour—That Pilate did send such acts is evident, for scarce any man, much less such a man as Justin Martyr, would have been so foolish, or so confident, as to affirm a thing in which it would be so easy to convict him of falsehood."* And another, speaking of the same thing, says, "They were men of excellent learning and judgment; but no man who could write an apology, can be supposed to have so little understanding, as to appeal to that account which Pilate sent to Tiberius, concerning the resurrection of Christ, in apologies, dedicated to the Roman emperor himself, and to the senate, if no such account had ever been sent."*

It does not follow, however, that these Fathers had ever seen these Acts, or that they were ever seen by any Christian. During the reigns of heathen emperors, Christians could have no access to the archives of the nation; but the fact of the existence of such a record might have been, and probably was, a matter of public notoriety; otherwise, we never can account for the confident appeal of these learned and respectable writers. There is no difficulty in conceiving how such a fact might have been certainly known to these Fathers, without supposing that they had seen the record. As the learned Casaubon says, "Some servants or officers of one of the Cæsars, who were converted to Christianity, and had opportunity of searching the public records at Rome, gave this account to some Christians, from whom Justin and Tertullian had it."

It may seem to be an objection to the existence of such Acts, that they were never made public when the emperors became Christians; but it is altogether probable, that they were destroyed through the malice of the senate, or of some Roman emperor who was hostile to Christianity. They who took so much pains to destroy the writings of Christians, would not suffer such a monument of the truth of Christianity to remain in their own palace. But as to those Acts of Pilate which are now extant, no one supposes that they are genuine. They have every mark of being spurious. The external and internal evidence is equally against them; and it would be a waste of time to enter into any discussion of this point.

It may, however, be worth while to inquire into the motives which probably led some mistaken Christian to forge such a narrative. And there seems to have been two: first, to have it in his power to show the record, to which the Fathers had so confidently referred. The heathen adversaries might say, after the destruction of the genuine Acts of Pilate, Where is the document to which this appeal has been made? let it be produced. And some man, thinking that he could serve the cause of Christianity by forging Acts, under the name of Pilate, was induced through a mistaken zeal, to write this narrative. But there was another reason which probably had some influence on this fact. About the close of the third century, the heathen had forged and published a writing called "The Acts of Pilate," the object of which was to render the Christians odious and contemptible to the public, by foul calumnies against their Founder and his apostles. Of this fact, Eusebius gives us express and particular information. "From whence," says he, "the forgery of these is manifestly detected, who have lately published certain Acts against our Saviour. In which, first, the very time which is assigned to them discovers the imposture; for those things which they have impudently forged, to have come to pass at our Saviour's crucifixion, are said to have occurred in the fourth consulship of Tiberius, which coincides with the seventh of his reign; at which time, it is certain, Pilate was not yet come into Judea, if any credit is due to Josephus, who expressly says, that Pilate was not constituted governor of Judea until the twelfth year of Tiberius."* And in another place he says, "Seeing therefore that this writer, (Josephus) who was himself a Jew, has related such things in his history concerning John the Baptist and the Saviour, what can they possibly say for themselves, to prevent being convicted of the most impudent forgery, who wrote those things against John and Christ." And in the ninth book of his ecclesiastical history, this writer gives us information, still more particular, respecting this malicious forgery. "At length, (the heathen) having forged certain Acts of Pilate, concerning our Saviour, which were full of all sorts of blasphemy against Christ, they caused them, by the decree of Maximinus, to be dispersed through all parts of the empire; commanding by letters, that they should be published to all persons, in every place, both in cities and country places; and that school-masters should put them into the hands of their

children, and oblige them to learn them by heart, instead of their usual lessons.”

Here it may be observed, that while this impudent forgery clearly shows with what malicious efforts the attempt was made to subvert the gospel, it proves at the same time, that there had existed a document under the name of “The Acts of Pilate.” Now, the circulation of such an impious piece of blasphemy, probably instigated Charinus, or whoever was the author of these Acts, to counteract them by a work of another kind, under the same name. How this book came to be called, “The Gospel of Nicodemus,” will appear by the subscription annexed to it, in which it is said, “The emperor Theodosius the great, found at Jerusalem, in the hall of Pontius Pilate, among the public records, the things which were transacted in the nineteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of the Romans—being a history written in Hebrew by Nicodemus, of what happened after our Saviour’s crucifixion.” And if this subscription be no part of the original work, still it may have occasioned this title; or it may have originated in the fact, that much is said about Nicodemus in the story which is here told. But even if we had the original Acts of Pilate, or some history of Nicodemus, it needs no proof that they could have no just claim to a place in the Canon.

VII. The last apocryphal book which I shall mention, is that entitled “The Acts of Paul and Thecla.” There is no doubt but that this book is apocryphal. It was so considered by all the Fathers who have mentioned it. Tertullian says respecting it, “But if any read the apocryphal books of Paul, and thence defend the right of women to teach and baptize, by the example of Thecla, let them consider that a certain presbyter of Asia, who forged that book, under the name of Paul, being convicted of forgery, confessed that he did it out of respect to Paul, and so left his place.”* And Jerome, in his life of Luke, says, “The Acts of Paul and Thecla, with the whole story of the baptized lion, I reckon among the apocryphal Scriptures.” And in the decree of Pope Gelasius, it is asserted, “That the ‘Acts of Thecla and Paul’ is apocryphal.”

It is manifest, however, that the primitive Christians gave credit to a story respecting Paul and Thecla, on which this book is founded: for it is often referred to as a history well known and commonly believed. Thus Cyprian, or some ancient writer under his name, says, “Help us, O Lord, as thou didst help the apostles in their imprisonment, Thecla amidst the flames, Paul in his persecutions, and Peter amidst the waves of the sea.” And again, “Deliver me, O Lord, as thou didst deliver Thecla, when in the midst of the amphitheatre she was in conflict with the wild beasts.” Eusebius mentions a woman by this name, but he places her long after the apostle Paul, and she is, therefore, supposed to be another person. Epiphanius relates, “That when Thecla met Paul, she determined against marriage, although she was then engaged to a very agreeable young man.”* Augustine refers to the same thing, and says, “By a discourse of Paul’s, at Iconium, he incited Thecla to a resolution of perpetual virginity, although she was then actually engaged to be married.” Many others of the Fathers speak of Thecla as of a person whose history was well known. And among the moderns, Baronius, Locrinus, and Grabe, look upon this history as true and genuine, written in the apostolic age, and containing nothing superstitious or unsuitable to that time. But none have ventured to assert that these Acts ought to have a place in the Canon. No doubt the book now extant is greatly altered from that ancient history referred to by the Fathers, and probably the original story was founded on some tradition which had a foundation in truth; but what the truth is, it is impossible now to discover among such a mass of fables and ridiculous stories as the book contains. As it now stands, it contains numerous things which are false in fact; others which are inconsistent with the canonical Scriptures, and some totally incompatible with the

true character of Paul. Moreover, it is favourable to several superstitious practices which had no existence in the apostles' days; and finally, the forgery was acknowledged as it relates to the ancient Acts, and those now existing cannot be more genuine than the original; but to these many things have been added of a silly and superstitious kind.

SECTION XVII("tw://[self]?tid=18&popup=0" \l "Canon_Contents-")

NO PART OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION HANDED DOWN BY UNWRITTEN TRADITION

In the former part of this work it was seen that it was not only necessary to show that the apocryphal writings had no right to a place in the sacred volume, but that there was no additional revelation which had been handed down by oral tradition. The same necessity devolves upon us in relation to the New Testament; for while it is pretty generally agreed by all Christians what books should be received into the Canon, there is a large society which strenuously maintains that besides the revelation contained in the divine record written by the apostles and their assistants, by the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, there is a further revelation consisting of such things as were received from the mouth of Christ himself while upon earth, or taught to the churches by his inspired apostles, which were not by them nor in their time committed to writing, but which have come down to us by unbroken tradition. The importance of this inquiry is manifest; for if, in addition to the written word, there are important doctrines and necessary sacraments of the church which have come down by tradition, it would be a perilous thing for us to remain ignorant of those things which God has enjoined, or to deprive ourselves of the benefits to be derived from those means of grace, which he has instituted for the edification and salvation of the church. But seeing traditions are much more liable to alteration and corruption than written documents, it is very necessary that we should be on our guard against imposition; and if it is a duty to exercise much care and diligence in distinguishing between inspired books and such as are spurious, it cannot be less incumbent to ascertain first whether any part of God's revealed will has been handed down by tradition only, and next to learn accurately what those things are which have been thus communicated. And as there are apocryphal books which claim a place in the Canon, so doubtless there would be apocryphal traditions, if any truths had been conveyed to the church through this channel. But if there be no satisfactory evidence of any such revelation having come down to us, nor any possibility of ascertaining what proceeded from the apostles, and what from the fancy and superstition of men, then we are right in refusing the high claims of tradition, and adhering inflexibly to the written word, "which is able," through faith, "to make us wise unto salvation." This doctrine of traditions is most convenient and favourable to the church of Rome in all her controversies with Protestants and others; for whatever she may assert as an article of faith, or teach as a part of Christian duty, although there be no vestige of it in the word of God, may readily be established by tradition. For as the church alone has the keeping of this body of oral law, she only is the proper judge of what it contains, and indeed can make it to suit herself. If we should concede to the Romanists what they claim on this point, the controversy with them might well be brought to an end, and all we should have to do, would be to yield implicit faith to whatever they might please to teach us. And even if we should be required to believe and practise, in direct opposition to the plain declarations of holy Scripture, yet, as the true interpretation of Scripture on this plan is only in the hands of the infallible head of the church, and is indeed understood by means of unwritten traditions, we must not trust to our own understanding in the most evident matters, nor even to our own senses, although several of them should concur in giving us notice of

some fact. Now, before we give ourselves up to be led blindly in such a way as this, it behoves us diligently and impartially to inquire, whether God has required of us this implicit submission to men. We ought to be assured that their authority over our faith and conscience has a divine warrant for its exercise; and especially we should be satisfied, on sufficient grounds, that these unwritten traditions, on which the whole fabric rests, are truly the commands of God; for if they are not, we have the highest authority for rejecting them. And if their claim to a divine origin cannot be made out clearly, they cannot in reason bind us to obedience; for when God gives a law he promulgates it with sufficient clearness that all whom it concerns may know what is required of them. To exhibit fairly the true point of controversy on this subject, it will be requisite to make several preliminary observations, that it may be clearly understood what we admit and what we deny.

1. In the first place then, it is readily admitted that a law revealed from heaven and communicated to us orally, with clear evidence of its origin, is as binding as if written ever so often. When God uttered the ten commandments on Mount Sinai, in the midst of thunderings and lightnings, it surely was as obligatory upon the hearers, as after he had written them on tables of stone. It is a dictate of common sense, that it is a matter of indifference how a divine revelation is communicated, provided it come to us properly authenticated.

2. Again, it is conceded, that for a long time there was no other method of transmitting the revelations received from heaven, from generation to generation, but by oral tradition, and such external memorials as aided in keeping up the remembrance of important transactions. As far as appears books were unknown, and letters not in use, until a considerable time after the flood. During the long period which preceded the time of Moses, all revelations must have been handed down by tradition. But while this concession is willingly made, it ought in connection to be remarked, that this mode was then used because no other existed; and that, in the early ages of the world, the longevity of the patriarchs rendered that a comparatively safe channel of communication which would now be most uncertain; and notwithstanding this advantage, the fact was, that in every instance, as far as we are informed, in which divine truth was committed to tradition, it was utterly lost, or soon became so corrupted by foreign mixtures, that it was impossible to ascertain what part of the mass contained a revelation from God. It is therefore the plausible opinion of some, that writing was revealed from heaven, for the very purpose of avoiding the evil which had been experienced, and that there might be a certain vehicle for all divine communications: and it is certain, that all that we know of the history of alphabetical writing, leads us to connect its origin with the commencement of written revelations.

It is, therefore, not an improbable supposition, that God taught letters to Moses for the express purpose of conveying, by this means, his laws to distant ages, without alteration; and it deserves to be well considered, that after the command was given to Moses, to write in a book the laws and statutes delivered to him, nothing was left to oral tradition, as has been shown in the former part of this work.

3. It will be granted also, that tradition, especially when connected with external memorials, is sufficient to transmit, through a long lapse of time, the knowledge of particular events, or of transactions of a very simple nature.

Thus it may be admitted, that if the gospels had not come down to us, we might by tradition be assured that Christ instituted the eucharist as a memorial of his death; for, from the time of its

institution, it has, in every successive age, and in many countries, been celebrated to perpetuate the remembrance of that event. And it is not credible that such a tradition should be uniform at all times, and everywhere, and be connected with the same external rite, if it was not founded in fact. Besides, the thing handed down, in this instance, is so simple in its nature, that there was no room for mistake.

There is one fact, for the truth of which we depend entirely on tradition, so far as external testimony is concerned, and that is the truth which in this work we have been attempting to establish, that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons under whose names they have come down to us. This fact is incapable of being proved from the Scriptures, because we must first be assured that they contain the testimony of inspired men before we can prove anything by them. The point to be established here is, that the apostles wrote these books. If it were ever so often asserted in a book, that a certain person was its author, this would not be satisfactory evidence of its genuineness, because any impostor can write what falsehoods he pleases in a book, and may ascribe it to whom he will; as in fact many have written spurious works, and ascribed them to the apostles. We must, therefore, have the testimony of those who had the opportunity of judging of the fact, given either explicitly or implicitly. In most cases, where a book is published under the name of some certain author, in the country in which he lived and was known, a general silent acquiescence in the fact, by the people of that age and country, with the consent of all that came after them, may be considered as satisfactory evidence of the genuineness of such book. But where much depends on the certainty of the fact in question, it is necessary to have positive testimony; and in order that it be satisfactory, it should be universal, and uncontradicted. When, therefore, a certain volume is expressly received as the work of certain individuals, by all who lived at or near the time when it was published, and all succeeding writings concur in ascribing it to the same persons, and not a solitary voice is raised in contradiction, the evidence of its genuineness seems to be as complete as the nature of the case admits. Just such is the evidence of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament; or, at least, of most of them. It is, however, the evidence of tradition; but of such a tradition as is abundantly sufficient to establish a fact of this sort. The thing attested is most simple in its nature, and not liable to be misunderstood. This necessity of tradition to establish the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, has been made a great handle of by the Romanists, in the defence of their favourite doctrine. They pretend that the point which we have here conceded, is all that is necessary to establish their whole system on the firmest foundation. They argue, that if we must receive the Scriptures themselves by tradition, much more other things. Indeed, they ascribe all the authority which the Scriptures possess to the testimony of the church, without which they assert that they would deserve no more credit than any other writings. But because a single fact, incapable of proof in any other way, must be received by tradition, it does not follow that numerous other matters which might easily have been recorded, must be learned in the same manner. Because a document requires oral testimony to establish its authenticity, it is not therefore necessary to prove the truth of the matters contained in that record by the same means. The very purpose of written records is to prevent the necessity of trusting to the uncertainty of tradition; and as to the allegation that the Scriptures owe their authority to the church, it amounts to no more than this, which we freely admit, that it is by the testimony of the early Fathers that we are assured that these writings are the productions of the apostles, and it is true that most of those witnesses who have given testimony were members of the Catholic church. But our confidence in their testimony on this

point, is not because they were members of the church, but because they lived in times and circumstances favourable to an accurate knowledge of the fact which they report. And accordingly we admit the testimony of those who were out of the church; yea, of its bitterest enemies to the same fact, and on some accounts judge it to be the most unexceptionable. While we weigh this evidence it would be absurd to make its validity depend on the witnesses being members of the church; for that would be to determine that the church was divine and infallible, before we had ascertained that the Scriptures were the word of God. Surely, if on examination it had turned out that the Scriptures were not inspired, the authority of the Christian church would have been worth nothing, and therefore previously to the decision on this point we cannot defer anything to the authority of the church. The truth is, that the witnesses being of the church is, in this inquiry, merely an incidental circumstance. A sufficient number of competent and credible witnesses, not of the church, would establish the fact just as well as those who have given testimony, and, as was before observed, such testimony on the score of freedom from all partiality has the advantage. The testimony of Jews and heathen has, on this account, been demanded by infidels, and has been sought for with avidity by the defenders of Christianity, and in the view of all considerate men is of great weight. But it is not just to ascribe the authority of these books to the church, because the greater number of the witnesses of their apostolical origin were members of the church. The law enacted by the supreme legislature of the state does not owe its authority to the men who attest its genuineness. It is true, it would not be known certainly to be a law without the attestation, but it would be absurd to ascribe the authority of the law to the persons whose testimony proved that it was really a law of the state. The cases are exactly parallel. The Scriptures cannot owe their authority to the church, for without them the church can have no authority, and although she may, and does give ample testimony in favour of their divine origin, this confers no authority on them, it only proves to us that they have authority which is derived from the Spirit of God, by whom they were indited. It is truly wonderful how this plain case has been perplexed and darkened by the artifice and sophistry of the writers of the church of Rome. But if it be insisted, that if we admit tradition as sufficient evidence of a fact in one case, we ought to do so in every other where the tradition is as clear, we answer, that to this we have no objection, provided this species of proof be as necessary and as clear in the one case as the other. Let any other fact be shown to be as fully attested as the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, and to need this kind of proof as much, and we will not hesitate to receive it as true, whatever may be the consequence. But the very fact which we have been considering, seems to raise a strong presumption against the necessity of depending on tradition for anything else. Why were these books written? Was it not to convey to us, and to all future ages, the revelations of God to man? Because it is necessary to authenticate by testimony this record, must we depend on the same testimony for information on the points of which the record treats? Surely not. For the proof of these we have nothing to do but refer to the document itself; otherwise the possession of written records would be useless. If, indeed, a doubt should arise about the meaning of something in the record, it would not be unreasonable to inquire how it had been understood and practised on by those who received it at first; but if we should find a society acting in direct opposition to a written charter on which their existence depended, and pretending to prove that they were right by appealing from the written documents to vague traditions, all sensible men not interested would judge that the case was a very suspicious one.

4. We are, moreover, ready to acknowledge that the gospel was at first, for several years, communicated orally by the apostles and their assistants. The churches when first planted had no written gospels; they received the same truths now contained in the gospels and epistles, by the preaching of the apostles and others; and, doubtless, were as well instructed as those churches which have had possession of the whole inspired volume. And what they had thus received without book they could communicate to others, and thus, if the gospels and epistles had never been written, the Christian religion might have been transmitted from generation to generation. Then it may be asked, why the writing of these books should hinder the transmission of many things, which might not be contained in them, to future generations? for it cannot be doubted that many things were said and done by Christ which were not recorded in the gospels; and there is reason to think that the apostles were much fuller in their sermons than in their writings; and that they established many rules for the good order and government of the church, of which we have in their epistles either no account or only brief hints; which though they might be readily understood by those who had received their verbal instructions, are insufficient without tradition to teach us what rules and institutions were established in the churches by apostolical authority. Now, if these were transmitted by tradition to the next generation, and by them to the following, and so on in an uninterrupted series until the present time, are we not as much bound to receive such traditions, and be governed by them as by the written word?

I have now presented the argument in favour of traditions in the strongest light in which I am able to place it; and it would be uncandid not to admit, that it wears at first sight a face of plausibility: and if the whole case as here stated, could be made out with satisfactory evidence, I think we should be constrained to receive, to some extent, this oral law of the Romish church. But before any man can reasonably be required to rest his faith on tradition, he has a right to be satisfied on several important points; as, whether it was the purpose of God to permit any part of the revelation intended for the use of the church, in all future ages, to be handed down by tradition. For, as he directed everything in the law given at Mount Sinai, intended to regulate the faith and practice of the Israelites, to be committed to writing by Moses, it is noways improbable that the same plan was pursued, in regard to the writings of the New Covenant; especially, when it is considered how much superior written communications are to verbal, as it respects accuracy. When a channel for conveying the truth had been provided, calculated to preserve all communications from corruption, and when it is acknowledged, that this was used for a part of the matter to be transmitted, how can it be accounted for, that another part should be committed to the uncertainty of oral tradition? Why not commit the whole to writing? But it is incumbent on the advocates of tradition to show, by undoubted proofs, that what they say has come down by tradition was really received from the mouth of Christ, or from the teaching of his apostles. As they wish to claim for this rule an authority fully equal to that which is given to the Scriptures, they ought to be able to produce the very words in which these instructions were given. But this they do not pretend to do. It may be said, indeed, that words and sentences, in their just order and connection, cannot be conveyed by tradition, and therefore this demand is unreasonable. I answer, that this allegation is most true, but instead of making in favour of traditions, it is a strong argument to prove, that nothing thus received can be of equal certainty and authority with the written word. When an article of faith is proposed, which is contained in the Scriptures, we can turn to the sacred text and read the words of Christ and his apostles, and may be assured that they express the truth contained in said article. But if an article of faith be asserted to have come down by tradition, we have no opportunity of knowing the words

in which it was expressed: for, while it is pretended that the doctrine or instruction has reached us, the words have been lost; for what advocate, of tradition is able, in any single case, to furnish us with the words of any divine revelation, which is not contained in the sacred Scriptures? But it is essential to the credit of traditions, that it be proved clearly, that those articles of religion, or institutions of worship, said to be received from this source, have indeed been handed down, without alteration or corruption, from Christ and his apostles. It is not sufficient that they have been long received, and have now the sanction of the belief and practice of the whole Catholic church. It ought to be shown, that they have always, from the very days of the apostles, been received with universal consent. We know that the church has undergone many vicissitudes; that she has sometimes been almost extirpated by the sword of persecution; has been overrun with dangerous errors; has been overwhelmed with the darkness of Gothic ignorance; and we believe, has greatly apostatized from purity of doctrine and worship; and this accords with the prophecy of Paul, who clearly intimates that a time would come, when there should be a falling away. Now it may have happened, that during this long period of adversity, heresy, darkness, and corruption, many things may have crept in, and may have obtained an extensive and firm footing, which were totally unknown in the days of the apostles, or in the primitive church; and that this has in fact occurred, we are not left to conjecture. It is a matter of historical record, which cannot be disputed, and which is not denied even by the Romanists themselves. Who that is not insane with prejudice, could persuade himself that all the opinions, rites and ceremonies, which now exist in the Romish church, were prevalent in the times of the apostles, and were received from them by tradition?

Besides, there is a multitude of other things received and held to be important by the church of Rome, of which there is no vestige in the Scriptures, and concerning which there is no early tradition. Many rules and ceremonies which have been long in use, can be traced to their commencement at a period much later than that of the apostles. Now amidst such a mass of traditions, how can it be ascertained which have come down from Christ and his apostles? Perhaps we shall be told, that the infallible head of the church can determine with certainty what we ought to believe and practise; but if there be on earth an infallible judge, we have no need of traditions. All that is necessary is, for this person to establish his claim to infallibility, and then all will be as much bound to receive his decisions, as if they were expressly written in the holy Scriptures. On this ground the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants first commenced. The defenders of the old system appealed to the authority of the Pope, and the infallibility of the church, but as it was impossible to sustain themselves by Scripture on these points, they found it very convenient to have recourse to the doctrine of unwritten traditions, which they pretended had been handed down from Christ and his apostles. Grant them this, and there is no doctrine, however absurd, which may not be supported. Grant them this, and it will be in vain to appeal any more to the sacred Scriptures as a standard of truth; for this traditionary law not only inculcates what is not found in the Scriptures, but teaches the only true interpretation of Scripture. Traditions may, therefore, be considered as the bulwark of the Romish church. Concede to them the ground which they assume, and the whole body of their ceremonial laws and unscriptural practices is safe. For as they can feign what traditions they please, having the keeping of them entirely in their own hands, they are prepared to defend every part of their system: but take this away from them, and their defence is gone. Bring them to the ground of clear scriptural testimony, and they are weak; for it is manifest that the Bible knows nothing of their monstrous accumulation of superstitious rites. The council of Trent, therefore, early in their sessions, made a decree on this

subject, in which, after recognizing the Scriptures, they add: "The Holy Synod receives and venerates traditions relating both to faith and manners, as proceeding from the mouth of Christ himself, or as dictated by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in an uninterrupted succession in the Catholic church, with equal affection and reverence, as the written Scriptures!" This was the first decree of the fourth session of this famous Council.

Before leaving this subject, it will be proper to consider some of the other arguments, which the Romanists bring forward in support of their beloved traditions. And the first is imposing, as it is derived from the express declarations of Scripture, in which we are exhorted to obey traditions. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."* Here Paul makes express mention of tradition. And in the preceding chapter, "Therefore brethren stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word, or our epistle." Now all that is necessary to refute the argument derived from these and such like passages, where the word traditions is used, is to observe, that Paul employs this word in a very extensive sense, to signify whatever doctrines or institutions he had delivered to the churches, whether by his preaching or writing. And in the verse first cited, he evidently refers to what he had said to them in his first epistle, for the words following are, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, &c." Now, this tradition which he commanded the Thessalonians to obey, was contained in the former epistle addressed to them, where it is said, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." 1 Thessalonians 4:11. And in the quotation from the second chapter, it is clear, that by traditions, the apostle did not mean merely oral communications, for he explains himself, by saying, "whether by word or epistle." It is not denied, that Paul delivered many things orally to the churches, as has been already acknowledged. All the instructions given to the churches first planted, were oral, for as yet no gospels nor epistles were written; but the true point in dispute is, whether any article of faith, or any important institution, thus originally communicated, was omitted, when the books of the New Testament were written by divine inspiration. Whether, while a part of the revelation of God, for the use of his church, was committed to writing, another important part was left to be handed down by tradition. That the word tradition, as used by Paul, makes nothing in favour of the doctrine of the Romish church, is evident, because by this word he commonly means such things as were distinctly recorded in the Scriptures. Thus, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, he says, "For I delivered unto you first of all," where the word for transmitting by tradition, is used; but what were those things which he had by tradition communicated to them? He informs us in the next words, "How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

It is manifest, therefore, that the argument derived from the exhortation of Paul to obey tradition, is but a shadow, and vanishes upon the slightest touch of fair examination.

2. Their next and principal argument is derived from the frequent declarations of the early Fathers in favour of tradition. Cyprian refers those who might be in doubt respecting any doctrine, to the holy tradition received from Christ and his apostles; and Irenæus, as cited by Eusebius, says, "that those things which he heard Polycarp relate concerning Christ, his virtues and his doctrines, which he had learned from converse with the apostles, he had inscribed on his heart, and not on paper."

But after a few sentences he informs us “that all which he had heard from them was in accordance with the Scriptures, (παντα συμφωνα ταις γραφαις.)” This sentence of Irenæus is of great importance, for it teaches us how the Fathers understood this subject. They received such traditions as came down through pious men from the apostles, but they compared them with the Scriptures; even then the Scriptures were the standard by which all traditions must be judged. Irenæus insinuates, plainly enough, that if what he had heard from Polycarp, had not been in accordance with the Scriptures he would not have considered it as deserving attention. But the same Irenæus and Tertullian have spoken in still stronger terms in favour of tradition in their controversies with heretics. The former, in the third chapter of the third book of his work on Heresies, says, “The tradition of the apostles is manifest in the whole world. In the church it is exposed to the view of all who are willing to know the truth.” And in the fourth chapter, “It is not necessary to seek the truth from others which can easily be acquired from the church, since the blessed apostles have deposited in her, most fully, all those truths which are needful, so that every one who will may drink of the water of life. This is the true door of life, and all others are thieves and robbers; them we should avoid; but those things which appertain to the church we should delight in with great diligence, and should lay hold of the tradition of truth. For what if the apostles had left us no writings, ought we not to follow the order of traditions, which they to whom the churches were committed have delivered to us? To which institution many barbarous nations have submitted, having neither letters nor ink, but having the tradition of the apostles inscribed on their hearts, which also they follow.”

Tertullian, in his work concerning “Prescriptions,” says, “If Christ commissioned certain persons to preach his gospel, then certainly none should be received as preachers except those appointed to office by him. And as they preached what Christ revealed unto them, what they taught can only be known by applying to the churches which the apostles planted, by preaching to them, whether viva voce, or by their epistles. Therefore, all doctrine which agrees with that held by the apostolical churches is to be considered as true and held fast, because the churches received it from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God; but all other doctrine which is repugnant to that received by the churches should be rejected as false, as being repugnant to that truth taught by the apostles, by Christ, and by God.”

These declarations from such men in favour of tradition seem, at first view, to be altogether favourable to the doctrine of the church of Rome; but we despair not of being able to convince the candid reader, that when the occasion on which these things were said, and the character and opinions of the persons against whom these Fathers wrote are considered, their testimony instead of making against the sufficiency of the Scriptures will be found corroborative of the opinions which we maintain. They do not appeal to tradition, let it be observed, for confirmation of articles of faith not contained in the Scriptures; but the doctrines which they are defending are among the most fundamental contained in the New Testament. They are precisely the doctrines which are comprehended in the Apostles’ Creed. Now, to appeal to tradition for the confirmation of such doctrines as these, never can be of any force to prove that other doctrines not contained in the Scriptures may be established by tradition. But it may be asked, if those doctrines concerning which they disputed are plainly inculcated in the New Testament, why have recourse to tradition? Why not appeal at once to the Scriptures? To which I would answer, that Irenæus does little else in the third, fourth, and fifth books of his work than confirm the truth by a copious citation of

Scripture.

Nothing can be more manifest, therefore, than that the matters in dispute were not such as could only be proved by tradition, but they were such truths as lie at the very foundation of the Christian religion, and to record which, the gospels and epistles were written. But still the question returns, why did these Fathers appeal for proof to tradition, when they had testimony so full and decisive from the Scriptures? The answer to this question will show us, in the clearest manner, that the views of Irenæus and Tertullian, relative to the Scriptures and to traditions, were such as are now held by Protestants, and that the heretics whom they opposed, occupied nearly the same ground as the Romanists now do, in this controversy. These heretics either rejected the Scriptures as being an insufficient rule, and asserted that they were not competent for the decision of such matters; or they so corrupted them, that it was useless to appeal to them for proof; for testimonies derived from the genuine Scriptures they would not admit. This is not conjecture; for Irenæus has explicitly stated the case. "When," says he, "they are confuted from the Scriptures themselves, they allege that they are not correct, or not of authority, and assert that they speak so variously, that the truth cannot be established by them without tradition; for, say they, it was handed down, not by letters, but viva voce." And Tertullian says, "This heresy does not receive some parts of the Scriptures; and what they do receive is so corrupted by additions, or detractions, to suit their own doctrine, that they cannot be said to receive the Scriptures entire, &c." Again: "They pretend that the apostles did not wish to reveal all things plainly, for while they made known certain truths to all, there were others which they communicated secretly, and to a few persons, which they say the apostle Paul meant by the depositum." From these quotations, the reason why these Fathers had recourse to traditions is most manifest. It was the only ground on which these heretics could be met; for they denied, (as the Romanists now do,) that the Scriptures were a certain and sufficient standard of truth. They said that their meaning could not be ascertained without tradition; that they were defective; and also, that there were some parts which they did not acknowledge; and they held, moreover, that some things were never committed to writing, but designedly handed down by tradition. We did not, indeed, expect to find the exact doctrine of the Romanists respecting the Scriptures and tradition, at so early a period of the church: but unfortunately for their cause, the persons who are found agreeing with them are gross heretics.

It is now easy to see why the appeal was made by the Fathers to universal tradition; and they show, that in their day tradition and Scripture were harmonious; and that if the apostles had written nothing, the consent of all the churches would be sufficient to prove, that the doctrines which they defended were received from the apostles. Instead, therefore, of using tradition, as the Romanists do, to prove some doctrine not contained in the Scripture, they used it merely to confirm the truths which are manifestly contained in the New Testament. They were at no loss for Scripture testimonies to establish these truths, but they were disputing with men who did not admit the authority of the Scriptures to be decisive, and therefore they appeal to universal tradition in support of them. It is said, indeed, by Irenæus, that many barbarous nations had received the faith, among whom letters and writing were unknown. They must, therefore, it is concluded, have received it from tradition. Very good. Just as heathen tribes now receive, from those missionaries who preach the gospel to them, a short summary of the most important doctrines of the New Testament. The truths which these barbarous nations received, were not different from those contained in the sacred Scriptures, but the very same, taught in a short comprehensive creed. In fact, we have

here the true origin of that symbol of doctrine, commonly called the Apostles' Creed, which was a summary of Christianity, used in very early times, in the instruction of those who were not able to read the New Testament, or who had, as yet, no access to it. There are extant a number of these creeds, which at first were very short; but were afterwards increased, as new heresies arose. Bishop Usher found several of these in very ancient manuscripts, all of which are substantially the same as the creed called 'the Apostles' Creed.' That Irenæus actually referred, in the passage alluded to, to these elementary doctrines, he explicitly informs us; for, immediately after mentioning these barbarous nations, who were destitute of "letters and ink," he adds, "Believing in one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and all things which are therein; and in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who for his exceeding great love to his creatures, submitted to be born of a virgin, by himself uniting man to God; and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and having risen again, was received into heaven; about to come again in glory; the Saviour of those who are saved, and the judge of those who are judged; and will send into eternal fire, the perverters of the truth, and the despisers of his Father, and of his coming; which barbarians, if any one should announce to them the doctrines invented by heretics, stopping their ears, they would fly far away from them. Thus, the ancient apostolical tradition does not sanction those monstrous opinions inculcated by heretics." In the second chapter of the first book of the same work, Irenæus describes the apostolical doctrine, thus: "The church, planted by the apostles and their disciples throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, receives the same faith; which is, in one God Almighty, the Father, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things which are therein; in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets, predicted the good will of God; his advent; his generation of a virgin; his passion, and resurrection from the dead; and the ascension in the flesh of our beloved Lord Christ Jesus; and his coming again from heaven, in the glory of his Father, as our Lord Jesus Christ; our God, Saviour, and King; before whom, according to the good pleasure of the Father invisible, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess the justice of his judgments towards all, when he will send wicked spirits, fallen and apostate angels, and blaspheming men, into eternal fire; but the just and upright who have kept his precepts, and persevered in his love, some indeed from the beginning, and others as having received the gift of repentance, he will surround with eternal glory. This faith, the church spread over the whole world, diligently keeps, as if she inhabited one house, and believes in it, as if possessing but one soul and one heart; and in accordance with the same, she teaches and preaches, as with one mouth. Although the languages which are in the world are different, yet there is one and the same tradition. Neither do the churches which are founded in Germany believe differently from those in Italy, nor from those which are in Egypt, or in Libya, or in the middle of the world. But as the sun is one and the same through the whole world, so the light and preaching of the truth, everywhere shines, and illuminates all men, who are willing to come to the knowledge of the truth," &c. This then is the apostolical tradition, of which these Fathers speak in such high terms: not any secret doctrine, never committed to writing; not any articles of faith, or rites of worship, of which no vestige can be found in the Bible; but the plain, prominent, fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion: the very doctrines contained in the Apostles' Creed. That the preaching of the gospel preceded the circulation of the Scriptures we admit, but this preaching we insist and have proved, contained nothing different from that which is written in the gospels and epistles.

Tertullian speaks to the same purpose, and furnishes us with another summary of the common faith of primitive Christians; "The rule of faith," says he, "is that by which it is believed, that there is no more than one God, and no other beside the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing, by his Word, first of all sent forth, which Word is called his Son; was seen under different forms by the patriarchs; was always heard by the prophets; and finally, by the Spirit and power of God, being conceived by the Virgin Mary, became flesh in her womb. Jesus Christ having thus become man, published a new law, and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; was crucified; rose again the third day; was caught up into heaven; sat down on the right hand of God the Father; sent, as his substitute, the power of the Holy Spirit, to influence those who believe; will come again in glory to take his saints to the fruition of eternal life and of the celestial promises, and to adjudge the profane to eternal fire; at which time, there will be a resuscitation of both parts, and the flesh will be restored. This rule of faith was instituted by Christ, and is questioned by none but heretics, and such as teach those things which make heretics."*

These are the apostolical traditions which were universally received; the very plainest and most fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, which are written amply in every gospel, and recognized fully in every epistle. Thus far then, it does not appear that anything was left to unwritten tradition, to be communicated to future ages; for those very truths which were at first delivered orally by the apostles, were afterwards recorded by inspiration; and when the preachers of the gospel instructed the ignorant, who were unacquainted with letters, they taught them, precisely, but in a summary way, what is written in the New Testament.

3. Another argument, depended on by the advocates of tradition, is derived from the fact, that there are some doctrines, not expressly mentioned in Scripture, which are universally inculcated by the Fathers, which all true Christians have received as articles of faith, in all succeeding ages, and which are not denied even by Protestants themselves. To this class belong the doctrine of the Trinity; the doctrine of the Son being of the same substance as the Father; the deity of the Holy Spirit; his proceeding from the Father and the Son: the two natures in Christ constituting one person; the baptism of infants; the religious observance of the Lord's day, &c. Now, in regard to these articles of religion, we observe, that although they are not contained in Scripture, in so many words, they may be derived from Scripture by legitimate inference; and conclusions fairly deduced from the declarations of the word of God, are as truly parts of divine revelation, as if they were expressly taught in the sacred volume. All the articles mentioned above, are capable of satisfactory proof from Scripture; and if we did not find them taught there, we should feel under no obligation to receive them. We do not deny, however, that the universal consent, and uniform practice of the primitive church, ought to have great weight in confirming our faith in important doctrines, and in satisfying us that certain things not explicitly mentioned in Scripture were practised by the apostles. Although the doctrine of the Trinity, and the essential deity of the Son and Holy Spirit, are doctrines very plainly taught in the New Testament, yet in a matter of such vast importance, it cannot but afford satisfaction to every sincere inquirer, to find that these doctrines were universally believed by the Fathers, to be taught in the writings of the apostles. And although there are principles and facts recorded in the New Testament, from which it can be fairly concluded, that the first day of the week was set apart for public worship, and that the infants of believers were, from the beginning, baptized, and thus connected with the visible church; yet, as these institutions are not so expressly included in Scripture, as to remove all uncertainty, the fact

of their universal observance, in the primitive church, has, deservedly, great influence in convincing us, that our reasonings and inferences from Scriptural principles are correct. But why should we be required to receive these things merely on the authority of tradition, when the Fathers themselves appealed for their truth to the infallible rule contained in the New Testament? Thus, on the subject of infant baptism, which the Romanists pretend is derived solely from tradition, we find the Fathers appealing not only to universal practice and apostolical tradition, but frequently to the words of Scripture, in which they believed that the practice was implicitly authorized. Irenæus, Origen, Augustine, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, do all appeal to Scripture, when treating this subject, although they do, indeed, lay great stress on the derivation of this practice from the apostles by undoubted tradition. It is not denied, however, that after some time an undue deference was paid to traditions. It will be shown hereafter, that many were misled from the simplicity of the gospel by this very means. By yielding too ready an assent to traditions, they were led to adopt false opinions, some of which were directly repugnant to the written word. It can have no weight with us, therefore, to adduce such a writer as Epiphanius extolling tradition; for it can be proved, that from this source he imbibed many foolish notions, and fabulous stories, which the more impartial among the Romanists are as far from receiving as we are. Nor do we feel bound, on this subject, to adopt all the opinions anywhere found in the writings of Origen, Basil, Augustine, &c.; for we are persuaded, that this was one of the errors of antiquity, and that it was prolific of numerous evils, by which the church of God became greatly corrupted in after times. But it answers no purpose to the Romish church to plead these authorities; for they themselves do not receive as articles of faith or parts of divine worship, all that these Fathers derived from tradition. The principle of Protestants ever has been, that the Scriptures contain all things necessary to guide the faith and practice of believers; and they feel under no obligations to receive any article of religion, which cannot be proved to be contained in the sacred volume. If, in the explanation of Scripture, light can be derived from tradition, or the universal opinion or practice of the primitive church, they are very willing to avail themselves of it, as they are to derive aid from any other quarter: but since they are convinced that the Fathers were fallible men, and actually fell into many mistakes, it would be folly to build their faith on their opinions, much more to adopt their errors, knowing them to be such. "The Bible is the Religion of Protestants." The fact is, that the Fathers generally depended on Scripture for the proof of their doctrines; and called in the aid of tradition, only to confirm the doctrines which they derived from the written word. And here it is important to remark, that tradition, in the earlier and purer times of the church, was a very different thing from what it is now. Men who lived within one or two hundred years of the apostles, had an opportunity of ascertaining their opinions and practices from tradition, with a degree of certainty which is utterly unattainable after the lapse of ages of error and darkness. If it should be agreed, to receive as apostolical everything which the early Fathers professed to have received by tradition from the apostles, yet it would be most unreasonable to be required to admit as divine, the monstrous mass of traditions held by the Romish church, which has been accumulating for ages. But it is capable of the clearest proof, that great uncertainty attended all matters received by tradition, which were not contained in Scripture, even in those times that were nearest to the days of the apostles. This fact is manifest, in the case of Papias, who was contemporary with the last of the apostles; and of Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the second century. If then tradition was so uncertain, at its very source, who can place any confidence in this channel of communication, after it has been increasing in impurity for seventeen hundred years? If the stream had even been pure in its

commencement, it would, by this time, have become so turbid, and so poisoned, that no dependence could be placed in the information conveyed by it. But where certain things are said to have been received by tradition from the apostle John, at second hand, it was deemed important to verify them, by a comparison with the Scriptures, as we have already seen. How unreasonable then is the demand, that we should now receive all traditions, which have come down to us, without any test of their genuineness, or any comparison of them with the oracles of God!

Here also it is necessary to observe that there is a wide distinction to be made between articles of faith and institutions of worship which are obligatory on all, and such modes of worship as were adopted under the general rule of "doing all things decently and in order," or from notions of expediency, with a view of conciliating those that were without. It may be proved, indeed, from the writings of the Fathers that many things of this kind existed, which they never thought of placing on a level with the faith received from the apostles. And it may be here remarked, that it was one of the first and greatest mistakes into which the church fell, after inspiration ceased, to make too free a use of this doctrine of expediency. The abuses which have crept in under this specious disguise were not foreseen. The Fathers saw no harm in an indifferent ceremony to which, perhaps, their new converts were attached from long custom. By adopting things of this kind, the church which was at first simple and unincumbered with rites, became strangely metamorphosed; and in place of her simple robe of white, assumed a gorgeous dress tricked off with gaudy ornaments and various colours. This practice of inventing new ceremonies went on increasing until, in process of time, the burdensome ritual of the Levitical law was not comparable to the liturgy of the Christian church. Who that now attends a Romish chapel on some high day, would suppose that the service performed was connected with the religion of the New Testament?

It is of no consequence, therefore, to adduce testimonies of the Fathers of the second, third, and fourth ages of the Christian church, to show that such ceremonies were then in use in some particular part of the church; or even in the church universal. All know by what means these things were received and obtained prevalence. But let it be kept in memory that the Fathers do not assert that these usages were derived from the apostles; nor do they pretend that they were necessary; and accordingly we find that in different countries they were not the same.

4. I come now to consider the last argument for unwritten traditions which I have been able to discover. It is this, that without the aid of tradition the Scriptures will be of no real benefit to us, because it is only by this means that we can arrive at their true meaning. And it is alleged that the Fathers in all disputes with heretics, when they referred to Scripture, still appealed to universal tradition for a true exposition of the meaning of the passages adduced. In returning an answer to this argument I would observe, that should we even grant all that is contended for, it would not be a concession of the main point in controversy. The claim of the Romanists, so unblushingly advanced in the decree of Trent already cited is, "That traditions relating both to faith and manners, are to be received with equal affection and reverence as the canonical Scriptures." And lest we should be at any loss to know what articles of faith are pretended to be received by tradition alone, Peter a Soto, one of the great defenders of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and a member of that Council, explicitly declares, "That the rule is infallible and universal; that whatever things the Romish church believes and holds, which are not contained in the Scriptures, are to be considered as derived from the apostles; provided the observances cannot be traced to any certain origin or author." Everything in use in this church, of the commencement of which we

are ignorant, must be ascribed to the apostles without doubt, and without further proof! And then he descends to particular doctrines and rites which, according to this sweeping rule, we must receive as handed down by tradition from the apostles. Among these are “the oblation of the sacrifice of the altar, unction with chrism or the holy oil, invocation of saints, the merit of good works, the primacy of the Roman pontiff, the consecration of the water in baptism, the sacrament of confirmation, of orders, of matrimony, prayers for the dead, extreme unction, auricular confession, and satisfaction,” &c. But beside these there are innumerable other things which are held sacred by the Romish church which cannot be proved from Scripture, such as the mutilation of the Lord’s Supper, the celibacy of the clergy, the distinction of meats, purgatory, pilgrimages, indulgences, the worship of images and relics, the canonization of saints, &c. Now, she cannot pretend that all these were received from the apostles, for some of them are in direct repugnance to the plain declarations of Scripture; and the occasion of the introduction of some of them is matter of history, as is acknowledged by the Romanists themselves. And surely it is not a very convincing argument of the apostolical origin of doctrines or ceremonies, that we do not know when they took their rise. But the argument now under consideration relinquishes this ground, and goes back to the Scriptures as the foundation of faith, but insists that the true interpretation of Scripture can only be known by tradition. On which we remark: That many things in Scripture are so clear that they stand in need of no interpretation. They are already as plain as any exposition can make them. Who wants tradition to teach him that Christ is the Son of God; was born of the virgin Mary; was crucified under Pontius Pilate, rose again the third day, and ascended to heaven, whence he will come again to judge the world? If we cannot understand the plain declarations of Scripture, neither could we understand an exposition. If we cannot know what the apostles and evangelists mean in their plainest declarations when we have their very words before us, how shall we know what is the meaning of the vague language of tradition?

There are many parts of the New Testament of which tradition has handed down no interpretation. If we wish to know their meaning, it is in vain that we apply to the Fathers for instruction. They are silent. They have not commented on these books and passages. To which of the Fathers shall I go for an exposition of the book of Revelation? Or will the Pope himself, aided by all his cardinals, or by an œcumenical council, undertake to give us the true interpretation of this prophecy? It cannot be true that Scripture can be interpreted only by tradition; unless we agree to give up a large part of the New Testament as wholly incapable of being understood.

We cannot build our faith on the interpretation of the Fathers, in all cases, because they often fall into palpable mistakes, which is not denied by the Romanists themselves; and again, they differ among themselves. How then can it be known what that interpretation is, which was received from the apostles? Must I follow Justin, or Irenæus, or Clement of Alexandria? or must I believe in all the allegorical interpretations contained in the Homilies of Origen, according to which, the plainest passages are made to mean something perfectly foreign from the literal sense? If the tradition which brings down this interpretation, is not found in the writings of the Fathers, where is it? And how has it come down? Surely that which was never mentioned nor recorded by the ancient church, ought not to be received as an apostolical tradition; for, as the great Chillingworth says, “A silent tradition is like a silent thunder,” a thing inconceivable. But we shall be told, that the church has preserved this deposit, and can testify that it was derived from the apostles. What church? And where is her testimony? And how do we know that among such a mass of traditions, some

have not crept in, which originated in other sources than the teaching of Christ and his apostles? Who kept these traditions securely when the church was overrun with Gothic ignorance and barbarism? Who kept this treasure unadulterated, when Arianism was predominant? If there be such an oral law, containing an exposition of Scripture, how has it happened that there have existed such dissensions about doctrine in the Romish church itself? And, as it is acknowledged, that many usages of the church have had their origin, long since the apostles' days, what authority is there for these innovations? If the authority of the church was sufficient to establish these, it could as easily establish all the rest, and there is no need of apostolical tradition: but if there is a distinction to be made between observances derived from the apostles, and such as have been invented by men, how can we draw the line between them? An implicit believer in the infallibility of the Pope, would deem it sufficient to answer, that his holiness at Rome knows certainly what is apostolical, and what not; what is obligatory and what not. All we have to do, is to believe what he believes, or what he tells us to believe. Now, without disputing the pretensions of the bishop of Rome to such extraordinary knowledge, at present, I would ask, if we must go to an infallible judge to learn what are apostolical traditions, what use is there in traditions? Why does not this infallible teacher declare at once what is truth in all cases, without the trouble of searching into antiquity after traditions, which never can be found? But if it be alleged that the traditions which ought to be received as the rule of our faith, are such as were universal, and concerning which there cannot be any doubt, I answer, that many such traditions may indeed be found, but what do they respect? Those very doctrines which are most plainly and frequently inculcated in Scripture, and of which we need no exposition; for, as was said before, they are expressed as perspicuously as any exposition can be. But it affords us satisfaction to find the church openly professing, from the beginning, those truths which we find recorded in Scripture. If it does not add confirmation to our faith in these points, it gives us pleasure to find such a harmony in the belief of true Christians.

Finally, it is dangerous to rely upon traditions. Heretics in all ages sheltered themselves under this doctrine. Those with whom Tertullian contended, alleged that the apostles did not know everything necessary, as Christ declared he had many things to say, which they could not bear yet; or there were some things which they did not teach publicly, nor commit to writing, but communicated privately to a few chosen persons, and therefore they declined the authority of Scripture. The same is true of those against whom Irenæus wrote. They appealed from Scripture to tradition, and he answers them by showing that universal tradition was conformable to Scripture.

Eusebius informs us that Artemon, who asserted that Christ was a mere man, pretended that he had learnt, from tradition, that all the apostles were of his opinion.* Thus also Clement of Alexandria says, "that Basilides gloried in having received his doctrine through a few hands from Peter; and Valentinus boasted of having been instructed by one who had been a disciple of Paul."† The Marcionites professed to have received their doctrines from Matthew. The Arians, as appears by an oration against them by Athanasius, appealed to tradition for the confirmation of their tenets. In fact, this doctrine of unwritten traditions has been justly compared to Pandora's box, which is calculated to fill the world with evils and heresies. But not only have heretics availed themselves of this corrupt fountain, but good men have been deceived by lending too credulous an ear to traditions.

Papias one of the hearers of John the apostle, was a great collector of traditions. He was inquisitive to know what each of the apostles had at any time said; and there was some chance at

coming at the truth from oral tradition, by one who was a hearer of one of the apostles. But what valuable information did this good man obtain by all his inquiries, which is not in Scripture? Let Eusebius answer, "Papias adopted many paradoxical opinions, by giving heed to unwritten traditions, (παράδοσεως ἀγραφου) and received certain strange parables of our Saviour, mixed with fabulous things, among which was the error of the Chiliasts; by which many other excellent men were deceived, paying too much deference to antiquity and unwritten traditions. Even such men as Irenæus, Apollinarius, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Lactantius, were misled by these ancient traditions, so that they adopted an opinion for which there is no foundation in sacred Scripture, and not only so, but which is repugnant to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles."*

Clement of Alexandria, too, than whom no man of the ancient church was more celebrated, speaks of certain persons who had taken much pains to preserve the sayings of the apostles handed down by tradition, among whom he mentions a Hebrew who is supposed to be Papias; but when he comes to tell us what he had learned from these unwritten traditions which is not contained in Scripture, it amounts to this, "That there was a public doctrine and a secret doctrine; the one exoteric, and the other esoteric; that the former was committed to writing, and was in the hands of all; but the latter was communicated secretly to chosen disciples. And if we may judge of the secret doctrine handed down by tradition from some specimens of it which he had learned, we will not appreciate unwritten traditions very highly in comparison with the written word. Among these is the opinion that the Greek philosophy answered the same purpose as the law of Moses, and was a schoolmaster to bring those that professed it to Christ; that this philosophy as well as the law of Moses was able to justify men, and that there were many ways of obtaining life. From the same tradition he teaches that Christ's ministry was finished in one year, which opinion Irenæus ascribes to heretics, and declares it as a tradition from John that Christ, when he was crucified, was nearly fifty years of age. Clement relates it as a tradition, "That the apostles after their death, went and preached to the dead, who descended with the apostles into a place of water, and then came up alive," and many other like things.*

There is much reason to believe that the corruption of the church, which commenced about this time, was owing to a disposition which began to be indulged of lending too credulous an ear to traditions, and to apocryphal writings. But among the Fathers no one gave himself up so entirely to unwritten traditions and apocryphal fables as Epiphanius. His writings abound with things of this kind; but who would assert that we are bound to receive these stories as articles of faith? Even the Romish church with all her store of legends, will not receive as true and necessary all that is handed down by tradition from one and another of the Fathers. From what has been said, therefore, the conclusion is clear that the Scriptures are complete without unwritten traditions; that no articles of faith, nor institutions of worship, concerning which the Scriptures are silent, have come down to us by tradition; that we have uniform, universal tradition on those points which are plainly taught in Scripture; that many things pretended to have been received from the apostles by tradition cannot be traced to them, and that many other things made equally necessary by the Romish church, can be proved to have originated many hundred of years since the death of the apostles. It has been also shown that there is no certain method of distinguishing between what is apostolical, and what has been derived from other sources, unless we make the Scriptures our standard; that tradition cannot be our guide even in interpreting Scriptures; and finally, that tradition has been the common refuge of heretics, and has greatly misled good and orthodox men,

by inducing them to adopt wild theories, fabulous stories, and paradoxical opinions, some of which are directly repugnant to Scripture. The traditions of the Romish church stand on no higher ground than the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees in the time of our Saviour; but he rejected these traditions as having no authority, and as making void the law of God. "Why do ye," says Christ, "also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Matthew 15:3-6. "Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Mark 7:7. The same questions and reproofs may with equal propriety be addressed to the Pope, and the doctors of the Romish church. But, say we, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

Thus have we brought this work to a close, and it affords us pleasure to believe that most who read these pages will be convinced that the Bible is a complete rule, both of faith and practice. "The law of the Lord is perfect." Psalms 19:1-14. What a treasure have we in the Old and New Testament! Here God speaks to us by his "lively oracles." The way of life is delineated so distinctly, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. We have, indeed, "a sure word of prophecy to which ye do well that ye take heed as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:7-19. There is nothing lacking to him that is in possession of the Scriptures; for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Let us then be grateful to God, and give him unceasing thanks for this precious deposit which he has committed to his church, and which, by his Providence, he has preserved uninjured through all the vicissitudes through which she has passed. Let us praise God that in regard to us, that night of darkness is past in which there was a famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of the word of the Lord; when the light of this brilliant lamp was put out, or rather "put under a bushel," and the feeble erring light of tradition was substituted in its place. Let us be glad and rejoice that we have lived to see the day when copies of the Bible are multiplied, and when many run to and fro to circulate them; and let us wait in assured hope for the day when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen."

APPENDIX

NOTE A. (Page 39.)

FIRST DECREE OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, A. D. 1546

"The holy œcumenical and general Council of Trent, legitimately convened in the Holy Spirit, under the presidency of three legates of the Apostolic see, constantly proposing this before all things, that all errors being taken away, the gospel in its purity may be preserved in the Church, which was promised before by the prophets in the holy Scriptures, but which was promulgated by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with his own mouth; moreover, he commanded it to be preached to every creature by his apostles, as the fountain of all saving truth and moral discipline: which truth and discipline he provided should be contained in the books of Scripture, and in unwritten traditions, received from the mouth of Christ by the apostles, or from the apostles speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and handed down to us; therefore this Synod,

following the example of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with equal pious affection and reverence, all the books both of the Old and New Testament (for one God is the author of both:) likewise those traditions relating to faith and manners, which were received from the mouth of Christ himself, or from his inspired apostles, and which have been preserved in an uninterrupted succession in the Catholic Church. Moreover, this Synod judges it proper to give a catalogue of the sacred books, lest any doubt should arise in the minds of any respecting the books received by them, the names of which are here inserted in this decree: viz. the five books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Next, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Chronicles, two of Ezra, viz. the first and the second, which is called Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job, CL Psalms of David, Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Twelve Minor Prophets, viz. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, two of Maccabees, first and second. Of the New Testament, the four gospels, viz. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of the blessed apostle Paul, viz. to the Romans; to the Corinthians, two; to the Galatians; to the Ephesians; to the Philippians; to the Colossians; to the Thessalonians, two; to Timothy, two; to Titus; to Philemon; to the Hebrews. Of the apostle Peter, two; of the apostle John, three; of James, one; of the apostle Jude, one; the Apocalypse of John the apostle.

“But if any one shall not receive as canonical and sacred all these books, with all their parts, as they are used to be read in the Catholic Church, and are contained in the old Vulgate Latin edition; or shall knowingly and intentionally condemn any of the aforesaid traditions, let him be anathema.

“Hence all may understand in what order and way the Synod, after laying the foundation of the Confession of their Faith, will proceed; and what testimonies and proofs they will especially use in confirming doctrines, and in the reformation of manners in the church.”

NOTE B. (Page 53.)

EXTRACT FROM AUGUSTINE “DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA,” LIB. III. CAP. 8

Sed nos ad tertium gradum illum considerationem referamus, de quo disserere quod Dominus suggesserit atque tractare institimus. Erit igitur divinarum scripturarum solertissimus indagator, qui primo totas legerit, notasque habuerit, etsi nondum intellectu, jam tamen lectione, duntaxat eas quae appellantur canonicæ. Nam cæteras securius leget fide veritatis instructus, ne præoccupent imbecillum animum, et periculosis mendaciis atque phantasmatibus eludentes præjudicent aliquid contra sanam intelligentiam. In canonicis autem scripturis Ecclesiarum catholicarum quamplurium auctoritatem sequatur, inter quas sane illæ sunt quæ Apostolicas sedes habere et epistolas accipere meruerunt. Tenebit igitur hunc modum in scripturis canonicis, ut eas quæ ab omnibus accipiuntur Ecclesiis catholicis, præponat eis quas quædam non accipiunt. In eis vero quæ non accipiuntur ab omnibus, præponat eas quas plures gravioresque accipiunt, eis quas pauciores minorisque auctoritatis Ecclesiæ tenent. Si autem alias invenerit a pluribus, alias a gravioribus haberi, quanquam hoc invenire non possit, æqualis tamen auctoritatis eas habendas puto. Totus autem canon scripturarum in quo istam considerationem versandam dicimus, his libris continetur. Quinque Moyseos, id est Genesi, Exodo, Levitico, Numeris, Deuteronomio, et uno libro Iesu Nave, uno Iudicum, uno libello qui appellatur Ruth, qui magis ad regnorum principia videtur pertinere. Deinde quatuor Regum et duobus Paralipomenon, non consequentibus, sed quasi a latere

adjunctis simulque pergentibus. Hæc est historia quæ sibimet annexa tempora continet, atque ordinem rerum. Sunt aliæ tanquam ex diverso ordine, quæ neque huic ordini, neque inter se connectuntur, sicut est Job et Tobias et Hester et Judith et Maccabæorum libri duo, et Esdræ duo, qui magis subsequi videntur ordinatam illam historiam, usque ad Regnorum vel Paralipomenon terminatam. Deinde Prophetæ, in quibus David unus liber Psalmorum et Salomonis tres, Proverbiorum, Cantica canticorum, et Ecclesiastes. Nam illi duo libri, unus qui Sapientia, et alius qui Ecclesiasticus inscribitur, de quadam similitudine Salomonis esse dicuntur. Nam Jesus filius Sirach eos scripsisse constantissime perhibetur. Qui tamen quoniam in auctoritatem recipi meruerunt, inter Propheticos numerandi sunt. Reliqui sunt eorum libri qui proprie Prophetæ appellati sunt, duodecim Prophetarum libri singuli; qui connexi sibimet, quoniam nunquam sejuncti sunt pro uno habentur. Quorum prophetarum nomina sunt hæc, Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Michæ, Naum, Abacuk, Sophonias, Aggæus, Zacharias, Malachias. Deinde quatuor Prophetæ sunt majorum voluminum, Esaias, Hieremias, Daniel, Ezechiel. His quadragintaquatuor libris veteris testamenti terminatur autoritas. Novi autem quatuor libris Evangelii secundum Matthæum, secundum Marcum, secundum Lucam, secundum Joannem; quatuordecim Epistolis Pauli Apostoli, ad Romanos, ad Corinthios duabus, ad Galatas, ad Ephesios, ad Philippenses, ad Thessalonicenses duabus, ad Colossenses, ad Timotheum duabus, ad Titum, ad Philemonem, ad Hebræos, Petri duabus, tribus Joannis, una Judæ, et una Jacobi, Actibus Apostolorum libro uno, et Apocalypsis Joannis libro uno.

NOTE C. (Page 123.)

PASSAGE FROM TERTULLIAN

The original of this passage is as follows; “Age jam, qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ percurrere Ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ præsident: apud quas ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, et repræsentantes faciem uniuscujusque. Proxima est tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam unde nobis quoque auctoritas præsto est.”—De Præscrip. cap. 36.

NOTE D. (Page 131.)

PASSAGE FROM EUSEBIUS

The Order of the Gospels

Let us now also show the undisputed writings of the same apostle, [John.] And of these his gospel, so well known in the churches throughout the world, must first of all be acknowledged as genuine. That it is, however, with good reason, placed the fourth in order by the ancients, may be made evident in the following manner. Those inspired and truly pious men, the apostles of Christ, as they were most pure in their life, and adorned with every kind of virtue in their minds, but unskilled in language, relying upon the divine and wonderful energy granted them by the Saviour, neither knew how nor attempted to propound the doctrines of their master, with the art and refinement of composition. But employing only the demonstration of the divine Spirit, working with them, and the wonder-working power of Christ, displayed through them, they proclaimed the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven throughout the world. They bestowed but little care upon the study of style, and this they did because they were aided by a co-operation greater than that of men. Paul, indeed,

who was the most able of all in the preparations of style, and who was most powerful in sentiments, committed nothing more to writing than a few very short epistles. And this too, although he had innumerable mysterious matters that he might have communicated, as he had attained even to the view of the third heavens, had been taken up to the very paradise of God, and had been honoured to hear the unutterable words there. The other followers of our Lord were also not ignorant of such things, as the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples, together with many others; yet of all the disciples, Matthew and John are the only ones that have left us recorded comments, and even they, tradition says, undertook it from necessity. Matthew also having first proclaimed the gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them by his writings. But after Mark and Luke had already published their gospels, they say that John, who during all this time was proclaiming the gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it on the following occasion. The three gospels previously written, having been distributed among all, and also handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but that there was only wanting in the narrative the account of the things done by Christ, among the first of his deeds, and at the commencement of the gospel. And this was the truth. For it is evident that the other three evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and intimated this in the very beginning of their history. For after the fasting of forty days, and the consequent temptation, Matthew indeed specifies the time of his history, in these words: "But hearing that John was delivered up, he returned from Judea into Galilee." Mark in like manner writes: "But after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee." And Luke, before he commenced the deeds of Jesus, in much the same way designates the time, saying, "Herod thus added yet this wickedness above all he had committed, that he shut up John in prison." For these reasons the apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former evangelists, and the deeds done by our Saviour, which they have passed by, (for these were the events that occurred before the imprisonment of John,) and this very fact is intimated by him, when he says, "this beginning of miracles Jesus made;" and then proceeds to make mention of the Baptist, in the midst of our Lord's deeds, as John was at that time "baptizing at Ænon near Salim." He plainly also shows this in the words, "John was not yet cast into prison." The apostle, therefore, in his gospel, gives the deeds of Jesus before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the circumstances after that event. One who attends to these circumstances can no longer entertain the opinion, that the gospels are at variance with each other, as the gospel of John comprehends the first events of Christ, but the others, the history that took place at the latter part of the time. It is probable, therefore, that for these reasons John has passed by in silence the genealogy of our Lord, because it was written by Matthew and Luke, but that he commenced with the doctrine of the divinity, as a part reserved for him by the divine Spirit, as if for a superior. Let this suffice to be said respecting the gospel of John. The causes that induced Mark to write his have already been stated. But Luke also in the commencement of his narrative, premises the cause which led him to write, showing that many others, having rashly undertaken to compose a narration of matters that he had already completely ascertained, in order to free us from the uncertain suppositions of others, in his own gospel, he delivered the certain account of those things, that he himself had fully received from his intimacy and stay with Paul, and also his intercourse with the other apostles. But this may suffice respecting these. At a more proper time we shall endeavour also to state, by a

reference to some of the ancient writers, what others have said respecting the sacred books. But besides the gospel of John, his first epistle is acknowledged without dispute, both by those of the present day, and also by the ancients. The other two epistles, however, are disputed. The opinions respecting the Revelation are still greatly divided. But we shall, in due time, give a judgment on this point also from the testimony of the ancients.

The Sacred Scriptures acknowledged as genuine, and those that are not

This appears also to be the proper place to give a summary statement of the books of the New Testament already mentioned. And here, among the first, must be placed the holy quaternion of the gospels; these are followed by "the book of the Acts of the Apostles;" after this must be mentioned the epistles of Paul, which are followed by the acknowledged first epistle of John, as also the first of Peter, to be admitted in like manner. After these are to be placed, if proper, the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall offer the different opinions in due time. These then, are acknowledged as genuine. Among the disputed books, although they are well known and approved by many, is reputed that called the epistles of James and Jude; also the "Second Epistle of Peter," and those called "the Second and Third of John," whether they are of the evangelist or of some other of the same name. Among the spurious must be numbered both the books called "the Acts of Paul" and that called "Pastor," and "the Revelation of Peter." Besides these, the books called "the Epistle of Barnabas," and what are called "the Institutions of the Apostles." Moreover, as I said before, if it should appear right, "the Revelation of John," which some, as before said, reject, but others rank among the genuine. But there are also some who number among these the gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews that have received Christ are particularly delighted. These may be said to be all concerning which there is any dispute. We have, however, necessarily subjoined here a catalogue of these also, in order to distinguish those that are true, genuine, and well authenticated writings, from those others which are not only not embodied in the Canon, but likewise disputed, notwithstanding that they are recognized by most ecclesiastical writers. Thus we may have it in our power to know both these books, and those that are adduced by the heretics under the name of the apostles, such, viz., as compose the gospels of Peter, Thomas and Matthew, and others beside them, or such as contain the Acts of the Apostles, by Andrew, and John, and others, of which no one of those writers in the ecclesiastical succession has condescended to make any mention in his works; and indeed the character of the style itself is very different from that of the apostles, and the sentiments, and the purport of those things that are advanced in them, deviating as far as possible from sound orthodoxy, evidently proves they are the fictions of heretical men; whence they are to be ranked not only among the spurious writings, but are to be rejected as altogether absurd and impious. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. xxiv. xxv.

NOTE E. (Page 163.)

GOSPEL OF THE NAZARENES*

There is no apocryphal book of the New Testament which has been so much spoken of, both by the ancients and moderns, as the gospel of the Nazarenes. By some, not only of the Romanists, but also of the Protestants, it has been exalted very nearly to an equality with the canonical books of the New Testament. It seems necessary, therefore, to examine its claims with more attention than is requisite in the case of other books of this class. This gospel was known among the ancients under several different titles. It was sometimes called "the gospel according to the twelve

apostles;" "the gospel of Bartholomew;" "the gospel according to the Hebrews;" "the gospel of the Ebionites," &c.

It is the opinion of some that this is the gospel to which Paul alludes. Galatians 1:6, where he speaks of "another gospel." However this may be, if we credit Eusebius, we must believe that it existed as early as the beginning of the second century; for he represents Hegesippus as writing some things concerning "the gospel according to the Hebrews and Syrians."

Clement of Alexandria* cites from it the following passage: "He who admires shall reign, and he who reigns shall be at ease"

Origen speaks of it in this manner, "If any one will receive the gospel according to the Hebrews, in which our Saviour says, 'The Holy Ghost my mother lately took me by one of my hairs, and led me to the great mountain of Thabor.' " And in another place, "It is written in a certain gospel, which is entitled according to the Hebrews, (if any one be pleased to receive it, not as of authority, but only for illustration of the present question,) 'A certain rich man said to Christ, What good thing shall I do that I may inherit life? He said to him, O man, keep the law and the prophets; he answered him, That I have done. He said to him, Go sell all things that thou hast, and distribute among the poor, and come and follow me. The rich man hereupon began to scratch his head, and was displeased. And the Lord said unto him, How can you say that you have kept the law and the prophets, seeing it is written in the law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; but behold, many of thy brethren, children of Abraham, are clothed with nastiness, and ready to perish for hunger, while thy home abounds with all sorts of delicacies, and nothing is sent out of it to them. And turning about, he said to his disciple Simon, who sat by him, Simon, son of Joanna, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.' "

Eusebius, speaking of apocryphal and spurious books, says, "In this number some have placed the gospel according to the Hebrews, with which they of the Jews who profess Christianity are very much delighted." And speaking of the Ebionites, he says, "They made use only of that which is called the gospel according to the Hebrews, very little esteeming any others."

Epiphanius has left several testimonies respecting this gospel, among which are the following: "The Nazarenes have the gospel of Matthew most entire in the Hebrew language; for this is still preserved among them, as it was at first, in Hebrew characters. But I know not whether they have taken away the genealogy from Abraham to Christ. In another place, speaking of the Ebionites, he says, "They also receive the gospel according to Matthew. For this both they and the Corinthians make use of, and no other. They call it the gospel according to the Hebrews; for the truth is, that Matthew is the only one of the New Testament writers who published his gospel and preaching, in the Hebrew language and Hebrew characters." And again, "In that gospel which they (the Ebionites) have called, according to St. Matthew, which is not entire and perfect, but corrupted and curtailed, and which they call the Hebrew gospel, it is written, 'That there was a certain man called Jesus, and he being about thirty years of age, made choice of us. And coming to Capernaum, he entered into the house of Simon called Peter, and opening his mouth, said, When I passed by the lake of Tiberias, I chose John and James the sons of Zebedee, and Simon and Andrew, and Thaddeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas Iscariot, and thee Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom, I called, and thou didst follow me. I will therefore that ye be my twelve apostles, for a testimony to Israel.' ... The meat of John the Baptist, according to this gospel, was wild honey, the

taste of which was like manna, or as cakes made with honey and oil. Thus they change the true account into a falsehood, and for locusts put cakes made with oil and honey.” “The beginning of the gospel was this, ‘It came to pass in the days of Herod,’ ” &c. After relating the baptism of Christ, as it is recorded in the other gospel, except that it asserts, that the voice from heaven saying, ‘This is my beloved Son,’ &c., was repeated, it goes on to say, ‘That hereupon John fell down before him, and said, O Lord, I pray thee baptize me; but he hindered him, saying that it is fit that all these things should be fulfilled.’ “See,” says Epiphanius, “how their false doctrine appears everywhere; how all things are imperfect, disordered, and without any truth!” So also Cerinthus and Carpocrates, using this same gospel of theirs, would prove that Christ proceeded from the seed of Joseph and Mary.”* But the testimony of Jerome respecting this gospel is the most full. “Matthew, also called Levi,” says he, “who became from a publican an apostle, was the first who composed a gospel of Christ, and for the sake of those who believed in Christ among the Jews, wrote it in the Hebrew language and letters, but it is uncertain who translated it into Greek. Moreover, the Hebrew copy is to this time preserved in the library of Cæsarea, which Pamphilus the martyr with much diligence collected. The Nazarenes, who live in Berœa, a city of Syria, and made use of this volume, granted me the favour of writing it out. In which gospel there is this observable, that wherever the evangelist either cites himself, or introduces our Saviour as citing, any passage out of the Old Testament, he does not follow the translation of the LXX, but the Hebrew copies, of which there are these two instances, viz. ‘Out of Egypt have I called my Son;’ and, ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’ ” This testimony is found in Jerome’s life of Matthew. And in his life of James we find the following account. “The gospel also, which is called according to the Hebrews, and which I lately translated into Greek and Latin, and which Origen often used relates, ‘That after our Saviour’s resurrection, when our Lord had given the linen cloth to the priest’s servant, he went to James and appeared to him; for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he drank the cup of the Lord, till he should see the Lord risen from the dead. And a little after the Lord said, ‘Bring the table and the bread;’ and then it is added, ‘He took the bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to James the Just, and said to him, My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from the dead.’ ” And in a work against Pelagius, he says, “In the gospel according to the Hebrews, which is written in the Chaldo-Syriac language, which the Nazarenes use, and is that according to the twelve apostles, or as most think, according to Matthew, which is in the library of Cæsarea, there is the following history: ‘Behold the mother and brethren of Christ spake to him; John the Baptist baptizes for the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized of him. He said, In what have I sinned, that I have need to go and be baptized of him? Unless my saying this proceeds, perhaps, from ignorance.’ And in the same gospel it is said, ‘If thy brother offend thee by any word, and make thee satisfaction, if it be seven times in a day, thou must forgive him. Simon his disciple said unto him, What! seven times in a day? The Lord answered and said unto him, I tell thee also till seventy times seven.’ ” The same author, in his commentary on Isaiah, mentions this gospel in the following manner: “According to their gospel, which is written in the Hebrew language, and read by the Nazarenes, the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended upon him. Besides, in that gospel just mentioned we find these things written. ‘It came to pass when the Lord ascended from the waters, the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended and rested upon him, and said to him, My son, among (or during the time of) all the prophets, I was waiting for thy coming, that I might rest upon thee; thou art my first begotten Son, who shall reign to everlasting ages.’ ” And in his commentary on Ezekiel, “In that which is

entitled the gospel according to the Hebrews, it is reckoned among the chief of crimes for a person to make sorrowful the heart of his brother.” In his commentary on the gospel of Matthew he has the following: “In the gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated out of Hebrew into Greek, and which is by most esteemed the authentic gospel of Matthew, the man who had the withered hand is said to be a mason, and prayed for relief in the following words: ‘I was a mason, who got my livelihood by my hands; I beseech thee, Jesus, that thou wouldst restore me to my strength, that I may no longer thus scandalously beg my bread.’ ”

“In the gospel which the Nazarenes use, for the son of Barachiah, I find written, the son of Jehoiada.” “In this gospel we read, not that the veil of the temple was rent, but that a lintel or beam of a prodigious size fell down.” “In the Hebrew gospel we read, that our Lord said to his disciples, ‘Be ye never cheerful, unless when you can see your brother in love.’ ”

Concerning this gospel according to the Hebrews, very different opinions have been expressed by learned men. Some have even pretended, that if it was now in existence it would be greatly superior to the Greek copy, but generally it has been considered apocryphal, for very good reasons, some of which I will now set down.

1. It was never received by any of the Fathers as canonical, or cited as of any authority, by any writer, during the first four centuries. For full proof of the fact here stated, I would refer the reader to Jones on the Canon, vol. iii.

2. This gospel was apocryphal, because it contained several things contrary to known and undoubted truths. Of this sort are the passages which have been cited respecting Christ’s manner of speaking, in regard to the baptism of John. Also the account which it contains of the oath of the apostle James; for it is evident that the disciples knew nothing of Christ’s resurrection from the dead until after that event occurred.

3. A third argument of the apocryphal character of this gospel, is derived from the ludicrous and silly relations which it contains—as that of the rich man scratching his head, and the Holy Ghost taking up Christ by one of his hairs, and carrying him to the great mountain Tabor, &c. The most probable opinion of the origin of this gospel is, that it was a corruption of the original Hebrew gospel of Matthew, by the Ebionites. These heretics having this gospel in their possession, and having departed from the true faith, mutilated the gospel of Matthew, by striking out such things as were unfavourable to their heresy, and adding such fabulous stories as suited their purpose. Of the fragments which remain, there is not one which agrees exactly with the authentic gospel of Matthew. Epiphanius expressly asserts, that the Ebionites used the gospel of Matthew alone, and that in Hebrew, but not entire, but corrupted and adulterated; and that they had taken away the genealogy from the beginning, and commenced their gospel with these words, “And it came to pass in the days of Herod,” &c.

NOTE F. (Page 280.)

THE DECREE OF POPE GELASIUS CONCERNING APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

1. The Travels under the name of Peter, which is also called the Eight Books of St. Clemens. 2. The Acts under the name of Andrew the apostle. 3. The Acts under the name of Philip the apostle. 4. The Acts under the name of Peter. 5. The Acts under the name of Thomas the apostle 6. The

gospel under the name of Thaddeus. 7. The gospel under the name of Thomas the apostle. 8. The gospel under the name of Barnabas. 9. The gospel under the name of Bartholomew. 10. The gospel under the name of Andrew the apostle. 11. The gospels corrupted by Lucianus. 12. The gospels corrupted by Hesychius. 13. The gospel of the Infancy of our Saviour. 14. The book of the Nativity of our Saviour. 15. The book called the Shepherd. 16. All the books made by Lentitius the disciple of the devil. 17. The Acts of Paul and Thecla. 18. The Revelation of Thomas. 19. The Revelation of Paul. 20. The Revelation of Stephen. 21. The travels or acts of Mary. 22. The book called the Lots of the Apostles. 23. The book called the Praise of the Apostles. 24. The book of the Canon of the Apostles. 25. The Letter of Jesus to king Abgarus—are apocryphal.

NOTE G. (Page 287.)

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS

Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren which are at Laodicea. Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank Christ in every prayer of mine, that ye continue and persevere in good works, looking for that which is promised in the day of judgment.

Let not the vain speeches of any trouble you, who pervert the truth, that they may draw you aside from the truth of the gospel which I have preached. And now may God grant that my converts may attain to a perfect knowledge of the truth of the gospel, be beneficent, and doing good works, which accompany salvation. And now my bonds, which I suffer in Christ, are manifest, in which I rejoice and am glad. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation for ever, which shall be through your prayer, and the supply of the Holy Spirit; whether I live or die; (for) to me to live shall be a life to Christ, to die will be joy. And our Lord will grant us his mercy, that ye may have the same love, and be likeminded.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have heard of the coming of the Lord, so think and act in fear, and it shall be to you life eternal; for it is God who worketh in you; and do all things without sin. And what is best, my beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and avoid all filthy lucre. Let all your requests be made known to God, and be steady in the doctrine of Christ. And whatsoever things are sound, and true, and of good report, and chaste, and just, and lovely, these things do. Those things which ye have heard and received, think on these things, and peace shall be with you. And all the saints salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Cause this epistle to be read to the Colossians, and the epistle of the Colossians to be read among you.

NOTE H. (Page 292.)

MIRACLES ASCRIBED TO CHRIST IN THE BOOK ENTITLED "THE GOSPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR'S INFANCY"

Christ is represented as speaking in the cradle, and telling his mother that he was her son. The swaddling clothes in which he was wrapt, when thrown into the fire, would not burn. When his parents entered Egypt, in their flight from the cruelty of Herod, the girth of the saddle on which Mary rode broke, and the great idol of Egypt fell down at the approach of the infant Jesus. By means of the babe's swaddling clothes, several devils were cast out of a boy's mouth, in the shape

of crows and serpents. A company of robbers, at the approach of Jesus, were frightened by being made to hear a sound, as of an army, &c.

It is related, that a girl was cured of a leprosy by means of water in which Christ's body had been washed. That a young man, who by witchcraft had been turned into a mule, was, upon Christ's mounting him, turned again into a man. On one occasion he is said to have turned certain boys, who hid themselves from him, into kids, and then at the intercession of their mothers restored them again to their proper shape. A boy having put his hand into a partridge's nest, to take out the eggs, was bit by a serpent, whereupon they brought him to Jesus, who directed them to carry him before him, to the place where he had received the injury. On coming to the spot, Jesus called for the serpent, and it presently came forth; and he said, "Go and suck out the poison which thou hast infused into that boy:" so the serpent crept to the boy, and took away all its poison again. He also cures his brother James, who, in gathering sticks, was bitten by a viper. Being one day on the house-top, playing with some boys, one of them fell down, and was instantly killed. And the boy's relations came and said to the Lord Jesus, "Thou didst throw our son down from the house-top;" but he denied it, and said, "Let us go and ask himself." Then the Lord Jesus, going down, stood over the dead body, and said with a loud voice, "Zeinunus, Zeinunus, who threw thee down?" Then the dead boy answered, "Thou didst not throw me down, but such a one."

Being, on a certain occasion, sent by his mother to the well for water, the pitcher broke, and he gathered up the water in his garment, and brought it to her. When at the age of twelve years Jesus was at Jerusalem, a certain astronomer asked him whether he had studied astronomy. Upon which he told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, &c. There was there also a philosopher, who asked the Lord Jesus whether he had ever studied physic. He replied, and explained to him physics and metaphysics, the powers of the body, its anatomy, &c. But from this time he began to conceal his miracles, and gave himself to the study of the law, till he arrived to the end of his thirtieth year.

See the "Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy," complete in the second volume of Jones on the Canon.

EXTRACT FROM HALDANE'S "EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY OF DIVINE REVELATION"

"It has been asserted that 'the question of the Canon is a point of erudition, not of divine revelation.' This is to undermine both the certainty and the importance of the sacred Canon. The assertion, that the question of the Canon is not a point of revelation, is false. It is not true either of the Old Testament or of the New. The integrity of the Canon of the Old Testament is a matter of revelation, as much as anything contained in the Bible. This is attested, as has been shown, by the whole nation of the Jews, to whom it was committed; and their fidelity to the truth has been avouched by the Lord and his apostles. Is not this revelation? The integrity of the Canon of the New Testament is equally a point of revelation. As God had said to the Jews, 'Ye are my witnesses,' and as they 'received the lively oracles to give unto us,' Acts 7:38, so the Lord Jesus said to the apostles, 'Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' The first churches received the New Testament Scriptures from these witnesses of the Lord, and thus had inspired authority for those books. It was not left to erudition or reasoning to collect that they were a revelation from God. This the first Christians knew from the testimony of those who wrote them. They could not be more assured that the things taught were from God, than they were that the writings which contained them were from

God. The integrity of the sacred Canon is, then, a matter of revelation, conveyed to us by testimony, like everything contained in the Scriptures.

“While it has been denied that the question of the Canon is a point of revelation, it has been asserted that it is a point of erudition. But erudition has nothing farther to do with the question, than as it may be employed in conveying to us the testimony. Erudition did not produce the revelation of the Canon. If the Canon had not been a point of revelation, erudition could never have made it so—for erudition can create nothing; it can only investigate and confirm truth, and testify to that which exists, or detect error. We receive the Canon of Scripture by revelation, in the same way that the Jews received the Law which was given from Mount Sinai. Only one generation of the Jews witnessed the giving of the Law, but to all future generations of that people it was equally a matter of revelation. The knowledge of this was conveyed to them by testimony. In the same way Christians, in their successive generations, received the Scripture as a matter of revelation. The testimony through which this is received, must, indeed, be translated from a foreign language; but so must the account brought to us of any occurrence, the most trivial, that takes place in a foreign country. If in this sense the question of the Canon be called a point of erudition, the gospel itself must be called a point of erudition; for it, too, must be translated from the original language in which it was announced, as also must everything which the Scriptures contain. When a preacher inculcates the belief of the gospel, or of a doctrine of Scripture, or obedience to any duty, would he be warranted in telling his audience that these are questions of erudition, not of divine revelation? Erudition may be allowed its full value, without suspending on it the authority of the word of God.

“The assertion that the question of the Canon is a point of erudition, not of divine revelation, is subversive of the whole of revelation. We have no way of knowing that the miracles related in the Scriptures were wrought, and that the doctrines inculcated were taught, but by testimony and the internal evidence of the books themselves. We have the evidence of miracles, as that evidence comes to us by the testimony which vouches the authenticity of the inspired books. As far as the genuineness and authenticity of any book are brought into suspicion, so far is everything contained in it brought into suspicion. For it should always be remembered, that there is no greater absurdity than to question the claim of a book to a place in the Canon, and at the same time to acknowledge its contents to be a revelation from God. There can be no evidence that the doctrines of Scripture are revealed truths, unless we are certain that the books of Scripture are revelation. If the books which compose the Canon are not matter of revelation, then we have no revelation. If the truth of the Canon be not established to us as matter of revelation, then the books of which it is composed are not so established; and if the books be not so, then not one sentence of them, nor one doctrine or precept, which they contain, comes established to us as a revelation from God. If, then, the question of the Canon be a point of erudition, not of divine revelation, so is every doctrine which the Scriptures contain; for the doctrine cannot be assured revelation, if the book that contains it be not assured revelation. There can be no higher evidence of the doctrine being revelation, than of the book that contains it: and thus were not the Canon a matter of divine revelation, the whole Bible would be stripped of divine authority. Anything, therefore, that goes to unsettle the Canon, goes to unsettle every doctrine contained in the Canon.

“Without a particular revelation to every individual, it does not appear that the authority of the Canon could be ascertained to us in any other way than it is at present. The whole of the Scriptures was given at first by revelation, and afterwards this revelation was confirmed by

ordinary means. The testimony concerning it has been handed down to the churches from one generation to another. On this, and on their own internal characteristics of being divine, we receive the Scriptures with the most unsuspecting confidence, and on the same ground the Jews received the Scriptures of the Old Testament. In these ways it is fixed by divine authority, and not left in any uncertainty; for, if its truth can be ascertained by ordinary means, it is fixed by the authority of God, as much as if an angel from heaven were every day to proclaim it over the earth. When Paul says, that his handwriting of the salutation was the token in every epistle, he at once shows us the importance of the Canon, and warrants us in receiving it as a divine revelation attested by ordinary means. Those to whom he wrote had no other way of knowing the handwriting of the apostle, than that by which they knew any other handwriting. Even at that time the churches knew the genuineness of the epistles sent to them by ordinary means; and Paul's authority warrants this as sufficient. We have, then, the authority of revelation for resting the Canon on the ordinary sources of human evidence, and they are such as to preclude the possibility of deception. The claim of the epistles sent to the first churches, and of the doctrine they contain as divine, rested even to those churches on the same kind of evidence on which we now receive them. It is very important to settle what kind of evidence is sufficient for our receiving the Scriptures. Many have rated this too high; and as the Scriptures contain a revelation, they wished to have them attested to every age by revelation, which is, in fact, requiring the continuance of miraculous interference, which it might easily be shown would be pernicious."—Pp. 147–150.

"If it should be asked, Should we be precluded from inquiring into the grounds on which the Canon is received? it is replied, Certainly not. But we should remember that the permanent ground on which it stands is testimony; and such must be the ground of every historical fact. Internal evidence may confirm the authenticity of a book sanctioned by the Canon, but to suspend belief till we receive such confirmation, argues an ignorance of the principles of evidence. A book might be inspired, when no such internal confirmation, from the nature of the subject, might be found. And when a book is substantially approved, by testimony, as belonging to the Canon, no evidence can, by a Christian, be legitimately supposed possible, in opposition to its inspiration. This would be to suppose valid objections to first principles. Sufficient testimony deserves the same rank as a first principle with axioms themselves. Axioms are not more necessary than testimony, to all the business of human life. Internal evidence may be sufficient to prove that a book is not divine; but it is absurd to suppose that such a book can have valid testimony, and therefore it can never be supposed by a Christian, that any of those books that are received as part of the sacred Canon, on the authority of sufficient testimony, can contain any internal marks of imposture. This would be to suppose the possibility of the clashing of two first principles. The thing that can be proved by a legitimate first principle, can never be disproved by another legitimate first principle. This would be to suppose that God is not the author of the human constitution. If, then, in a book recognized by the Canon, as the Song of Solomon, we find matter which to our wisdom does not appear to be worthy of inspiration, we may be assured that we mistake. For if that book is authenticated by testimony as a part of the sacred Scriptures, which the Lord Jesus Christ sanctioned, it is authenticated by a first principle, to which God has bound us, by the constitution of our nature, to submit. If, in this instance, or in any particular instance, we reject it, our own conduct in other things will be our condemnation. There is no first principle in the constitution of man that can entitle him to reject anything in the Song of Solomon, coming, as it does, under the sanction of a first principle. Those persons who reject any book of the Canon on such grounds, would show

themselves much more rational, as well as more humble Christians, if, recognizing the paramount authority of a first principle universally acknowledged, they would view the Song of Solomon and the book of Esther, as any other part of the word of God, and humbly endeavour to gain from them the instruction and edification which, as divine books, they must be calculated to give. This questioning of the Canon, then, proceeds on infidel and irrational principles, which, if carried to their legitimate length, must end in complete unbelief.”—Pp. 153, 4.

“It is a wonderful circumstance in the providence of God, that while the two parts of Scripture were delivered to two classes, with the fullest attestation of their divine original, both the one and the other have been faithful in preserving the precious trust respectively committed to them, while they have both been rebellious in regard to that part of which they were not originally appointed the depositaries. The Jews always held the books of the Old Testament in the highest veneration, and continued to preserve them, without addition or diminution, until the coming of Him concerning whom they testify, and they have kept them entire to this day; yet they have altogether rejected the New Testament Scriptures. And while Christians have all agreed in preserving the Scriptures of the New Testament entire and uncorrupted, they have wickedly adulterated those of the Old by a spurious addition, or have retrenched certain portions of them. Of the divine original of the sacred Scriptures, as we now possess them, we have evidence the most abundant and diversified. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the gospel, that it is preached to the poor, and God has so ordered it, that the authenticity of that word by which all are to be judged, should not be presented to them as a matter of doubtful disputation.

“Were there no other evidence of the truth of divine revelation than the existence of the holy Scriptures, that alone would be conclusive. The Bible is not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many authors acting in confederacy in the same age, in which case it would not be so wonderful to find a just and close connection in its several parts. It is the work of between thirty and forty writers, in very different conditions of life, from the throne and sceptre down to the lowest degree, and in very distant ages, during which the world must have put on an entirely new appearance, and men must have had different interests to pursue. This would have led a spirit of imposture to vary its schemes, and to adapt them to different stations in the world, and to different fashions and changes in every age. David wrote about four hundred years after Moses, and Isaiah about two hundred and fifty years after David, and John about eight hundred years after Isaiah. Yet these authors, with all the other prophets and apostles, wrote in perfect harmony—confirming the authority of their predecessors, labouring to enforce their instructions, and denouncing the severest judgments on all who continued disobedient. Such entire agreement in propounding religious truths and principles, different from any before or since promulgated, except by those who have learned from them, establishes the divine mission of the writers of the Bible beyond dispute, proving that they all derived their wisdom from God, and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In all the works of God there is an analogy characteristic of his divine hand; and the variety and harmony that shine so conspicuously in the heavens and the earth, are not farther removed from the suspicion of imposture than the unity that, in the midst of boundless variety, reigns in that book which reveals the plan of redemption, To forge the Bible is as impossible as to forge a world.”—Pp. 156, 7.

S. Counsels of the Aged to the Young

COUNSELS

OF THE AGED

TO THE YOUNG

BY THE

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COUNSELS

OF

THE AGED TO THE YOUNG

It is a matter of serious regret, that young persons are commonly so little disposed to listen to the advice of the aged. This prejudice seems to have its origin in an apprehension, that austerity and rigour naturally belong to advanced years; and that the loss of all susceptibility of pleasure from those scenes and objects which afford delight to the young produces something of an ill-natured or envious feeling towards them. Now, it cannot be denied, that some of the aged are chargeable with the fault of being too rigid in exacting from youth the same steady gravity, which is becoming in those who have lived long, and have had much experience in the world; not remembering that the constitutional temperament of these two periods of human life is very different. In youth, the spirits are buoyant, the susceptibilities lively, the affections ardent, and the hopes sanguine. To the young, every thing in the world wears the garb of freshness; and the novelty and variety of the scenes presented keep up a constant excitement. These traits of youthful character, as long as irregularity and excess are avoided, are not only allowable, but amiable; and would in that age be badly exchanged for the more sedate and grave emotions which are the natural effects of increasing years, and of long and painful experience. But it is greatly to be desired, that the lessons of wisdom taught by the experience of one set of men should be made available to the instruction of those who come after them. We have, therefore, determined to address a few short hints of advice to the rising generation, on subjects of deep and acknowledged importance to all; but previously to commencing, we would assure them, that it is no part of our object to interfere with their innocent enjoyments, or to deprive them of one pleasure which cannot be shown to be injurious to their best interests. We wish to approach you, dear youth, in the character of affectionate friends, rather than in that of dogmatical teachers or stern reprovers. We would therefore, solicit your patient, candid and impartial attention to the following counsels.

GOOD PRINCIPLES("tw://[self]?tid=17" \ "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Resolve to form your lives upon some certain principles, and to regulate your actions by fixed rules. Man was made to be governed by reason, and not by mere accident or caprice. It is important, therefore, that you begin early to consider and inquire, what is the proper course of human conduct, and to form some plan for your future lives. The want of such consideration is manifest in the conduct of multitudes. They are governed by the impulse of the moment, reckless of consequences. They have fixed no steady aim, and have adopted no certain principles of

action. Living thus at random, it would be a miracle if they went uniformly right. In order to your pursuing a right path, you must know what it is, and to acquire this knowledge, you must divest yourselves of thoughtless giddiness, and must take time for serious reflection. It will not answer to adopt without consideration the opinions of those who may be about you; for they may have some sinister design in regard to you; or they may themselves be misled by error or prejudice. Persons already involved in dissipation or entangled in error, naturally desire to keep themselves in countenance, by the number of followers whom they can seduce into the paths of vice. As reasonable creatures, therefore, judge for yourselves what course it is right and fitting that you should pursue. Exercise your own reason independently and impartially, and give not yourselves up to be governed by mere caprice and fashion, or by the opinions of others.

USEFUL KNOWLEDGE("tw://[self]?tid=17" \l "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

While you are young, avail yourselves of every opportunity of acquiring useful knowledge. Reason should guide us; but without correct knowledge reason is useless; just as the most perfectly formed eye would be useless without light. There is in every man a natural thirst for knowledge, which needs only to be cultivated and rightly directed. All have not equal opportunities of obtaining important knowledge; but all have more advantages for this object than they improve. The sources of information are innumerable; the principal, however, are books and living men. In regard to the former, no age of the world which has passed, was so favoured with a multiplicity of books as our own. Indeed, the very number, and diversity of character and tendency of authors now create one of the most obvious difficulties to those who are destitute of wise advisers. It would be an unwise counsel, to tell you to read indiscriminately whatever comes to hand. The press gives circulation not only to useful knowledge, but to error dressed up plausibly in the garb of truth. Many books are useless, others are on the whole injurious, and some are impregnated with a deadly poison. Waste not your time in works of idle fiction. Touch not the book which exhibits vice in an alluring form. Seek the advice of judicious friends in the choice of books. But you may also learn much from listening to the conversation of the wise and good. There is scarcely a person so ignorant, who has lived any time in the world, that cannot communicate some profitable hint to the young. Avail yourselves, then, of every opportunity of learning what you do not know; and let not pride prevent you from seeking instruction, lest by this means you should betray your ignorance. Cherish the desire of knowledge, and keep your mind constantly awake and open to instruction, from every quarter.

But, especially, I would recommend to you the acquisition of self-knowledge, "Know thyself" was a precept held in such high esteem among the ancients, that the honour of inventing it was claimed for several of their wisest men; and not only so, but on account of its superlative excellence, it was believed by many to have been uttered by the oracle of Apollo, at Delphos; at which place, as Pliny informs us, it was conspicuously written in letters of gold, over the door of the temple. And this species of knowledge is also inculcated in the Christian Scriptures, as most useful and necessary. "Examine yourselves," says Paul, "whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves?" And in the Old Testament, the value of this knowledge is also fully recognized, where we are exhorted "to commune with our own hearts,"—and "to keep our hearts with all diligence." And the possession of it is made an object of fervent prayer; "search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts,"—"examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart." As this knowledge is necessary to all, so it is placed within the reach of

all. But it cannot be acquired without diligent self-examination. To this duty there exists in human nature a strong repugnance; partly from natural, and partly from moral causes; so that, by most, it is entirely neglected, to their exceeding great detriment. But, when it is attempted, we are in great danger of being misled by self-love and prejudice. To acquire any true knowledge of ourselves, some good degree of honesty and impartiality is essentially requisite. But an honest desire to arrive at the truth is not the only prerequisite to self-knowledge. The mind must be enlightened in regard to the standard of rectitude, to which we ought to be conformed. "The entrance of thy word giveth light." The word of God should dwell richly in us, and by the rules and principles of the sacred volume, we should form all our sentiments respecting ourselves. This is the candle of the Lord which searcheth the inward parts of man; and without such a lamp it would be as impossible to obtain any considerable degree of self-knowledge, as to distinguish the objects in a dark room, without a light. Self-examination, accompanied with a careful perusal of the Holy Scriptures, will lead us daily to a more thorough knowledge of our own character.

Beware of the common illusion of forming your estimate of yourselves from the favourable opinions of those around you. They cannot know the secret principles from which you act; and flattery may have much influence in leading them to speak in your praise.

Seize favourable opportunities of judging of the latent strength of your passions. The fact is, that until some new conjuncture or occasion elicits our feelings, we are as ignorant of what is within us, as other persons.

Study also your constitutional temperament, and consider attentively the power which particular objects and circumstances have over you. You may often learn even from your enemies and calumniators what are the weak points in your character. They are sagacious in detecting faults; and, generally, have some shadow of pretext for what they allege against us. We may, therefore, derive more benefit from the sarcasms of our foes than from the flattery of our friends.

Learn, moreover, to form a correct estimate of your own abilities, as this is necessary to guide you in your undertakings.

GOOD HABITS("tw://[self]?tid=17" \ "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Be careful to form good habits. Almost all permanent habits are contracted in youth; and these do in fact form the character of the man through life. It is Paley, I believe, who remarks, that we act from habit nine times, where we do once from deliberation. Little do young persons apprehend the momentous consequences of many of their most frequently repeated actions. Some habits are merely inconvenient, but have no moral quality; others affect the principles of our conduct, and become sources of good or evil, to an incalculable degree. As to the former, they should be avoided, as detracting from our comfort, and ultimately interfering with our usefulness; but the latter should be deprecated, as laying the foundation of a wicked character, and as standing in the way of all mental and moral improvement.

GOOD COMPANY("tw://[self]?tid=17" \ "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Be particular and select in the company which you keep, and the friendships which you form. 'Tell me,' says the proverb, 'what company you keep, and I will tell you what you are.' 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' Vice is more easily and extensively diffused by improper

companions, than by all other means. As one infected sheep communicates disease to a whole flock, so one sinner often destroys much good, by corrupting all the youth who fall under his influence. When vicious men are possessed of wit and fascinating manners, their conversation is most dangerous to the young. We would entreat you, dear young friends, to form an intimacy with no one whose principles are suspicious. The friendship of profligate men is exceedingly dangerous. Listen not to their fair speeches, and warm professions of attachment. Fly from contact with them, as from one infected with the plague. Form no close alliance with such. No more think of taking them to your bosom, than you would a viper. Gaze not on their beauty, nor suffer yourselves to be charmed with their fascination of manners. Under these specious appearances, a deleterious poison lurks.

'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' is the exhortation of scripture. And what can be more unseemly and incongruous, than for an amiable and virtuous woman to be indissolubly united to an unprincipled debauchee? Or, for a good man to be connected with a woman destitute of, piety and virtue? Be especially careful, therefore, in forming alliances for life. Seek a connection with the wise and good, and you will become wiser and better by converse with such.

A GOOD REPUTATION("tw://[self]?tid=17" \l "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Endeavour to acquire and maintain a good reputation. 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.' A ruined fortune may be recovered, a lost reputation never. Young men are often laying the foundation of an unenviable reputation, while they are thinking of no such thing. They never dream that the character which they attain at school or college, will probably be as lasting as life. The youth who is known to be addicted to falsehood, knavery, treachery, &c., when arrived at the age of man, will be viewed by those who know him with distrust. A stain on the character is not easily washed out. At a distant period the faults and follies of youth may be revived to a man's confusion and injury. But especially is the female character exquisitely delicate. A small degree of imprudence will often fix a stigma on the gay young lady, which no subsequent sobriety can completely erase.

We do not mean, that the young should cherish a false sense of honour, which would lead them to fight and contend for reputation. No man ever secured or increased a good name, by shedding the vital blood of a human being. The reputation which we recommend must arise from a life of consistent and uniform well-doing. Prize such a character, as of inestimable value to your own peace, and as a most powerful means of usefulness. The most potent human engine of utility is influence; and this depends entirely on reputation.

ECONOMY

Manage your worldly concerns with economy and discretion. Avoid the inconvenience, embarrassment, and vexation of being in debt. Conduct your business with attention and diligence; and have your accounts in such a condition, that you will be at no loss to ascertain the true state of your affairs. Men often become unjust, and injurious to others, without having intended any such thing, merely by a confused and careless manner of transacting their business. Such a man, after a while, feels an unconquerable aversion to a scrutiny into his affairs. He shuts his eyes against the ruin which he is bringing on himself, and heedlessly rushes forward in the path which habit or fashion has rendered agreeable. When, at length, an exigence arrives, which

constrains him to adopt some measure to extricate himself from his difficulties, he is placed under strong temptation to resort to a course which is not strictly honourable. He persuades himself, that if he can save his credit for the present, he will be able to rectify every thing, by diligence and good fortune, and to preserve his friends from suffering on his account. But these efforts to recover lost ground commonly prove ineffectual, and render the situation of the person more involved than before. He finds, at length, that he is sinking; and this discovery often produces a desperate recklessness. He plunges deeper and deeper into debt; and often drags to ruin, not only his own family, but some of his friends who confided too implicitly in his truth and integrity. It is also too common for men who have failed in trade, to resort to means for the support of a helpless family, which a sound moral faculty never can approve. The temptation arising from the tender love of wife and children is indeed very strong, but not invincible. In the commercial world, there are many illustrious examples of merit, honour, and the strictest probity, in men who had it in their power to defraud their creditors, or to deeply involve their confiding friends, but who chose rather to look haggard poverty in the face, and to see their beloved families descending from affluence into the vale of obscurity, than to be guilty of a dishonourable act. And in the long run this turns out more to the benefit of those persons, than any advantage obtained by a resort to shifts and evasions not entirely consistent with the highest integrity. He who sacrifices reputation for present comfort, buys it at too dear a rate. The merchant, who, when he fails, loses his reputation for truth and integrity, will meet with but little favour from the world, and will have very little chance of rising again. But he who has been unfortunate, and yet maintains his integrity, and preserves his character unsullied, is often able to enter again into business under favourable auspices; and is encouraged and aided in his attempts to gain a living, by men of wealth and standing; so that such a man is often successful to such a degree, that he has it in his power to compensate those from whom benefit was derived in the day of his calamity. Beware of being governed by ambition in your commercial enterprises. The pride of doing a large business, and of being considered as at the head of the profession, seduces many aspiring young merchants: and greediness of gain tempts still more to engage in hazardous speculations, and to trade to an extent not authorized by the capital which they have at command. In this way bankruptcies become so common that the event ceases to excite much surprise. Families delicately educated, and long accustomed to the luxuries as well as the comforts of life, are reduced to poverty. Multitudes of such families are found in our large commercial cities, who are really more properly the objects of benevolence than the common beggar who clamorously solicits your charity. The real privations and sufferings of such are not fully known; for, from the desire of avoiding the contempt and the pity of vulgar minds, such persons spread a decent veil over their indigence, and prefer to pine secretly in want rather than to seek relief by a public disclosure of their necessities. The Christian philanthropist will, however, seek out such sufferers, and will contrive methods of bestowing relief upon them in a way consistent with the delicacy of their feelings. The above remarks are particularly adapted to those who engage in commerce; but they are not inapplicable to others. It is true, integrity is the soul of a merchant; but it is a sterling quality which every man ought to possess; and all men are liable to be reduced to a state of indigence by a long series of untoward events. My counsel then is, that you commence and pursue business with prudence; and when unfortunate, that you so act as to preserve your integrity and your reputation, by resorting to no equivocal means of relief; but resolve to act in conformity with the strictest rules of justice and honour.

("tw://[self]?tid=17" \ "Counsels_CONTENTS-")CHRISTIAN CONSISTENCY("tw://[self]?tid=17" \ "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Aim at consistency in your Christian character. There is a beauty in moral consistency which resembles the symmetry of a well proportioned building, where nothing is deficient, nothing redundant. Consistency can only be acquired and maintained by cultivating every part of the Christian character. The circle of virtues must be complete, without chasms or obliquities. A character well proportioned and nicely balanced in all its parts, we are not very frequently permitted to witness; for, while in one branch there is vigour, and even exuberance, in another there may be the appearance of feebleness and sterility. The man who is distinguished for virtues of a particular class is apt to be deficient in those which belong to a different class. This is so commonly the fact, that many entertain the opinion that the same person cannot excel in every virtue. Thus, it is not expected that the man of remarkable firmness and intrepidity, should at the same time be distinguished for meekness and gentleness. But after making due allowances for a difference of constitutional temperament, we must maintain, that there is not, nor can there be, any incompatibility between the several virtues of the Christian life. They are all branches of the same root, and the principle which affords nourishment to one, communicates its virtue to all. As all truth is harmonious, however it may, on a superficial and partial view, seem to be contradictory; so all the exercises of moral goodness are not only consistent, but assist and adorn each other. This is so much the case, that symmetry of Christian character has, by some distinguished casuistical writers, been laid down as a necessary evidence of genuineness; and it has been insisted on as probable, that where one virtue seems to exist in great strength, while others are remarkably wanting, it is a mark of spuriousness. There is much reason in this view of the subject; for men are frequently found whose zeal blazes out ardently and conspicuously, so as to leave most others far back in the shade, while they are totally destitute of that humility, meekness, and brotherly kindness, which form an essential part of the Christian character. Some men are conscientious and punctilious in the performance of all the rites and external duties connected with the worship of God, who are inattentive to the obligations of strict justice and veracity in their intercourse with men: and on the other hand, many boast of their morality, and yet are notoriously inattentive to the duties of religion. Real Christians, too, are often chargeable with inconsistency, which arises from a want of clear discernment of the rule of moral conduct, in its application to particular cases; for while the general principles of duty are plain, and easily understood by all, the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, in many complicated cases, is extremely rare. This delicate and correct perception of moral relations, can only be acquired by the divine blessing on our assiduous exertions. It is too commonly taken for granted, that Christian morals are a subject so easy, that all close study of it is unnecessary. This is an injurious mistake. Many of the deficiencies and inconsistencies of Christians are owing to a want of clear and correct knowledge of the exact rule of moral conduct. On no subject will you find a greater diversity of opinion, than in regard to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of particular practices: and even good men are often thrown into difficulty and doubt, respecting the proper course to be pursued. But while many cases of inconsistency arise from ignorance of the exact standard of rectitude, more must be attributed to heedlessness and forgetfulness. Men do not act sufficiently from principle, but too much from custom, from fashion, and from habit. Thus many actions are performed without any inquiry into their moral character. There is an obtuseness in the moral sensibility which permits evils to pass without animadversion. Another cause of the inconsistency so commonly observed, is the

prevalence which certain passions or appetites may obtain, in the time of temptation. The force of the internal principles of evil is not perceived, when the objects and circumstances favourable to their exercise are absent. As the venomous adder seems to be harmless while chilled with cold, but soon manifests his malignity when brought near the fire; so sin often lies hid in the bosom, as though it were dead, until some exciting cause draws it forth into exercise; and then the person himself is surprised to find the strength of his own passions, above any thing which he had before conceived. Thus men often act, in certain circumstances, in a way altogether contrary to the general tenor of their conduct. It is by no means a fair inference from a single act of irregularity, that the person who is guilty of it has acted hypocritically in all the apparent good actions of his former life. The true explanation is, that principles of action which he has commonly been able to govern and restrain, acquire, in some unguarded moment, or under the power of some strong temptation, a force which his good principles are not at that moment strong enough to oppose. The man who is usually correct and orderly may thus be overtaken in a fault; and as all are liable to the same frailties, there should exist a disposition to receive and restore an offending brother, when he gives sufficient evidence of penitence. Man, at his best estate in this world, is an inconsistent creature. The only persons in whom this defect is not observed are the men who by grace live near to God, and exercise a constant jealousy and vigilance over themselves. But when faith is weak and inconstant, great inconsistencies will mar the beauty of the Christian character. Young persons ought, therefore, to begin early to exercise this vigilance, and to keep their hearts with all diligence, lest they be ensnared by their own passions, and overcome by the power of temptation. I counsel you then, my young friends, to aim at consistency. Cultivate assiduously every part of the Christian character; so that there may appear a beautiful proportion in your virtue. The reflections to which I have been led in speaking of consistency of Christian character, suggest the importance of urging upon you the government of your passions. A man who has no control over his passions, is justly compared to a ship at sea, which is driven by fierce winds, while she neither is governed by the rudder nor steered by the compass. By indulgence, the passions gain strength very rapidly; and when once the habit of indulgence is fixed, the moral condition of the sinner is most deplorable, and almost desperate. To preserve consistency, it is necessary to be well acquainted with the weak points in our own character, to know something of the strength of our own passions, and to guard beforehand against the occasions and temptations which would be likely to cause us to act inconsistently with our Christian profession. Many men have successfully contended with their own passions, and although naturally of a hasty and irritable temper, have, by constant discipline, brought themselves into a habitual state of equanimity; so that however they may be conscious of the strugglings of the natural passions, they are kept so completely under restraint, that to others they do not seem to exist.—The anecdote which is related of Socrates and the physiognomist, is instructive on this point. When the latter, upon examining the lines of the philosopher's face, pronounced that he was a man of bad temper, and exceedingly irascible, the disciples of Socrates laughed him to scorn, as having betrayed the weakness of his art, by so totally mistaking the true disposition of their master; but he checked their ridicule, by acknowledging that his natural temper had been truly represented by the physiognomist, but that by the discipline of philosophy, he had been able to acquire such a mastery over his passions, that their existence was not apparent. To achieve a victory of this kind is more honourable than to conquer in the field of battle; according to that of the wise man, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." And again, "He that hath no

rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." Learn then, my young friends, to bridle your passions, and govern your temper, from your earliest days.

CONTENTMENT

Be contented with the station and circumstances in which Providence has placed you. Never repine at God's dealings towards you, nor envy those who are above you in worldly advantages. Consider not so much what you Want, as what you have; and look less at those above you, than at those in inferior circumstances. Accustom yourselves to look on the bright, rather than the dark side of the picture. Indulge not in unreasonable fears, nor give way to feelings of despondency. Exercise fortitude, and maintain tranquillity of mind. Be not ruffled and disconcerted by every little cross event which may occur. Place not your happiness at the disposal of every one who may be disposed to speak an unkind word, or to do an unhandsome thing. Learn to possess your souls in patience, believing that when appearances are darkest, the dawn of a more comfortable day is near.

("tw://[self]?tid=17" \l "Counsels_CONTENTS-")THE SOCIAL VIRTUES("tw://[self]?tid=17" \l "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Let your intercourse with men be marked by a strict and conscientious regard to truth, honour, justice, kindness and courtesy. We should certainly have recommended politeness, as a happy means of polishing social intercourse, and affording pleasure to those with whom you are conversant; but many are accustomed to connect an unpleasant idea with this word. But, surely, genuine politeness, if not itself a virtue, spreads a charm and a beauty over that which is virtuous. And, certainly, there is no merit in awkwardness and clownishness. But our chief object under this particular is to urge upon you a constant and punctilious regard to the social virtues. Be honest, be upright, sincere, men of your word, faithful to every trust, kind to everybody, respectful where respect is due, generous according to your ability, grateful for benefits received, and delicate in the mode of conferring favours. Let your integrity be unsuspected. Never resort to any mean or underhand measure: but let your conduct and conversation be characterized by frankness and candour, by forbearance, and a spirit of indulgence and forgiveness. In short, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

PHILANTHROPY

Live not merely for yourselves, but also for the good of others. Selfishness contracts the soul, and hardens the heart. The man absorbed in selfish pursuits is incapable of the sweetest, noblest joys of which our nature is susceptible. The Author of our being has ordained laws, according to which the most exquisite pleasure is connected, not with the direct pursuit of our own happiness, but with the exercise of benevolence. On this principle it is, that he who labours wholly for the benefit of others, and as it were forgets himself, is far happier than the man who makes himself the centre of all his affections, the sole object of all his exertions. On this principle it was, that our Saviour said, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." Resolve, therefore, to lead lives of usefulness. Be indifferent to nothing which has any relation to the welfare of men. Be not afraid of diminishing your own happiness, by seeking that of others. Devise liberal things, and let not avarice shut up your hand from giving to him that needeth, or from contributing to promote the cause of piety and humanity.

("tw://[self]?tid=17" \I "Counsels_CONTENTS-")RELATIVE DUTIES("tw://[self]?tid=17" \I "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Be faithful and conscientious in the discharge of all duties which arise out of the relations which you sustain to others. Relative duties are far more numerous than all others; because the occasions requiring their performance are constantly occurring. The duties of parents, of children, of brothers and sisters, of neighbours, of masters and servants, of teachers and pupils, of magistrates and citizens, of the learned professions, of trade, of the rich and the poor, occupy a very large portion of the time and attention of every man. And these furnish the proper test of character. "He who is faithful in little, is faithful also in much." And he who is not attentive to the daily recurring duties of his station, in vain claims the reputation of virtue or piety, by splendid acts of public beneficence. "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

TEMPTATIONS

Exercise incessant vigilance against the dangers and temptations by which you are surrounded, and by which you will certainly be assailed. These dangers are too numerous to be specified in detail; but I will mention a few. Guard solicitously against all approaches towards infidelity. Reject unbelieving thoughts and sceptical doubts from the beginning. Even if the system of infidelity were true, it promises no comfort, and cannot possibly be serviceable to you. But the best security will be to study diligently the evidences of religion, and be ready to meet the cavils of infidelity at all points. Make yourselves well acquainted with the best authors on this subject, and let your faith rest on the firm ground of evidence.

Another danger against which you must be watchful, is pleasure—sensual pleasure. Worldly amusements, however innocent they may appear, are replete with hidden dangers. These scenes exhilarate the spirits, and excite the imagination, until reason and conscience are hushed, and the real end of living is forgotten. For the sake of pleasure, every thing important and sacred is neglected, and the most valuable part of human life wasted in unprofitable engagements. Beware then of the vortex of dissipation, and especially of the least approach towards the gulf of intemperance. On that slippery ground, many strong men have fallen, never to rise. The trophies of this insidious and destructive vice are widely spread on every side, and the wise and the good have come to the conclusion, that there is no effectual security against this enemy, but in a resolute and persevering abstinence from all inebriating drink. Seek your happiness, dear youth, in the pursuit of useful objects, and in the performance of duty, and then you will be safe, and will have no reason to envy the votaries of sensual pleasure.

("tw://[self]?tid=17" \I "Counsels_CONTENTS-")GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE("tw://[self]?tid=17" \I "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

A counsel, near akin to that which has been just given, is, "govern your tongue." More sin, it is probable, is committed, and more mischief done, by this small member, than in all other ways. The faculty of speech is one of our most useful endowments, but it is exceedingly liable to abuse. He who knows how to bridle his tongue, is, therefore, in Scripture, denominated "a perfect man;" and again, of him "who seemeth to be religious and bridled not his tongue," it is declared that "that man's religion is vain." The words which we utter are a fair index of the moral state of the mind. "By

thy words," saith our Lord, "shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." Not only are sins of the tongue more numerous than others, but some of them are the most heinous of which man can be guilty—even that one sin which has no forgiveness, is a sin of the tongue. Not only should all profaneness, obscenity, and falsehood be put far away, but you should continually endeavour to render, your conversation useful. Be ever ready to communicate knowledge, to suggest profitable ideas, to recommend virtue and religion, to rebuke sin, and to give glory to God. Beware of evil-speaking. A habit of detraction is one of the worst which you can contract, and is always indicative of an envious and malignant heart. Instead of prostituting this active and useful member to the purposes of slander, employ it in defending the innocent and the injured.

Permit me to suggest the following brief rules for the government of the tongue. Avoid loquacity. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." If you have nothing to communicate which can be useful, be silent. Think before you speak. How many painful anxieties would be prevented by obeying this simple, common-sense precept. Especially, be cautious about uttering any thing in the form of a promise, without consideration. Be conscientiously regardful of truth, even to a tittle, in all that you say. Never speak what will be likely to excite bad feelings, of any kind, in the minds of others. Be ready, on all suitable occasions, to give utterance to good sentiments, especially such as may be useful to the young. Listen respectfully to the opinions of others, but never fail to give your testimony modestly, but firmly, against error. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

A GOOD CONSCIENCE("tw://[self]?tid=17" \l "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Keep a good conscience. If wickedness had no other punishment than the stings of conscience which follow evil actions, it would be reason enough to induce every considerate man to avoid that which is productive of so much pain. No misery of which the human mind is susceptible is so intolerable and so irremediable as remorse of conscience. And it is liable to be renewed as often as the guilty action is distinctly recollected. It is true, the conscience, by means of error and repeated resistance to its dictates, may become callous—"seared as with a hot iron;" but this apparent death of moral sensibility is no more than a sleep. At an unexpected time, and in circumstances the most inconvenient, conscience may be aroused, and may exert a more tremendous power than was ever before experienced. The long arrears of sins committed, while no notice seemed to be taken of them, now demand and enforce consideration. Joseph's brethren seem to have almost forgotten their unnatural and cruel conduct in selling him as a slave into a foreign country; but when many years had elapsed, and they found themselves environed with difficulties and dangers in that very land, the remembrance of their crime painfully rushed upon their minds, and extorted from them mutual confessions of their guilt. "God," said they, "hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Men often endeavour to escape from the stings of a guilty conscience by a change of place; but the remedy is ineffectual. The transgressor may traverse the widest ocean, and transcend the loftiest mountains, and may bury himself in the dark recesses of the desert, but he cannot fly so far, nor conceal himself so effectually, as to escape from his tormentor. In some cases, the agonies of remorse have been so intolerable, that the guilty perpetrator of great wickedness has preferred "strangling and death" to a miserable life,

and has rushed uncalled into the presence of his judge. And in other cases, men guilty of bloody crimes have found the pangs of remorse so intolerable that they have voluntarily given themselves up to justice; and by a voluntary confession, have convicted themselves, when no human witnesses were competent to prove their guilt. But what man is there who has not committed sins, the recollection of which gives him sensible pain? And such acts often stand out in strong relief in the retrospect of the past. No effort can obliterate such things from the memory. We may turn away our eyes from the disagreeable object; but the painful idea will return again; and thus men whose consciences are not seared, are haunted by guilt as by a troublesome ghost; and often their sins find them out, and stare them in the face, when danger threatens, or when calamity has overtaken them. Why moral sensibility should be so much more exquisite at some times than others, cannot be easily explained; but the fact is certain, and is probably familiar to the consciousness of all. There may indeed exist a morbid susceptibility, an unreasonable scrupulousness and terror of conscience, which is a real and distressing disease, and which yields only to physical remedies judiciously applied. Melancholy is not the effect of religious impressions; but is a state of mind of a most unhappy kind, produced by a derangement of the physical system, and which leads the subject of it to fix his thoughts on those things which are most awful and gloomy. The same is true in regard to insanity. Many people entertain strong prejudices against experimental religion, because they apprehend that it endangers the reason, and drives the timid and weak-minded into mania.

Now it is no doubt true, that any strong emotion or passion may, when there exists a predisposition to the disease, disturb the regular exercise of reason; but that this danger is greater to persons deeply exercised about religion than to others, is utterly without foundation. Fanaticism, it may be conceded, has a tendency to insanity. Indeed, it has long appeared to me, that fanaticism, especially in its mildest forms, is nothing else than a species of insanity. I have upon no other hypothesis been able to account for the opinions and conduct of some persons who have been led away into the excesses of enthusiasm. But what is the most effectual preservative from this kind of mental derangement? Is it irreligion, vice, and infidelity? By no means. Persons who take refuge in such things, find them to be "refuges of lies." The only effectual remedy against the misery of a disturbed mind and a guilty conscience, is true religion. For this wound the balm of Gilead is the only medicine which is proved by experience to be efficacious. He who is able to cherish a lively hope of happiness beyond the grave, who can look up to God as a reconciled Father, and who feels good will to all men, has surely within him the ingredients of a settled peace of mind. When I counsel you, my young friends, to keep a good conscience, I mean, that you should, in the first place, endeavour to obtain this inestimable blessing by an application to "the blood of sprinkling." Until the soul is justified and sin pardoned, there can be no true peace of conscience. While the law remains unsatisfied for us, and denounces vengeance against us for our sins, what in the universe can give us peace? But when by faith the soul apprehends the atonement, and sees that it is commensurate to all the demands of the law, and that in the cross, justice is not only satisfied, but gloriously illustrated, it is at once relieved from the agony of guilt, and the peace of God which passeth understanding pervades the soul. The great secret of genuine peace is, therefore, living faith in the blood of Christ. But if you would preserve your conscience pure and enjoy peace, you must not only obtain forgiveness for the past, but must be very careful to sin no more in future. The law of God is exceeding broad, and if we would preserve peace of conscience, we must conform our actions to its precepts with assiduous and holy diligence. A good conscience is always an

enlightened conscience. Through error, a man may believe that he is doing God service, when he is persecuting his people; but such a conscience is not good. Men may act conscientiously, and yet act very wickedly. I suppose that all the devotees of the most absurd and impious superstition, act according to the dictates of conscience, even when they sacrifice human beings, and expose to death their own offspring, or themselves; but who would say that such a conscience was good? The correct knowledge of truth, therefore, lies at the foundation of a good conscience. Nothing is more important to man than the truth; therefore “buy the truth and sell it not.” But too often conscience is not regarded when it correctly dictates what should be done or avoided. Amidst the cravings of appetite, the storm of the passions, and the incessant bustle of the world, the whispers of conscience are not heeded. In multitudes of instances, where persons do wrong, they have a premonition of the evil; or, at least, a suggestion, that it is proper to inquire and consider what duty is. Some persons are conscientious in great matters, who, in comparatively small concerns, seem to have no moral discernment. The habit of consulting the moral sense in all things is of great importance. Before you act, consider; and beware of the false colouring which passion and self-interest throw around the subjects of duty. Lean to the safe side. Where an action is of dubious character, do not venture upon it. Be fully persuaded in your own mind, “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Some persons are conscientious and punctilious about little things, but careless about the weightier matters of the law. This is the conscience of a hypocrite. Others have a mind ill at ease, because the festering wound of guilt has never been thoroughly probed and cleansed, but merely externally healed. Their repentance has not been deep enough, nor universal enough: some secret sin is still too much indulged. Now, while these are the facts, a good conscience is an impossible thing. Sincere penitence, humiliation and confession, are God’s prescribed remedy, and where these are wanting the conscience will not be at peace.

Now whatever may be the infirmity or moral defect which cleaves to us, it is odious in the sight of God, and tends to grieve the Holy Spirit. In just judgment, we are left to darkness, barrenness, and misery, because we have not sufficiently desired deliverance from sin; but have made vain excuses for our own faults. I would then counsel you, especially to cherish the motions of the Holy Comforter. By his divine influences alone, a good conscience can be maintained. And if you are sensible that you have grieved the Spirit, so that you are left comfortless, never rest until you again experience the peace and joy, which is the fruit of his indwelling

PEACE

Cultivate peace. Next to the blessing of peace with God and in our own conscience, is that of peace with our fellow-men. “As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” And again, “Follow peace with all men.” The true source of all the wars, contentions, and disturbances which are in the world, is the pride, the envy, the covetousness, and other evil passions of our nature. Eradicate these, and in their place introduce pure and kind affections, and you will experience a double peace—peace within, and peace without. Every Christian temper is friendly to peace. I know, indeed, that Christ says, that he came not to bring peace but a sword; but he refers not to the nature of his religion, but to the event which he foresaw would occur, from the perverse opposition of men, to that which is good. The genuine spirit and tendency of the gospel is beautifully and emphatically expressed in the angelic anthem, sung by the celestial choir at the nativity of our Saviour—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will to men.” All the adopted sons of God are sons of peace, and are peace-makers. “Live in peace,” says Paul, “and

the God of peace shall be with you." Humility, meekness, and benevolence, must, from the nature of the case, have a mighty influence in producing and maintaining peace. For, as the apostle Peter argues, "who will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" No system was ever so well adapted to produce universal peace as Christianity; and the only reason why this effect has not followed its reception everywhere, is, that its true spirit has not been imbibed. Just so far as this blessed system is cordially embraced, it cuts up by the roots all causes of contention; except that which has for its subjects sin and error. It teaches us not only to love our friends and brethren but also our bitterest enemies; to return blessing for cursing, and kindness for ill treatment. Endeavour then, to cherish habitually those kind affections which lead to peace; and while you seek peace in your own souls, make it an object to promote peace in the world, and covet the blessedness which is pronounced to belong to peace-makers. Their high honour it is to be denominated "the sons of God."

FORTITUDE

As "man is born to sorrow as the sparks fly upwards;" as no situation is exempt from the arrows of adversity, I would give it as a necessary counsel, to learn to bear affliction with fortitude and resignation. To dream of escaping what is appointed unto all, would be to fall wilfully into a dangerous delusion. Every man is vulnerable in so many points, that nothing short of a perpetual miracle could shield any one from the strokes of adversity. Indeed, piety of the most exalted kind does not secure its possessor from affliction and persecution. Christ himself suffered while in the world, and has left his followers a perfect example of holy fortitude, and filial submission to the will of God. When sorely pressed with the inconceivable load of our sins, so that his human soul could not have sustained it unless supported by the divine nature, his language was, "Not my will but thine be done." Those afflictions which are allotted to the people of God, are necessary parts of salutary discipline, intended to purify them from the dross of sin, and to prepare them for the service of God here, and his enjoyment in the world to come. They are, therefore, to them, not penal judgments, but fatherly chastisements, which, though "not joyous but grievous" for the present, "afterwards work for them the peaceable fruits of righteousness." But whatever may be our moral and spiritual condition, whether we are friends or enemies to God, we must be subject to various afflictions. This is a dying world. The nearest and dearest friends must part. Death sunders the tenderest ties, and often pierces the susceptible heart with a keener anguish, by directing the mortal stroke to a dear companion, or child, than if it had fallen on our own head. When I see youth rejoicing in the sanguine hopes and brilliant prospects which the deceitful world spreads out before them, I am prevented from sympathizing with their happy feelings, by the foresight of a speedy end to all their earthly pleasures. Their laughter will be converted into mourning. Their day of bright sunshine will soon be overcast with dark clouds; and all their brilliant prospects will be obscured, and the overwhelming gloom of sorrow will envelope them.

It is indeed, no part of wisdom to torment our minds with vain terrors of evils which are merely possible. Many persons suffer more in the apprehension of calamities, than they would if they were present. The imagination represents scenes of adversity in a hue darker than the reality. In regard to such evils, our Saviour has taught us not to yield to useless anxieties about the future, but to trust to Providence. "Let the morrow take care of itself." But that to which I would bring my youthful readers is a state of mind prepared for adversity, of whatever kind it may be; that they may not be taken by surprise when calamity falls upon them. And when the dark day of adversity

arrives, be not dismayed, but put your trust in the Lord, and look to Him for strength to endure whatever may be laid upon you. Never permit yourselves to entertain hard thoughts of God, on account of any of his dispensations. They may be dark and mysterious, but they are all wise and good. What we cannot understand now, we shall be privileged to know hereafter. Exercise an uncomplaining submission to the will of God, as developed in the events of Providence. Believe steadfastly that all things are under the government of wisdom and goodness. Remember that whatever sufferings you may be called to endure, they are always less than your sins deserve: and consider, that these afflictive dispensations are fraught with rich, spiritual blessings. They are not only useful, but necessary. We should perish with a wicked world, if a kind Father did not make use of the rod to reclaim us from our wanderings. Besides, there is no situation in which we can more glorify God, than when in the furnace of affliction. The exercise of faith, and humble resignation, with patience and fortitude, under the pressure of heavy calamity, is most pleasing to God, and illustrates clearly the excellency of religion which is able to bear up the mind, and even render it cheerful, in the midst of scenes of trouble. Bear then, with cheerful submission, the load which may be laid upon you; and learn from Paul to rejoice even in the midst of tribulation. And not only bear your cross with cheerful resignation, but endeavour to extract from sorrow a rich spiritual blessing. While enjoying such an effectual means of grace, improve it to the utmost, to promote growth in the divine life. Be willing to suffer any pain which will render you more holy. Although we naturally desire uninterrupted prosperity, yet if the desire of our hearts was always given to us, it would prove ruinous. And when schooled in adversity, you will be better qualified to sympathize with the Children of sorrow, and better skilled in affording them comfort, than if you had no experience of trouble.

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My next counsel is, that you set a high value upon your time. Time is short; and its flight is rapid. The swiftness of the lapse of time is proverbial in all languages. In Scripture, the life of man is compared to a multitude of things which quickly pass away, after making their appearance; as to a post, a weaver's shuttle, a vapour, a shadow, &c. All the works of man must be performed in time; and whatever acquisition is made of any good, it must be obtained in time. Time, therefore, is not only short, but precious. Everything is suspended on its improvement, and it can only be improved when present; and it is no sooner present, than it is gone: so that whatever we do must be done quickly. The precious gift is sparingly parcelled out, by moments, but the succession of these is rapid and uninterrupted. Nothing can impede or retard the current of this stream. Whether we are awake or asleep, whether occupied or idle, whether we attend to the fact or not, we are borne along by a silent, but irresistible force. Our progressive motion in time may be compared to the motion of the planet on which we dwell, of which we are entirely insensible; or, to that of a swift-sailing ship, which produces the illusion that all other objects are in motion, while we seem to be stationary. So in the journey of life, we pass from stage to stage, from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to mature age, and finally, ere we are aware of it, we find ourselves declining towards the last stage of earthly existence. The freshness and buoyancy of youth soon pass away; the autumn of life, with its "sere leaf," soon arrives; and next, and last, if disease or accident do not cut short our days, old age with its gray hairs, its wrinkles, its debility and pains, comes on apace. This period is described by the wise man, as one in which men are

commonly disposed to be querulous, and to acknowledge that the days draw nigh in which they have no pleasure, "The keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened. When men rise up at the noise of the bird—when all the daughters of music are brought low, and there shall be fears. And the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper be a burden."

Time wasted can never be recovered. No man ever possessed the same moment twice. We are, indeed, exhorted to "redeem our time," but this relates to a right improvement of that which is to come; for this is the only possible way by which we can redeem what is irrevocably past. The counsels which I would offer to the young on this subject are: Think frequently and seriously on the inestimable value of time. Never forget that all that is dear and worthy of pursuit must be accomplished in the short span of time allotted to us here. Meditate also profoundly, and often, on the celerity of the flight of time. Now you are in the midst of youthful bloom, but soon this season will only exist in the dim shades of recollection, and unless it has been well improved, of bitter regret.

If you will make a wise improvement of your time, you must be prompt. Seize the fugitive moments as they fly; for, otherwise, they will pass away before you have commenced the work which is appropriated to them.

Diligence and constancy are essential to the right improvement of time. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Work while it is called to-day." Walk while you have the light; for the dark night rapidly approaches, when no work can be done.

Let every thing be done in its season. There is a time for all things; and let all things be done in order. The true order of things may be determined by their relative importance, and by the urgency of the case, or the loss which would probably be sustained by neglect.

If you would make the most of your time, learn to do one thing at once, and endeavour so to perform every work, as to accomplish it in the best possible manner. As you receive but one moment at once, it is a vain thing to think of doing more than one thing at one time; and if any work deserves your attention at all, it deserves to be well done. Confusion, hurry, and heedlessness, often so mar a business, that it would have been better to omit it altogether.

Beware of devolving the duty of to-day on to-morrow. This is called procrastination, which is said, justly, to be "the thief of time." Remember that every day, and every hour, has its own appropriate work; but if that which should be done this day, is deferred until a future time, to say the least, there must be an inconvenient accumulation of duties in future. But as to-morrow is to every body uncertain, to suspend the acquisition of an important object on such a contingency, may be the occasion of losing for ever the opportunity of receiving it. The rule of sound discretion is, never to put off till to-morrow, what ought to be done to-day.

GENUINE PIETY("tw:///self?tid=17" \l "Counsels_CONTENTS-")

Cherish and diligently cultivate genuine piety. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Early piety is the most beautiful spectacle in the world. Without piety all your morality, however useful to men, is but a shadow. It is a branch without a root. Religion, above every other acquisition, enriches and adorns the mind of man; and it is especially congenial with the natural

susceptibilities of the youthful mind. The vivacity and versatility of youth, the tenderness and ardour of the affections in this age, exhibit piety to the best advantage. How delightful is it, to see the bosoms of the young swelling with the lively emotions of pure devotion! How beautiful is the tear of penitence or of holy joy, which glistens in the eye of tender youth! Think not, dear young people, that true religion will detract from your happiness. It is a reproach cast upon your Maker, to indulge such a thought. It cannot be. A God of goodness never required any thing of his creatures, which did not tend to their true felicity. Piety may indeed lead you to exchange the pleasures of the theatre and ball-room, for the purer joys of the church and prayer-meeting. It may turn your attention from books of mere idle fancy and fiction, to the word of God, which to a regenerated soul, is found to be sweeter than honey, and more excellent than the choicest gold; but this will add to your happiness, rather than diminish it. We would then affectionately and earnestly exhort and entreat you, to “remember now your Creator in the days of your youth.” This will be your best security against all the dangers and temptations to which you are exposed; this will secure to you “the favour of God which is life, and his loving kindness which is better than life.” Delay not your conversion. Every day is lost time, which is not spent in the service of God. Besides, procrastination has proved ruinous to many. Eternity is at hand; the judgment day must be met, and how can we appear there, without piety? This is our only preparation and passport for heaven. Dear youth, be wise, and secure an inheritance among the saints in light. God invites you to be reconciled. Christ extends his arms of mercy to secure you. Angels are waiting to rejoice at your conversion, and to become your daily and nightly guardians. The doors of the church will be opened to receive you. The ministers of the gospel, and all the company of believers, will hail your entrance and will welcome you to the precious ordinances of God’s house. And, finally, remember that now is the accepted time and the day of salvation.

PRAYER

Seek divine direction and aid, by incessant, fervent prayer. You need grace to help you every day. Your own wisdom is folly, your own strength weakness, and your own righteousness altogether insufficient. “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” But if you lack wisdom, you are permitted to ask; and you have a gracious promise, that you shall receive. Whatever we need will be granted, if we humbly and believingly ask for it. “Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” “Be careful for nothing, but in every thing with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”

Faith and prayer are our chief resource under all the various and heavy afflictions of this life. When all other refuges fail, God will hide his people who seek him in his secret pavilion, and shelter them under the shadow of his wings. Prayer is essential to the existence and growth of the spiritual life. It is the breath of the new man. By this means he obtains quick relief from innumerable evils; and draws down from heaven blessings of the richest and sweetest kind. Possess your minds fully of the persuasion, that prayer is efficacious, when offered in faith and with importunity, to obtain the blessings which we need. God has made himself known as a hearer of prayer; yea, he has promised that we shall have, as far as may be for his glory and our good, whatever we ask. The most important events may be brought about by prayer. One righteous man, by fervent and effectual prayer, has been able to shut heaven and open it again. How often did Moses by his prayers avert the divine wrath from the people of Israel! That man who has access to a throne of grace will never want any thing which is really needful. “God will give grace and glory, and no good

thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "But he will be inquired of by the house of Israel for this thing that he may do it for them." Banish, as most unreasonable, the idea that prayer is a dull or melancholy business. Such a sentiment must have been invented by Satan; for it never could have been suggested by reason, or taught by experience. Intercourse with the greatest and best of all beings must be a source of exalted pleasure; and surely, man can have no greater honour and privilege conferred upon him, than to be admitted to converse intimately and confidentially with the God whom angels adore. The experience of every saint attests, that "it is good to draw near to God;" and that "one day in his courts is better than a thousand." I need not be afraid, therefore, to counsel the young to cultivate the spirit of prayer, and to be constant in its exercise. "Pray without ceasing." "Be instant in prayer." It will not spoil your pleasures, but will open for you new sources of enjoyment, far more refined and satisfactory, than any which prayerless persons can possess. Prayer is the only method by which intercourse between heaven and earth can be kept open. Often, too, in the performance of this duty, a taste of heaven is brought down to earth; and the pious worshipper anticipates, in some degree, those joys which are ineffable and eternal. Prayer will, moreover, be your most effectual guard against sin and the power of temptation:

"For Satan trembles, when he sees

The weakest saint upon his knees."

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I conclude my counsels to the young, by a serious and affectionate recommendation to every one who reads these pages, to make immediate preparation for death, I know that gay youth are unwilling to hear this subject mentioned. There is nothing which casts a greater damp upon their spirits, than the solemn fact that death must be encountered; and that no earthly possessions or circumstances can secure us from becoming his victims, on any day. But if it is acknowledged that this formidable evil is inevitable, and that the tenure by which we hold our grasp of life is very fragile, why should we act so unreasonably, and I may say, madly, as to shut our eyes against the danger? If, indeed, there was no way of preparing to meet this event, there might be some reason for turning away our thoughts from immediate destruction; but if by attention and exertion, it is possible to make preparation for death, then nothing can be conceived more insane, than to refuse to consider our latter end. How often are we called to witness the decease of blooming youth, in the midst of all their pleasures and prospects! Such scenes have been exhibited within the observation of all of you. Dear friends and companions have been snatched away from the side of some of you. The grave has closed upon many whose prospects of long life were as favourable as those of their survivors. Now, my dear young friends, what has so frequently happened in relation to so many others, may take place with regard to some of you. This year you may be called to bid farewell to all your earthly prospects, and all your beloved relatives. The bare possibility of such an event ought to have the effect of engaging your most serious attention, and of leading you to immediate preparation. Do you ask what preparation is necessary? I answer, reconciliation with God, and a meetness for the employments and enjoyments of the heavenly state. Preparation for death includes repentance towards God for all our sins, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and reliance on his atoning sacrifice, regeneration of heart, and reformation of life; and, finally, a lively exercise

of piety, accompanied with a comfortable assurance of the divine favour. In short, genuine and lively piety forms the essence of the needed preparation. With this your death will be safe, and your happiness after death secure; but to render a death-bed not only safe but comfortable, you must have a strong faith, purpose to deliver us from this bondage. With his presence and guidance we need fear no evil, even while passing through the gloomy valley and shadow of death. He is able by his rod and his staff to comfort us, and to make us conquerors over this last enemy.

S. A Dialogue between a Presbyterian and a “Friend”

A DIALOGUE

between a

PRESBYTERIAN

and a

“FRIEND”

by the

REV. A. ALEXANDER, D. D.

“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,

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DIALOGUE

Presbyterian. Friend Thomas, I was glad to see you at our church on last Sabbath evening—I think you were never there before. How did you like our young preacher?

Friend. Neighbour John, I am not fond of being catechized. I went on the evening of First-day, to the meeting, because I was told that the preacher intended to speak of our deceased friend Jeremy Jones, a neighbour I much esteemed. But in regard to this, I was disappointed. And as to the matter of the young man's discourse, it was well enough; but to tell thee the truth, neighbour, I have a strong dislike of these hireling preachers, who make a traffic of the truth of God.

P. Is not the labourer worthy of his hire? If any man spends his time and strength in serving you, is it not reasonable that you should support him?

F. The Bible tells us that none should be induced to seek the ministry for the love of filthy lucre; that what we receive freely, we should give freely.

P. I agree with you, friend, that it is wicked for any one to be moved to preach by the love of money; but that very text shows that it was common in the days of the apostles, to receive remuneration for preaching; otherwise, there would have been no temptation to seek that office from the love of filthy luere. I agree with you, also, that the miraculous gifts of healing, conferred on the apostles, were to be exercised freely, and not sold for money. We know that Simon Magus was declared to be in “the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity,” because he thought these miraculous gifts could be bought with money. But when the apostles were sent out at first by our

Lord, and he said, "Freely ye have received, freely give," he intended that the people to whom they were sent should support them; for he commanded them to take no money, nor any clothing, but what they had on; and the reason assigned is, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." As they could not live without food, and were not permitted to take money in their purse to buy, they must have been supported by the people among whom they laboured.

F. But Paul refused to receive any thing for his preaching, and supported himself by the labour of his own hands.

P. When Paul came to Corinth, there was no Christian church there, and he could not expect to be supported in preaching the gospel by the heathen; therefore he resorted to working at the trade of tent-making, which he had learned in his youth.

F. But, afterwards when there was a numerous church gathered at Corinth, Paul refused to receive any thing from them for his labours.

P. His refusing to receive any pecuniary compensation for his labours at Corinth, was not owing to any opinion that that was unlawful in itself; but he pursued this course for prudential reasons, on account of certain false teachers, who had come in among the people, and who were endeavouring to lessen the influence of the apostle. That this is a true statement, appears from what he says when speaking on this very subject. "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." (2 Corinthians 11:7-8) Accordingly, he expresses warmly his gratitude to the church at Philippi, because they had, above others, been attentive to the supply of his necessities. "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity!" (Php_4:14-16.) F. Why, then, did not Paul explicitly declare, that the preachers of the gospel ought to be supported by the people?

P. Friend Thomas, I really thought that you were more familiar with the writings of Paul, than to ask such a question. The very thing which you require has been done. There is not a truth more clearly taught, nor a duty more expressly inculcated in the New Testament.

F. Point me to the passage; for it has escaped my notice, or slipped from my memory.

P. I have a New Testament with me, and I will read it to you from the 9 chap. of first Corinthians. "Who goeth a warfare at any time, at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing that we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple: and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

F. I remember the passage now, since thou hast recited it. But our people do not take it literally; but suppose that Paul is speaking of the spiritual blessings which they enjoy who preach the gospel.

P. It is impossible, friend, that they should be right in their interpretation, for Paul calls the things which religious teachers received from the people whom they served, “carnal things;” that is, things which relate to the sustenance and comfort of the body. But what of himself demonstrates, that they were not spiritual blessings of which he speaks, unless you would suppose that he had no experience of grace. For he says, expressly, “Nevertheless, we have not used this power; but suffer all things lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.” And again, “But I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.” (1 Corinthians 9:12, 1 Corinthians 9:15.)

F. I am unable to explain this matter now; but I will consult the elders of our meeting, and ascertain how they dispose of this passage. I am sure they must have some method of interpreting it, consistently with our sentiments.

P. My good friend, I do not think that you need go to any one to explain these words. The meaning is as plain as it could possibly be made. In this case, you should judge for yourself. I know it is a cross to depart from that religion in which we have been brought up; but it is the interest of every one to forsake error, when discovered, and to prize the truth as the most precious jewel. “Buy the truth, and sell it not.”

But, friend Thomas, I wish to ask you one question. Is it not the custom in your society to defray the expenses of travelling preachers when they are poor?

F. It is, and this is necessary to enable these public friends, when moved, to go forth and visit places distant from their home. This we do not consider in the light of hire for preaching, but merely as necessary to enable these public friends to travel, as they cannot live on air. But our public friends, who are accustomed to speak in our meetings, never receive any thing for their services.

P. Very well. You may call this contribution to travelling friends by what name you please; but the principle is the very same as that adopted by us. We do not pay our ministers for dispensing the word; but we support them, that they may have it in their power to preach the gospel; and as to what you observe in regard to such as preach in their own meeting, I am fully of opinion that they should receive nothing for their services; because they employ no part of their time in preparation. But our ministers are required to spend much money in preparing for the ministry—frequently their whole patrimony; and they are expected to spend much time in studying the Scriptures and preparing their discourses. Your preachers can follow their secular pursuits without interruption; but ours must devote their lives to study and to pastoral duties; so that they cannot and ought not to engage in worldly business. The apostle Paul has given them a rule, which, without sin, they cannot neglect.

F. What rule is that?

P. I will read it to you out of his first epistle to Timothy. (1 Timothy 4:13-16.) "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Meditate upon these things. Give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Now if any man devotes his whole time and talents to the instruction of a congregation, nothing can be more equitable, than that they should furnish him and his family with a decent support.

F. Well, neighbour, I will think more about this matter; but there are other things in which thou differest from the Friends, which I do not think thou canst defend; at least to my satisfaction.

P. I know that I am liable to error, as well as others; and all I can say is, that as soon as I am convinced that any tenet of mine is contrary to reason or the word of God, I will renounce it; for my earnest desire is to be found walking in the truth. Mention then, what it is in my creed, which you think cannot be defended.

F. I had reference to those external ceremonies which thy church retains and practises. I mean baptism and the Lord's supper; which ordinances might have suited a dispensation of figures and shadows; but which seem to me altogether unsuitable to the spiritual dispensation of the gospel.

P. The ordinances to which you refer, would be mere will-worship, if not appointed by Christ, whose commandments we are bound to obey. We reject every ceremony for which we have not a "Thus saith the Lord." But if he commands us to observe any external ceremonies, then it is undoubtedly our duty to comply, for we are bound to keep all his commandments.

F. The ceremonial law is abrogated, and all these external institutions, like shadows, have passed away, since Christ, the substance, is come. In my opinion these outward forms are unprofitable, and have been the occasion of much contention, and of much superstition. And as mere bodily exercise can profit little, it is the part of wisdom to lay all such things aside, and rather attend to the inner man, and to the motions of the Spirit prompting us to seek communion with the Father of our spirits.

P. No doubt an undue dependence may be placed on external ordinances, and men may attend hypocritically on these outward forms, when the heart is far from God; but while we are in the body, we need some external rites of worship, that we may glorify God with our bodies as well as with our spirits. (1 Corinthians 6:20.) Even in Paradise, God gave to man in innocence, certain external objects, connected with his religion. There was the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden, and also the tree of life. Besides, when God had finished all his works of creation, he sanctified the seventh day; that is, set it apart from a common to a holy use. And as soon as man had fallen, sacrifices were instituted: and from time to time, other ceremonies, most of which had a prospective aspect: they pointed to Christ, the Redeemer, and to his glorious work. When Christ came and suffered on the cross the typical ceremonies were of course no longer needed. The body having appeared, the shadows became useless. But there was nothing in the new dispensation which rendered it unsuitable to appoint a few simple, striking institutions, which might serve as emblems of spiritual blessings, seals of God's covenant, and memorials of important events, and which might serve as modes of external worship. But I admit, that if Christ

has not instituted these ceremonies, it would be impious in us to attend on them. Christ is King, and makes his own laws, which it is our duty to obey, of whatever kind they may be. I think, friend, that you will not deny, that we ought to obey all the commandments of Christ.

F. Certainly not. All I want is to be convinced that Christ requires such services at our hands. My opinion, however, is, that if any such ordinances were observed by Christ and his apostles, it was only in compliance with Jewish prejudices. We know, that Paul circumcised Timothy: and that he made a vow, and shaved his head, at Cenchrea and went into the temple at Jerusalem, and passed through a course of purification. Now, would any man infer from these actions of the apostle, that these ceremonies were binding on us; or that it would be right for us to follow his example in these things?

P. What you say has force, as it relates to Jewish ceremonies; but, if Christ has commanded certain positive duties to his disciples, entirely distinct from the Mosaic rites, and having a spiritual end, we cannot be at liberty to dispense with these, unless we can prove that they were intended to be temporary. When our Lord was about to leave the world after his resurrection, he said, “Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” To be sure, water is not mentioned; but it would not be ingenuous to found an objection on that omission. No other than water baptism was administered, or could be administered by the apostles, in the name of the sacred Trinity. No doubt it was premised that Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; but that baptism was internal, and not to be administered by man, nor in the name of the Trinity. When the three thousand converts, on the day of Pentecost, were exhorted by Peter to be baptized, it was that they might receive the Holy Ghost; that is, be endued with his miraculous gifts. And when Cornelius and his family were baptized, water is expressly mentioned. “Who can forbid water?” said Peter. And when Paul was baptized, he was exhorted by Ananias to “arise and be baptized and wash away his sins;” and from that day to this, baptism has been practised in every age and in every section of the Christian Church, with the exception of the society of Friends and a few others. And that the ordinance was intended to be perpetual, is evident from the Saviour’s promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”—with you in preaching and baptizing. What Paul says, when he thanks God that he had baptized few of the Corinthians, shows that it was not spiritual baptism to which he referred, but water baptism. If Christ intended water baptism to be a temporary ordinance, he has left no hint of his will on record; and the whole Church in all ages, has fallen into a grievous mistake.

F. Let me now hear what thou hast next to say in favour of the Lord’s supper, as a standing ordinance.

P. It is my candid opinion, that all that is necessary to convince an impartial mind, of the binding obligation of this sacrament, is a careful consideration of what the sacred Scriptures teach on this subject. It has been a matter of astonishment to me, that serious inquirers among the Friends could avoid seeing that this is an ordinance of Christ, and a very delightful privilege, which Christians have always greatly prized, and which will be perpetual in the Church.

F. Well, neighbour, I have read the New Testament from the beginning to the end, as often as almost any one, and I was never convinced that these ordinances, or sacraments as thou callest

them, were binding on me. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." It would be sin in me to partake of that bread and wine; for Paul saith, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." And I assure thee, I have no faith in this thing.

P. Our believing a thing does not make it true; nor does our disbelieving it make it false. I do not doubt but that you sincerely believe as you say; but, friend, you will pardon me for thinking, that when you read the New Testament, your eyes were hood-winked by the prejudices of your education. Permit me, therefore, to direct your attention to some texts of Scripture which have a bearing on this subject.

F. Well, neighbour John, thou mayest; but I tell thee beforehand, that I do not think thou wilt ever convince me that I ought, as a religious ceremony, to eat a bit of bread, and take a sup of wine. There is no religion in this. Religion is in the heart, and not in outward ceremonies.

P. It is very probable that we shall both be, when our conference is ended, just where we were when we began. But still it is a duty which we owe one to another, to communicate what we believe to be truth to our neighbour. As to what you say, that religion has its seat in the heart, I believe it; but, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "Out of the heart are the issues of life." If God has commanded us to perform this external act of eating bread and drinking wine, you cannot deny that we ought to obey him. Whatever he commands is right, whether we can see the reason of it or not; and we have no right to judge of the reasonableness of his commands. Now, he has said, "Do this in remembrance of me;" that is, eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of me. It is a thing easy to be performed, and we ought to comply with this injunction of our dying Lord.

F. Neighbour, let me tell thee that thou dost run too fast to a conclusion; thou oughtest to prove, that that commandment is binding on us. Remember it was addressed to the twelve disciples more than eighteen hundred years ago, and nothing is said about doing this often. If they did it once, they obeyed the Lord's commandment. And not a word is said respecting its observance by those who were to come after them.

P. I confess, if this were the only text on the subject, I might find it difficult to prove what you require. But I will now refer you to another passage, which contains full proof of both the things for which you demand proof.

F. If thou canst do this, it will be more than I have ever seen done yet. Come, I am anxious to hear what thou hast to say.

P. I will again read out of my New Testament the passage to which I refer. It is found in 1 Corinthians 11:1-34 Paul says, "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup." Now, Paul received his instructions immediately from the risen Saviour; and with the gospel, he received this ordinance, to be communicated to the churches which he should gather. And that it was not to be, like baptism, observed but once, is evident from the words "as oft as ye drink it," from which it may be inferred, that it was an ordinance to be often celebrated.

F. But still, this does not prove that this practice was to be continued through all ages; and that it is now binding on us.

P. The constant understanding and practice of the Christian Church unto this time, ought to satisfy us, that it was intended to be a standing ordinance, especially as nothing is said to lead to the idea that it was to cease. And this is the most reasonable construction, when we consider that Christians now have as much reason to remember Christ's death as those who lived in the apostle's days.

F. I thought from thy positive manner of speaking, that thou hadst some more express testimony for the continuance of this ceremony through all ages.

P. I was just about to adduce the text which proves it, from the same chapter already quoted. Paul says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." "What could be more express? When Christ shall come in his glory, he will find some of his disciples occupied in thus remembering him. And it is a memorial calculated to keep up a lively remembrance of the death of the Redeemer, and is adapted to our nature; for how often do departing friends leave some token of remembrance to those left behind! It is good to remember our best Friend; and this ordinance assists in calling him to mind.

F. Thy church, neighbour, has another practice, which is very offensive to our people. I mean the singing of psalms and hymns, set to artificial music. It is a strange conceit, that God, who is a pure Spirit, can take delight in hearing these musical sounds. It is something akin to the notions of some heathen, who believed that their gods were refreshed with food set before them, and regaled with the savour of meats, and the odour of incense.

P. No opinion of the society of Friends is more unaccountable to me than their prejudice against sacred music, in the worship of God. In the other ordinances to which they are opposed, there is of the nature of ceremony and positive institution; but in this case they set themselves in opposition to a natural expression of our feelings. Music of some kind is found among all nations, ancient and modern, and is undoubtedly a natural expression of lively emotions.

F. Nature does not teach us to sing in artificial measure and tune; but merely to emit such sounds as correspond with our feelings at the moment.

P. If certain tones of voice are natural expressions of certain emotions of the mind, surely there can be nothing evil in the regulation of these sounds, and reducing them to systems; so that a number of persons may unite in the same song of praise to God. And if singing tones are prompted by the constitution which God has given us, there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that if the emotions of love and gratitude in the soul are pleasing to God, the expression of these feelings by appropriate sounds, cannot be offensive to him. The Scripture teaches, that we should "present our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service." And again, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body and spirit, which are God's." Now it is written, "He that offereth praise, glorifieth me." How can we offer our bodies a sacrifice, but by presenting them before God in reverential and humble acts of worship, as we are taught in Hebrews 13:15? "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

F. Well, I must confess, that the practice is not at all edifying to me. It has a trifling and puerile appearance, to see a whole congregation or a select choir, chasing one another by artificial sounds, and in such tunes often, as seem better suited for idle people to dance after, than to aid devotion in public worship.

P. Friend, you confound two things which should be kept distinct; unsuitable and improper tunes, with the propriety of using sacred music of any kind. I have heard prayers offered with a very unbecoming tone; but that does not prove that it is not proper to use the voice in prayer. I admit that there is often a want of good taste in the selection of tunes, and that this part of worship is often performed in a very unsatisfactory manner. But we have many good tunes, and praise may be offered by a whole congregation with elevated feeling and delightful solemnity.

F. What dost thou say of instrumental music in the worship of God, for I observe that it is being introduced in many of your churches?

P. I shall not enter on the discussion of that subject at present, because it forms no part of our system, and it is not adopted by most of our churches; but singing we hold to be an imperative duty on all Christians, and it is a grand defect in your meetings that the sound of praise is never heard there.

F. Neighbour John, thou dost rather surprise me, by asserting that singing is a commanded duty. I thought that at most it was a matter of option, for every one to adopt or reject, according to his taste and inclination.

P. Friend Thomas, it grieves me to find that you make duty so much a matter of feeling and taste, and so seldom refer to the Holy Scriptures, to ascertain the mind of the Lord. If there were no positive command to sing the praises of God, the thing would be lawful, for nature prompts men of all countries to its performance under strong emotions of gratitude. Thus Miriam and her company sang at the deliverance at the Red Sea. And the sons of the prophets, when under the divine afflatus, sang and played on instruments.

F. What was done under the Old Testament, in the worship of the tabernacle and temple, is no more a rule for us, than the command to offer a sacrifice or burn incense.

P. There is a great difference. Praising God with the voice, I have proved to be a moral and not a ceremonial duty. It is therefore proper in every age, and under every dispensation. But I will undertake to prove from the New Testament, that singing in the worship of God is a commanded duty.

F. Do this, and it will be to the purpose; but I have not yet seen such a command, often as I have read the New Testament.

P. Prejudice often blinds our eyes, so that we see not in Scripture what is plainly set down there. Have you not read, that Christ and his disciples, after the Passover, went out and sang a hymn? Have you not read that the angels sang a glorious anthem at the birth of Christ? Have you not read, how Paul and Silas sang praises in the prison at Philippi, at midnight, and the prisoners heard them?

F. All this does not amount to a command for us to sing.

P. Well, I will give it to you in the words of Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, (Colossians 3:16) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

I do not know what your society will do when they arrive at heaven; for there the redeemed sing a new song, which none others can learn: "To Him that loved us and washed us in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God." If we expect to join in the praises of heaven, we should begin our song here upon earth.

F. I trust that if we shall ever be so happy as to reach heaven, we shall be prepared to join in all the sublime services of that glorious place. But the question is, not what we shall do in heaven, but what God requires of us here. And in regard to this I agree with thee, that, prejudice aside, we should impartially and diligently seek to know the Divine will. I confess that some things which thou hast brought forward, do, in some measure, shake my confidence in my former opinions; and I am determined to give the subject an honest investigation, and to follow the light of truth whithersoever it may lead.

P. Permit me before we part, to put you in mind of the necessity of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Without his guidance, we are almost sure to err. And this is in accordance with the principles of your Society, who profess in all their religious acts to follow the promptings of this Divine Monitor. The only point of difference between you and us, touching this matter, is that while you expect this guidance, without the word, we believe that it is afforded only through the Holy Scriptures. May that effectual Teacher make us both wise to salvation!

F. So let it be!

S. A Discourse Occasioned by the Burning of the Theatre in the City of Richmond, VA

A DISCOURSE

occasioned

By the Burning of the Theatre

in the

CITY OF RICHMOND,

virginia,

ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH OF DECEMBER, 1811.

by which awful calamity

A large number of valuable lives were lost.

Delivered in the Third Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on the eighth day of January, 1812, at the request of the Virginia Students attached to the Medical Class, in the University of Pennsylvania.

BY A. ALEXANDER, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:

john welwood scott, no. 14 chesnut-street,

FOR DANIEL WILSON, M. D.

1812.

DISCOURSE

Romans 12:15.

“WEEP WITH THEM THAT WEEP.”

ONE leading difference between the system of ethics prescribed by the Stoics, and that inculcated by Christianity is, that whilst the former aims at eradicating the passions, the latter endeavours to regulate them, and direct them into their proper channels. The attempt of the first is as impracticable as is undesirable; the object of the last, is, by divine aid, in a good degree attainable, and in it consists much of the dignity, perfection, and happiness of man. The great Author of our being has implanted the principle of sympathy deeply in human nature; and has made the susceptibility of feeling the sorrows of another, as extensive as the race of man. It is common to the untutored savage, and to the man of refinement and education: and traces of it are even

discovered in the animal creation; many species of which appear to be strongly excited, as often as any great evil threatens, or befalls, any of their own kind. This principle of sympathy, whilst it indicates the unity of our species, seems to form a mysterious bond of connexion between all its members. The spectacle of suffering humanity, however great a stranger the object of distress may be, will always excite our sensibility, unless the feelings be blunted by vicious indulgence, restrained by prejudice, or extinguished by the long prevalence of malignant passions. Simply considered, it is not of a moral nature; it is, however, friendly to virtue, and intimately mingles itself with the most benevolent and pious affections of the human heart: and the want of it always argues a high degree of moral depravity. Refined and cultivated, as it may be by education, it has a great share in forming the character which is termed amiable and interesting. But like other original principles of our nature, it is liable to abuse and excess; and the evils thence resulting to human happiness, are not few nor inconsiderable. Instead of being the ally of virtue, and prompter of benevolence, it may become the most successful auxiliary of vice. In fact, a morbid sensibility has, with many in this age, usurped the place, and claimed the honour, due to moral principle and religion. Genuine pity, and compassion for objects of real distress, have been perverted, and almost extinguished, in a multitude of persons, by the artificial excitement of a set of spurious feelings, produced by the contemplation of scenes of fictitious distress; which tend to no valuable end, and are sought only for the momentary gratification of the possessor. But, however sympathy may be abused, there is a legitimate and proper exercise of it, to which we are not only prompted by nature, but directed by reason, and exhorted by religion. There are occasions, when not to “weep with them that weep,” would be rebellion against every principle which ought to govern us, as well as against those which commonly do influence men. If the sufferings of an enemy may be such as to affect us—if we are excited to weep at the woes of a stranger—what must our feelings be, when we recognise, in the cry of unutterable anguish, the well known voice of an acquaintance, a friend, a brother, or a sister? Such a cry of distress, from the capital of our native state, has recently pierced our ears, and filled our hearts with grief. The sons of Virginia, resident in this place, are today called upon to mourn, and to mingle their sympathetic tears with those of the whole state. A calamity, as great and distressing, as it was sudden and unexpected, has fallen upon her! A calamity, which in its circumstances of real woe and great distress, has scarcely a parallel in history! In most occurrences which pierce the soul with anguish, there are some alleviating considerations which sooth the aching heart, and mitigate the pangs of grief. But here there are none! Every fresh recital, every additional circumstance, only serves to increase the horror of the scene, and more deeply to interest our feelings. Had her honourable men and valuable citizens fallen in the field of battle, like those of a sister state, bravely resisting the enemies of their country, and covered with honourable wounds, however bereaving and distressing the dispensation, still there would have existed some ground of consolation. Had her respected matrons and fair daughters been swept off by the desolating pestilence, however melancholy the scene, yet still there would have been some warning, and some opportunity of preparing for the event. The last words, and the last looks of tenderness and affection, would have left a pleasing impression upon the memory: and at least, surviving friends would have enjoyed the satisfaction of beholding the bodies of their beloved relatives entire and unmangled; and of gazing upon their well known features undeformed with burns and bruises. But even this meagre consolation was wanting. In the midst of health—in the moment of mirth and exhilaration, in the full flow of earthly joy, perfectly thoughtless of futurity, and unsuspecting of any danger, more than a

hundred respectable citizens, are overwhelmed in one promiscuous ruin! Neither genius, learning, power, wealth, youth, beauty, nor accomplishments, avail any thing to rescue their unfortunate possessors from destruction. Almost as rapid as the fall of lightning from heaven, Death, in his most frightful and resistless form, rushes on them! O! the dismal scene of horror, of misery, and of death, which here presents itself to our view!—But to pourtray this shocking scene is neither practicable nor desirable. Permit me, then, to drop the curtain over the catastrophe of this dismal tragedy! The impression which this awful occurrence has already made on your minds is indelible. You need no highly wrought description to make it deeper. The lapse of time can never obliterate it. The wound in the feelings of some here present, will never be completely healed, on this side the grave! The mere circumstance, that these unfortunate sufferers were creatures of our species, would have been sufficient to awaken all our tender sympathies; and much more, to know that they were our countrymen, who had been accustomed to breathe the same air and tread the same soil, and had been nurtured and educated in the same institutions with ourselves. But the ties by which most of you, my young countrymen, who have consecrated this day to sorrow, are connected with the unfortunate sufferers and disconsolate mourners of Richmond, are of a much more intimate and tender nature. To many of you, this sad catalogue of death, presented the names of much esteemed friends and intimate acquaintances; to some, of beloved relatives; and alas! to one or more, the first intelligence of their misfortune, was conveyed by the distressing sight of the endeared name of a sister! It is not surprising therefore, that you feel sensibly on this occasion: Nature constrains you to weep, and Religion approves it. Tears are becoming, even in the manly countenance, when distresses like these pass in review before our eyes, and approach so near to our bosoms. But if this disastrous occurrence, by the mere recital, has produced such poignant anguish here, what must have been the feelings of those on the spot, who were both witnesses and partakers of the calamity! Our conceptions, as well as our words, are here altogether inadequate; and we are therefore incapable of fully sympathising with their sufferings. But if we could, the scene is such as to revolt all our feelings. The idea of such distress is, to the mind of sensibility, intolerable. Here then let us pause, and not attempt to enter more minutely into the melancholy detail of the events of that dreadful night.

“Boast not thyself, O man! of to-morrow!” See what a day—an hour, may bring forth! Behold a flourishing city, from the height of exultation and prosperity, cast down into the deepest abyss of grief and misery! The voice of mirth and joy are exchanged for the voice of wailing, lamentation, and wo, in all her dwellings! Lately, she appeared arrayed in the robes of gaiety and splendor, but now she sitteth disconsolate, in the sable garments of sorrow! Her face, recently animated with hope, and brightened with joy, is now distorted with anguish, and defiled with weeping! As a widow she sitteth solitary, and those who should comfort her, are removed from her sight. Have pity upon her, O ye her friends! Have pity upon her, for the hand of God hath touched her! In order to form a just estimate of the extent and magnitude of this calamity, not only to the city of Richmond, but to the state at large, (and may I not say to the United States?) we must take a cursory view of the names inscribed on this catalogue of death.* The king of terrors, when personified, is commonly represented as going forth with his destructive weapon cutting down old and young, male and female, rich and poor, the honourable and obscure, with a promiscuous sweep; but in the present instance, the ruthless tyrant, seems to have made a discrimination, in the selection of his prey. Wealth, talents, youth, and beauty, were, in this instance, the objects of his fatal shafts. The first on the list, is the respected governor and chief magistrate of the state, who had only a few days

before this melancholy event, been raised to that high station, by the voice of the representatives of the people; and who, it is intimated, like some others, perished in the generous attempt to rescue some beloved friend from the flames. By a premature death, his country is deprived of his services for ever, and a wife and five weeping orphans left to deplore their irreparable loss!

Next in order, we find the name of the president of the Bank of Virginia; a man, whose vigorous mind was highly improved and richly furnished: long known as a useful and active member of the supreme legislature of the nation, where he was distinguished for the extent and accuracy of his information. And not less qualified for the important station which he lately occupied, by unsuspected integrity and unshaken firmness of character, united with habits of strict order and correctness, in the management of business. He was, moreover, in private life, uniformly mild and amiable; remarkable for sweetness of temper and urbanity of manners. And although he has left neither wife nor children to deplore their loss, yet his untimely and unhappy end, will long be the subject of bitter lamentation, in a large circle of respectable and affectionate friends and connections. The speaker hopes to be indulged in offering this small tribute of respect to the memory of a useful citizen, with whom he has had the honour of an acquaintance for many years; and he regrets that the want of personal acquaintance, prevents him from doing justice to the characters of others, who may be equally distinguished. This deficiency, however, will be amply compensated by those who enjoyed the pleasure of their acquaintance.

I will only add, that in the list of the deceased, we find the names, of an eminent attorney, whose wife also perished with him; of a promising young officer of the Navy of the United States; of several highly respectable merchants; and of one or more strangers of distinction. That view of this mournful catalogue, however, which more especially interests our tender feelings, and awakens all the exquisite sensibilities of our nature, is the large number of respectable females, it contains. Was there ever before an unfortunate city which had equal cause of grief and lamentation, on this account! O Richmond! how art thou fallen! Who will not drop a tear over thy misfortunes! Thy glory, thy pride, and thy beauty, are brought down to the dust, and the dark cloud of sorrow has overshadowed thee, and turned thy day into night! But that which should excite our sensibility to the utmost, and wind up all our sympathetic feelings to the highest pitch, is, that the greater part were young ladies, in the very prime and bloom of life! About one half the names in the whole catalogue are of persons of this description. O! who can think, without exquisite anguish, of so many gay and blooming virgins, decorated with the charms of beauty, and accomplished by the refinements of art, delicate and tender to excess, and accustomed only to caresses and endearments, perishing by a death so cruel, and by torments so excruciating! Who can describe the chasm which has been made in numerous respectable families; and the agony which has been, and is still endured! Tell us, ye bereaved mothers, (if words can express it,) the pangs which have rent your breaking hearts, since you beheld the scorched, bruised, and disfigured bodies of your once beautiful daughters.

"In Rama," of old, "a voice of lamentation and weeping and great mourning was heard: Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not:" And now of late, a cry of anguish equally as bitter has proceeded from Richmond! O how many inconsolable Rachels are there this day, who weep for their children, and refuse to be comforted! The hoary head of the indulgent father too, must now come down with sorrow to the grave! Perhaps, the last prop and solace of his declining years, as well as the darling of his heart, is for ever gone from his sight! The

helpless widow, and the orphaned children also, lift up their deploring hands, and their streaming eyes to heaven, expressing thereby, feelings of grief and agony, to which all words are inadequate.

And, why need I attempt to describe the poignant pangs of the disappointed lover, (the day of whose nuptials might perhaps have been fixed,) when he beholds the beauty which he so much idolized, transformed into a frightful and deformed skeleton! But the shock of this awful stroke is not only felt in the city of Richmond, and its immediate vicinity, but in distant and remote parts of the state. Several of the young ladies who unfortunately perished in the flames, resided at a distance, where they had numerous, respectable, and affectionate connections, through all the ramifications of which, this occurrence will diffuse the most heart-felt sorrow! With some, perhaps, it was the first visit of any length which they ever made from their father's house. O! fatal visit! Methinks, I see the fond mother taking the last leave of her beloved daughter, little suspecting that it was the last! Or, shall I fancy, that some unaccountable foreboding seizes her mind, and oppresses her heart, as the object of her fond hopes and anxious fears is carried from her sight!

But, who shall attempt to imagine what her situation and feelings are, when the day arrives which should bring a letter from her affectionate child? A letter comes 'tis true; but what horror chills the blood, when it is seen not to be inscribed in the well known hand of the dear girl; and is addressed to the father instead of the mother. Methinks I see his veteran hand tremble, whilst he breaks the ominous seal! And the countenance which had remained unmoved, whilst death was braved at the cannon's mouth, now turns pale as ashes, whilst he reads the few incoherent sentences, by which he is made to realize more than ever the gloomiest hour had painted on his imagination!

Distressed family! What on earth can give you comfort? This world can never afford another taste of joy to you. All its most flattering scenes and fascinating appearances must henceforth be considered as deceitful and illusive. But one resource remains.—Religion is the only cure for griefs like these: But even piety itself may for a while swell the torrent of distress. “O!” says the pious mother, “why did I ever consent to let her go out of my sight; what sin and folly have I been guilty of, to commit her to the gaities and dissipation of the metropolis! My poor girl is for ever gone; but I am to blame for her permature and awful death; O could she have been permitted to die a natural death at home; or any kind of death, whilst engaged in serious and pious exercises, I would have been contented! But O! to be burnt alive!—To die in the theatre! To be snatched in a moment from time to eternity! To be hurried instantly from thoughtless gaiety to the bar of God! The idea is too dreadful! What soul can endure it! Gracious Heaven! send relief to a heart bursting with grief!” This may be said, to be in part, a fancied case. But O! the reality, in this calamity, goes far beyond the powers of imagination.

These last remarks were suggested by the recollection of a modest and amiable young lady, whom I happened to see, when on a visit to Virginia last summer, in company with a pious mother, at a solemn religious meeting, where she appeared to be deeply interested and to enter very devotionally into the exercises of the day: but alas! in looking over this melancholy list (if I mistake not) I find her name enrolled. She perished in the flames on the fatal twenty-sixth of December!

It may perhaps be expected by some of my hearers, that I should enter into some discussion, relative to the nature and moral tendency of theatrical exhibitions. But various considerations influence me to waive this discussion for the present. However, I feel it to be incumbent on me,

without intending to censure those who think differently, or expecting to make any considerable impression on a public excessively devoted to these amusements, to give my public testimony against them, as being, notwithstanding the partial good which may result from them, on the whole, unfriendly to piety—unfriendly to morality—unfriendly to health—unfriendly to domestic happiness—and unfriendly to true delicacy and genuine refinement.—And sure I am, that allowing all to this institution, which its warmest advocates claim for it, it will not, in a thousand years repair to the community, the loss of which it has, in this instance been, unfortunately the occasion.

One other observation, I am constrained to make upon this subject, and that is,—that those of the inhabitants of this place, and other places in our country, who do not even suspend their attendance on public amusements, in consequence of the alarming dispensation which has occurred, for a single day, clearly evince a destitution of a tender and amiable sympathy with their suffering fellow citizens; and also discover a state of society, the most alarming to the reflecting mind, which can easily be conceived. If there be a moral conclusion clearly deducible from the records of history, it is, that such an infatuated devotion to pleasure, in the midst of threatening judgments, and public calamities, is a certain indication of a people being ripe for ruin, and a sure forerunner of it. As for you, my young friends, I hope that you will fully evince the sincerity of your grief, and the depth of the impression made on your minds by this awful dispensation, by acting up fully to the spirit of that ordinance of the common council of the capital of your native state, which prohibits all public amusements for the space of four months from its date, and that during this period at least, you will religiously abstain from every species of public amusement, and more especially from an attendance at the theatre. Whilst your native state mourns with such bitter anguish, it is no time for you to be seen in the scenes of gaiety and dissipation. But I hope you do not need this caution.

I will now bring this discourse to a conclusion, by making a few general reflections, which seem to be suggested by the occasion, and which may assist us in making the proper improvement of this distressing visitation of Almighty God.

1. How vain and precarious are all earthly possessions and enjoyments! How uncertain is life itself!—How near are we often to death when unconscious of any danger!—How soon may the most flourishing families be desolated and almost extinguished!—Of how little real value are those things, for the acquisition of which mankind toil with such indefatigable industry!—How soon is the most princely fortune dissipated, or the owner snatched away from its possession, before the period allotted for its enjoyment, has arrived! Whilst infatuated mortals are flattering themselves with the prospect of long and uninterrupted pleasure, and like the rich man mentioned in the gospel, saying, “Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry, for thou hast much goods laid up for many years;” God, in his holy providence says “Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee. And then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”

What empty bubbles also, are the honors of office, the dignity of power, the eclat of talents, the fame of conquest, and the applause of the world! What a fading flower is beauty, and its attendant graces and accomplishments! And how strikingly is this exemplified in the melancholy scene which we have been this day contemplating! To receive the full impression of this truth, you must cast your eyes on that long and mournful procession, which slowly ascends the Capitol Hill. You must draw near and inspect the contents of those huge coffins which contain all the earthly remains of

once celebrated beauty.—But ah! instead of the brilliant eye, the fair complexion, the winning smile, and the indescribable charm of countenance, you now behold ghastly skulls, mangled limbs, bones and ashes, indiscriminate; so that neither age, nor sex, nor colour any longer can be recognized. Let then the pride of beauty cease, and the vain flatterer's incense too. And what shall we say of the pleasures of the senses, of the gratifications of appetite, of the indulgence of the passions, of the entertainments of fancy, and of the feast of intellect? Hear the answer of an oracle, whose responses are never vague and ambiguous: "Surely, every man walketh in a vain show."—"Verily, every man, at his best state, is altogether vanity."—"Surely, they are disquieted in vain: They heap up riches and know not who shall gather them." They make trial of 'mirth and pleasure,' and behold the end is found to be 'vanity.'—"I said of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doeth it?" They give their hearts to 'madness and folly,' and the fruit is 'vexation of spirit.' The young man rejoiceth, and his heart cheereth him in the days of his youth, and he walketh in the ways of his heart and the sight of his eyes, but considereth not that for all these things God will bring him into judgment. Even 'in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' 'Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. But the conclusion of the whole matter is, To fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man; For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.'

2. How cold, how dark, and comfortless, is the system of infidelity, to persons overwhelmed with calamity, and suffering under the pressure of heavy affliction! The idea of obscuring and extinguishing the pleasing and necessary light of revelation, was never first entertained by the sons of adversity. This scheme was never intended, nor calculated to tranquillize the perturbations, and sooth the agonies, of a soul rent with anguish. What consolation does it offer to the bereaved parent, to the disconsolate widow, to the destitute orphan, and to indigent and diseased old age? What relief to the alarmed and struggling sinner, held fast in the grasp of death? To such it presents no brighter prospect than the blackness of despair. The following narrative may be depended on, as substantially correct: "In a populous town on this continent, a gentleman of some learning and talents, distinguished himself by his zeal for infidelity; and he was unhappily but too successful in poisoning the minds of many young persons with his libertine principles. In the number of his proselytes was a young lawyer, of good education and promising talents, who appeared confidently to adopt these new opinions, without entering, however, into any careful or impartial investigation of the subject;—but relying implicitly on the plausible representations and confident assertions of his friend, who assured him in the most positive terms, that Christianity was a fable and religion a dream. This last mentioned gentleman being seized with a mortal fit of illness, his young disciple hastened to his chamber, and accosted him in the following manner: "Dear sir, I have been led by your advice and influence to adopt a system which I am anxious to see proved in this honest hour and trying situation, to which you are come; tell me, I conjure you by our friendship, plainly and candidly; are you satisfied? Do your sentiments afford you peace and comfort in the near prospect of death?" The sick gentleman, much agitated, and casting a look of horrid consternation on his young friend, exclaimed, "All is darkness and uncertainty," and in a few minutes expired. The scene left too deep an impression on the mind of the young lawyer ever to be erased. He renounced the tenets of infidelity from that moment, and began to make himself acquainted with the sacred scriptures, which he found to contain the true secret of a peaceful death, as well as a happy immortality."

Indeed, so conscious are the abettors of infidel principles, that they are badly qualified to administer consolation to the distressed and dying, that they seldom apply them for the comfort of their friends in these circumstances; and what is worst of all, they often fail the infidel himself, when he most needs their support; as witness Voltaire, Diderot, and a host of inferior names. I have, indeed, read somewhere, of an instance of one of these modern philosophers attempting to console his dying wife, by preaching to her the doctrine, that death was an eternal sleep; but the good lady being better instructed, and entertaining better hopes, rejected the miserable comfort, with pious indignation.

Infidelity was the product of pride and licentiousness combined. Its object was to break down the restraints of conscience, to separate remorse from crime, and to banish fear from the guilty. It never ought to be considered as an evidence of superior understanding or information; for it has been repeatedly proved that the balance of genius, learning and worth, were greatly on the side of revelation. And every young man should repel every solicitation to embrace this deadly system, with horror and indignation. For scepticism, once admitted into the soul, may not be so easily cast out, even when we desire it, and stand in need of better consolations.

3. What an invaluable gift to suffering humanity is the christian religion! It is true, it does not remove our earthly afflictions; but it mitigates and sanctifies them. It does not make this world a satisfying portion; but it brings a better world into view. If it strips earthly objects of their fictitious and bewitching charms, it is to prevent our being deceived and seduced by them. If it forbids pleasure, it is to put us in possession of happiness. If it requires self-denial, it compensates a hundred fold for the pain occasioned, by the peace of conscience, and joy of self-conquest which it inspires. The tears of repentance which it commands, it converts into streams of consolation. It turns our heaviest afflictions to our advantage; and our greatest losses become our richest gain. It prepares us for exertion and for suffering—teaches us how to live and how to die. It is this divine religion which sweetens the coarse fare, and softens the hard bed of poverty: which soothes the anguish of the heart broken with sorrow, and fills up the chasm produced in the mind by the bereavement of beloved friends:—which binds up and heals those wounds in the spirit which no other remedy can reach. Yes; Religion, despised and neglected as it is, is after all, the only sure refuge of the afflicted, and solace of the wretched. It is that alone, which can smooth the rugged path that leads down to the valley of the shadow of death: and which often sheds a cheering light on that gloomy vale of tears. But it does more:—It discovers to us the glory, and brings us to the possession of those happy regions where there are no more sighs and tears;—where no sad tidings overwhelm the soul;—where no storms blow—no destructive fires burn—no sickness wastes—no sounds of horrid war disturb the eternal peace: There is the rest which remaineth for the people of God;—there dwells the society which is completely blessed: There the glorious Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, having himself ‘endured the cross, despising the shame,’ now sits highly exalted on his throne of majesty, resplendent with all the glories of Deity, which beam through his face and diffuse happiness among unnumbered millions.

But, in order to enjoy the consolations of religion, we must practise its precepts; and in order to practise its precepts, we must experience its power. True religion is not a form, but a living principle within;—not a name, but an active, energetic influence, which governs the whole man, and directs his views and exertions to the noblest objects.

Finally, permit me to conclude this discourse, by considering the dispensation which has occasioned our meeting here this day, in the light of a solemn warning. Yes, my hearers, if ever the warning trumpet of a righteous Providence sounded loudly in our ears, it doth this day. The voice of this dispensation is truly alarming. Let no weak notions, of accident and second causes, keep you from observing the frowns of heaven, which lower over us. Think not that these were “sinners above all who dwell in this land, because they suffered such things.” I tell you may: But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Often, since the ominous and fatal handwriting on the wall caused the proud kind of Babylon to shake with terror in the midst of his profane mirth and riot, has the awful transition from the gay-scenes of dissipation, to the gloomy shades of death, been made in the period of a single night! Often, have the votaries of pleasure been hurried from the festive board, the merry dance, the opera and play; and what is still more dreadful, from scenes of riot and debauchery, into eternity, to answer for their deeds, before the tremendous bar of God. Receive the warning then, and suffer the word of exhortation. The views and impressions produced by this deplorable occurrence, however painful at the present, may be precious in their effects, and should not be suffered to pass off without originating such resolutions and purposes, as shall become the foundation of a new course of life. You may never in the whole period of your lives, find a season so favourable, to shake off the undue influence of the world, and to break with every darling lust and besetting sin. My last advice, therefore, is, become real christians. Make religion a personal concern. Attend to it without delay. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” And may the God of all grace crown the exercises of this day with his blessing, for Christ’s sake.—Amen.

S. The Duty of Catechetical Instruction

THE DUTY

of

CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION

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CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION

Catechetical Instruction must have been coeval with the human family. At first all knowledge was communicated orally, and handed down by tradition. The first man delivered a stock of important ideas to his children; and they again to theirs, with different degrees of ability and fidelity. The most usual place of instruction was, doubtless, for a long time, the domestic circle. Here the pious patriarch would spend much time in dealing out to his listening children the lessons which he had learned in his youth from his predecessors, and those which he had been taught by his own experience. These instructions were properly of the nature of catechising, which may be defined to be "the familiar communication of knowledge, orally." As long as this duty was faithfully performed by parents, the darkness of ignorance and idolatry were prevented, but as soon as it fell into neglect, error and vice must have been the consequence. Of Abraham, God certifies, "I know that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," Genesis 18:19. And God, by Moses, insisted more upon no duty than this, of domestic instruction in the truths of religion. "And the words which I command thee shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." Again, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach thy sons, and thy son's sons." Deuteronomy 4:9-10; Deuteronomy 6:7. To these precepts the Psalmist refers, when he says, "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: that the generations to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children." Psalms 78:5-6. The word catechise, is properly Greek, derived from the verb κατηχῶ, "to instruct with the voice," which is found, in

some of its parts, six or seven times in the New Testament, but is commonly translated “to instruct;” because in English, the word catechise has somehow acquired a narrower signification than the original term, and conveys the idea of instruction by question and answer; whereas, the word in Greek includes all manner of elementary, oral instruction: and it would be desirable to bring back the word to its original meaning. This, however, is of small moment. The passages in which the original word is found, are the following: Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; Acts 21:22, Acts 21:24; Romans 2:18; 1 Corinthians 14:19; Galatians 4:6.

It appears therefore that this mode of instruction is fully recognised in the sacred Scriptures. Indeed, if no other methods of inculcating divine truth were resorted to, than delivering elaborate and continued discourses from the pulpit, very little information would be gained by the young and the ignorant. Preaching supposes and requires some preparatory knowledge in the hearers, to render it useful in communicating religious knowledge. Elementary principles must be acquired in some other way; and this was more especially the case before the invention of printing, when books were very scarce, and few persons were able to read. It seems that the apostles and first teachers of the Christian religion were much occupied in giving religious instruction, from house to house; and we know from undoubted authorities, that in the earliest times of the primitive church, all who applied for admission into the church, from among the heathen, and all the children of Christians, were carefully instructed by catechising; that is, by a course of familiar teaching, viva voce. To every church a class of catechumens was attached and formed a kind of school, in which the first principles of religion were inculcated, and certain formulas of Christian doctrine, such as the early creeds, carefully committed to memory, together with portions of the sacred Scriptures. In some places these schools for catechumens became very famous, and were supplied with teachers of the highest character for learning and piety; so that they were frequented by the lovers of sacred literature from other countries. A celebrated institution of this sort flourished for several ages at Alexandria, in Egypt in which Origen was educated, and at which he became the most distinguished teacher. A large number of the treatises written by the fathers, in different countries, and in different centuries, were composed expressly for the instruction of the catechumens. And until darkness overspread the church, and her unnatural pastors deprived the people of the Scriptures, the church was, as it ever should be, like a great school, where holy men of God devoted their time to the instruction of the rising generation, and of converts from paganism. In catechetical, or elementary instruction, the grand secret is, “little at a time and often repeated.” Whoever would successfully instruct children and very ignorant adults, should avoid the error of crowding too many things into their minds at once. It is as preposterous a practice as it would be to attempt to increase the activity, vigour, and size of the body, by cramming the stomach with as much food as it could hold. Moreover, the truths first communicated should be as simple as possible. Tender minds must not be fed with strong meat, but with pure milk. To accommodate instruction to the state of advancement in knowledge, and to the degree of development of the mental faculties, is certainly that part of education which is most difficult, and at the same time most important. That historical facts should form the commencement of a course of religious instruction, is indicated, first, by the method pursued in the Bible; and secondly by the predilection of all children for this species of knowledge. But at a very early period, moral and doctrinal instruction of the most important kind may be connected with the scriptural facts inculcated, and may always be most advantageously engrafted on them. Doctrinal catechisms are, it is admitted, not commonly understood well by children; but it can do them no harm to exercise themselves in

committing the words to memory; for it is universally admitted, that to strengthen the memory, it must be frequently and vigorously exercised: and will it not be much better to have it stored with words which contain the most salutary truths, rather than those which may, by some association, prove injurious on the recollection? Sometimes the having committed to memory such a system as the Shorter Catechism, is of the utmost importance to an individual when his lot is cast where he has no means of correct information; or in case the person should lose his sight or hearing. We once noticed an exemplification of this in the case of a man of strong mind, who had led a busy life, without much concern with books, and who in his latter years was entirely blind. In conversation on the most important topics of religion, in which he took a deep interest, he would continually recur to the answers in the Shorter Catechism, which he had learned when young; and which now seemed to serve as a guide to his thoughts in all his meditations. But the true reason why so many children learn the Catechism without understanding its meaning, is that no pains are taken to explain its doctrines, and to illustrate them, in a way adapted to their capacity. Parents are, for the most part, either incapable of giving such instruction or negligent in the performance of this important duty. "Most parents then stand in need of some helps to enable them to explain the meaning of the Catechism;" and such helps have been amply provided, and should be in the hands of every Presbyterian family. We have works of this description by Vincent, Flavel, Thompson, and others of former days; and more recently an excellent exposition of the Shorter Catechism by the Rev. Mr. Belfrage of Scotland; and still more recently we have an excellent set of Lectures on the Shorter Catechism from the pen of the venerable Doctor Green, in two volumes, which we sincerely wish might be found in every family in our church, as a work of sound theology, written in a correct and perspicuous style. And while we are recommending expositions of this excellent little compend, we would not omit to mention with high approbation, the Rev. Matthew Henry's "Scriptural Catechism," in which all the questions are derived from those in the Shorter Catechism; and the answers throughout are in the very words of Scripture. This in our opinion is an admirable work, and ought to be reprinted and widely circulated. We are also free to recommend "Fisher's Catechism," as a valuable doctrinal work, which has been much used in Scotland, and by many Presbyterians in this country. The "Key to the Shorter Catechism," we also approve, and from the testimony of those who have tried it, we are led to believe, it may be made very useful in aiding children to understand the meaning of words and phrases used in the Catechism. The old Presbyterian custom of devoting the Sabbath evening, sacredly, to the business of catechising the children and domestics, in every family, ought to be revived among us where it has fallen into disuse; no other means which have been substituted for this, are likely to answer as good a purpose. Or, if public services in the church are considered on the whole expedient, on this evening, let an hour in the morning, or immediately after dinner be appropriated to this important work; it is as useful to parents, as to children; and is the most effectual method of inducing young persons to commit the Catechism well to memory; and unless this is done, the religious instruction of servants and domestics will be neglected. These family instructions should be conducted with great gravity and kindness of manner: at such times, hiding and scolding should be avoided; and the addresses to the consciences of delinquents should be made with affectionate tenderness.

We do earnestly hope that attention to doctrinal instruction will not be relinquished, nor diminished, in our church. Hitherto Presbyterians have been distinguished above all people in the world, for a correct and thorough knowledge of the tenets of their own church. No people on earth are so well

indoctrinated in the principles of religion, and in the proof of the doctrines believed, as the Scotch, and their descendents in Ireland and America. Other people far exceed them in metaphysical speculations, and in the knowledge of other matters: but for sound religious knowledge, commend us to Scotch Presbyterians of every sect. The benefits of thorough instruction in the doctrines of religion cannot be calculated. The truths thus received into the mind may prove ineffectual, in some cases, to restrain from open sin; but even in these, the force of the truth is often felt, and the person thus situated, is much more likely to be convinced of the error of his ways than those transgressors whose minds are almost totally destitute of the knowledge of the doctrines of religion. There is, moreover, an unspeakable benefit from the possession of correct doctrinal information, when the mind falls under serious impressions of religion; for then, truths which had been early inculcated, and long forgotten, will revive in the memory, and serve to guard the anxious mind from those enthusiastic errors into which ignorant persons are so prone to fall when they are deeply exercised on the subject of their salvation. Let not the members of the Presbyterian Church, therefore, become remiss in that which has ever been her most honourable distinction; the careful initiation of children into the doctrines of religion, contained in her Catechisms; than which we believe, a sounder system of theoretical and practical theology, cannot be found in any language. It may appear rather extraordinary, that the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, should have prepared two catechisms, as this seems rather calculated to distract than edify the church. But the history of this matter is simply this. The Larger Catechism was first composed by a committee of three members; Dr. Tuckney, Dr. Arrowsmith, and the Rev. Mr. Newcomen; though there is good reason to believe that the first named had the chief hand in the composition. The work was highly approved, but was thought to be too long to be generally committed to memory by children, the committee was therefore directed to prepare a catechism containing the same truths, in a more condensed form. The Shorter Catechism is therefore an abridgement of the Larger, and by comparison it will be found to contain the substance of the Larger, expressed with more brevity, but containing, for the most part, the very language of the original. It was formerly a frequent thing for young persons of both sexes, in our church, to commit to memory, accurately, the whole of the Larger Catechism. Whether this practice is continued in many of the Presbyterian congregations, under the care of the General Assembly, our information is not sufficient to enable us to declare; but we cannot but believe that young persons who have accomplished this object, have acquired a treasure which may be to them of more value than thousands of silver and gold. One thus armed with the panoply of divine truth, will not be liable to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine," and every wild spirit of enthusiasm which may be abroad in the world; and when he reads religious books, or hears discourses from the pulpit, he will not only be capable of understanding them better than others, but will carry about with him a test, by which he can make trial of the correctness of what he hears or reads, and thus be in a situation to obey the apostle's exhortation, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." We cannot be contented to let the opportunity pass of bestowing merited commendation on those denominations of Scotch Presbyterians who are not in communion with the General Assembly, for their indefatigable industry and care in giving doctrinal instruction to their children. In this respect, it must be acknowledged, they greatly excel all other denominations of Christians in our country. Among them, we have reason to believe, there has been no falling off in attention to the Catechisms; and few instances ever occur of the members of these churches being seduced by the insidious arts of the propagators of error and infidelity. The question may occur to some, To

whom does it belong to give catechetical instruction? We answer, to all who are capable of teaching any thing of divine truth correctly. But, especially, it is the duty of parents, guardians, masters, school-masters, elders and ministers. All who can be enlisted in the service should be engaged to teach those more ignorant than themselves. And we feel constrained to give our testimony strongly in favour of Sunday Schools, in which so many persons are employed, so beneficially to themselves and others, in giving instruction out of the Bible. When this is called a new institution, it surely is not meant that any new instruction is given; or that there is any thing new in the manner of communicating religious knowledge. The whole novelty of the thing consists in the success of the attempt to engage such a multitude of teachers in giving lessons, and such a multitude of scholars in learning them. But we would respectfully ask, whether parents, and ministers, and elders, have not become more remiss in catechising since the introduction of Sunday School? In order to render the public catechising of children profitable, the pastor of the flock must manifest a deep and lively interest in the exercise. If he should appear indifferent, and attend on catechetical exercises in a formal or careless manner, no great good can be expected to arise from such meetings; but if he will take pains to arrange all the circumstances of such exercises: so as to render them interesting to old and young;—if he will propose special subjects of inquiry, refer to proper books, and converse freely with his people on this topic, a spirit of investigation will be excited, religious knowledge will be pursued with diligence and alacrity, and catechising will be found to be the most effectual means of diffusing correct information on the doctrines of religion.

If common schools were what they ought to be, seminaries in which Christian doctrine was carefully taught, then our schoolmasters would all be catechists, and the children would be trained in the knowledge of God, and their duty. The business of catechising youth seems also to be one of the appropriate duties of the eldership; for surely these officers ought not to be restricted to mere matters of order and government. As leaders of the people, they should go before them in religious instruction; and it would be an expedient, as it is a common arrangement, to have each parish so divided into districts, that every elder would have a little charge of his own to look after, the families within which he might frequently visit, and where he might frequently collect and catechise the youth. If ruling elders are commonly incompetent to perform such a work as this, they are unfit for the office which they hold, and can be of little service in the church in other respects. It is now becoming matter of common complaint, that our ruling elders are not generally sensible of the important duties which belong to their office, and are not well qualified to perform them. But how can this evil be remedied? We answer, that the effectual remedy will be found in an increased attention to instruction in the doctrines of the church, by which means many will acquire a taste and thirst for religious knowledge; and whenever this occurs, there will be rapid progress in the acquisition of such a fund of sound theology, as will qualify them to communicate instruction to the young and ignorant. In the mean time, let every pastor meet with the elders of his church, once in the week, for the express purpose of discussing questions which relate to the duties belonging to their office: and thus those who are really desirous of executing their office in a faithful and intelligent manner, will become better and better prepared for their important work every year. The question has often been agitated, whether it would not be expedient to have an order of catechists, whose duty it should be to attend to this whole concern; and the idea has been favorably entertained by some in the Presbyterian church. But to us it appears, that such an office would be worse than useless: for, if the catechist be taken from among the members of the church, where

he is expected to officiate, and this must be the case if every church is supplied with one or more, then why not constitute him at once a ruling elder? Surely the mere name of catechist would not qualify him to give instruction; and if he is qualified, would he not be as able to teach, if called by the name elder as catechist? And if the office is judged to be expedient, because we cannot obtain well qualified elders, how can it be supposed that competent catechists could be found? The idea of some, however, is, that to perform the duties of catechising well, requires much more time than men can commonly afford from their own business; and, therefore, proper persons should be employed at a reasonable salary, to devote their whole time to this important branch of instruction. Now all this is very reasonable, and brings us to the very point mentioned before, viz. that schools, among Christians, should have it as their chief object, to bring up children in the knowledge of divine things; and the proper catechists of the church would be the teachers of these schools. If it be said, that school-masters are often incompetent to perform this part of their duty; we reply, that the same thing would be true if they were called catechists; or if other persons were sought for, in the present state of the church, there would exist the same difficulty in obtaining them as there is now in finding well qualified school-masters. The truth is, the church should take pains to train men for this very office; and the parents should set a much higher value on it, than they have been accustomed to do; and the office ought to be rendered more respectable, and more desirable than it is at present.

It may, perhaps, be thought by some, that the prevalence of Sunday schools renders it unnecessary for church officers to concern themselves with the instruction of the youth under their charge. If, indeed, the schools of this description within the parish are under the special superintendence and tuition of the Pastor and Elders, there is no good reason why catechetical instruction should not be given in a Sunday school as well as any where else. Catechising is an exercise peculiarly suited to the Sabbath, and if the officers of any church should agree to conduct this part of the instruction in these valuable institutions, it would certainly be an improvement on the plan on which they are commonly conducted. But when, as is commonly the case, these schools are made up of children of different denominations, and are under the direction of persons not connected with any one church, their existence and prosperity, while it will greatly facilitate pastoral labours, ought not to be considered as a substitute for catechising. We are afraid, however, that some pastors, as well as many parents, have become remiss in this part of their duty, from the mistaken idea, that their labours in this field are now superseded. This mistake should be carefully counteracted; and while the benefits of Sunday school are gratefully acknowledged, the instruction of our youth in the Catechisms of our own church should be pursued with increasing diligence. The old Presbyterian plan of conducting catechising did not confine this method of instruction to children and youth, but extended it to all persons except the officers of the church. And certainly one of the chief hinderances to the success of catechetical instruction has been that it commonly terminates too soon. When children have arrived at the age of twelve or fourteen years, they take up the opinion that they are too big and too old to repeat the catechism; in consequence of which, until the institution of Bible classes, our youth received no appropriate instruction, in many congregations, in that period of their lives which of all others is most important for improvement in knowledge. While we are strong advocates for catechetical instruction, we are at the same time warm friends to the method of instruction pursued in Bible classes; and we should be pleased to see both these methods of instruction extended to all ages and conditions of men; for who is there that has not something yet to learn? And what upon earth

is so worthy of time and pains as the knowledge of God's word, and the doctrines of his wonderful love and grace? Every man who contributes to the increase of this kind of learning by his writings, should be deemed more a public benefactor than he who invents the most useful machine. Let all, then, whom God has entrusted with so excellent a talent as that of writing well on theology, take heed that they do not hide it in a napkin or bury it in the earth; for never was there a time when there was a greater need of good books and tracts to counteract the floods of error which are issuing from a thousand sources; and never was there a period when the effect of good writing was so extensive. By means of the improvements in printing, and the facilities of conveyance in our day, opportunity is afforded of circulating opinions throughout the land; and if religious men sleep, there is no doubt that the enemy will sow his tares plentifully. Let the friends of truth, therefore, be watchful and wise, and ever on the alert, in seizing opportunities of enlightening the world with the pure doctrines of the word of God.

S. Evidences of the Authenticity, Inspiration and Canonical Authority of the Holy Scriptures

EVIDENCES

of the

AUTHENTICITY, INSPIRATION

and

CANONICAL AUTHORITY

of the

HOLY SCRIPTURES

by the

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This edition of the Evidences has been enlarged by the addition of one-fourth part of the volume, and contains nearly twice as much matter as was included in the first editions of the work. The parts which have been added to the preceding and to the present edition are the chapter on "the necessity of Divine Revelation;" a new chapter on prophecy, relating to Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre; the chapters on Inspiration; and the whole of what relates to the Canon of the Old and New Testaments. This last is an abridgment of the volume which the author published on the Canon; of which work two editions have been given to the public.

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The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were written by the inspiration of God; and this inspiration, however it may be distinguished, was plenary; that is, the writers were under an infallible guidance, both as to ideas and words; and yet the acquired knowledge, habits, and peculiar dispositions, of the writers, were not superseded

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EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

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THE RIGHT USE OF REASON IN RELIGION

That it is the right and the duty of all men to exercise their reason in inquiries concerning religion, is a truth so manifest, that it may be presumed there are none who will be disposed to call it in question.

Without reason there can be no religion: for in every step which we take, in examining the evidences of revelation, in interpreting its meaning, or in assenting to its doctrines, the exercise of this faculty is indispensable. When the evidences of Christianity are exhibited, an appeal is made to the reason of men for its truth; but all evidence and all argument would be perfectly futile, if reason were not permitted to judge of their force. This noble faculty was certainly given to man to be a guide in religion, as well as in other things. He possesses no other means by which he can form a judgment on any subject, or assent to any truth; and it would be no more absurd to talk of seeing without eyes, than of knowing any thing without reason.

It is therefore a great mistake to suppose that religion forbids or discourages the right use of reason. So far from this, she enjoins it as a duty of high moral obligation, and reproves those who neglect to judge for themselves what is right.

It has frequently been said by the friends of revelation, that although reason is legitimately exercised in examining the evidences of revelation, and in determining the sense of the words by which it is conveyed; yet it is not within her province to sit in judgment on the doctrines contained in such a divine communication. This statement, though intended to guard against the abuse of reason, is not, in my opinion, altogether accurate. Without reason we can form no conception of a truth of any kind; and when we receive any thing as true, whatever may be the evidence on which it is founded, we must view the reception of it to be reasonable. Truth and reason are so intimately connected that they can never with propriety be separated. Truth is the object, and reason is the faculty by which it is apprehended, whatever be the nature of the truth, or of the evidence by which it is established. No doctrine can be a proper object of our faith which it is not more reasonable to receive than to reject. If a book, claiming to be a divine revelation, is found to contain doctrines which can in no way be reconciled to right reason, it is a sure evidence that those claims have no solid foundation, and ought to be rejected. But that a revelation should contain doctrines of a mysterious and incomprehensible nature, and entirely different from all our previous conceptions, and, considered in themselves, improbable, is not repugnant to reason; on the contrary, judging from analogy, sound reason would lead us to expect such things in a revelation from God. Every thing which relates to this Infinite being must be to us, in some respects, incomprehensible. Every new truth must be different from all that is already known; and all the plans and works of God are very far above and beyond the conception of such minds as ours. Natural religion has as great mysteries as any in revelation; and the created universe, as it exists, is as different from any plan which men would have conceived, as any of the truths contained in a revelation can be. But it is reasonable to believe what by our senses we perceive to exist; and it is reasonable to believe whatever God declares to be true. In receiving therefore the most mysterious doctrines of revelation, the ultimate appeal is to reason: not to determine whether she could have discovered these truths; not to declare whether considered in themselves they appear probable; but to decide whether it is not more reasonable to believe what God speaks, than to confide in our own crude and feeble conceptions. Just as if an unlearned man should hear an able astronomer declare that the diurnal motion of the heavens is not real but only apparent, or that the sun is nearer to the earth in winter than in summer, although the facts asserted appeared to contradict the senses, it

would be reasonable to acquiesce in the declarations made to him by one who understood the subject, and in whose veracity he had confidence. If then we receive the witness of men in matters above our comprehension, much more should we receive the witness of God, who knows all things, and cannot deceive his creatures by false declarations.

There is no just cause for apprehending that we shall be misled by the proper exercise of reason on any subject which may be proposed for our consideration. The only danger is of making an improper use of this faculty, which is one of the most common faults to which our nature is liable. Most men profess that they are guided by reason in forming their opinions; but if this were really the case, the world would not be overrun with error; there would not be so many absurd and dangerous opinions propagated and pertinaciously defended. In one sense, indeed, they may be said to follow reason, for they are guided by a blinded, prejudiced, and perverted reason.

One large class of men are accustomed, from a slight and superficial view of the important subject of religion, to draw a hasty conclusion, which must prove in the highest degree detrimental to their happiness. They have observed, that in the modern as well as ancient world, there is much superstition, much imposture, much diversity of opinion and variety of sects, many false pretences to Divine inspiration, and many false reports of miracles and prophetic oracles. Without giving themselves the trouble of searching diligently for the truth amidst the various contending claims, they draw a general conclusion that all religions are alike; that the whole affair is a cheat, the invention of cunning men who imposed on the credulity of the unthinking multitude: and that the claims to Divine Revelation do not even deserve a serious examination. Does right reason dictate such a conclusion as this? If it did, and we were to apply it to all other concerns, it would make a sad overturning in the business of the world. Truth, honesty, and honour might, on these principles, be discarded as unmeaning names; for of all these there have been innumerable counterfeits, and concerning all of them an endless diversity of opinion. A second class, who profess to be men of reason, pay more attention to the subject of religion; but their reason is a prejudiced judge. They listen with eagerness to all that can be said against revelation. They read with avidity the books written against Christianity, and but too faithfully treasure up every objection to religion; but their advocates never obtain from them a fair hearing. They never inquire whether the arguments and objections which appear to them so strong, have not been refuted. With the means of conviction within their reach, they remain firmly fixed in their infidelity; and as long as they pursue this partial method of investigation, they must ever remain in the same darkness. A third class, who wish to be considered as taking reason for their guide, are under the dominion of vicious passions; ambition, avarice, lust, or revenge. Men of this character, however strong their intellect, or extensive their erudition, can never reason impartially on any subject which interferes with the gratification of their predominant desires; and as religion forbids, under severe penalties, all irregular passions and vicious indulgences, they pursue it with malignant hatred. As one well observes, "they are against religion because religion is against them." Such men never reason calmly on the subject, and they are incapable of receiving any benefit from the arguments of others. They never think of religion but with a feeling of enmity: they never speak of it out in the language of sneer or abuse. There is no object which this race of infidels have more at heart, than to root up every principle of religion from the minds of men, and to drive it from the earth, so that not one vestige of it may remain to give them torment. Voltaire may be considered as the leader of this band, and his humble imitators have been too numerous in every Christian country. But there

is still another class of men, more distinguished, as masters of reason, than those who have been mentioned. They are the cold, speculative, subtle skeptics, who involve themselves in a thick mist of metaphysics, attack first principles, and confound their readers with paradoxes. The number of those who belong to this class is perhaps not large, but they are formidable; for while the other enemies of the truth scarcely make a show of reason, these philosophers are experienced in all the intricacies of a refined logic; so that in their hands error is made to appear in the guise of truth. Should we yield ourselves to the sophistry of these men, they will persuade us to doubt, not only of the truth of revelation, but of our senses and of our very existence. If it be inquired how they contrive to spread such a colouring of skepticism over every subject, the answer is, by artfully assuming false principles as the premises of their reasoning; by reasoning sophistically of correct principles; by the dexterous use of ambiguous terms; by pushing their inquiries beyond the limits of human knowledge; and by calling in question the first principles of all knowledge. It is not easy to conjecture what their motive is; most probably it is vanity. They are ambitious of appearing more profound and acute than other men, and distinction is not so readily obtained in the common course, as by flying off in an eccentric orbit. It cannot be any sincere regard for truth which influences them; for upon their principles, truth and reason are equally worthless. They pull down every thing, but build up nothing. Truth has no greater enemies in the world than this Pyrrhonic sect; and it is to be lamented that sometimes ingenious young men are caught in the wiles of their sophistry, and are led so far into the labyrinth of their errors, that they are never able to extricate themselves; and all their fair prospects of virtue and usefulness are obscured for ever.

Before I leave the consideration of the various classes of persons who, while they profess to be guided by reason, make an improper use of this faculty, I ought to mention a set of men, distinguished for their learning and ingenuity, who profess to receive the Christian revelation and glory in the appellation of Rational Christians. They proceed on the plausible and (if rightly understood) correct principle of receiving nothing as true but what their reason approves; but these very men, with all their fair appearances of rationality, are chargeable with as gross a dereliction of reason as can well be conceived; and, in regard to consistency, are more vulnerable than any of those already mentioned. While they admit that God has made a revelation, they insist upon the right of bringing the truths revealed to the test of human judgment and opinion, and reject them as unreasonable if they do not accord with this standard. But the declaration of God is the highest reason which we can have for believing any thing. To set up our opinion against the plain expression of his will, is surely presumption of the highest kind. Perhaps, however, I do not represent the case with perfect accuracy. Perhaps no man is chargeable with such an inconsistency, as to admit a thing to be contained in an undoubted revelation, and yet reject it. The exact state of the matter is this. The Scriptures, it is admitted, contain a revelation from God; but there are many things in the Bible, which if taken in the most obvious sense, are inconsistent with reason; and as nothing inconsistent with reason can be from God, it is concluded that this cannot be the true sense of Scripture. Accordingly, their wits are set to work, and their learning laid under contribution, to invent and defend some other sense. Upon these principles, a man may believe just as much, or as little as he pleases of what the Bible contains; for it has been found, that no text is so stubborn as not to yield to some of the modes of treatment which have been adopted. This whole procedure is contrary to right reason. The plain course which reason directs us to pursue, is, after examining the evidences of revelation until we are satisfied, to come to the interpretation of the Scriptures with an unbiased mind, and in the exercise of a sound judgment,

and with the aid of those helps and rules which reason and experience suggest, to obtain the sense of the several parts of the document; and although this sense may contradict our preconceived opinions, or clash with our inclinations, we ought implicitly to receive it; and not by a refined ingenuity, and laboured critical process, to extort a meaning that will suit our own notions. This is not to form our opinions by the word of God, but to cut down the sublime and mysterious doctrines of revelation to the measure of our narrow conceptions. In the creed of many, called Rational Christians, the divine system of heavenly truth is shorn of its glory, and comes forth little more than an improved theory of Natural Religion. There is no reason in this. But what if the plain sense of Scripture be absolutely repugnant to the first principles of reason? Let that be demonstrated and the effect will be rather to overthrow the Scriptures, than to favour such a method of forming a theory from them. But no such thing can be demonstrated. The reasonings by which it has been attempted to prove that the doctrines commonly called orthodox are contrary to reason, and fallacious, and a similar mode of reasoning on truths of Natural Religion, will land us in Atheism.

Deistical writers have been fond of representing faith and reason as irreconcilable. They have insinuated and even asserted, that revelation cannot be received without a renunciation of reason; and have affected to regret that it should be subjected to the trial of a rational investigation, which they allege it can by no means bear. This was a favourite topic with Morgan, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Hume. The last mentioned author, in the close of his Essay on Miracles, used the following language: "Our most holy religion is founded on Faith, not on reason, and 'tis a sure method of exposing it, to put it to a test, which it is by no means fitted to endure."—And again: "Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its [the Christian religion's] veracity, and whoever is moved by faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continual miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding." On the insidious nature of this attack, I shall not stop to remark, except to observe, that it may be taken as a specimen not only of Hume's method of treating Christianity, but of that of the whole tribe of deistical writers, until very recently, when they have come out boldly. Under the mask of friendship, and with words of respect on their lips, they have aimed the most deadly thrusts at the vitals of Christianity. But in regard to the sentiment expressed in this extract, the friends of revelation utterly disclaim it, and hold it to be false and unfounded. The state of the controversy between Christians and deists did not authorize any such assertion. The defenders of the truth have ever been ready to meet their antagonists on the ground of impartial reason. They have met them at every point where they have chosen to make the assault; and I may safely say, that no deistical argument remains unrefuted, no infidel objection undetected and unexposed. As Mr. Hume wrote this immediately after finishing his argument against miracles, he may have felt a confidence that he had achieved what none before were able to effect. But his confidence was premature; the argument which he claims the honour of having discovered, (though this might be disputed on good ground) has been refuted, with a clearness of evidence sufficient to bring a conviction to any mind but that of a sophist and skeptic. We shall have further occasion, in the sequel, to consider the force of Mr. Hume's reasoning against miracles.

It may perhaps require some apology, that a subject which has been so fully and ably discussed in numerous volumes, should be attempted to be treated in a short essay. My only apology is that the poison of infidelity is imbibed by many, who never have access to the antidote. It is much to be regretted that some of the books which are almost sure to fall into the hands of literary youth, are

deeply tinctured with skepticism. How many read Hume and Gibbon, who never have seen the answers of Campbell and Watson! Now if we can present even a brief outline of the evidences of Christianity to those who may not be disposed to read larger works, we may be contributing, in some small degree, to prevent the progress of one of the greatest evils to which men are liable.

CHAPTER II("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BANISH ALL RELIGION FROM THE WORLD, AND IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, IT WOULD BE THE GREATEST CALAMITY WHICH COULD BEFAL THE HUMAN RACE

It is not my object here to consider religion as it is a matter of duty, or a means of obtaining happiness in a future world; for both these would be equally disregarded by those men who aim at the subversion of all religion. What I shall attempt, at present, is to state and establish the fact, that man is so constituted that he must have some sort of religion. And the truth of this will be manifest from an inspection of the principles of human nature, and from the history of the world. Man has naturally a sense of moral obligation, a perception of the difference between right and wrong, feelings of remorse or approbation on the review of his conduct, fears of future retribution when he has committed a crime, and a propensity to pay religious homage to some object visible or invisible. These are what have been called his religious feelings; and from them he has received the appellation of a religious animal. And certainly there is nothing by which man is so clearly distinguished from the creatures below him, as this capacity for religion; for whatever indications they give of sagacity in other matters, it is impossible to communicate to them any ideas of morality, or any impressions of a religious nature. That these feelings are natural, and not adventitious is manifest because they are found to exist in men of all ages, of all countries, and in every different state of society. And hence, no nation ancient or modern, has ever been found without some kind of religion. It would be as difficult to find a whole nation without religion, as to find one destitute of speech. Some travellers, it is true, from superficial observation, have reported that some savage tribes had no ideas of religion, and no species of worship; but on more accurate examination it has been ascertained that this was a mistake. And from our present knowledge of the nations of the earth, we are authorized to assert that there is not one totally destitute of some sense of religion and some form of worship. The same thing was well known to all the wisest men of antiquity. It is a fact from which both Plato and Cicero have derived many important conclusions. And these principles of our nature are so deeply radicated that they never can be removed. Men may be induced to abandon their old religion and to adopt a new one; but they never can remain long free from all religion. Take away one object of worship and they will soon attach themselves to another. If unhappily they lose the knowledge of the true God, they will set up gods of their own invention or receive them from others.—The history of all nations bears such ample testimony to this fact that it cannot be denied. Now, this universality of religion evinces, in the clearest manner, that the principle is natural, that it is an essential thing in the constitution of man: just as the fact that men are always found living in society, proves that the social principle exists and is natural to man.

Atheistical men have indeed attempted to trace all religious feelings and all rites of worship to the craft of priests and policy of rulers; but this opinion is not only unsupported by historical testimony, but is most unreasonable in itself. For if there had not existed a predisposition to religion in the

minds of men, such a design would never have been conceived; and if it had, all attempts to introduce into the minds of men ideas so foreign to their nature, must have been abortive. At any rate, such an imposition could not have continued for so long a time, and could not have been extended to every tribe and nation in the world. If no sense of religion had existed in the minds of men, priests and politicians, however cunning, would have had no handle to take hold of, no foundation on which to build. Besides, it seems to be forgotten by the advocates of this hypothesis, that the existence of priests supposes the previous existence of religion.

They have moreover alleged that fear produced the gods. Be it so; it still confirms the position, that there is something in the nature of man which leads him to religion; and it is reasonable to conclude that a cause, which has operated uniformly heretofore, will continue to produce the same effects as long as the world stands. It is impossible, therefore, to banish all religion from the world. To what degree atheists have succeeded in divesting themselves of all religious impression, I do not pretend to know. That some men have gone to a great length in counteracting the constitutional tendencies and extinguishing the feelings of nature, is undoubtedly true; but there have been sufficient indications to lead to the opinion that there is more of affectation than reality in the bravery of their profession. It is known that some of them have, above other men, been the slaves of superstitious fears; and that others, in times of extreme peril, as in a storm at sea, have for the moment renounced their atheism, and cried as earnestly for mercy as those around them. Now if these philosophers, with all their reasoning, are not able to erase all religious impressions from their minds, it is vain to attempt to banish all religion from the world. But suppose the great work achieved, and that every vestige of religion were obliterated, what would be the result? Would men remain without any objects of religious homage? Would they never again be afraid of invisible powers? Would the feelings of remorse at no time urge them to perform some sort of penance, or attempt some kind of expiation? Would no impostors and false prophets arise to deceive the world again with their dreams, fancies, and pretended revelations? They must have made but superficial observations on human nature, who think that none of these things would ever occur.

If those persons, therefore, who oppose Christianity, hope by its suppression to get rid of all religion, they do greatly deceive themselves. This work being accomplished, they would soon have more to perform in endless progression. Instead of the pure, mild, benignant religion of Christ, they would soon find themselves surrounded by superstitions as foul and as false, as monstrous and as absurd, as any which the hotbed of paganism ever produced. Look into the heathen world, and see the abominations and miseries which inveterate superstition perpetuates in some of the fairest and most populous regions of the globe. Look at the savage tribes of Africa and America, and contemplate the cruel bondage of superstition to which the people are subjected. Evils as great would soon grow up among us, were it not 'or the salutary influence of Christianity. Our forefathers, before they became Christians, were in the same degraded and wretched situation. And shall we curse our posterity by bringing back those evils from which our fathers escaped? It is a truth which should be proclaimed every where on the house tops, that it is the Bible which has delivered us from the horrid dominion of superstition, and it is the Bible which must prevent its return. Philosophy has had no hand in working out this deliverance from the horrors of idolatry. With all her celebrated schools and sages, she never turned one individual from the worship of idols; and she would be equally powerless in preventing the return of superstition, if other barriers

were removed. But I proceed now to the second part of my proposition, which is, that if religion could be banished from the world, it would be the greatest calamity which could befall the human race.

It has formerly been a matter of discussion with the learned, whether the influence of superstition or atheism is most baneful to society. Plutarch, Bacon, Bayle, Warburton, and others, have handled this subject in a learned and ingenious manner, and arrived at very different conclusions. However doubtful this question may have been considered in former times, I believe all reflecting men are now pretty well satisfied, that the question is put to rest for ever. We have recently beheld the spectacle of a great nation casting off contemptuously the religion of their fathers, and plunging at once into the abyss of atheism. We have seen the experiment tried, to ascertain whether a populous nation could exist without the restraints of religion. Every circumstance was as favourable to the success of the experiment as it could be. Learning was in its highest state of advancement; philosophy boasted of an approximation to perfection; refinement and politeness had never been more complete among any people. But what was the result? It is written in characters of blood. It was as if a volcano had burst upon the world, and disgorged its fiery flood over all Europe. Such a scene of cruelty, cold-blooded malignity, beastly impurity, heaven-daring impiety, and insatiable rapaciousness, the world never witnessed before, and, I trust in God, will never witness again. The only ray of hope which brightened the dismal prospect was, that this horrible system contained in itself the principles of its own speedy downfall. Atheism has no bond of union for its professors, no basis of mutual confidence. It breeds suspicion, and consequently hatred in every breast; and it is actuated by a selfishness which utterly disregards all the bonds of nature, of gratitude, and of friendship. To an atheist fear becomes the ruling passion. Conscious of his own want of virtue, honour, and humanity, he naturally views his fellows in the same light, and is ready to put them out of the way as soon as they appear to become obstacles to the accomplishment of his plans. Hence the bloody actors in this tragedy, after glutting their revenge, by shedding the blood of innocent Christians and unoffending priests, turned their murderous weapons against each other. Not satisfied with inflicting death on the objects of their suspicion or envy, they actually feasted their eyes daily, with the streams of blood which incessantly flowed from the guillotine. Never was the justice of heaven against impious and cruel men more signally displayed, than in making these miscreants the instruments of vengeance upon each other. The general state of morals in France, during the period in which Christianity was proscribed, and atheism reigned, was such as almost exceeds belief. An eye-witness of the whole scene, and an actor in some parts of it, has drawn the following sketch:—"Multiplied cases of suicide; prisons crowded with innocent persons: permanent guillotines; perjuries of all classes; parental authority set at naught; debauchery encouraged by an allowance to those called unmarried mothers: nearly six thousand divorces within the single city of Paris, within a little more than two years after the law authorized them;—in a word, whatever is most obscene in vice, and most dreadful in ferocity!"* If these be the genuine fruits of atheism, then let us rather have superstition in its most appalling form. Between atheism and superstition there is this great difference; the latter may authorize some crimes, the former opens the flood-gates to all. The one restrains partially, the other removes all restraint from vice. Every kind of religion presents some terrors to evil doers; atheism promises complete immunity, and stamps virtue itself with the character of folly. But we must not suppose that the whole mass of the French people became atheists during this period. Far from it. A large majority viewed the whole scene with horror and detestation; but the atheistical

philosophers had the power in their hands; and, though a small minority of the nation, were able to effect so much mischief. But from this example we may conjecture what must be the state of things, if the whole mass of people in a nation should become atheists, or be freed from all the restraints of conscience and religion. Such an event will never occur, but if it should, all must acknowledge that no greater calamity could be imagined. It would be a lively picture of hell upon earth; for what is there in the idea of hell more horrible than the absence of all restraint and all hope, and the uncontrolled dominion of the most malignant passions? But there would be one remarkable point of difference, for while atheists deny the God that made them, the inhabitants of hell believe and tremble.

CHAPTER III("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \ "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

IF CHRISTIANITY BE REJECTED, THERE IS NO OTHER RELIGION WHICH CAN BE SUBSTITUTED IN ITS PLACE; AT LEAST NO OTHER WHICH WILL AT ALL ANSWER THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH RELIGION IS DESIRABLE

It has been proved in the former section, that it is necessary to have some religion. We are already in possession of Christianity, which, by the confession of deists themselves, answers many valuable purposes. It behoves us, therefore, to consider well what we are likely to obtain by the exchange, if we should relinquish it. If any man can show us a better religion, and founded on better evidences, we ought to give it up willingly; but if this cannot be done, then surely it is not reasonable to part with a certain good, without receiving an equivalent. This would be, as if some persons sailing on the ocean in a vessel which carried them prosperously, should determine to abandon it without knowing that there was any other to receive them, merely because some of the passengers, pretending to skill, suggested that it was leaky, and would sooner or later founder.

Let the enemies of Christianity tell us plainly what their aim is, and what they design to substitute in the place of the Bible. This, however, they are unable to perform: and yet they would have us to consent to give up our dearest hopes without knowing what we are to receive, or whether we are to receive any thing to compensate for the loss. This is a point of vital importance, and demands our most serious attention. If it is really intended to substitute some other religion in the place of Christianity, we ought certainly, before we make the exchange, to have the opportunity of examining its claims, that we may know whether it will be likely to answer the purposes for which religion is wanted. To bring this subject fairly into view, let us take a survey of the world, and inquire, what it has to propose for our selection, if we should renounce Christianity

There are only three things, in that event, among which we must choose. The first, to adopt some of the existing or some of the exploded systems of Paganism; the second, to accept the Koran instead of the Bible; and the third, to embrace Natural Religion or pure deism.

Few men have had the effrontery to propose a return to Paganism; yet even this has not been too extravagant for some whose names stand high as men of literature. The learned Gibbon has not, that I recollect, expressed his opinion on this subject explicitly; but it may be fairly inferred, from many things in his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire, that he deeply regretted the subversion of the old Pagan systems, and that the progress of Christianity was far from affording him any pleasure. But although he makes it sufficiently manifest that, could his wishes have governed past events, the old systems would never have been disturbed, and Christianity

never have had a footing; yet we cannot say whether he would have given his vote to have the temples rebuilt and the Pagan rites restored. It is difficult to tell what he wished to accomplish by his opposition to Christianity; or whether he had any definite view, except to manifest his hatred to the gospel and its Author.

Taylor, the learned translator of Plato, openly avowed his predilection for the religion of the Athenian philosopher, and his wish that it might be revived; and speaks in contemptuous terms of Christianity, in comparison with Platonism; but he never could have supposed that to be a suitable religion for the bulk of men, which had not the least influence upon them while the philosopher lived. This, then, would be no substitute for Christianity; for under its benign influence, even the poor have the gospel preached unto them. But I have no doubt that, if the truth could be ascertained, we should find that this sublime genius derived some of his best ideas directly or indirectly from the Scriptures; and that if he had lived under the light of the gospel, he would never have spoken of it as his translator has done. In the time of the revolution in France, after some trial had been made of having no religion, D'Aubermenial proposed a new religion, in imitation of the ancient Persians. His plan was to have the Deity represented by a perpetual fire and offerings made to him of fruits, oil, and salt; and libations poured out to the four elements. It was prescribed, that worship should be celebrated daily in the temple, that every ninth day should be a Sabbath, and that on certain festivals all ages should unite in dances. A few fanatics in Paris and elsewhere, actually adopted the new religion, but they were unable to attract any notice, and in a little time it sunk into merited oblivion.

It has been common enough to set up the Mohammedan religion in a sort of rival comparison with Christianity, but I do not know that any have gone so far as to prefer the Koran to the Bible, except those few miserable apostates, who, after being long "tossed about with every wind of doctrine," at length threw themselves into the arms of the Arabian impostor. How far this religion can bear a comparison with Christianity, will be seen in the sequel.

Deism, then, or Natural Religion, is the only hope of the world, if the Christian Religion be rejected. The first English deists extolled Natural Religion to the skies, as a system which contained all that man needed to know; and as being simple and intelligible to the meanest capacity. But strange to tell, scarcely any two of them are agreed what Natural Religion is; and the same discordance has existed among their successors. They are not agreed even in those points which are most essential in religion, and most necessary to be settled before any religious worship can be instituted. They differ on such points as these; whether there is any intrinsic difference between right and wrong; whether God pays any regard to the affairs of men; whether the soul is immortal; whether prayer is proper and useful; and whether any external rites of worship are necessary.

Again, if deism be the true religion, why has piety never flourished among its professors? why have they not been the most zealous and consistent worshippers of God? Does not truth promote piety and will it not ever be the case that they who hold the truth will love God most ardently, and serve him most faithfully? But what is the fact in regard to this class of men? Have they ever been distinguished for their spirit of devotion; have they produced numerous instances of exemplary piety? It is so much the reverse, that even the asking such reasonable questions has the appearance of ridicule. And when people hear the word "pious deist," they have the same sort of feeling as when mention is made of an honest thief, or a sober drunkard.

There is no slander in making this statement, for deists do not affect to be pious. They have no love for devotion. If the truth were known, this is the very thing they wish to get rid of; and if they believed that professing themselves to be deists laid them under greater obligations to be devout, they would not be so zealous for the system. Believe me, the contest is not between one religion and another, it is between religion and irreligion. It is impossible that a man of truly pious temper should reject the Bible, even if he were unacquainted with its historical evidences. He would find it to be so congenial to his taste, and so salutary in its effects on his own spirit, that he would conclude that it must have derived its origin from heaven. But we find no such spirit in the writings of deists. There is not in them a tincture of piety; but they have more than a sprinkling of profane ridicule. When you turn to them from the Bible, you are sensible of as great a transition, as if you passed suddenly from a warm and genial climate into the frigid zone. If deists expect ever to conciliate regard for their religion they must appear to be truly pious men, sincerely engaged in the service of God; and this will have more effect than all their arguments. But whenever this event shall occur, they will be found no longer opposing the Bible, but will esteem it as the best of books, and will come to it for fuel to feed the flame of pure devotion. An African prince, who was brought to England and resided there some time, being asked what he thought of the Bible, answered, that he believed it to be from God, for he found all the good people in favour of it, and all the bad people against it! The want of a spirit of piety and devotion, must be reckoned the principal reason why the deists have never been able to establish and keep up any religious worship among themselves. The thing has been attempted at several different times and in different countries, but never with success.

It is said, that the first enterprise of this kind was that of David Williams, an Englishman, who had been a dissenting minister in Liverpool, but passing over first to Socinianism, and then to deism, went to London, where, being patronized by some persons of influence, he opened a house for deistical worship, and formed a liturgy, consisting principally of praise to the Creator. Here he preached for a short time, and collected some followers; but he complained that most of his congregation went on to atheism. After four years' trial, the scheme came to nothing. There were neither funds nor congregation remaining, and the Priest of Nature, (as Williams styled himself) through discouragement and ill health, abandoned the project.

Some feeble attempts of the same kind have been made in the United States; but they are unworthy of being particularly noticed.

Frederick II., the deistical king of Prussia, had once formed the plan of a Pantheon in Berlin for the worshippers of all sects and all religions, the chief object of which was the subversion of Christianity; but the scheme was never carried into execution. The most interesting experiment of this kind was that made by the Theophilanthropists in France, during the period of the revolution. After some trial had been made of atheism and irreligion, and when the want of public worship was felt by many reflecting persons, a society was formed for the worship of God, upon the pure principles of Natural Religion. Among the patrons of this society, were men beloved for their philanthropy, and distinguished for their learning, and some high in power.

La Revellière Lepaux, one of the directory of France, was a zealous patron of the new religion. By his influence, permission was obtained to make use of the churches for their worship. In the city of Paris alone, eighteen or twenty were assigned to them, among which was the cathedral church of

Notre Dame. Their creed was simple, consisting of two great articles, the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul. Their moral system also embraced two great principles, the love of God, and the love of man;—which were indicated by the name Theophilanthropists. Their worship consisted of prayers and hymns of praise, which were comprehended in a manual prepared for a directory in worship. Lectures were delivered by the members, which, however, underwent the inspection of the society, before they were pronounced in public. To these were added some simple ceremonies, such as placing a basket of fruit and flowers on the altar. Music, vocal and instrumental, was used; for the latter, they availed themselves of the organs in the churches. Great efforts were made to have this worship generally introduced in all the principal towns in France; and the views of the society were even extended to foreign countries. Their manual was sent into all parts of the republic by the Minister of the interior, free of expense.

Never did a society enjoy greater advantages at its commencement. Christianity had been rejected with scorn; atheism had for a short time been tried, but was found to be intolerable; the government was favourable to the project: men of learning and influence patronized it, and churches ready built were at the service of the new denomination. The system of Natural Religion which was adopted was the best that could have been selected, and considerable wisdom was discovered in the construction of their liturgy. But with all these circumstances in their favour, the society could not subsist. At first, indeed, while the scene was novel, large audiences attended, most of whom however were merely spectators; but in a short time, they dwindled away to such a degree, that instead of occupying twenty churches in Paris, they needed only four; and in some of the provincial towns, where they began under the most favourable auspices, they soon came to nothing. Thus they went on declining until, under the consular government, they were prohibited the use of the churches any longer; upon which they immediately expired without a struggle, and it is believed that not a vestige of the society now remains.

It will be instructive and interesting to inquire into the reasons of this want of success, in a society enjoying so many advantages. Undoubtedly, the chief reason was, the want of a truly devotional spirit. This was observed from the beginning of their meetings. There was nothing to interest the feelings of the heart. Their orators might be men of learning, and might produce good moral discourses, but they were not men of piety, and not always men of pure morals. Their hymns were said to be well composed, and the music good; but the musicians were hired from the stage. There was also a strange defect of liberality in contributing to the funds of the society. They found it impossible to raise, in some of their societies, a sum which every Christian congregation, even the poorest of any sect, would have collected in one day. It is a fact, that one of the societies petitioned government to grant them relief from a debt which they had contracted in providing the apparatus of their worship, not amounting to more than fifty dollars, stating, that their annual income did not exceed twenty dollars. In the other towns their musicians deserted them, because they were not paid, and frequently no person could be found to deliver lectures.

Another difficulty arose which might have been foreseen. Some of the societies declared themselves independent, and would not agree to be governed by the manual which had been received, any further than they chose. They also remonstrated against the authority exercised by the lecturers in the affairs of the society, and declared that there was danger of their forming another hierarchy. There were also complaints against them addressed to the ministers by the agents of government in the provinces, on account of the influence which they might acquire in

civil affairs. The Theophilanthropists were moreover censured by those who had made great advances in the modern philosophy, for their illiberality. It was complained that there were many who could not receive their creed, and all such must necessarily be excluded from their society. This censure seems to have troubled them much, and in order to wipe off the stigma they appointed a fête, which they called the anniversary of the re-establishment of Natural Religion. To prove that their liberality had no bounds, they prepared five banners to be carried in procession. On the first was inscribed the word, Religion; on the second, Morality: and on the others, respectively, Jews, Catholics, Protestants. When the procession was over, the bearers of the several banners gave each other the kiss of peace; and that none might mistake the extent of their liberality, the banner inscribed Morality was borne by a professed atheist, universally known as such in Paris. They had also other festivals peculiar to themselves, and four in honour of the following persons; Socrates, St. Vincent de Paul, J. J. Rousseau, and Washington;—a strange conjunction of names truly.*

I have been thus particular in giving an account of this society, because the facts furnish the strongest confirmation of my argument, and are in themselves curious and instructive. After the failure of this enterprise, deists will scarcely attempt again to institute any form of public worship. But among those philosophers who believe in the perfectibility of human nature under the fostering influence of increasing knowledge and good government, there is a vague theory of a kind of mental, philosophical religion, which needs the aid of no external forms. The primary articles of their creed are, that religion is a thing entirely between God and every man's conscience; that all our Creator requires is the homage of the heart; that if we feel reverence, gratitude, and submission towards him, and act our part well in society, we have fulfilled our duty; that we cannot know how we may be disposed of hereafter, and ought not to be anxious about the matter. Whether this is expected to be the religion of philosophers only, or also of the unlearned and the great mass of labouring people, I am unable to say. But I know that such a system as this will, to a large majority of every community, be equivalent to no religion at all. The great body of the people must have something tangible, something visible, in their religion. They need the aid of the senses, and of the social principle, to fix their attention, to create an interest, and to excite the feelings of devotion. The truth is, that if the heart be affected with lively emotions of piety, it will be pleasant, it will be useful, and it will be natural, to give them expression. This will hold in regard to philosophers and men of learning, as well as others. Wherever a number of persons participate in the same feelings, there is a strong inclination to hold communion together; and if sentiments of genuine piety exist in the bosoms of many, they will delight to celebrate in unison the praises of that Being whom they love and adore. There is no reason why pious emotions more than others should be smothered, and the tendency to express them counteracted. Such indeed will never be the fact. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Piety, it is true, consists essentially in the exercises of the heart but that religion which is merely mental, is suspicious; at best very feeble; is not likely to produce any permanent effect on the character or comfort of the person entertaining it; and cannot be useful to others in the way of example. In the year 1802, when Christianity, which had been proscribed in France, was restored by an act of government, a speech was delivered by one of the counsellors of state which contains excellent sentiments on the subject here treated. One or two extracts will not be unacceptable to the reader. "Science can never be partaken of but by a small number, but by religion one may be instructed without being learned. The Natural Religion to which one may rise by the effects of a cultivated reason, is merely

abstract and intellectual, and unfit for any people. It is revealed religion which points out all the truths that are useful to men who have neither time nor means for laborious disquisitions. Who then would wish to dry up that sacred spring of knowledge which diffuses good maxims, brings them before the eyes of every individual, and communicates to them that authoritative and popular dress, without which they would be unknown to the multitude and almost to all men? For want of a religious education for the last ten years, our children are without any ideas of a divinity, without any notion of what is just and unjust; hence arise barbarous manners, hence a people becomes ferocious. One cannot but sigh over the lot which threatens the present and future generations. Alas! what have we gained by deviating from the path pointed out to us by our ancestors? What have we gained by substituting vain and abstract doctrines for the creed which actuated the minds of Turenne, Fenelon, and Pascal?" The unhappy condition of that generation who grew up after this time in France, in regard to religion, is repeatedly noticed by Allison, in his history of Europe.

I think enough has now been said to establish, beyond all reasonable doubt, our second proposition, that if Christianity be rejected, there is no other religion which can be substituted in its place, or at least, no other which can at all answer the purpose for which religion is desirable.

It may also be observed, in conclusion, that the facts which have been adduced, not only serve to confirm this proposition, but furnish new and cogent arguments in proof of the proposition maintained in the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER IV("tw:///self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

REVELATION NECESSARY TO TEACH US HOW TO WORSHIP GOD ACCEPTABLY—THE NATURE AND CERTAINTY OF A FUTURE STATE, AND ESPECIALLY THE METHOD BY WHICH SINNERS MAY OBTAIN SALVATION

It would be superfluous here to repeat what was said in the preceding chapter, respecting the need in which man stood of a revelation when he first proceeded from the hands of his Creator. The object which we have, at present, in view, is, to inquire, whether man, in the condition in which we now find him, and in which history informs us he has existed for ages, does not stand in urgent need of more light than he possesses; and whether there are not some points of vital importance, concerning which he must remain in the dark, unless the knowledge of the truth is communicated to him by a revelation from God. Let it be understood, however, in what sense it is asserted, that a revelation is necessary. Of course, it is not meant that there is any natural necessity for such an event; nor is it intended that God is obliged by any necessity to grant a revelation. The necessity contended for relates altogether to the wants of man. It is found, that in all times and under all circumstances, he needs information, which he cannot obtain from the unassisted exercise of his own reason; or at least not so satisfactorily, as from divine revelation. For even if it were possible for a few philosophers of the highest order of intellect, by long and profound investigation, to discover all the truths absolutely necessary to be known; yet, for the bulk of mankind, it might be all important to have these same things made known by divine revelation, because the great majority of our race have neither leisure nor ability for such tedious and difficult researches. But the truth as made known by history is, that on those very points on which it is most needful that man should be instructed, the wise men of this world have been as much at a loss as the vulgar. They reasoned much, and speculated as far as human intellect could go, but instead of clearly ascertaining truth, they rested at last in mere conjecture, or deviated into gross error.

Again, if the light of nature were sufficient to shed some light on the great truths needful to be known by man; yet a clear well-attested communication from heaven, might be of the greatest utility, by speaking decisively and authoritatively, in regard to matters concerning which the conclusions of reason are feeble and uncertain. To affect the conscience and influence the heart, it is highly important that religious truth should be attended with certainty, and should be felt to possess the sanction of divine authority. What men discover by the slow deductions of reason is found to operate feebly on the conscience compared with the persuasion that God speaks to us immediately by divine revelation. In reasoning about the most important truths men differ exceedingly from one another: and this very circumstance spreads doubt and uncertainty over all their speculations. When we peruse the discourses of the wisest of the heathen sages, and observe what darkness surrounded them, we cannot but feel commiseration for the imbecility of the human intellect; and, indeed, the best of them were deeply convinced of the insufficiency of their own reason to guide them; and sometimes seemed to entertain a glimmering hope, that at some future period, and in some unknown way, divine instruction might be communicated to the erring children of men.

It is also more than probable that the clearest and most important ideas, which the heathen philosophers entertained, were not the discoveries of their own reason, or a light struck out from an observation of the works of nature, but rays of truth derived more remotely or more directly from divine revelation, as has been remarked in another part of this essay. The heathen sages attributed all their knowledge to tradition. But after all, it is an undeniable fact, that reason, aided as it was by tradition, left men to grope in the dark, and to fall into the most degrading idolatry.—Indeed, though reason may teach that there is a God, and that he ought to be worshipped; yet of what kind his worship should be in order to be acceptable, she never has made known, nor is it within the reach of her ability. All the rites of worship invented by man are altogether unworthy of God: and, truly, it is in the nature of things impossible, that men should devise a form of acceptable worship, for no service of this kind which he has not himself appointed, can be pleasing in the sight of God. Now, if men have lost the knowledge of the original institutions of religion; or, if these have become altogether corrupt, there must be a new revelation, before man will be able to render an acceptable service to his Creator. There is good reason to believe that many of the heathen rites of worship are nothing but corruptions of divine institutions, which were given to men by an early revelation. This seems especially to be the fact, in relation to sacrifices, which constituted an essential part of the worship of almost all ancient nations, and some vestiges of which have come down by tradition among the most barbarous tribes. Reason certainly never taught men that shedding the blood and taking away the life of an animal, could be an acceptable sacrifice to the Deity, or that presenting it on an altar, and consuming it wholly or partially by fire, could be a propitiation for sin; and yet these mysterious ceremonies were almost as universal as the gift of speech. And between the sacrifices of nations, remote from each other, there has been remarked a wonderful similarity in the circumstances of their sacred offerings; in the erection of altars; in the pouring out of the blood; in dividing the animal into pieces; in combining the offering of salt, wine, bread, and incense, with the sacrifice of animals; in considering the blood and death of the victim, as expiatory for sin; in having an order of priesthood to officiate in these sacred rites, who were solemnly consecrated to the service, and considered more holy than other men; and when only a small part of the animal sacrificed was consumed by fire, in feasting on the remainder, within the precincts of the temple or sacred enclosure. This

analogy may be traced even in the names, by which similar sacrifices were denominated among different nations. These and many other striking resemblances in the rites of ancient nations, go to prove, incontestably, that they must have had a common origin; and no account of this is half so probable as that which ascribes sacrificial rites to an original revelation. And hence we see the credibility of the Mosaic history in regard to the origin of religious worship. But supposing that any heathen nation should now be convinced of the absurdity of idolatry, and should become sensible of their obligations to render some kind of external homage to the great Creator, by what means could they learn what sort of service would be acceptable? Reason could not teach them what rites should be observed. Without a revelation from God, they must for ever remain without a form of worship; or if they attempted to invent certain rites, all experience teaches that these human inventions will ever be marked by human weakness, and reason herself intimates, that no worship, not appointed by God, can be acceptable to him. It appears then, that even if man were not a sinner, he would need a divine revelation to teach him how to render an acceptable worship to his Creator.

Some infidel writers have pretended that it is a matter of indifference by what rites God is worshipped, and that he is equally pleased with the services of all nations, however different from each other in their mode of worship. This doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the dictates of sound reason. Upon this principle even human sacrifices, which have been so common in the world, would be justified. And the most impure and abominable rites would be sanctioned by the Deity. The whole worship of Pagan nations, both in ancient and modern times, is detestable; and no one who has any just conceptions of the attributes of God, can persuade himself that he ever could be pleased with services so characterized by cruelty, impurity, and folly. Their worship is not directed to the true God, but to the false deities of their own invention. They sacrifice not to God but to devils. They have substituted for the august Creator, creatures of almost every kind and species. No man under the government of reason can look into any heathen temple without being shocked and confounded, with the degrading and abominable rites of idolatry. The more this subject is contemplated the more clearly will the necessity of divine revelation be felt, and the greater will appear to be its value to the human race. Who can read an account of the mythology and idolatry of the ancient Egyptians, or of the modern Hindoos, and not be deeply impressed with the necessity of something to dispel this horrible darkness, and break asunder these cruel bonds of superstition?

Another argument for the necessity of a divine revelation is, that without it man must remain ignorant of his origin and his end, and utterly unable to account for the circumstances by which he is surrounded. He finds himself here upon the earth, and feels that he is borne along the stream of time with the rest of his generation, towards a dark gulf before him, which he perceives he can by no means escape. But when he inquires respecting the origin of the human race, when he seeks a solution of the enigma of his sinful, suffering, and mortal existence, he finds no one among the living or the dead, from whom he can obtain the least satisfactory information. All the traditions and histories of men are full of fables; and if they contain some rays of truth, they are so mingled with error that no man can distinguish the one from the other. Leave out of view the history contained in the Bible, and all that we can learn from others casts not a solitary ray of light on the points under consideration. We have no means of tracing up our race to its origin, and the deist can give no rational account of the wickedness of men and of their sufferings and death. The darkness and

uncertainty resting on these subjects have led many who rejected the authority of the Bible, to adopt most absurd and atheistical hypotheses respecting the origin of man. Some have professed to believe that the earth and its inhabitants have existed from all eternity; which is too absurd to require refutation. Others have amused themselves and their readers with the idea, that originally mankind were merely a species of monkey or baboon, and that by degrees they laid aside their brutal appearance and manners, and certain inhuman appendages, and having in process of time invented language and the arts most necessary to provide for the clothing and shelter of the body, gradually rose higher and higher in the scale of improvement, until they arrived at that pitch of refinement and civilization, which has been attained by the most polished nations. These, it is true, are rather atheistical than deistical hypotheses; but they serve to show how little light reason can shed on this subject, and how much we need a divine revelation. For the deist can form no theory which can satisfy our reasonable desires. He can give no good reason for the moral condition and mortality of our race. He may say, that it is the law of nature; but this is merely to declare the fact, not to account for it. But we might, perhaps, be contented to remain ignorant of our origin, if we could know what is to be our destiny hereafter, and how far it is connected with our present character and conduct. Reason has exerted and exhausted all her resources to demonstrate a future existence, and to place the immortality of the soul on an immovable basis. But what has been the result of all these reasonings? Why, a possibility, or, to say the most, a strong probability, that the soul survives the body. But this, of all others, is the point, on which we want certainty—absolute certainty. How painful to be involved in a cloud of doubt and suspense, when we look forward to futurity; and, especially, when descending into the grave, to have nothing to lay hold of but the conclusions and conjectures of our own feeble reason! That I do not depreciate the force of the arguments for the soul's immortality, will appear from the fact, that many of the heathen philosophers held that the soul died with the body; that of those who believed in a future existence, some were of opinion, that after the lapse of a thousand years or some longer period, it would come to an end; others—and these very numerous—believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls from the body of one animal to that of another, in perpetual succession; and more still had no other idea of immortality, than that the soul—which they thought was a particle of deity—would at death be refunded into the divine essence; which was virtually to deny its future existence, as to its distinct personality, or as possessing individuality and consciousness. Even such men as Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, had no clear, consistent, and satisfactory views of this interesting subject; not because they neglected to exercise their cultivated and powerful intellects upon it; for it was a subject, which more than all others engaged their thoughts;—but because it was surrounded by a darkness which unassisted reason could not penetrate. O how glad would these sages have been to possess one ray of that revelation which our infidels foolishly despise! The earlier deists generally admitted the doctrine of a future state of retribution, and affected to believe that reason was sufficient to establish the doctrine; but their successors in modern times, or at least a large majority of them, have either denied or called in question this fundamental doctrine. And if we should weigh impartially all the arguments which have ever been adduced in ancient or modern times to establish this point, we should be obliged to confess that we need further light. And from the very nature of the case, no one can give us an absolute assurance of our future and immortal existence, but God alone. It is an event which depends on his will and nothing else. Arguments may be adduced to prove that the soul is naturally immortal; but they prove no more than this, that the causes which effect the dissolution of

the body, can have no tendency to destroy the existence and activity of the soul. And what are called the moral arguments only go to prove that if God exercises a moral government over his creatures here, there must be a place for a just retribution hereafter. But we want, on this point, more certainty. We want one to come from the other world to tell us that there is a future state. We want to hear the voice of God testifying that there is not only a future state, but a day of righteous judgment. Here every man can judge for himself, whether he needs a revelation. This argument for the necessity of a divine revelation, will be corroborated by observing the state of religion and morals among all heathen nations. It has often been remarked, that the most certain method of ascertaining what reason is capable of accomplishing is to see what she has actually done in time past, especially, when enjoying all the advantages of high culture and extensive information. In physical science we may expect new discoveries by the exercise of reason; and the science of morals may in time to come be better understood; but if all nations, the most civilized and learned as well as the rude and barbarous, have utterly failed in forming correct opinions on the most essential points of theology and ethics, and have all fallen into the most absurd and degrading errors, and acquiesced in the most abominable and impure rites of idolatry; then, what can be more evident, than that they needed a divine revelation? Probably one reason why the nations were left so long to walk in their own ways, was, to convince us of our own imbecility, and to prepare us to receive gratefully when offered, this most comprehensive gift of God. To do justice to this argument would require volumes; but as the subject has been amply treated by Leland, and others, I will pass it over, only remarking, that the abominable rites of Pagan worship, and the shocking cruelties and impurities which have ever been perpetrated under the sanction of every heathen religion, make but a faint impression on our minds, because we only hear the distant report of these things, and are often tempted to think that the narrative of these horrible doings must be too highly coloured; but the half, and far more than the half, remains untold, and cannot be publicly told, without outrageously offending against decency. It is an awful thought, that for so long a time so many millions of our fellow creatures have been under the cruel bondage of superstition, a slavery which affects the mind, and is productive of more human misery than all other causes. As Paganism still exists, and as its evils are unmitigated by the lapse of time, it is an easy matter to compare the Christian with the heathen world. Cast your eye over the map of the earth, and say, where is found the densest darkness? Where does the light of truth shine? Is not the line of demarkation between light and darkness visible? And is it not as evident as any thing can be, that the Bible is a rich blessing to all who possess and read it? We might here also institute a comparison between those Christian nations which freely circulate the Scriptures, and those who lock them up in a dead language; but this we omit, and go on to remark, that he who is informed of the events which have occurred on missionary ground, in our own times, must have his eyes covered with thick scales of prejudice, if he does not acknowledge that the gospel is the richest benefit which can be conferred on Pagan nations. Either then, a vile imposture, a cunningly devised fable, has the power of reforming and civilizing the most degraded of the heathen tribes; or Christianity is a Divine Revelation, and is still accompanied by the power of God, making it effectual to the illumination, conversion, and salvation of the Gentiles. Let the deist take his choice between these two things. But here let me ask, whether if a company of deists had gone out to Africa or to the Society or Sandwich Islands, any such reformation would have been wrought? The reader will smile at the idea of a deist turning missionary to the heathen; but this very feeling demonstrates that deism is not to be the means of regenerating the world. If the deist were right he

would be the only proper person to send on a mission to convert the idolatrous world. But all are ready to pronounce the very idea to be ludicrous. What! a missionary society of deists! Why, they have no confidence in their own principles, in this respect, and no zeal for propagating them in such a field, and with such sacrifices as the Christian willingly makes. But why should I go to distant and heathen lands, to prove that a revelation is necessary, when we have proof enough before our eyes? In any of our populous cities we may draw a visible line between that part of the population who are under the light of evangelical truth, and those who place themselves out of the reach of all the direct rays of the gospel. Between these two extremes there is a large class not properly reckoned with either; but let us, without caring for exact accuracy in our computation, suppose, that one-third of the adult population are regular church-going people, who hear the leading truths of the gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath; and that another third seldom or never attend any place of public worship. Between these two classes of citizens we can institute a comparison. Exceptions you may have to make on both sides, but taking them in mass, is there any room to doubt whether religion is useful and necessary? From which of these classes are our prisons crowded with inmates? Suppose, first, that all those who never read the Bible, and frequent no place of worship, were removed from among us, would the state of society be meliorated or deteriorated? Or again, suppose that all the church-going people should be translated to another country, what would then be the condition of society? If I am not egregiously erroneous in my calculations, on the former supposition we should be able to dispense with most of our means of coercion and restraint, and would save the enormous expense of keeping up such an array of courts, police-officers, and prisons. On the latter supposition, all the wealth of the country would be insufficient to provide places of confinement and means of support for the guilty; or, to come nearer to the truth, our large towns would soon become as Sodom, or as a den of thieves, and soon the doom of Sodom would sink them never to rise again. But does any one think that this is not a fair statement of the matter, as it seems to take for granted that there is no religion, nor can be any, without revelation? I would request the person who makes this objection, to tell me what kind of religion might be expected if the Bible were banished from among us? Suppose that instead of the hundreds of gospel preachers, whose voices are lifted up on the first day of every week, to warn men of the danger of a sinful course, and to point out to them the way of life, all these pulpits should be filled with infidel lecturers, male and female; what, in your consciences, do you think would be the effect on morals and social happiness? We all know that many sinners have been converted by the faithful preaching of the gospel; do you know, or have you heard of any transgressors being turned from the error of their ways by attending on deistical lectures, or even on the theatre, that boasted school of morality? No doubt, some of my readers have heard of conversions at these places of fashionable resort, but not to righteousness, not to God. And as I have happened to mention the theatre, I will further add, that I am far more afraid of the moral influence of this institution, than of that of deistical and atheistical lectures; not because it pleads for vice—this would not be tolerated—but because it draws thousands within the enchanted circle of temptation, and plunges thoughtless youth into the vortex of sensual pleasure.

I admit that there may be much religion without revelation; the whole heathen world is a proof of it. Some men of the world, indeed, confound all religions and all the ministers of religion together, as if they were all alike; whereas, true and false religion are as dissimilar as light and darkness; and the only effectual barrier to false religion, is to cultivate that which is true. Infidelity may serve to sweep away one form of superstition, but after a time the tide will turn, and enthusiasm or

superstition will come in like a flood; for, as we have shown, the people must have some sort of religion, and if you banish that which is true, rational, sober, and benevolent, you will soon be visited with the most absurd and degrading systems of wild fanaticism; and these will, when the fires of enthusiasm are extinguished, settle down, or rather grow up, into hideous forms of superstition. The pagan religions had some mixture of truth derived from early tradition; for they were all, as we have seen, a corruption of the primitive worship of fallen man. But banish the Bible, and you will have in its place either the dark horrors of atheism, accompanied with crime, in her polluted and bloodstained robe, or you will have the reign of superstition, chilling every generous emotion, degrading every noble affection, and blighting all domestic bliss.

Sometimes, a splendid temple rests upon a few solid pillars, and falls to ruin if they be removed, Thus the peace, and order, and comfort of civil society depend much on two institutions, for both of which we are indebted to revelation. The first of these is the sacred institution of marriage: the second is, the religious obligation of an oath or solemn affirmation, which is virtually the same thing. Remove these, and the fabric of human happiness totters at once to its very base. But the argument on which I chiefly mean to dwell, to evince the necessity of a revelation, is, that without it we can never learn how sin can be forgiven or the sinner saved. Admitting that reason can direct us with sufficient clearness in regard to all our moral duties; admitting that if a man performs his duty, no more is required of him, and he may confide in the justice and goodness of God; admitting that from this course no evil will ensue, and the suitable reward will not be wanting; admitting all this for argument's sake—yea, more, that all men possess this knowledge: yet, I maintain, that in relation to the state in which man actually is, it amounts to nothing. It is one thing to have a system of religion which suits the case of an innocent being, and quite another to find out a plan by which a sinner can obtain forgiveness. A citizen may know full well that if he obeys the laws of his country he will be protected by all upright magistrates; but if he has already violated the laws and incurred a formidable penalty, the knowledge mentioned does not reach his case. What he needs now is, to know how he can obtain a pardon, and evade the vengeance of the violated law. In every such case, there is an absolute need of a declaration or revelation from the supreme power of the state, of a willingness to pardon on some certain condition. In no government can a pardon be a matter of course, or provided for by the law itself; for such a provision would be subversive of all government. It would be a complete nullification of the obligation and authority of the law. Here then the momentous question occurs, is man a sinner? Have all men transgressed the law of God? I am willing to wave the proof of this point, for the present, and to leave it to the decision of every man's conscience. Is there a man upon earth who is not conscious of having violated the law of his nature, both by omissions of duty and the actual commission of sin?

Assuming it then as a fact, that men are sinners, I ask, what does the light of nature teach respecting the forgiveness of sin? I shall endeavour to demonstrate, that reason sheds not a ray of light on this fundamental point, and, therefore, that Natural Religion, if known ever so perfectly and universally, could not bring us the relief which we need. The main argument for the position which I have laid down, is short and simple. It is the dictate of right reason, that God is just, and will render to every one according to his character and conduct; and that his law being wise and good must not be violated with impunity. Can the deist conceive of an objection to this principle? Certainly not. It must be considered a self-evident truth by every theist who believes in the moral government of God. The case is plain, therefore, and so far as the dictates of reason extend, the

sinner has no prospect before him but to suffer the just punishment of his offences, whatever that may be. To suppose that reason can inform us that God will pardon our sins, is to suppose that its dictates are contradictory; for, to pardon is the same as not to punish; but as we have just seen, the voice of reason is, that God is just, and will render to every man what he deserves. These two things are not compatible. Before I proceed further, I must put the reader on his guard against loose and illogical reasoning on a point so vital. I scarcely know a subject on which most men appear to satisfy themselves with more vague and fallacious arguments. Some of the more common of these it will be my object now to consider. In the first place, it is alleged, and with much confidence asserted by many, that God is a Being of too much benevolence and kindness to inflict severe punishments on his erring creatures. This suggestion, for it has not the shape of an argument, seems to give honour to God, while it is very soothing to the mind of the sinner. But when it is examined, it will be found to be rather an insult than an honour; for it supposes that the Ruler of the universe, out of kindness to a rebellious creature, will cease to be just; that rather than punish offences as they deserve he will dishonour his own law. What sort of compliment would it be to an upright judge among men, to say of him, that his benevolence and compassion would surely prevent his inflicting the penalties annexed to the laws? But if the Judge of all the earth does not act upon the principle of punishing all sin as it deserves, on what other principle does he act? By punishing it half as much as it deserves? But this might be a severe suffering, and therefore the conclusion to which this reasoning must lead, is, that God's goodness will altogether and for ever prevent him from inflicting any punishment on sin, however atrocious it may be.

Many in our days, who are not called deists or atheists, but who are more dangerous because they mingle some Christian truth with their errors, greedily embrace and zealously inculcate this very opinion. But look at its consequences. The infinitely perfect God will treat alike the most malignant rebel and the most affectionate and obedient servant. He will, in his treatment of his creatures, manifest no more displeasure at sin, than he does towards the most perfect virtue. If such benevolence as this existed, it would be no moral perfection, but a defect. But no; God's attributes are never at variance. There is no goodness in God which forbids or prevents the fullest exercise of justice. If ever he chooses to rescue sinners from the consequences of their sins, it will not be by sacrificing his justice, but by fully satisfying it. But this is an affair of which mere reason knows nothing. If the deist, however should insist that all moral goodness consists in benevolence, and nothing else, and therefore God will not punish any but for his own good, I answer that the good of the whole is to be preferred by a benevolent being to the happiness of an offending individual; and in all communities, the general good requires that transgressors should be intimidated and restrained by punishment; so that it must be proved that the good of the universe does not require the punishment of the guilty, before any such conclusion can be drawn from the benevolence of God.

It is manifest, therefore, that the suggestion which we have been considering, however pleasing to the mind in love with sin, and however plausible at first sight, will not bear examination, and instead of tending to the honour of God, takes from him all that is estimable in moral character. It allows him no other excellence than an indiscriminate benevolence to his creatures, without the least regard to their moral character. Such a being would not be an object of veneration and esteem to all holy intelligences. An infinitely good God may punish transgressors according to the demerit of their crimes, without any disparagement of his goodness; and an infinitely just and holy

God must punish sin. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Another suggestion, supposed by many to be a dictate of reason, is, that all the punishments ever inflicted on men for their sin is the evil which arises out of it from the laws of nature, and the constitution of the human mind; and that there is no good ground for any apprehension of any further or greater penalty. There is no proof adduced of the truth of this position, nor does it admit of proof. Who can tell what the judge of all may think it necessary to inflict hereafter on sinners, for the manifestation of his justice, the vindication of his law, and as a terror to other offenders? Indeed, as far as we can judge of the facts, men do not suffer in this life, in any just proportion to their crimes. The wicked are often prosperous; and when the conscience becomes callous, they experience but little remorse for their worst crimes. Transgressors who are only beginning their career, experience the agonies of an accusing conscience in the keenest manner; while the veteran in iniquity has long since ceased to be much troubled with these "compunctious visitings." But, supposing it true, that all the punishment of sin is that which naturally follows it, who can tell what all the consequences are, or where they will end? Crimes do not always produce their bitterest fruit immediately. We see the sins of the intemperate, the lewd, and the dishonest, often overtaking them with then saddest consequences, long after the acts were committed. Sins committed in youth often produce a miserable old age. Look into the history of multitudes whose vices have consigned them to a prison or a mad house, and you will find that the cause of their wretchedness and disgrace may be traced back to the sins of their youth, those very sins which many are disposed to regard with so indulgent an eye. And as these evils go on increasing until death, who can assure the sinner that this fearful progression will not continue beyond the grave? As we are not now arguing with atheists, we have a right to assume as a truth the soul's future existence; and if it exists in conscious activity, will it not carry with it the moral character acquired in this world? Will not the selfish, the proud, the malignant, be selfish, proud, and malignant, when the clay tabernacle is dropped? Can death transform a sordid and guilty creature into an angel? Will not the man who is wicked up to the moment of dissolution, continue to be wicked after death? Will not he carry with him his memory, his conscience, and his craving desires? There is then but little comfort for the sinner in this suggestion, if true; for he may find springing out of his own corruption a worm which will never die, and which will gnaw his vitals with as agonizing a pain as any which he is capable of enduring. Be it so, that conscience is the only fire to be dreaded in another world—who can tell us how intense and interminable the pain which this principle of our nature is capable of inflicting on the sinner? The fear, remorse, and horrible perturbation which sometimes surround the death-bed of profligate sinners, afford a tremendous intimation of what they may expect in a future state. How great or how long the evil consequences of sin may be, our reason certainly cannot tell; as far as her dictates extend, we can see no end to this progression in vice and misery. But I now come to the consideration of a much more specious opinion, on which deists, and others who agree with them in these matters, place great confidence. It is, that whatever the deserved penalty of sin may be, reason teaches us that it can be set aside, or evaded, by a sincere and seasonable repentance. This principle has been assumed as a fundamental article in all the systems of sober deists. It is well known that Lord Herbert laid it down as one of the five positions on which he founded his system; and, therefore, as perfectly understood by all men. And as many who wish to be considered rational Christians adopt the same principle, it has gained very general possession of the public mind. And again, as pardon and repentance are closely connected, according to the doctrines of the Gospel, this truth of

revelation is by many not distinguished from what is considered a dictate of reason, and hence it becomes a matter of real difficulty to separate truth from error on this point, and in attempting it, we must encounter a formidable front of prejudice. Before I proceed further, I must request the reader to separate the evangelical doctrine of pardon, on repentance, from the deistical principle under consideration; for they stand on entirely different grounds, as will appear in the course of the discussion. And here let it be carefully remarked, that before this doctrine of reason, as it is called, can become a practical principle, two things must be pre-supposed; first, that all men know what that repentance is which will insure our pardon; and next, that every sinner has ability to perform it. The reasonableness of these pre-requisites is self-evident. But great difficulty attends the theory, as it relates to these points. We would ask whether by that repentance which reason inculcates, any thing more is meant than sorrow or compunction for our sins; or whether it includes a thorough reformation of life, and that not merely extending to external acts, but to the motives and affections of the heart. It is also reasonable to ask, whether any certain degree or continuance of sorrow is requisite; and whether repentance will not cease to be available, if the sinner revert to his former ways of iniquity. Moreover, whether repentance, flowing simply from fear of punishment, is genuine; and if not, what sort of principles it must have as its source. It is also needful and important to inquire, whether an inveterate, hardened sinner can repent of his sins, so as to hate and forsake them; and surely no other repentance is worth any thing. With a mind filled with error, his conscience seared, and his habits deeply radicated, what hope is there of his turning about and commencing a new life? From what principle could we anticipate such a change in a confirmed villain or debauchee? You might as reasonably expect the Ethiopian to change his skin, as that he who has been long accustomed to do evil should learn to do well. It will answer no purpose to say, that he can repent if he will, and if he will not, the blame is all his own; for we are inquiring whether reason can teach a method of salvation adapted to the condition of sinners, and it matters not whether the obstacle be in the will or in something else: if it uniformly prevents the desired effect, it is plain, that something else is needed. As to the blame being on his own head, it is admitted, but this is true in regard to every sin. In every act of transgression the sinner is culpable, otherwise it would be no sin; and if the only object be to fix the blame upon the culprit, this is sufficiently provided for without offering him pardon upon repentance, for life and happiness can be secured without repentance, if men will only obey the law of God perfectly. And there is no greater, nor other inability in the way of his doing this, than in the way of his exercising true penitence. There is manifestly a radical defect in the deistical theory on this very point. It makes no provision for bringing the sinner to repentance, but merely offers pardon in case he will do that to which his whole heart is averse. And does not fact accord with our sentiments? Where are the instances of deists repenting of their sins, and yet adhering to this system? There are indeed many glorious examples of infidels being brought to repentance and reformation by the Gospel; but I would challenge the world to produce an instance of any one being brought to repentance, and a thorough change of life, merely on the principles of deism. And if the principle is in practice utterly ineffectual, of what value is it? and why should it be magnified into a matter of so much importance as to be adduced as a proof that a revelation is not needed?

As, however, I wish to give a full and impartial discussion to this point, I will now, for the sake of argument, suppose, that the repentance which is necessary to pardon is understood by all men, and that all have ability to perform it. The opinion then, is, that all sinners by repentance may escape the punishment justly due to their sins; and this repentance they can bring into exercise at

any time when it may be needed. If this be true, and a dictate of reason, then it must be confessed that a revelation is not absolutely necessary; for what method of salvation can be simpler, easier, or more intelligible than this? But I deny that any such doctrine belongs to the system of Natural Religion, or is dictated by the light of reason. This opinion of the efficacy of repentance is borrowed from the Gospel, and has been tacked to deism, with which it has no coherence. It is altogether incompatible with the first great fundamental principle of natural religion; namely, that God being just will render to every one according to his moral character and conduct. Deists have ever been in the habit of borrowing from revelation, without giving credit for what they take, and perhaps, without knowing whence the sentiment is derived. Men, born and educated under the light of revelation, however they may come to reject the Bible and all the positive institutions of Christianity, cannot divest themselves of all those important moral principles which directly or indirectly they have derived from this source. The light of divine revelation is widely diffused in Christian countries, and has given complexion to all our laws, institutions, and systems of education; so that a man can no more escape entirely from its influence than from the effect of the light of the sun. Many truths which the deist pretends to have discovered by the light of reason, are nothing else than the reflected light of divine revelation; for how else can you account for it, that the theories and moral systems of our sober deists should be so much superior to the attainments of Socrates, Plato and Cicero? Their conduct resembles that of a man who should light his taper by means of the sun's rays and then pretend that all the light around him he had struck out himself, or that it was produced by the feeble taper which he held in his hand. But to return to the point under discussion. If a man, now that he is a sinner, can certainly know that the punishment of his sins may be evaded by a repentance completely in his own power, he could also know this before he sinned. Then, with the law written on his heart, and sanctioned with a penalty, he had the clear knowledge from reason, that commit whatever atrocious sins he might, and incur whatever punishment he might, he would at any and at every moment of his existence, have it in his power to escape all the punishment which he had merited, simply by the act of repentance. This is a plain and fair statement of the case, and it is easy to see that it is completely subversive of the law of God as a binding rule, and leaves it fully in the power of the creature to do whatever he pleases. He may deliberately determine that he will rebel against his Maker, till the last moment of life, and then disarm his vengeance by repentance. The penalty of the law may be in itself tremendous, but it can deter no one from any course which he may be inclined to pursue, because he can at any moment remove himself from its operation. What greater license could the most daring rebel wish than what is thus granted? This single principle admitted into the moral government of God would be a complete nullification of the divine authority.

These consequences of the doctrine under consideration are evident and inevitable, and demonstrate that it cannot be a principle of reason or natural religion. But it may be thought by some, that the same objection will lie with all its force against the doctrine of the gospel, which promises a plenary pardon to every true penitent. But the evangelical doctrine of repentance stands on entirely different grounds. That such an offer would be made, could be known by no creature before he sinned. This doctrine does not in the least clash with the justice of God; for all the sins of the penitent, to which pardon is granted, are virtually and actually punished in the sinner's substitute. Here is the grand point of difference between Christianity and all other systems. The former maintains the glory and harmony of all the divine attributes; the latter obscure or would destroy one attribute, to make way for another. The consequence is, that the way in

which pardon is granted to the penitent, according to the gospel, has no tendency to relax our obligation to obedience, or to lessen our sense of the evil of sin; but the deistica principle of forgiveness, as we have seen, nullifies the law and authority of the Governor of the universe, and leaves it completely at the option of the creature, whether he will obey or transgress the law of God. The former is perfectly consistent with the justice of God, extending pardon to no sin for which satisfaction has not been made; while the latter is indirect repugnance to the clearest demands of justice.

Another objection to the opinion that the punishment of sin is remitted upon repentance is, that this is contrary to experience and fact. We have seen that the deist is fond of considering the punishment of sin as being nothing else but its consequences, arising out of the laws of nature. Is it true, then, that the laws of nature change their course as soon as a sinner repents? Is it not a fact that the penitent thief in the jail, and the repentant debauchee in the hospital, are still suffering the consequences of their crimes long since committed? Repentance cannot bring back lost health, ruined reputation, dissipated fortune, and alienated friends. How then can the deist, on his own principles, pretend that the punishment of sin is removed by repentance? He may allege that the future punishment of sin will be remitted; but how does he know this? Reason can judge nothing in regard to the future, but by some analogy with what is observed to take place in this life; and all analogy is against the opinion, that the evil consequences of sin will be terminated by death.

Again, if pardon be granted only to the penitent, and the impenitent be punished according to the demerit of their crimes, then there is a state of sinning which renders it proper that sin should be punished rigidly, according to its desert. There can, therefore, be no argument drawn from the goodness and compassion of God against the condign punishment of sinners. But why is impenitence alone to be considered as exposing a sinner to the wrath of God? And why are the penitent alone exempt from the penalty of the law? The answer must be, either that the sin of impenitence is so great as to deserve this severe treatment, or the merit of repentance is such as to atone for the greatest sins. But supposing that impenitence draws after it deeper guilt than all other sins, that does not prove that this alone should be punished; it only proves that it should be punished more. If there be a plain principle in jurisprudence, it is, that every sin should certainly be visited with punishment, but exactly according to its nature. There is no reason why a less sin should be suffered to pass rather than a greater. Strict justice says, let every sin have its due retribution. The greatness of the sin of impenitence, therefore, cannot be a reason why the impenitent alone are to be punished. Nor can this great difference in the treatment of sinners be owing to the merit of repentance; for it would be difficult to tell wherein its extraordinary merit consists. It must either be in the obedience or the suffering involved in the exercise of repentance. But it cannot consist in the degree of obedience which it contains; for if this were perfect, it could do no more than answer the demands of the moral law for the time being, but could have no effect on sins already committed. I think it a self-evident truth, that my obedience this moment cannot atone or satisfy for my disobedience the preceding moment; for I do no more than my duty. Then certainly the obedience included in repentance cannot atone for all past sins, however enormous, for it is imperfect, and moreover has nothing in it which enhances its value above other acts of obedience. Neither can the suffering involved in repentance atone for past sins; for these pangs of compunction owe all their virtue to the obedience with which they are connected, and without

which they would not even be of a moral nature. Unless some one should be of opinion, that these penitential sorrows are to be considered as an equivalent for the penalty of the law: but this cannot be correct, because an equivalent for the penalty of the law would be an equal degree and duration of suffering. If indeed a person of higher dignity and greater worth is permitted to suffer in the place of another, in proportion to the difference in dignity, the sufferings may be diminished. It is, however, always a matter in the breast of the Supreme Judge, whether to allow of such a substitution. I see nothing unreasonable in it. But in the case under inquiry, the same person who owes the suffering, if I may so speak, endures the sorrows of repentance; and how, I would ask, can the pious grief of a few hours or days be an equivalent for the punishment of the most heinous transgressions? Besides, the penitent sinner ever feels, and is ready to confess, that he deserves other punishment. No one who ever truly repented, entertained the idea that by this he had made a complete atonement for his sins. These stains are of too deep a dye to be washed out by a few penitential tears. Nothing can be more opposed to this opinion than the views and feelings involved in the exercises of true repentance. Every true penitent is deeply convinced, that he deserves heavier punishment than is involved in the sorrows which he now experiences.

There is, however, one ground for the opinion, that there is a reasonable connexion between repentance and forgiveness, perhaps more plausible than any other argument; it therefore merits a distinct consideration. It is, that all good men acknowledge that it is a virtue to forgive those who offend us, when they appear to be penitent; and Christians cannot deny that this is a part of moral duty, for it is repeatedly and emphatically enjoined in the New Testament, as a thing essential. What is here alleged we fully admit, and are willing to go further and say, that it is made the duty of Christians to forgive those who injure them, whether they repent or not; for they are required to "love their enemies, to do good to them that hate them, to bless them that curse them, and pray for them which despitefully use them." But this is entirely a distinct case, and resting on principles entirely different from the one under consideration. It is no part of the duty of Christians to inflict condign punishment on those who sin, even if they have been injured by them. They are forbidden to seek revenge, or to render to the wicked according to their iniquities; not because there is any thing improper or inconsistent with moral goodness in punishing the guilty as they deserve; but because this is the peculiar prerogative of the Governor of the universe. In those very passages of Scripture where vengeance is forbidden to the creature, in express and emphatical language it is claimed for the Almighty. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord; therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." If this duty of forgiveness in the Christian proved any thing, it would prove more than is wished; it would follow, that God would certainly pardon not only the penitent, but all sinners, however obstinate in their rebellion. But this conclusion is altogether at variance with the opinion which we have had under discussion, and is not even held by the deist.

Another argument in favour of the doctrine that repentance is naturally connected with pardon, is derived from the practice of granting pardon in human governments. But here there is a mistake respecting the real state of the fact for although it is true that in all human governments, it is found expedient to have a pardoning power lodged somewhere, yet no government ever yet professed to act on the principle of pardoning all offences on the condition of repentance; nor indeed is the extension of mercy to certain criminals, who have incurred the penalty of the law, at all connected with this principle. The reason why it is sometimes right to pardon offences against the state, is

either because, in some particular case, the rigid execution of law would not be entirely just; or, because on account of the number of persons implicated, sound policy may dictate that only the most guilty should be held up as an example. It appears, then, that the weakness of human governments is the ground on which the penalty of the law is remitted; but no such reason can exist in the divine government. In the execution of human laws, no inquiry is ever instituted whether the criminal be penitent; nay, though his repentance should be most evident, this never disarms the law of its penalty. The penitent thief or murderer is punished by our laws, as well as the obstinate and impenitent. If in a few cases rulers who possessed the power of granting pardon have acted on the principle, that criminals who discovered signs of penitence should be on that account pardoned, it only proves, that men entrusted with power may be misled; for undoubtedly this principle carried out would soon be subversive of all law. If the only end of punishment were the good of the culprit, then, indeed, such a course might be defended; but as long as the good of the community is the chief end of punishment, it never can be safe to offer pardon to all who profess repentance, or who for a time appear to be reformed.

I think it is manifest from the preceding discussion, that the idea of a certain connexion between repentance and pardon in the moral government of God, is not derived from the light of nature, but from the gospel; and therefore, if pardon is to be had in this way, it is only on the ground of the atonement of Christ, and not on account of any merit or efficacy in repentance to take away the guilt of sin.

If these views are correct, then is a divine revelation absolutely necessary to teach us that God is willing to receive the penitent into favour, and to show on what terms this is practicable.

Hence we may learn the deplorable situation of our whole race, and the infinite obligations which we are under to God for the gospel. All our well-grounded hopes of pardon and salvation we owe to the free mercy of God in Christ, and to the expiatory efficacy of the great atonement.

CHAPTER V("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THERE IS NOTHING IMPROBABLE OR UNREASONABLE IN THE IDEA OF A REVELATION FROM GOD, AND CONSEQUENTLY NOTHING IMPROBABLE OR UNREASONABLE IN SUCH A MANIFEST DIVINE INTERPOSITION, AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A REVELATION

That a revelation is possible, will not be called in question by any who believe in the existence of a God; nor can it be believed that there is any thing in the notion of a revelation repugnant to the moral attributes of the Supreme Being. It cannot be inconsistent with the wisdom, goodness or holiness of God, to increase the knowledge of his intelligent creatures. The whole end of a revelation is to make men wiser, better, and happier; and what can be conceived more accordant with our ideas of divine perfection than this? That man is capable of receiving benefit from a revelation is a truth so evident, that it would be folly to spend time in demonstrating it; for whatever may be thought of the sufficiency of Natural Religion if it were fully understood and improved, all must admit, that men generally, have not been sufficiently enlightened on the subject of religion. The history of the world in all ages proves the deplorable ignorance of the greater part of the human race, even on those subjects which the advocates of Natural Religion confess to be most important and fundamental, as has been proved in the preceding chapter.

It cannot be thought an unreasonable supposition, that when God made the original progenitors of our race, he should furnish them with such knowledge as was absolutely necessary, not only for their comfort but for their preservation. As they were without experience, and had none upon earth from whom they could derive instruction is it unreasonable to suppose, that the beneficent Creator communicated to them such a stock of knowledge as was requisite for the common purposes of life? The theory of those who suppose that man was at first a dumb, irrational animal, very little different from those which now roam the forest, that from this state he emerged by his own exertions, that he invented articulate speech and all the arts of life, without ever receiving any aid or any revelation from his Creator, has already been sufficiently refuted.

If then man received at first such ideas as were necessary to his condition, this was a revelation; and if afterwards he should at any time need information on any subject connected with his happiness, why might not the benevolent Creator, who does not abandon the work of his hands, again vouchsafe to make a communication to him? Such an exigency, deists themselves being judges, did arise. Men almost universally fell into the practice of idolatry, and lost the knowledge of the true God. They betook themselves to the worship of the luminaries of heaven, dead men, beasts, and inanimate things. They invented superstitious rites, not only irrational, but cruel and abominable. These were transmitted from generation to generation; and the children became still more involved in ignorance than their parents. That the righteous Governor of the universe may leave men to follow their own inventions, and suffer by their own folly, is certain: for he has done so. But is it not consistent with his wisdom and goodness to use extraordinary means to rescue them from a state so degraded and wretched? Would not every sober deist admit, that some means of bringing them back to just ideas of Natural Religion would be desirable? If then the apostasy of man from his Maker should render some further revelation necessary, would it not be highly benevolent to communicate whatever knowledge his circumstances required? Why should it be thought unreasonable, that God should sometimes depart from his common mode of acting, to answer great and valuable ends? What is there in the established course of nature so sacred or so immutable, that it must never on any occasion or for any purpose be changed? The only reason why the laws of nature are uniform, is, that this is for the benefit of man, but if his interest requires a departure from the regular course, what is there to render it unreasonable? The author of the universe has never bound himself to pursue one undeviating course, in the government of the world. The time may come when he may think proper to change the whole system. As he gave it a beginning, he may also give it an end. General uniformity is expedient, that men may know what to expect, and may have encouragement to use means to obtain necessary ends; but occasional and unfrequent deviations from this uniformity have no tendency to prevent the benefit arising from it. This is so evident a truth that I am almost ashamed to dwell so long upon it; but by the sophistry of infidels a strange darkness has been thrown over the subject, so that it seems to be thought that there would be something immoral, or unwise and inconsistent, in contravening the laws of nature.

Let it be remembered that the object here is not to prove that there must be a revelation; it is only to show that there would be nothing unreasonable in the thing; and further, that it would be a very desirable thing for man, and altogether consistent with the perfections of God, and the principles on which he governs the world.

If God should determine to reveal his will to man, how could this be most conveniently effected? We can conceive of two ways. The first, by inspiring all who needed knowledge with the ideas

which he wished to communicate; the second, by inspiring a few persons, and directing them to make known to others the truths received. The first would seem to be the most effectual, but the last is more analogous to his other dispensations. Reason might have been given in perfection at once, and not left to the uncertainty of education and human improvement; but such is not the fact. By slow degrees and much culture this faculty attains its maturity, and when neglected never acquires any high degree of strength. In regard to the best mode of making a revelation, however, we are totally incompetent to judge; but of one thing we may be certain, that if God should give a revelation to men, he would so attest it as to enable all sincere inquirers to know that it derives its origin from him; for otherwise it would be useless, as there would be no evidence of its truth. Supposing a revelation to be given, what would be a satisfactory attestation of its divine origin? It must be some sign or evidence not capable of being counterfeited; something by which God should in some way manifest himself. And how could this be effected, but by the exertion of his power or the manifestation of his infinite knowledge; that is, by miracles, or by prophecies, or by both? There is then just as much probability that miracles will exist, (for prophecy may be considered one kind of miracle) as that a revelation will be given. The conjunction of these two things is reasonable; if we find the one, we may be sure the other exists also.

It is admitted that a revelation from God would have internal evidence of its origin, but this does not strike the attention at once. It requires time before it can be perceived; but in the first establishment of a revelation, there is need of some evidence which is obvious to the senses and level to the capacities of all. Just such an evidence are miracles. Moreover, internal evidence requires, in order that it may be perceived and appreciated, a certain favourable state of the moral feelings, without which it is apt to be overlooked, and produces no conviction; whereas, external evidence is not only level to every capacity, but adapted to bring home conviction to every description of men, to the bad as well as the good.

Miracles, then, furnish the best proof for the establishment of a revelation; they seem to be its proper seal; they are the manifest attestation of God. Nothing can be conceived which more strikingly indicate his power and presence, than a visible suspension of the laws of nature. He is invisible he must make himself known by his works, and a miracle is such a work as no other can perform. When, therefore, a person professes to have received a revelation from God, and when we behold the effects of Almighty power accompanying his words, all are sure that God is with him, and that he is a teacher sent from God; for otherwise he could never perform such wonderful works; or rather, to speak more correctly, God would never exert his power to confirm the pretensions of an impostor, or to attest doctrines which are not true.

CHAPTER VI("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

MIRACLES ARE CAPABLE OF PROOF FROM TESTIMONY

I do not know that any one has denied that a miracle would be credible if exhibited to our senses. A man might, indeed, be deceived by an illusion arising from some disorder in his senses; but if he were conscious of being in a sound state of body and mind, and should witness not only one, but a variety of miracles; not only a few times, but for years in succession; and if he should find that all around him had the same perceptions of these facts as himself, I need not say that it would be reasonable to credit his senses, for the constitution of his nature would leave him no choice: he would be under the necessity of believing what he saw with his eyes, heard with his ears, and

handled with his hands. But are there facts which a man would credit on the evidence of his senses, which cannot possibly be rendered credible by the testimony of any number of witnesses. Then there might be facts, the knowledge of which could never be so communicated as to be worthy of credit. According to this hypothesis, the constitution of our nature would require us to withhold our assent from what was true, and from what others knew to be true. If a thousand persons of the strictest veracity should testify that they had repeatedly witnessed a miracle, and if all circumstances should concur to corroborate their testimony, yet upon this principle would be unreasonable to credit them, even if they should consent to die in confirmation of what they declared to be the fact. This is the ground taken by Mr. Hume, in his boasted argument against miracles. But it appears to me that every man, even before examination, must be convinced that it is false; for it is contrary to common sense and universal experience of the effect of testimony. The true principle on this subject is, that any fact which would be believed on the evidence of the senses, may be reasonably believed on sufficient testimony. There may be testimony of such a nature as to produce conviction as strong as any other conceivable evidence; and such testimony in favour of a miracle would establish it as firmly as if we had witnessed it ourselves. But though this is the conclusion of common sense and experience, the metaphysical argument of Mr. Hume has had the effect of perplexing and unsettling the minds of many: and as he boasts that “it will be useful to overthrow miracles as long as the world endures,” it seems necessary to enter into an examination of his argument, that we may be able to expose its fallacy. This has already been done in a convincing manner, by several men,* eminent for their learning and discrimination; and if their works were read by all who peruse Hume, I should think it unnecessary to add a single word on the subject. But it may not be without its use to present a refutation in a condensed form, for the sake of those who will not take the trouble to go through a minute and extended demonstration. The argument of Mr. Hume will be best exhibited in his own words. “A miracle,” says he, “supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision, than of argument. No testimony for any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability.”—“We establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make a just foundation for any system of religion.”—“Our belief or assurance of any fact from the report of eye witnesses, is derived from no other principle than experience; that is, our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. Now, if the fact attested partakes of the marvellous, if it is such as has seldom fallen under our own observation; here is a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other as far as its force goes. Further, if the fact affirmed by the witness, instead of being only marvellous is really miraculous; if, besides, the testimony considered apart, and in itself, amounts to an entire proof; in that case there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail. A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. And if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony. A miracle, therefore, however attested, can never be rendered credible, even in the lowest degree.”

Here we have the substance of Mr. Hume’s argument, on which I propose to make some remarks intended to show that its whole plausibility depends on the assumption of false principles, and the artful use of equivocal terms.

1. Some prejudice is created in the mind of the unsuspecting reader, by the definition of a miracle here given. It is called "a violation of the laws of nature," which carries with it an unfavourable idea, as though some obligation were violated and some injury done. But the simple truth is, that the laws of nature are nothing else than the common operations of divine power in the government of the world, which depend entirely for their existence and continuance on the divine will; and a miracle is nothing else than the exertion of the same power in a way different from that which is common; or it may be a mere suspension of that power which is commonly observed to operate in the world.

2. Mr. Hume's argument will apply to the evidence of the senses as well as to that derived from testimony, and will prove (if it prove any thing) that it would be impossible to believe in a miracle, if we should witness it ever so often. "The very same principle of experience," says he, "which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance against the fact which they endeavour to establish, from which contradiction there arises necessarily a counterpoise, and mutual destruction of belief and authority." The very same counterpoise and mutual destruction of belief must also occur between the assurance derived from the senses and that derived from experience. The reason why testimony cannot be believed in favour of a miracle, is not, according to Mr. Hume, because it has no force, for taken by itself it may be sufficient to produce assurance; but let this assurance be as strong as it may, it cannot be stronger than that derived from universal experience. "In that case," says he, "there is proof against proof." It is evident that, upon these principles, the same equilibrium from contradictory evidence must take place between experience and the senses. If one evidence be stronger than another, "the stronger must prevail, but with a diminution of force in proportion to that of its antagonist." But in the case of the senses and a firm and unalterable experience, the evidence is perfect on both sides, so that the "counterpoise and mutual destruction of belief" must occur. According to this metaphysical balance of Mr. Hume, a miracle could not be believed if we witnessed it ever so often; for though there is a great weight of evidence on each side, yet as there is an equilibrium, neither can have any influence on our assent. Whether Mr. Hume would have objected to this conclusion does not appear; but it is manifest, that it logically follows from his argument, as much as in the case to which he has applied it. And here we see to what a pitch of skepticism his reasoning leads.

3. Mr. Hume makes an unnecessary distinction between that which is marvellous and that which is miraculous; for though there is a real difference, there is none as to his argument. The force of his reasoning does not relate to events as being miraculous, but as being opposite to universal experience. If the conclusion therefore be correct, it will equally prove, that no testimony is sufficient to establish a natural event which has not before been experienced. If ever so many witnesses should aver that they had seen meteoric stones fall from the clouds, or the galvanic fluid melt metals, yet if we have never experienced these things ourselves we must not believe them.

4. The opposite or contrary experience of Mr. Hume in regard to miracles, can mean nothing more than that such things have not been experienced. There is no other opposite experience conceivable in this case, unless a number of persons present at the same time should experience opposite impressions. The distinction which he artfully makes in relation to "the king of Siam, who refused to believe the first reports concerning the effects of frost," between that which is contrary to experience and that which is not conformable to experience, is without foundation. For a fact

cannot be contrary to experience in any other way than by being not conformable to it. There neither is nor can be any experience against miracles, except this, that they have not occurred in our own experience or that of others. When the proposition of our author is expressed in language free from ambiguity, it will amount to this, that what has never been experienced can never be believed on any testimony; than which nothing can easily be conceived more false. In what a situation must man have been at the beginning of the world, if he had adopted the principles of this skeptic!

5. Mr. Hume uses the word experience in a twofold sense, changing from one to the other as best suits his purpose. Sometimes it means personal experience, and at other times, and more commonly, the experience of the whole world. Now if it be taken to mean our own individual experience, the argument will be that no fact which we ourselves have not witnessed can be established by testimony; which, if correct, would cut off at a stroke the greater part of human knowledge. Much the most numerous class of facts are those which we receive upon testimony of others, and many of these are entirely different from any thing that we have personally experienced. Many learned men never take the trouble to witness the most curious experiments in philosophy and chemistry; yet they are as well satisfied of their truth as if they had personal experience of it. But though an argument founded on an opposition between testimony and experience, in order to be of any validity, must relate to personal experience; yet Mr. Hume commonly uses the term to signify the experience of all men in all ages. This extensive meaning of the term must be the one which he affixes to it in most places of his essay; because it is experience by which we know that the laws of nature are uniform and unalterable; and he has given an example which clearly determines the sense of the word. "That a dead man should come to life," says he, "has never been witnessed in any age or country." Now, according to this use of the word, what he calls an argument is a mere assumption of the point in dispute, what logicians call a *petitio principii*, a begging of the question. For, what is the question in debate? Is it not whether miracles have ever been experienced? And how does Mr. Hume undertake to prove that they never did exist? By an argument intended to demonstrate that no testimony can establish them; the main principle of which argument is that all experience is against them. If miracles have ever occurred, they are not contrary to universal experience; for whatever has been witnessed at any time, by any person, makes part of universal experience. What sort of reasoning is it then to form an argument against the truth of miracles, founded on the assumption, that they never existed? If it be true, as he says, that it has never been witnessed in any age or country, that a dead man should come to life, then indeed it is useless to adduce testimony to prove that the dead have on some occasions been brought to life. If he had a right to take this for granted, where was the use of such a parade of reasoning on the subject of testimony? The very conclusion to which he wished to come is here assumed as the main principle in the argument. It is however as easy to deny as to affirm; and we do utterly deny the truth of this position; so that after all we are at issue precisely on the point where we commenced. Nothing is proved by the argument which promised so much, except the skill of the writer in sophistical reasoning.

6. Our author falls into another mistake in his reasoning. The object is to prove that testimony in favour of miracles can never produce conviction, because it is opposed by uniform and unalterable experience. But how do we know what this universal experience is? Is it not by testimony, except within the narrow circle of our own personal experience? Then it turns out that the testimony in

favour of miracles is neutralized or overbalanced by other testimony. That is, to destroy the force of testimony he assumes a principle founded on testimony. It is admitted that when testimony is adduced to establish any facts, if other and stronger testimony can be brought against them, their credibility is destroyed. But if I bring testimony for a fact, and some one alleges that he can show that this testimony is unworthy of credit because he can bring witnesses to prove that many persons in different countries and ages never saw any such thing; to such a person I would reply, that even if these witnesses declared the truth, it could not overthrow the positive testimony which I had adduced, as they did not contradict the facts asserted; and besides, it must be determined which witnesses are the most credible, yours or mine. Just so it is in the case of Mr. Hume's argument. He sets up uniform experience against testimony, and gives a preponderance to the former, on the ground that witnesses are known sometimes to lie; but all that he knows of what has happened in other ages and countries, is by testimony; and they who give this testimony are as fallible as others; therefore, there existed no ground for preferring the evidence of experience to testimony. Besides, he is not in possession of testimony to establish a thousandth part of what has been experienced; and as far as it goes, it amounts to no more than non-experience, a mere negative thing which can never have any weight to overthrow the testimony of positive witnesses. In a court of justice, such a method of rebutting testimony would be rejected as totally inadmissible. If we had sufficient evidence of a fact of any kind, that testimony would not be invalidated, if it could be proved that no person in the world had ever witnessed the like before. This want of previous experience naturally creates a presumption against the fact, which requires some force of evidence to overcome: but in all cases, a sufficient number of witnesses, of undoubted intelligence and veracity, will be able to remove the presumption and produce conviction.

7. Mr. Hume lays it down as a principle, that our belief in testimony arises from "experience, that is, observation of the veracity of human testimony." But this is not correct. Our belief in testimony is as natural and constitutional as our belief in our senses. Children at first believe implicitly all that is told them, and it is from experience that they learn to distrust testimony. If our faith in testimony arose from experience, it would be impossible to acquire any knowledge from instruction. If children were to believe nothing that was told them until they had made observations on the veracity of human testimony, nothing would be believed; for they would never arrive at the maturity and judgment necessary to make observations on a subject so complicated. But although Mr. Hume's object in wishing to establish this false principle was, to exalt the evidence of what he calls experience above testimony, yet, if we should concede it to him, it could answer him no purpose, since we have shown that this experience itself depends on testimony. Whatever use he can make of this principle therefore against testimony, can be turned against himself, since his knowledge of what the experience of the world is, can only be obtained by the report of witnesses, who, in different ages, have observed the course of nature.

8. Mr. Hume, on reflection, seems to have been convinced that his argument was unsound; for in a note appended to his Essay on Miracles, he makes a concession which entirely overthrows the whole. But mark the disingenuity (or shall I not rather call it the malignity?) which is manifested in this only evidence of his candour. He concedes that there may be miracles of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony, in direct contradiction to his reiterated maxim, and in complete repugnance to all his reasoning; but he makes the concession with the express

reservation that it shall not be applied to the support of religion. He however not only makes this concession, but gives an example of such miracles, and of the testimony which he admits to be sufficient to establish it. "Suppose," says he, "all authors in all languages agree, that from the first of January, 1600, there was a total darkness all over the earth for eight days; suppose that the tradition of this event is still strong and lively among the people; that all travellers bring us accounts of the same tradition, &c.—it is evident that our philosophers ought to receive it for certain." And this is a part of the same Essay, in which it is said that "a miracle supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision than of argument." "No kind of testimony for any kind of miracle can possibly amount to a probability, much less to a proof!"

It might appear that after so complete a renunciation of the principle which at first he so strenuously asserted, we might have spared ourselves the pains of a formal refutation. But not so. The author is resolved that his concession shall be of no service whatever to religion. Hear his own words: "But should this miracle be ascribed to any new system of religion; men in all ages have been so imposed upon by ridiculous stories of that kind, that, this very circumstance would be full proof of a cheat and sufficient with all men of sense, not only to make them reject the fact, but even reject it, without further examination." I have heard of a maxim which I believe the Jesuits introduced, that what is false in theology may be true in philosophy; but I never could have expected that a philosopher, a logician, and a metaphysician too, would utter any thing so unreasonable and so marked with prejudice as the declaration just quoted. The fact is admitted to have such evidence, that even philosophers ought to receive it as certain; but not if it is ascribed to a new religion. On this subject no evidence is sufficient. It is perfectly unexceptionable in philosophy; but in religion a sensible man will reject it, whatever it may be, even without further examination. The circumstance of its being a miracle connected with religion is sufficient, in his opinion, to prove it a cheat, however complete the testimony. The world, it seems, has been so imposed on by ridiculous stories of this kind, that we must not even listen to any testimony in favour of religious miracles. This author would indeed reduce the advocates of religion to an awkward dilemma. They are called upon to produce evidence for their religion, but if they adduce it sensible men will not notice it, even if it is good every where else, it must go for nothing in religion. Upon these principles, we might indeed give up the contest: but we are not willing to admit that this is sound logic, or good sense. The reason assigned for proscribing, in this summary way, all the testimony in favour of religion, will apply to other subjects. Men have been imposed on by ridiculous stories in philosophy, as well as in religion; but when evidence is proposed, shall we not even examine it, because there have been impositions? This is the very reason why we should examine with care, that we may distinguish between the true and the false.

If it were true, that miracles had often been ascribed to new religions, it would not prove that there never were any true miracles, but rather the contrary; just as the abounding of counterfeit money is evidence that there is some genuine: for that which has no existence is not counterfeited. But the clamour that has been raised by infidels about new religions being commonly founded on miracles, or the pretence of miracles, has very little foundation in fact. Beside the Jewish and Christian religions, (which are indeed parts of the same,) it would, I believe, be difficult to designate any other, which claims such an origin.

After all that has been said of the false maxims of the Jesuits, I doubt whether any one could be selected so perfectly at war with reason, as this of the philosopher; nay, I think I may challenge all

the enemies of revelation, to call from any Christian writer a sentence so surcharged with prejudice.

But, to do justice to Mr. Hume—though he seems to have closed the door against all discussion on our part—yet, in one of his general maxims, he leaves us one alternative. The maxim is this, “That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless it be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact.” An ingenious writer* has undertaken to meet Mr. Hume on his own ground, and has endeavoured to prove, that the testimony of the apostles and early Christians, if the facts reported by them were not true, is a greater miracle than any which they have recorded. But the maxim, as stated by Mr. Hume, is not correct. With the change of a single word, perhaps it may be adopted, and will place the question on its proper ground. The change which I propose, is to substitute the word improbable for miraculous. And it will then read: No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more improbable, than the fact which it endeavours to establish. The ground of objection to the word miraculous, is, that it involves a false principle, which is, that facts are incredible in proportion as they are miraculous; which principle he in several places avows, and which is indeed a cardinal point in his system of evidence. But it is not true. There are many cases which might be proposed, in which, of two events, one of which must be true, that which is miraculous is more probable than the one which is merely natural. I will mention only one at present. Man was either immediately created by God, or he proceeded from some natural cause. Need I ask, which of these is more probable? and yet the first is miraculous; the second is not. The plain truth is, that in all cases, the fact which has most evidence is most probable, whether it be miraculous or natural. And when all evidence relating to a proposition is before the mind, that is true which is easiest to be believed, because it is easier to believe with evidence than against it. We are willing, therefore, that this maxim, as now stated, should be the ground of our decision, and we pledge ourselves to prove that the falsehood of the miracles of the gospel would be more improbable, and consequently more incredible, than the truth of the facts recorded in them. But this discussion will be reserved for another place. To conclude; since it has been shown that there is no antecedent presumption against miracles from the nature of God, or from the laws by which he governs the universe; since a miraculous fact is not more difficult to be accomplished by omnipotence than any other; since miracles are no further improbable than as they are unusual; since they are the most suitable and decisive evidences which can be given of a revelation; since even by the concession of Mr. Hume himself, there may be sufficient testimony fully to establish them; and since the many false pretences to miracles, and the general disposition to credit them, are rather proofs that they have existed than the contrary; we may safely conclude, that Mr. Hume’s argument on this subject is sophistical and delusive; and that so far from being incredible, whatever may be their evidence, when brought to support religion, this is, of all others, the very case in which they are most reasonable and credible. In a recent popular, but anonymous publication, entitled, “Essays on the Pursuits of Truth, on the Progress of Knowledge, and the Fundamental Principles of all Evidence and Expectation, by the Author of Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions,” the doctrine of Hume, on the subject of testimony, has been exhibited in a form somewhat new and imposing. And as this writer has acquired considerable celebrity in England, and his Essays have been published in Philadelphia, and recommended strongly to the public upon the authority of the Westminster Review it seems necessary to guard the public against the insidious design of the writer. The ingenious author,

indeed, never brings the subject of divine revelation directly into view, in all that he has written; and I believe, the word “miracles” does not occur in either of the volumes which he has published. It is a fact however, that in the last of his Essays he has revived, in substance, the famous argument of Hume on miracles; and has, with even more concealed sophistry than the celebrated infidel employed, endeavoured to prove that no testimony, however strong, is sufficient to establish any fact which involves a deviation from the regular course of the laws of nature. That I may not be suspected of misrepresenting the sentiments of this discriminating and popular writer I will here insert an extract from the essay before mentioned, which contains the substance of the whole argument.

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

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

“It is clearly shown by this reasoning, that in the reception of testimony and the use of physical evidence we proceed on the same principle. But in the case of testimony there is a peculiarity not belonging to physical evidence. In the former we not only have certain effects from which it is our task to infer the causes, or certain causes from which to infer the effects; as when we judge the writing before us to have been the work of some human being, or the testimony to be true on account of the circumstances under which it was given; but the testimony itself consists of the assertion of facts, and the nature of the facts asserted often forms part of the grounds on which the veracity of the testimony is determined; it frequently happens, that while external circumstances tend to confirm the testimony, the nature and circumstances of the facts attested render it highly improbable that any such facts should have taken place, and these two sets of

circumstances may be so exactly equivalent as to leave the mind in irremediable doubt. In the consideration of both, however, the same assumption is involved. We think the facts improbable, because we have found them rarely occurring under the circumstances stated; we think the testimony likely to be true, because we have generally found true testimony to proceed from witnesses acting under the influence of similar motives, and what we have found to happen in other cases we are irresistibly led to conclude must also happen in the case before us.

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

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

“For let us put the strongest case imaginable; let us suppose that the circumstance of the ice remaining unmelted, rests on the concurrent testimony of a great number of people, people too of reputation, science, and perspicacity, who had no motive for falsehood, who had discernment to perceive, and honesty to tell the real truth, and whose interests would essentially suffer from any departure from veracity. Under such circumstances false testimony it may be alleged is impossible.

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

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

It will abbreviate the answer to this specious argument, to acknowledge, that the general principle which this author takes so much pains to establish, and on which he builds his reasoning, is freely

admitted to be not only correct, but self-evident. That the same causes uniformly produce the same effects, is a truth so obvious, and so generally admitted, that it was unnecessary for the ingenious author of this essay, to spend so much time in rendering it evident. And I am willing to admit its certainty to be as undoubted in moral, as in physical subjects. But while I freely admit, that the same causes will uniformly be followed by the same effects, I do by no means accede to the proposition, which our author seems to consider as of the same import; namely, that the course of nature, or the laws of nature, never have been interrupted, or suspended: and the whole appearance of force and plausibility which the argument of this writer possesses, arises from the artful confounding of these distinct propositions. I agree, that no testimony can be strong enough to induce a rational man to believe that the same causes will not be attended with the same effects; for this would be to assent to an evident absurdity. But it is an entirely different thing to believe that the laws of nature have sometimes been suspended; for in this case, we suppose that an extraordinary cause has intervened. To believe that a divine power has interposed to change the course of nature, is surely not the same thing, as to believe that the same cause which commonly produced one effect, is now attended by another entirely different. The natural causes, it is true, remain the same, but the general proposition stated above, is not true, if confined only to these. If there exist supernatural causes, or a power superior to the laws of nature—and this our author does not profess to deny—then the laws of nature, or mere natural causes may remain the same; and yet, by the operation of these supernatural causes, effects entirely diverse from those that would be the sequence of natural causes, may take place. And the author himself seems in one place to have been aware of this distinction, and to admonish the reader of its existence; and yet, through the whole of the argument he proceeds, as if the two propositions were identical. He ought, however, to have recollected, that while no man in his senses disbelieves the first proposition, much the greater number of men have believed, that in some cases the laws of nature have been suspended; not, that they thought that the same causes did not, in these instances, produce the same effects, but that other causes of greater potency than natural causes, were put into operation. When our author, therefore, infers from the uniformity of causation, that no testimony is sufficient to be the foundation of a rational belief, that there has been a deviation from the common course of nature, he applies a correct principle to a case to which it evidently does not belong. Because the same cause must produce the same effects, does it follow, that when another and superior cause operates, the same effects must be produced? This would be in direct repugnance to his own maxim. Then, before this principle of the uniformity of causes and effects can be applied it must be demonstrated, that in the case under consideration, no other causes operate, but such as are usual and natural, and whenever he shall be able to establish this, there will be no further contest respecting the matter. That I do not misrepresent the argument of the author will appear satisfactorily, by considering the cases which he had adduced. “Suppose, for instance,” says he, “any person to affirm, that he had exposed a cubic inch of ice to a temperature of two hundred degrees of Fahrenheit, and that at the expiration of an hour, it had retained its solidity. Here is a sequence of events asserted, which is entirely at variance with the admitted course of nature; and the slightest reflection is sufficient to show, that to believe the assertion, would involve a logical absurdity. The intrinsic discrepancy of the facts could never be overcome by any possible proofs of the truth of testimony.” In another page, he says, “If a number of men were to swear, that they had seen the mercury of the barometer remain at the height of thirty inches, when placed in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, their testimony would be instantly

rejected. The universal conclusion would be, that such an event was impossible.” What is here confidently asserted, would only be true upon the supposition, that no causes but such as were natural operated in the cases adduced; but on the hypothesis of the operation of a supernatural cause, there would neither be absurdity nor impossibility in either of the facts. What! could not He, who established these laws and gave to heat and air, respectively, their peculiar power and qualities, suspend their usual operation? Could not He cause the ice to remain unmelted in any temperature; and the mercury to remain suspended, without the pressure of the atmosphere? But the sophistical nature of the argument used, is most evident. The principle is, that similar causes must have similar effects. Very good—what then? Why, if ice remain unmelted at two hundred degrees of Fahrenheit, then this principle would be violated I answer, not at all, provided another cause is its operation, of such potency as to counteract the usual effects of caloric; or to counteract the gravity of the quicksilver, in vacuo. And it will not do to allege, that God, who established these laws, will not contravene them, on any occasion; for this would be an entire change of the ground of the argument, and a relinquishment of the principle on which the reasoning of our author is founded. Besides, it would be a mere begging of the question in dispute.

Now, in both the cases adduced by this writer, to illustrate and confirm his argument, on which he pronounces so confidently, that the judgment of men would universally reject any testimony, I beg leave to be of a different opinion, and will appeal to the common sense of all reflecting men, whether, on the supposition, that a dozen men, of perspicacity and undoubted integrity, should solemnly affirm that they had seen a cubic inch of ice remain an hour unmelted at two hundred degrees of Fahrenheit, whether they could refuse their assent, even if they knew of no good reason why the laws of nature should be suspended? But if they knew that an important purpose in the divine government could be answered by such a miracle, much less testimony would be sufficient to produce unwavering conviction of the truth of the extraordinary fact. And while they assent to such facts, on sufficient testimony, they are guilty of no absurdity, and violate no rule of common sense. It is true, that the credibility of the event reported, may be reduced to this question—whether it is more probable, that the laws of nature should, for a good end, be suspended, or that twelve men of tried veracity, should agree to assert a falsehood, without any motive to induce them to do so? And here our ingenious author revives the metaphysical balance of Mr. Hume; and after admitting that the evidence from testimony may be so strong that nothing is wanting to give it force, yet the maxim that the same causes may have the same effects, is also a truth so certain, that no evidence can countervail it. We have, therefore, according to this statement, the equipoise of evidence, which we have already considered, in Mr. Hume’s argument. The rational mind, in such circumstances, must remain neutral; it can neither believe nor disbelieve; for the evidence for the one exactly counterbalances that for the other. But after stating this hypothesis, our author finds that the evidence from testimony never can be so convincing, as that which we have for the uniformity of causation. His words are—“If the rejection and the admission of the testimony equally implied a deviation from the uniform terms of causes and effects, there could be no reason for rejecting or admitting it.” “But the rejection of the testimony is not in this predicament. The causes of testimony, or in other words, those considerations which operate on the minds of the witness, cannot always be ascertained; and as we are uncertain as to the causes in operation, we cannot be certain of the effect; we cannot be sure that the circumstances of the witness are such as have given rise to true testimony, and consequently we cannot be sure that the testimony is true.” On this whole subject I have several

remarks to make. First, this method of destroying the equipoise of evidence granted by Mr. Hume, and conceded by our author, is not altogether fair; because it does not admit what is obviously true, that in regard to some kinds of testimony, the evidence is so certain, that we might as soon doubt our own existence as the truth of the facts attested. Now, this being the case, there was no propriety in representing all testimony as being involved in some degree of uncertainty.

Again, what is here said of testimony will apply just as fully to what we ourselves witness, and for the truth of which we have the testimony of our own senses. I mean, that if the argument of our author is at all valid, it will prove, that if we saw the ice remain unmelted in the heat, and beheld it ever so often, and found that thousands around us received the same impression, we must not credit our own senses, nor believe what we saw with our own eyes, because, however certain this kind of evidence may be, it cannot be more certain than the principle, that the same causes will uniformly produce the same effects. Therefore, although we should, under all manner of circumstances, see such events, they could not be believed; for to believe them would be a logical absurdity. And thus would these men, by their metaphysics, reason us out of the evidence of our very eye-sight. I know, indeed, that neither Hume, nor the author whose reasoning we are now considering, has pushed the argument to this its just consequence; but I would defy any man to show, that it is not as applicable to the evidence of the senses as to that derived from testimony. Now, as the kind of evidence which will invariably command assent, is not learned by metaphysical reasoning, but by experience, I would leave the matter to be decided by every man of impartial judgment, for himself. Every man knows whether or not he would believe his own eyes, if he should see ice remain unmelted in two hundred degrees of temperature, according to Fahrenheit: or whether he would say, "it seems to be so, but it cannot be true, because it contradicts a self-evident principle, that the same causes must always be followed by the same effects." To which a man of plain, unsophisticated common sense would reply, "I must believe my own senses; if doing so contradicts a thousand abstract principles, I care not—'seeing is believing.' " And the same may be said in regard to testimony. Suppose a thousand persons entirely disinterested to aver, that they had seen ice remain unmelted in a very high temperature, we could not but believe them, account for the fact as we might. But we have already proved, that believing in such an event violates no maxim, but only supposes that some extraordinary power or cause is in operation; and when it is understood, that this deviation from the laws of nature is intended to confirm the declarations of some person who claims to be a messenger of God, there is not only no absurdity in the thing, but all presumption against the probability of such supernatural interposition is removed, as has been shown in the argument on that subject.

It might also be demonstrated, that upon the principles of this author, it would be absurd, upon any evidence, to believe not only in a fact which involved a real deviation from the laws of nature, but in any one which was entirely different from all our own experience of the laws of nature. For if it would be absurd to believe, on the testimony of thousands of unconnected witnesses, that ice did not melt in a certain case when placed in the fire; then it was altogether rational for the king of Siam, and all others in similar circumstances, to disbelieve the fact that water had been known to become as hard as a stone, so that men and animals could walk upon it. Persons so situated never could know that such an effect existed, but by testimony; yet as this testimony contradicted all their own experience about the laws of nature, in relation to water, they ought rather to reject the testimony, however strong, than to credit a fact which seemed to involve a deviation from "the

sequence of cause and effect," to use the language of this author. And thus we should be reduced to the necessity of rejecting all facts not consonant to our own personal experience; for to receive them on the ground of testimony, would be to violate the principle that causation is uniform. But the zeal of our author to establish his favourite point, has led him, not only to assert that a deviation from the regular succession of the laws of nature was incredible on the ground of testimony, but that it is, in the nature of things, impossible. In this assertion he certainly may lay claim to originality; for I believe no one before him, not even Hume, has gone so far in bold affirmation. His words are—"An event is impossible which contradicts our experience, or which implies that the same causes have produced different effects, or the same effects been preceded by different causes. Thus, when we pronounce that it was impossible for a piece of ice to remain in the midst of burning coals without being dissolved, our conclusion involves a complete knowledge of this particular effect of fire on ice." And he is so confident that this is the true import of the word impossible, that he says, "If I am not greatly deceived, the acutest reasoner, the closest thinker, the most subtle analyser of words, will find himself unable to produce any other meaning of the term impossible, than that which is here assigned to it." But he seems to have felt that he had gone too far in this dogmatical, and I must say, irrational assertion; for in a note he himself gives another, and one of the true meanings of the word impossible. But as confident assertion, accompanied by no proof nor reason, is sufficiently answered by a confident denial, I would take the liberty of saying, therefore, that if I am not greatly mistaken, no accurate philologist will admit that this is the true meaning of the word impossible. And certainly, men of plain common sense never can be persuaded, that it is impossible for the succession of events according to the laws of nature, to be changed. It is true, when we confine our ideas to the mere powers and qualities of nature, we do assert that their effects will be uniform, and that it is impossible that the same causes should produce different effects; but when we extend our views to the Great First Cause, it is not only absurd, but impious, to assert that he cannot suspend or alter the laws of nature. Nothing is impossible to him which does not imply a contradiction, or is not repugnant to his attributes. The conclusion which is rational on this subject, is, that all things are possible to God, and whatever is possible may be believed on sufficient testimony, which testimony, however, must be strong in proportion to the improbability of the event to be confirmed.

CHAPTER VII("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE MIRACLES OF THE GOSPEL ARE CREDIBLE

Having shown, in the preceding chapter, that miracles may be so attested as to be credible, I come now to examine the evidence by which the miraculous facts recorded in the New Testament are established. This is the main point in our inquiry; for after all that has been said, it must be admitted that unless the Christian religion is attended with sufficient evidence, we cannot believe in it, even if we would.

Before entering directly on this discussion it may be useful to premise a few things respecting the nature and force of testimony, which, it is presumed, will be admitted by all who have attended to the subject. This species of evidence admits of all conceivable degrees, from the weakest probability to the fullest assurance; for while, on this ground, we yield to some reports the most hesitating assent, we are as certainly persuaded of others as of those things which we perceive by our senses, or have demonstrated by mathematical reasoning. The exact force of testimony

cannot be calculated by rule nor estimated by reason, but is known only from experience. Many things are believed on testimony with the most unwavering confidence, when we are utterly unable to explain the precise ground on which our conviction rests. The sources of our information have been so numerous, and the same facts presented to us in so many forms, that it is impossible to attribute to each its influence in gaining our assent. If we were asked on what particular testimony we believe there is such a place as Rome, or why we believe that such a person as Bonaparte lately figured in Europe, we could only answer, in the general, that multiplied testimonies of these facts had reached us so that all possibility of doubting was excluded. The same assurance, and resting on the same grounds, is experienced in relation to facts which occurred in ages long past. Who can bring himself to doubt whether such persons as Julius Cæsar, Paul, Mohammed, Columbus, or Luther ever existed? When we have obtained evidence to a certain amount, nothing is gained by the admission of more. The mind becomes, as it were, saturated, and no increase of conviction is produced by multiplying witnesses. One sound demonstration of a theorem in mathematics is as good as a hundred. A few upright witnesses who agree and are uncontradicted by other evidence, are as satisfactory as any conceivable number. On a trial for murder, if there were a thousand witnesses who could attest the fact, a judicious court would not deem it necessary to examine more than half a dozen, or at most a dozen, if there were a perfect agreement in their testimony. Experience only can inform us what degree of evidence will produce complete conviction; but we may judge from former experience what will be the effect of the same evidence in future, and from the effect on our own minds, what it will be on the minds of others.

Testimony, not of the strongest kind, may be so corroborated by circumstances, and especially by the existing consequences of the facts reported, that it may be rendered credible and even irresistible. Should an historian of doubtful credit assert that an eclipse of the sun occurred on a certain day and was visible in a certain place; if we possessed no other evidence of the fact, it might be considered doubtful whether the testimony was true or false; but if by astronomical calculation it should be found, that there must have been an eclipse of the sun at that time, and visible at that place, the veracity of the witness would be confirmed beyond all possibility of doubt. Or should we find it recorded by an anonymous author, that an earthquake at a certain time had overthrown a certain city; without further evidence, we should yield but a feeble assent to the statement; but if on personal observation or by the report of respectable travellers, it was ascertained, that the ruins of an ancient city existed in that place, we should consider the truth of the history as sufficiently established. The evidences of the Christian religion may be sufficient, and yet not so strong as inevitably to produce conviction. Our conduct in the pursuit and reception of truth may be intended by our Creator to be an important part of the probation to which we are subjected; and therefore the evidence of revelation is not so great as to be irresistible, but is of such a kind, that the sincere and diligent inquirer will be in no danger of fatal mistake; while men of pride and prejudice, who prefer darkness to light, will be almost sure to err.*

It is natural for all men to speak the truth; falsehood requires an effort. Wicked men lie only when they have some sinister end in view. Combinations to deceive are never formed, but with a view to accomplish some object desirable to those concerned. No set of men will be at the trouble of forging and propagating a falsehood, which promises them no profit or gratification. Much less will they engage in such an enterprise, with the view of bringing evil on themselves, or when they foresee that it can be productive of nothing but pain and reproach.

Between truth and falsehood there is so great a difference, that it is extremely difficult for the latter so effectually to assume the garb and exhibit the aspect of the former as, upon a strict scrutiny, not to be detected. No imposture can stand the test of rigid inquiry. The style and manner of truth are entirely different from those of falsehood. The one pursues a direct course, is candid, unaffected, and honest; the other is evasive, cunning, tortuous, and inconsistent; and is often betrayed by the efforts made to avoid detection. When both sides of a question are pressed with difficulties, reason teaches us to choose that which is attended with the fewest. Objectors to Christianity often forget to notice the difficulties of their own hypothesis. Every question has two sides; if we reject the affirmative, we of necessity receive the negative with all the consequences which may burden it. If we reject the evidence of Christianity and deny that miracles ever existed, we are bound to account for the existence of the Christian Church, and for the conduct of the first preachers and primitive believers, on other principles. And whoever seriously undertakes this will impose on himself a difficult task. Gibbon has put forth his strength on this subject with very small success. His account of the origin of Christianity is very unsatisfactory and totally defective in historical evidence.*

If the evidence on both sides of an important question appear to be pretty equally balanced, it is the dictate of wisdom to lean to the safe side. In this question, undoubtedly, the safe side is that of religion; for if we should be mistaken here, we shall suffer no loss and obtain some good by our error; but a mistake on the other side must prove fatal. When a proposition has been established by proper and sufficient evidence, our faith ought not to be shaken by every objection which we may not be able to solve. To admit this, would be to plunge into skepticism on all subjects, for what truth is there to which some objection may not be raised that no man can fully answer? Even the clearest truths in science are not exempt from objections of this sort. It must be so, as long as our minds are so limited and the extent of human knowledge so narrow. That man judges incorrectly who supposes that when he has found out some objection to Christianity which cannot be satisfactorily answered, he has gained a victory. There are indeed objections which relate to the essence of propositions, which, if sustained, do overthrow the evidence; but there are other numerous objections which leave the substantial evidence undisturbed. Concerning these I speak when I say that objections, though not admitting of an answer, should not be permitted to unsettle our faith.

Let us now proceed to the examination of the testimony for the miracles recorded in the gospel. In this discussion we shall take it for granted, that such a person as Jesus Christ lived in Judea about the time mentioned by the evangelists, that he inculcated a pure and sublime morality, lived a virtuous and unblamable life, and was put to death by Pontius Pilate at the instigation of the Jewish rulers; that his apostles went forth into various countries preaching to the people, and declaring that this crucified Jesus was a person sent from God for the salvation of the world, and that many were induced to connect themselves with the Christian church. These facts not being of a miraculous nature, and it being necessary to suppose some such events, deists have commonly been disposed to admit them. But Volney and some others have pretended that such a person as Jesus Christ never existed, that this is the name of one of the celestial luminaries, and that the gospel history is an allegory. Such visionary theories do not deserve a serious answer: they are subversive of all historical truth, and have not a shadow of evidence. They may be well left to sink by the weight of their own extravagance. Volney, however, has received a learned answer from a

gentleman* who has met him on his own ground, and being as much attached to astronomical allegories as the Frenchman, has vanquished him with his own weapons. In the examination of written testimony, the first thing requisite is to prove the authenticity of the document in which it is recorded. The evidence on which we depend for the truth of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ and by his apostles, is contained in the New Testament. Here we have four distinct narratives of the life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth; and also a history of the acts and sufferings of the apostles in preaching the gospel and laying the foundation of the first Christian churches, after the resurrection and ascension of their Master. We have also in this collection of writings a number of epistles addressed to the church in general, to particular churches, and to individuals. These, with a book of prophecy, compose the volume called the New Testament.

These books are certainly not of recent origin; for there are extant copies of the New Testament in the original Greek, which are, at the least, twelve hundred years old. And before the time when these manuscripts were penned, we have in other books numerous testimonies to the existence of the Christian Scriptures. They are not only mentioned but quoted, expounded and harmonized, so that if every copy of the New Testament, had been lost, a large portion of it might be recovered by means of the numerous quotations in the early Christian writers. Besides, there are extant versions of the New Testament into several languages made at a very early period. By these means we are able to trace these writings up to the time in which the apostles lived.

There is also ample proof, not only from Christian but heathen authors, that a society calling themselves Christians existed as early as the reign of Nero who was contemporary with the apostles. It is evident, from the necessity of the case, that some such accounts as those contained in the gospels must have been received as true from the first existence of the Christian church. Unless it had been preached and believed that Christ was a divine Teacher and performed extraordinary works in attestation of his mission, how is it possible that such a society could have been formed? To suppose such a thing would be to conceive of a superstructure without a foundation. The resurrection of Christ from the dead must have been an article of the faith of Christians, from their very origin; for it is the corner stone of the whole edifice. Take the belief of this away and the Christian system has no existence. There are also some external institutions peculiar to Christianity, which we must suppose to be coeval with the formation of the society, for they are the badges of the Christian profession, and constitute a part of their worship. I refer to baptism and the eucharist. To suppose that in some way Christianity first existed, and after wards received these articles of faith and these institutions of worship, is too improbable to be admitted by any impartial man. It would be to suppose that a religious society existed without any principles, or that they rejected their original principles and adopted new ones; and that they who imposed these upon them, had the address to persuade them, that they had always belonged to their system;—than which it is not easy to conceive any thing more improbable. Let us for a moment attempt to imagine, that previously to the publication of the gospels, the Christian church had among them no report of the miracles, and no account of the institutions, recorded in these books. When they opened them, they would read that their society was founded on the belief of the resurrection of Jesus, and that baptism and the eucharist were instituted by him before he left the world, and had existed among them ever since. Nothing can be more evident than that the substance of what is contained in the gospels, was believed and practised by Christians from the

commencement of the society. As these books have come down to us under the names of certain apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, so they were ascribed to the same persons from the earliest mention of them. It is by the ancient Fathers spoken of as a fact universally believed among Christians, and contradicted by nobody. And we must not suppose that in the first ages of Christianity there was little care or discrimination exercised, in ascertaining the true authors and genuine character of the books in circulation. The very reverse is the fact. The most diligent inquiries were instituted into matters of this kind. Other books were published in the name of the apostles, professing to give an account of Jesus Christ, which were not genuine. The distinction between the books of the New Testament and all others of every class, was as clearly marked in the earliest ages as it has ever been since. The writings of the apostles were held in great veneration, were received by the churches all over the world, as the rule of their faith and directory of their lives, and publicly read at their meetings for the instruction of the people. When any controversy arose they were appealed to as an authoritative standard. As soon as published, they were so widely scattered and so carefully guarded, that no persons had it in their power to make any alteration in them. The style and dialect in which these books are written furnishes an evidence of their authenticity, of a peculiar kind. It does not indeed ascertain the persons of the writers, but proves that they must have been exactly in the circumstances of those to whom these books have been uniformly ascribed. The words are Greek but the idiom is in Hebrew, or rather Syro-Chaldaic, the vernacular tongue of Judea in the time of Christ and his apostles. This is a peculiarity which none could counterfeit, and which demonstrates that the New Testament was not composed by men of a different country and age from those in which the apostles lived. In the New Testament there are numerous references to rivers, mountains, seas, cities, and countries, which none but a person well acquainted with the geography of Judea and the neighbouring countries could have made, without falling into innumerable errors. There is moreover incidental mention of persons and facts known from other authorities to have existed, and frequent allusions to manners and customs peculiar to the Jews. From all these considerations, it ought to be admitted without dispute, that these are indeed the writings of the apostles, and of those particular persons to whom they are ascribed. It would not however destroy their credibility even if other persons had written them, since they were certainly composed in that age and were received by the whole body of Christians. But what imaginable reason is there for doubting the genuineness of these books? What persons were so likely to write books to guide the faith of the church as the apostles? If they did not write them who would? And why would they give the credit of them to others? But their universal reception without opposition or contradiction should silence every cavil. The persons who lived at this time knew the apostles, and were deeply interested in the subject, and they are the proper judges of this question. They have decided it unanimously, as it relates to the historical books of the New Testament. From them the testimony has come down, through all succeeding ages, without chasm. Even heathen writers and heretics are witnesses that the gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear.* In other cases we usually possess no other evidence of the genuineness of the most valued writings of antiquity, except the opinion of contemporaries handed down by uncontradicted tradition. How soon would Homer be deprived of his glory, if such evidence was insisted on as is required for the genuineness of the New Testament? Certainly, as it respects evidences of genuineness, no books of antiquity stand upon a level with the books of the New Testament. The works of the Greek and Latin historians and poets have no such evidence of being the writings of the persons whose names they bear, as the

writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For we have the testimony, not merely of individuals, but of numerous societies, widely scattered over the world. We have internal evidence of a kind which cannot be counterfeited. We have, in short, every species of evidence of which the case admits. It may therefore be considered as an established fact, that the books of the New Testament are the genuine productions of the apostles, and consequently contain their testimony to the miracles of Jesus Christ, and also to those miracles which in his name they performed after his ascension.

It is also certain that the books of the New Testament have not undergone any material change since they were written; for there is a general agreement in all copies, in all the versions, and in all the quotations. There are, it is true, small discrepancies, which have occurred through the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers, but not more than might naturally be expected. There is no ancient book which has come down to us so entire as the Scriptures, and which is accompanied by so many means of correcting an erroneous reading where it has occurred. This representation may appear surprising to those who have heard of the vast multitude of various readings which learned critics have collected from a collation of the manuscripts; but it ought to be understood by all who have ever heard of these discrepancies, that not one in a thousand is of the least consequence; that a great majority of them are merely differences in orthography, in the collocation of words, or in the use of words perfectly synonymous, by which the sense is not in the least affected. A cursory reader would find as little difference in the various manuscripts of the New Testament, as in the different printed editions of the English version.

Having established the authenticity of the record which contains the testimony, we shall next proceed to consider its credibility.

I. Many of the facts related in the gospel are undoubtedly of a miraculous nature. It is declared that Jesus Christ, in several instances, raised the dead. In one case the person had been dead four days, so that the body began to be offensive to the smell. In every case, this miracle was wrought instantly and without any other means than speaking a word. It is declared that he healed multitudes of the most inveterate and incurable diseases; that he gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb and active limbs to the withered and the maimed; that he delivered those who were furious and unmanageable by reason of the possession of demons; that on different occasions he fed thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes until they were satisfied, and that the fragments which were gathered up were much greater in quantity than the original materials; that he walked upon the sea and with a word allayed the raging storm and produced a great calm. And finally, it is repeatedly and solemnly declared by all the witnesses, that Jesus Christ after being crucified and after having continued in the sepulchre three days, rose from the dead, and after showing himself frequently to his disciples, ascended to heaven in their presence. That all these were real miracles, none can for a moment doubt. It is true, we do not know all the powers of nature; but we do know, as certainly as we know any thing, that such works as these could not be performed but by the immediate power of God. The same remark may be extended to the miracles wrought by the apostles in the name of the Lord Jesus, and especially to that stupendous miracle on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles in visible form, and conferred on them the gift of tongues and other extraordinary endowments. All must admit, that if these events ever occurred, then there have existed undoubted miracles.

II. The miracles of Jesus were performed, for the most part, in an open and public manner, in the presence of multitudes of witnesses, under the inspection of learned and malignant enemies, in a great variety of circumstances, and for several years in succession. There was here no room for trick, sleight of hand, illusion of the senses, or any thing else which could impose on the spectators. This circumstance is important, because it proves to a certainty, that the apostles themselves could not be deluded and deceived in the testimony which they have given. To suppose that they could think that they saw such miracles every day for years, and yet be deceived, would be nearly as extravagant a supposition, as that we were deceived in all that we ever experienced in our whole lives.

III. The character of the miracles recorded in the gospels ought to be carefully observed. They were all worthy of the majesty, justice, and benevolence of the Son of God. They are characterized by dignity, propriety, and kindness. Most of them indeed were acts of tender compassion to the afflicted. Although so many miracles were performed, in so great a variety of circumstances, yet there is nothing ludicrous, puerile, or vindictive in any of them. Christ never exerted his power to gratify the curiosity of any, or to supply his own daily wants. He made no ostentatious display of his wonderful power, and never used it to acquire wealth and influence. While he fed hungry multitudes by a miracle, he submitted to hunger and want himself; while he could command all nature, he remained in poverty, not having so much as a home of any kind, to which he could retire to find repose. Although he was rejected and ill-treated by the Jews, he never refused to relieve any who sincerely sought his aid. His life, in consequence of the multitudes who flocked to him, was fatiguing, and on many accounts unpleasant, but he never grew weary in doing good.

Let any man compare the narrative of the miracles of Christ, contained in the genuine gospels, with those fictitious accounts which may be found in the apocryphal and spurious gospels still extant, and he will be struck with the remarkable contrast between them. The same result will be the consequence of a comparison of the miracles of Christ with those ascribed to Mohammed by his followers, or those contained in the legends of the church of Rome. I know not how any impartial man can read attentively the account of the miracles recorded in the gospels, and not be convinced, from the very nature and circumstances of the facts reported, that they were real.

IV. There are no signs of fraud or imposture to be discovered in the record itself. There is, on the contrary, every indication of truth, honesty, and good intention in the writers. Although they differ from each other in style and manner so much that it is evident the same person did not compose the four gospels; yet there is a character of style which belongs to the whole of them, and which is without a parallel among any writers but the penmen of the sacred Scriptures. It is an apparent exemption from the passions and frailties of human nature. The most stupendous miracles are related without one exclamation of wonder from the historian, and without the least appearance of a desire to excite the wonder of the reader. The character of Christ is drawn in no other way than by simply telling what he did and said. There is no portraying of character in the way of general description, or by using strong epithets to set him forth. There is perhaps no such thing in the gospel as an expression of admiration of any discourse or action, on the part of the evangelists. If they relate such things, they are the words of others which they faithfully set down. When they describe the sufferings of Christ, they never fall, as men usually do, into pathetic declamation. They are never carried away from their simple course by the power of sympathy. The facts are related as though the writer felt nothing but the strong purpose of declaring the truth, without giving

any colouring whatever to the facts. Neither do they indulge themselves in those vehement expressions of indignation against the enemies of Christ, which we should naturally have expected. They never give utterance to a harsh expression against any one. They relate the treachery of Judas with the same unaffected simplicity as if they had no feelings relative to his base conduct. But there is something which exhibits the true character of the writers in a light still stronger. It is the manner in which they speak of themselves. Few men can write much concerning themselves without betraying the strength of self-love. Weak men, when they speak on this topic, are commonly disgusting: and even when persons seem willing to let the truth be known, there is usually an effort to seek compensation in something for every sacrifice which they make of reputation. But we may challenge any one to designate any instance in which the least indication of this moral weakness has been given by the evangelists. They speak of themselves and their companions, with the same candour which characterizes their narrative in regard to others. They describe in the most artless manner, the lowness of their origin, the meanness of their occupation, the grossness of their ignorance, the inveteracy of their prejudices, their childish contentions for superiority, their cowardice in the hour of danger, the fatal apostacy of one, and the temporary delinquency of another of their number. If any person supposes that it is an easy thing to write as the evangelists have done, he must have attended very little to the subject. It cannot be imitated even now when the model is fully before us. That these unlearned men should be able to write books at all with propriety, is wonderful. Few fishermen or mechanics, confined all their lives to laborious occupations and untutored in the art of composition, could produce, without committing great faults, a narrative of their own lives. But that men of such an education should possess such self-command and self-denial, as is manifest in these compositions, cannot be accounted for on common principles.

That, however, which deserves our special attention, is the absence of all appearance of ill-design. I should like to ask a candid infidel to point out in the gospel, some fact or speech, which in the remotest degree tends to prove that the writers had a bad end in view. I need not say that he could find nothing of the kind. Then upon his hypothesis, we have this extraordinary fact, that four books, written by impostors who have imposed on the world a series of falsehoods, do in no part of them betray the least appearance of ill design or sinister purpose. Certainly no other books written by deceivers possess the same characteristics.

We have some instances of men of learning and piety manifesting uncommon candour, in the accounts which they have left of their own errors, prejudices, and faults; but in all of them you perceive the semblance, if not reality, of human frailty. These works, however, are very valuable. Some eminent infidels also have come forward before the world, with confessions and narratives of their lives, and even of their secret crimes. None has made himself more conspicuous in this way than J. J. Rousseau, who professes to exhibit to the world a full confession of his faults, during a period of many years. And to do him justice, he has exposed to view moral turpitude enough to make, if it were possible, a demon blush. But this infatuated man gloried in his shame, and declared it to be his purpose, when called before the tribunal of heaven, to appear with his book in hand and present it to his judge as his confession and apology. Through the transparent covering of affectation, we may observe the most disgusting pride and arrogance. While common sense and decency are outraged by a needless confession of deeds which ought not to be once named, he is so far from exhibiting any thing of the character of a true penitent, that he rather

appears as the shameless apologist of vice. By his unreserved disclosures he aspired to a new sort of reputation and glory. Perhaps there is not, in any language, a composition more strongly marked with pride and presumption. His confessions were manifestly made in a confidence of the corruption of mankind, from whom he expected much applause for his candour, and small censure for his vices; but as he has appealed to another tribunal, we may be permitted to doubt whether he will there find as much applause, and as slight condemnation, as he affected to expect. Between such impious confessions as these, and the simple, humble, and sober statements of the evangelists there can be no comparison.

There is only one thing in the style of the apostles, which I wish to bring into view. In all the detailed narratives which they have given of Jesus Christ, no allusion is ever made to his personal appearance. We are as much unacquainted with his stature, his aspect, his complexion, his gait and manner, as if the gospel had never been written. There is profound wisdom in this silence; yet I doubt whether any writers, following merely the impulse of their own feelings, would have avoided every allusion to this subject.

V. There is no just ground of objection to the testimony on account of the paucity of the witnesses. In regard to most facts handed down to us by authentic history, it is seldom that we have more than two or three historians testifying the same things; and in many cases we receive the testimony of one as sufficient, if all the circumstances of the fact corroborate his narrative. But here we have four distinct and independent witnesses, who were perfectly acquainted with the fact which they relate. Two of these, Matthew and John, were of the number of the twelve who accompanied Jesus wherever he went, and saw from day to day the works which he performed. Mark and Luke might also have been eye-witnesses. Many think that they were of the number of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ to preach; but even if they were not, they may have been his followers, and often present in Jerusalem and other places where he performed his miracles. It is not necessary, however, to resort to either of these suppositions. They were contemporaries, early disciples, constant companions of the apostles, and travelled much among the churches. Mark was at first the companion of Paul and Barnabas, and afterwards attached himself to Peter, from whose preaching, according to the universal tradition of the early Fathers, he composed his gospel. Luke was chosen by the churches in Asia to accompany Paul in his labours, and was almost constantly with him until his first imprisonment at Rome; at which time his history of the life and labours of that apostle terminates.

Besides these four evangelists, who have professedly written an account of the miracles of Jesus Christ, we have the incidental testimony of those apostles who wrote the epistles, especially of Paul. It is true, Paul was not one of the twelve apostles who accompanied Christ on earth, but he became an apostle under circumstances which rendered his testimony as strong as that of any other witness. He informs us that he was met by Jesus near to Damascus, when he was "breathing out threatening and slaughter" against the disciples of Christ; that he appeared to him in the midst of a resplendent light, and spoke to him. From that moment he became his devoted follower, and the most laborious and successful preacher of the gospel. He abandoned the most flattering worldly prospects which any young man in the Jewish nation could have. He possessed genius, learning, an unblemished character for religion and morality; was in high favour with the chief men of his nation, and seems to have been more zealous than any other individual to extirpate Christianity. How can it be accounted for, that he should suddenly become a Christian,

unless he did indeed see the risen Jesus? Instead of bright worldly prospects which he had before, he was now subjected to persecution and contempt wherever he went. The catalogue of only a part of his sufferings, which he gives in one of his epistles, is enough to appal the stoutest heart; yet he never repented of his becoming a Christian, but continued to devote all his energies to the promotion of the gospel as long as he lived. This change, in a person of Paul's character and prospects, will never be accounted for upon the supposition of imposture or enthusiasm.* Here, then, we can produce what deists often demand, the testimony of an enemy; not of one who was unconvinced by the evidence of Christianity, which would be an inconsistent testimony and liable to great objections; but of one whose mind had been long inflamed with zeal against Christianity; and yet by the force of evidence was converted to be a zealous disciple, and retained all his life a deep and unwavering conviction of the truth of the gospel.* This man, although he has not written a gospel, has given repeated testimonies to the truth of the leading facts which are now in question. He is especially one of the best witnesses on the subject of the resurrection of Christ; for he not only saw and conversed with Jesus after his ascension, but has informed us of some circumstances of great importance not mentioned by any of the evangelists. He asserts that Christ was seen by five hundred persons at one time, most of whom were still living when he wrote. If there had been any falsehood in this declaration, how soon must it have been detected! His letters, no doubt, were immediately transcribed and conveyed to every part of the church; and how easy would it have been to prove the falsehood of such a declaration, if it had not been a fact! But almost every page of Paul's writings recognises as true the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is constantly assumed as a truth most assuredly believed by all Christians. It is the great motive to exertion and source of consolation, in all his epistles. And when he would convince certain heretics of the absurdity of denying the resurrection of the body, he reduces them to this conclusion, that "if the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen," which would be at once to subvert the Christian religion. His appeal to the common assured belief of Christians is remarkably strong and pertinent to our purpose: "If," says he, "Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." Would any man in his senses have written thus, if the resurrection of Christ had not been a fundamental article of faith among Christians, or if he had not been fully persuaded of its truth? Had Paul been an impostor, would he have dared to appeal to five hundred persons, most of whom were living, for the truth of what he knew to be false? How easy and how certain must have been the detection of an imposture thus conducted! The same is evident from the epistles of the other apostles, and from the Apocalypse.

Now, when we can clearly ascertain what any persons believed in relation to a fact, we have virtually their testimony to that fact; because, when they come forward and give testimony explicitly, they do no more than express the conviction of their own minds. Certainly, then, if we can, by any means, ascertain what the primitive Christians believed in regard to the resurrection of Christ and other miraculous facts, we are in possession of all the testimony which they could give.* This is an important point as it relates to the number of witnesses. Now, that all Christians, from the beginning, did believe in the facts recorded in the gospels and epistles of the apostles, we have the strongest possible evidence. It is proved incontestably from the fact of their becoming Christians; for how could they be Christians without faith in Christianity? unless any one will be so extravagant as to believe, that not only the apostles, but all their converts, were wilful deceivers. It is proved also from the manner in which Christians are addressed by the apostles in all their

epistles. Suppose, for a moment, that the Corinthian Church had no belief in the resurrection of Christ, when they received the above mentioned epistle from Paul, would they not have considered him perfectly insane? But the universal reception of the gospels and epistles, by all Christian churches throughout the world, is the best possible evidence that they believed what they contained. These books were adopted as the creed and guide of all Christians. It is manifest, therefore, that we are in possession of the testimony of the whole primitive church, to the truth of the miracles recorded in the gospels. Suppose a document had come down to us, containing a profession of the belief of every person who embraced the Christian religion, and a solemn attestation to the facts on which Christianity is founded, would any man object that the witnesses were too few? The fact is, that we have substantially this whole body of testimony. I do not perceive, that its force would have been sensibly greater had it been transmitted to us with all the formalities just mentioned. There is, therefore, no defect in the number of witnesses. If every one of the twelve apostles had written a gospel, and a hundred other persons had done the same, the evidence would not be essentially improved. We should have no more, after all, than the testimony of the whole primitive church, which, as has been proved, we possess already.

VI. The credibility of the testimony is not impaired by any want of agreement among the witnesses. In their attestation to the leading facts and to the doctrines and character of Christ, they are perfectly harmonious. The selection of facts by the several evangelists is different, and the same fact is sometimes related more circumstantially by one than another; but there is no inconsistency between them. In their general character and prominent features, there is a beautiful harmony in the gospels. There is no difference which can effect, in the judgment of the impartial, the credibility of the testimony which they contain. If all the evangelists had recorded precisely the same facts, and all the circumstances in the same order, the gospels, would appear to have been written in concert, which would weaken their testimony. But it is almost demonstrable, from internal evidence that the evangelists, with the exception of John, never had seen each other's productions before they wrote. Their agreement therefore ought to have the effect of witnesses examined apart from each other; and their discrepancies serve to prove that there could be no concerted scheme to deceive; for in that case every appearance of this kind would have been carefully removed.

I am aware, that on the ground of supposed contradictions or irreconcilable discrepancies, the most formidable attacks have been made on Christianity. It is entirely incompatible with the narrow limits of this essay to enter into a consideration of the various methods which have been adopted for harmonizing the gospels, and removing the difficulties which arise from their variations. I can only make a few general observations, with the view of leading the reader to the proper principles of solution.

It ought to be kept in mind, that the gospels were written almost two thousand years ago, in a language not now spoken, and in a remote country, whose manners and customs were very different from ours. In all such cases, there will be obscurities and difficulties, arising entirely from the imperfection of our knowledge. The gospels do not purport to be regular histories of events, arranged in exact, chronological order, but a selection of important facts out of a much greater number left unnoticed. The time when, or the place where, these facts occurred, is of no consequence to the end contemplated by the evangelists. In their narratives, therefore, they have sometimes pursued the order of time; in other cases, the arrangement has been suggested by the subject previously treated, or by some other circumstance. In recording a miracle, the number of

persons benefited is not of much consequence; the miracle is the same, whether sight be restored to one person or two: or whether demons be expelled from one or many. If one historian, intent on recording the extraordinary fact, selects the case of one person, which might in some respects be more remarkable, and another mentions two, there is no contradiction. If they professed to give an accurate account of the number healed, there would be ground for this objection; but this was no part of the design of the evangelists.

If a writer, in order to exhibit the skill of an oculist, should mention a remarkable instance of sight being restored to a person who had been long blind, it could not be fairly inferred from the narrative that no person received the same benefit at that time; and if another person should give a distinct account of all the cases, there would be no contradiction between these witnesses. All the difference is, that one selects a prominent fact out of many; the other descends to all particulars.

There is no source of difficulty more usual than the confounding of things which are distinct. The narratives of events truly distinct may have so striking a similarity, that the cursory reader will be apt to confound them. It has been remarked that if the two miracles of feeding the multitude had been mentioned by two different evangelists, each giving an account of one case, it would have been supposed by many that they were accounts of the same occurrence, and that the evangelists did not agree in their testimony; but in this case, both these miracles are distinctly related by the same evangelist, and distinctly referred to by Christ in his conversation with his disciples. This confounding of distinct things is never more commonly done, than when a fact was attended with a great number of circumstances and occurrences, rapidly succeeding each other, and the historian mentions only a few out of many. This remark is fully verified with respect to Christ's resurrection. The narrative of all the evangelists is very concise. Few particulars are mentioned; and yet from the nature of the case, there must have been an extraordinary degree of agitation among the disciples; a great running from one part of Jerusalem to another, to tell the news; and a frequent passing to and from the sepulchre. It is not wonderful, therefore, that, as each evangelist mentions only a few of the accompanying occurrences, there should seem, at first view, to be some discrepancy in their accounts. Companies of women are mentioned by each, and it is hastily taken for granted that they were all the same; and the objector proceeds on the supposition, that these women all arrived at the sepulchre at the same time, and that they continued together. He forgets to take into view, that the persons who might agree to meet at the sepulchre, probably lodged at very different distances from the place, and allows nothing for the agitation and distraction produced by the reports and visions of this interesting morning. But on this, as on several other subjects, we are indebted to the enemies of revelation for being the occasion of bringing forward able men, who have shed so much light on this part of the gospel history, that even the appearance of discrepancy is entirely removed.* The genealogy of Jesus Christ, as given by Matthew and Luke, has furnished to modern infidels much occasion of cavil; but it ought to be sufficient to silence these objectors that the early enemies of Christianity made no objections on this ground. If one of these is the genealogy of Joseph and the other of Mary, there will be no discrepancy between them. Why it was proper to give the descent of Joseph the husband of Mary, it is not now necessary to inquire. But on this whole subject I would remark, that we are very little acquainted with the plan on which genealogical tables were constructed. It seems to have been a very intricate business, and it is not surprising that we should be at a loss to elucidate every

difficulty. Again, it is highly probable that these lists were taken from some genealogical tables of the tribe and family of the persons to whom they refer. Every family must have had access to such tables, on account of their inheritance. Public tables of acknowledged authority would be far better for the purpose which the evangelists had in view than new ones, even though these should have been more full and accurate. These genealogies had no other object than to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was a lineal descendant of David and Abraham; which purpose is completely answered by them; and there are no difficulties which may not be accounted for by our ignorance of the subject.

Finally, it may be admitted that some slight inaccuracies have crept into the copies of the New Testament, through the carelessness of transcribers. It is impossible for men to write the whole of a book without making some mistakes; and if there be some small discrepancies in the gospels with respect to names and numbers, they ought to be attributed to this cause.

VII. The witnesses of the miracles of Christ could have had no conceivable motive for propagating an imposture. That they were not themselves deceived is manifest from the nature of the facts, and from the full opportunity which they had of examining them. It is evident, therefore, that if the miracles recorded by them never existed, they were wilful impostors. They must have wickedly combined to impose upon the world. But what motives could have influenced them to pursue such a course we cannot imagine; or how men of low condition and small education should have ever conceived it possible to deceive the world in such a case is equally inconceivable. These men had worldly interests which it was natural for them to regard: but every thing of this kind was fully relinquished. They engaged in an enterprise not only dangerous, but attended with certain and immediate ruin to all their worldly interests. They exposed themselves to the indignation of all authority, and to the outrageous fury of the multitude. They must have foreseen, that they would bring down upon themselves the vengeance of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, and that every species of suffering awaited them. Their leader was crucified, and what could they expect from declaring that he was alive and had performed wonderful miracles? If they could have entertained any hopes of exemption from evils so apparent, experience must soon have convinced them that they had engaged not only in a wicked, but most unprofitable undertaking. It was not long after they began their testimony, before they were obliged to endure unrelenting persecution from Jews and Gentiles. Could they have been influenced by a regard to fame? What renown could they expect from proclaiming a crucified man to be their master, and the ground of all their hope and confidence? If this was their object, why did they give all the glory to another who was dead? But the fact is that instead of fame they met with infamy. No name was ever more derided and hated than that of Christian. They were vilified as the most contemptible miscreants that ever lived, as the refuse and offscouring of all things, as the pests and disturbers of society, and the enemies of the gods. They were pursued as outlaws, and punished for no other reason but because they acknowledged themselves to be Christians. Would men persevere in propagating an imposture for such fame as this? It cannot be supposed that they expected their compensation in another world; for the supposition is that they were wilful impostors, who were every day asserting, in the most solemn manner, what they knew to be false. It would be just as reasonable to suppose that the murderer or highway robber is influenced in the commission of his atrocious crimes, by the hope of a future reward. The only alternative is to suppose that they were fanatics, as it is known that men under the government of enthusiasm condemn all the common considerations which usually

influence human conduct, and often act in a way totally unaccountable. This representation of enthusiasm is just, but it will not answer the purpose for which it is adduced. Enthusiasts are always strongly persuaded of the truth of the religion which they wish to propagate; but these men, upon the hypothesis under consideration, knew that all which they said was false. Enthusiasm and imposture are irreconcilable. It is true that what begins in enthusiasm may end in imposture; but in this case the imposture must have been the beginning, as well as the end, of the whole business. There was no room for enthusiasm; all was imposture, if the facts reported were not true. But the best evidence that the evangelists were not fanatics, is derived from their writings. These are at the greatest remove from the ravings or reveries of enthusiasm. They are the most simple, grave, and dispassionate narratives that ever were written. The writers are actuated by no phrensy; they give no indication of a heated imagination; they speak uniformly the language of "truth and soberness."

VIII. But if we could persuade ourselves, that the apostles might have been actuated by some unknown and inconceivable motive, to forge the whole account of Christ's miracles, and were impelled by some unaccountable phrensy to persevere through all difficulties and sufferings to propagate lies; can we believe that they could have found followers in the very country, and in the very city, where the miracles were stated to have been performed? When these accounts of stupendous and numerous miracles were published in Jerusalem, where the apostles began their testimony, what would the people think? Would they not say, "These men bring strange things to our ears. They tell us of wonders wrought among us, of which we have never before heard. And they would not only have us to believe their incredible story, but forsake all that we have, abandon our friends, and relinquish the religion of our forefathers, received from God: and not only so, but bring upon ourselves and families the vengeance of those that rule over us, and the hatred and reproach of all men." Is it possible to believe that one same person would have received their report?

Besides, the priests and rulers who had put Jesus to death, were deeply interested to prevent the circulation of such a story; it implicated them in a horrid crime. Would they not have exerted themselves to lay open the forgery, and would there have been the least difficulty in accomplishing the object, if the testimony of these witnesses had been false? The places of many of the miracles are recorded, and the names of the persons healed or raised from the dead, are mentioned. It was only one or two miles to the dwelling of Lazarus; how easy would it have been to prove that the story of his resurrection was a falsehood, had it not been a fact! Jerusalem, and indeed the temple itself, were the scenes of many of the miracles ascribed to Christ. As he spent much time in that city, it is presumable that not a person residing there could have been totally ignorant of facts which must have occupied the attention and excited the curiosity of the public. An imposture like this could never be successful in such circumstances. The presence of an interested, inimical, and powerful body of men, would soon have put down every attempt at an imposition so gross and groundless. If the apostles had pretended that at some remote period, or in some remote country, a man had performed miracles, they might have persuaded some weak and credulous persons; but they appealed to the people to whom they preached, as the witnesses of what they related. No more than a few weeks had elapsed after the death of Jesus, before this testimony was published in Jerusalem: and notwithstanding all the opposition of those in authority, it was received, and multitudes willingly offered themselves as the disciples of him whom they had recently crucified.

IX. The last particular which I shall mention, to set the testimony of the witnesses to the miracles of the gospel in its true light, is that there is no counter testimony. These witnesses have never been confronted and contradicted by others. Whatever force or probability their declarations are entitled to, from the circumstances of the case and from the evidences which we possess of their integrity and intelligence, suffers no deduction on account of other persons giving a different testimony. The Jewish priests and rulers did indeed cause a story to be circulated relative to the dead body of Christ, contrary to the testimony of the apostles which has been handed down to us by the evangelists. They hired the soldiers to report that Christ's disciples had come by night and stolen the body while they slept, a story too absurd and inconsistent to require a moment's refutation. But as the body was gone out of their possession, they could not perhaps have invented any thing more plausible. It proved nothing, however, except that the body was removed while the soldiers slept, and for aught they could testify, might have risen from the dead, according to the testimony of the apostles.

Deists sometimes demand the testimony of the enemies as well as the friends of Christianity. To which I would reply, that the silence of enemies is all that can reasonably be expected from them. That they should come forward voluntarily with testimony in favour of a religion which, through prejudice or worldly policy, they opposed, could not reasonably be expected. Since they would have contradicted these facts if it had been in their power, their not doing so furnishes the strongest negative evidence which we can possess. And no other evidence than that which is negative or merely incidental, ought to be expected from the enemies of the gospel; unless, like Paul, they were convinced by the evidence exhibited to them. But no denial of the reality of the miracles of Christ has reached us from any quarter. As far as we have any accounts, there is no reason to think that they were ever denied by his most implacable enemies; they said that he performed his works by help of Beelzebub. The first heathen writers against Christianity did not dare to deny Christ's miracles. Neither Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, nor Julian, pretend that these facts were entirely false, for they attempted to account for them. The Jewish rabbies, in the Talmud, acknowledge these miracles, and pretend that they were wrought by magic, or by the power of the venerable name of Jehovah, called tetragrammaton, which they ridiculously pretended that Jesus stole out of the temple, and by which they say he performed his wonderful works. From what has been said, I trust it is sufficiently manifest that we have such testimony for the miracles of the New Testament, as will render them credible in the view of all impartial persons. We have shown that the miracles recorded are real miracles; that they were performed in an open and public manner; that the witnesses could not possibly have been deceived themselves; that enemies had every opportunity and motive for disproving the facts, if they had not been true; that there is every evidence of sincerity and honesty in the evangelists; that the epistles of the apostles furnish strong collateral proof of the same facts; that all Christians from the beginning must have believed in these miracles, and they must therefore be considered competent witnesses; that none of the witnesses could have any motive to deceive; that they never could have succeeded in imposing such a fraud on the world, even if they could have attempted it; that it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the Jewish rulers to have silenced such reports if they had been false; that the commencement of preaching at Jerusalem, and the success of Christianity there, cannot be accounted for on any other supposition than the truth of the miracles; that the conduct of the apostles in going to the most enlightened countries and cities, and their success in those places, can never be reconciled with the idea that they were

ignorant impostors; and finally, that no contrary evidence exists, but that even the early enemies of Christianity have been obliged to admit that such miracles were performed. When all these things are fairly and fully considered, is it not more probable that miracles were performed, than that such a body of testimony, so corroborated by circumstances, and by effects, reaching to our own times, should be false?

If all this testimony is false, we may call in question all historical testimony whatever; for what facts have ever been so fully attested? But why should this testimony be rejected? No reason has ever been assigned, except that the facts were miraculous: but we have shown that it is not unreasonable to expect miracles in such a case, and that miracles are capable of satisfactory proof from testimony. It is, therefore, a just conclusion, that the Miracles of the Gospel are credible.

CHAPTER VIII("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE RAPID AND EXTENSIVE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL, BY INSTRUMENTS SO FEW AND FEEBLE, IS A PROOF OF DIVINE INTERPOSITION

The success of the gospel, under the circumstances of its first publication, is one of the most wonderful events recorded in history; and it is a fact beyond all dispute. In a little time, thousands of persons embraced the Christian religion in Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea. In heathen countries its success was still more astonishing. Churches were planted in all the principal cities of the Roman Empire, before half a century had elapsed from the resurrection of Christ. The fires of persecution raged; thousands and tens of thousands of unoffending Christians were put to death, in a cruel manner; yet this cause seemed to prosper the more, so that it became a proverb, that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." And it went on increasing and prevailing, until in less than three centuries, it became the religion of the empire. That the Christian religion did actually prevail and was widely extended within a short period after its first publication, is matter of undoubted history. The testimony confirming this fact is not derived merely from the authority of Christian writers however numerous, but also from that of the most respectable heathen historians. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny have all borne witness to the fact, that Christianity was extensively prevalent in their day; and as such impartial witnesses who did not believe in Christianity but held it in abhorrence, is of great weight in establishing this fact, and it may not be easily accessible to the reader, a translation of their words is here subjoined.

Tacitus lived during the first century of the Christian era; and his high character as an historian is known to all. After describing the destructive fire which desolated Rome, he proceeds thus: "But neither by human aid, nor by the costly largesses by which he attempted to propitiate the gods, was the prince able to remove from himself the infamy which had attached to him in the opinion of all, for having ordered the conflagration. To suppress this rumour, therefore, Nero caused others to be accused, on whom he inflicted exquisite torments, who were already hated by the people for their crimes, and were vulgarly denominated Christians. This name they derived from Christ their leader, who in the reign of Tiberius was put to death as a criminal, while Pontius Pilate was procurator. This destructive superstition, repressed for a while, again broke out, and spread not only through Judea where it originated, but reached this city also, into which flow all things that are vile and abominable, and where they are encouraged. At first, they only were seized who confessed that they belonged to this sect, and after wards, a vast multitude, by the information of those who were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for hatred of the

human race. These, clothed in the skins of wild beasts, were exposed to derision, and were either torn to pieces by dogs, or were affixed to crosses: or when the daylight was past, were set on fire, that they might serve instead of lamps for the night."

Suetonius also lived in the first century, but his life extended into the second. His character as a well informed and correct historian is also high. His testimony is as follows: "He [Claudius] banished the Jews from Rome who were continually raising disturbances, Christ (Chrestus) being their leader." And in the life of Nero, he says, "The Christians were punished, a sort of men of a new and magical religion." But the fact which we wish to establish is, perhaps, more fully confirmed by the testimony of Pliny the younger, than by any other Roman writer. It is contained in a letter addressed by this distinguished philosopher to the emperor Trajan, in the beginning of the second century. "Pliny, to the emperor Trajan, wisheth health, &c. It is my custom, Sir, to refer all things to you of which I entertain any doubt; for who can better direct me in my hesitation or instruct my ignorance? I was never before present at any of the trials of the Christians; so that I am ignorant both of the matter to be inquired into, and of the nature of the punishment which should be inflicted, and to what length the investigation is to be extended. I have, moreover, been in great uncertainty whether any difference ought to be made on account of age, between the young and tender, and the robust; and also whether any place should be allowed for repentance and pardon; or whether those who have once been Christians should be punished, although they have now ceased to be such, and whether punishment should be inflicted merely on account of the name, where no crimes are charged, or whether crimes connected with the name are the proper object of punishment. This, however, is the method which I have pursued in regard to those who were brought before me as Christians. I interrogated them whether they were Christians; and upon their confessing that they were, I put the question to them a second, and a third time, threatening them with capital punishment; and when they persisted in their confession, I ordered them to be led away to execution; for whatever might be the nature of their crime, I could not doubt that perverseness and inflexible obstinacy deserve to be punished. There were others, addicted to the same insanity, whom, because they were Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the city. In a short space, the crime diffusing itself, as is common, a great variety of cases have fallen under my cognizance. An anonymous libel was exhibited to me, containing the names of many persons who denied that they were Christians or ever had been: and as an evidence of their sincerity, they joined me in an address to the gods, and to your image, which I had ordered to be brought along with the images of the gods for this very purpose. Moreover, they sacrificed with wine and frankincense, and blasphemed the name of Christ: none of which things can those who are really Christians be constrained to do. Therefore I judged it proper to dismiss them. Others, named by the informer, at first confessed themselves to be Christians, and afterwards denied it; and some asserted that although they had been Christians, they had ceased to be such for more than three years, and some as much as twenty years. All these worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and execrated Christ. But they affirmed that this was the sum of their fault or error, that they were accustomed, on a stated day, to meet together before day, to sing a hymn to Christ in concert, as to a God, and to bind themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wickedness—but on the contrary, to abstain from theft, robbery, and adultery—also, never to violate their promise, nor deny a pledge committed to them. These things being performed, it was their custom to separate; and to meet again at a promiscuous, innocent meal; which, however, they had omitted, from the time of the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I

forbad assemblies of this sort. On receiving this account, I judged it to be more necessary to examine by torture, two females, who were called deaconesses. But I discovered no thing except a depraved and immoderate superstition. Whereupon, suspending further judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared to me that the subject is highly deserving of consideration, especially on account of the great number of persons whose lives are put into jeopardy. Many persons of all ages, sexes, and conditions are accused, and many more will be in the same situation; for the contagion of this superstition has not merely pervaded the cities, but also all villages and country places; yet it seems to me that it might be restrained and corrected. It is a matter of fact, that the temples which were almost deserted begin again to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities which had been long intermitted are again attended; and victims for the altars are now readily sold, which, a while ago, were almost without purchasers. Whence it is easy to conjecture what a multitude of men might be reclaimed, if only the door to repentance was left open.” To which the emperor replied as follows:—“Trajan to Pliny—Health and happiness.

“You have taken the right method, my Pliny, in dealing with those who have been brought before you as Christians; for it is impossible to establish any universal rule which will apply to all cases. They should not be sought after; but when they are brought before you and convicted, they must be punished. Nevertheless, if any one deny that he is a Christian, and confirm his assertion by his conduct, that is, by worshipping our gods, although he may be suspected of having been one in time past, let him obtain pardon on repentance. But in no case permit a libel against any one to be received, unless it be signed by the person who presents it, for that would be a dangerous precedent, and in no wise suitable to the present age.”

Other heathen testimonies might be adduced, and which may be seen in “Lardner’s heathen testimonies;” but for the sake of brevity they are omitted. And the testimonies of the two Christian fathers—Irenæus and Tertullian, who both lived at the close of the second, and beginning of the third century, will be sufficient to show, beyond all controversy, how extensively the Christian religion prevailed in their day.

Irenæus, speaking of the uniformity of the faith of Christians, says, “Neither do those churches which are established among the Germans believe or teach otherwise; nor do those among the Hiberii or the Celts; nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those established in the central parts of the world.”* The language of Tertullian is still more to our purpose, and nothing further will be needed in the way of testimony, to show the extent of Christianity in less than one century after the death of the last of the apostles. “In whom,” says he, “but the Christ now come, have all nations believed? for in whom do all other nations (but yours, the Jews) confide? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, and the inhabitants of Pontus, Asia, and Pamphylia; the dwellers in Egypt, and inhabitants of Africa beyond Cyrene; Romans and strangers; and in Jerusalem, both Jews and proselytes;—so that the various tribes of the Getuli, and the numerous hordes of the Mauri; all the Spanish clans and different nations of Gauls, and the provinces of the Britons inaccessible to the Romans, but subdued by Christ—and of the Samaritans and Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians; and many unexplored nations, and countries, and islands unknown to us, and which we cannot enumerate—in all which places the name of the Christ who has come, now reigns; for who could reign over all these but Christ, the Son of God?”†

There is another testimony of this father, in his Apology, which was written a little before the close of the second century; and seems to have been addressed to the Proconsul of Africa, and to the other præfects of that province, of which he was an inhabitant. He there speaks in the following manner:—"If we Christians were disposed to array ourselves as open or secret enemies of our opposers, a sufficient force of numbers is not wanting to us. Many of the Moors and Marcomanni, as well as other tribes more remote, even to the very ends of the earth, and throughout the world, are with us. We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your places; your cities, your islands, your castles, your towns your council houses, your very camps, your tribes, your palace, your senate, your forum. We have left you nothing but your temples. If we should break away from you and should remove into some other country, the mere loss of so many citizens would overwhelm your government; and would itself be an effectual punishment. Doubtless you would be frightened at your own solitude. The silence and stupor which you would witness, would cause the world over which you reign to appear as dead. Your enemies would then be more than your citizens who should remain."* It will be unnecessary to adduce more testimonies, for the fact is undisputed; and in a short time the majority of the empire were professedly Christians.

Learned infidels have in vain attempted to assign an adequate cause for this event on natural principles. Gibbon exerted all his ingenuity to account for the progress and establishment of Christianity; but though he has freely indulged conjecture, and disregarded the testimony of Christians, his efforts have been unavailing. The account which he has given is entirely unsatisfactory. Upon the deistical hypothesis, it is a grand revolution without any adequate cause. That a few unlearned and simple men, mostly fishermen of Galilee, without power or patronage, and employing no other weapons but persuasion, should have been successful in changing the religion of the world, must forever remain an unaccountable thing, unless we admit the reality of miracles and supernatural aid. The argument from the rapid and extensive progress of the gospel may be estimated, if we consider the following circumstances.

1. The insufficiency of the instruments to accomplish such a work without supernatural aid. They had neither the learning nor address to make such an impression on the minds of men, as was requisite to bring about such a revolution. It would have been impracticable for a few unlettered Jews to acquire the languages of all the nations, among whom the gospel spread in so short a time. They must have had the gift of tongues, or this conquest could never have been achieved. Besides, it ought to be remembered, that Jews were held in great contempt by all the surrounding nations. A few persons of this nation, exhibiting a very mean appearance, as must have been the case, would have called forth nothing but derision and contempt, in any of the large cities of the empire. It is more unlikely that they could have been able to make many converts, than that a few poor Jewish mechanics should now proselyte to Judaism vast multitudes in all the principal cities of Europe and America.*

2. The places in which the gospel was first preached and had greatest success, furnish proof that it could not have been propagated merely by human means. These were not obscure corners, remote from the lights of science, but the most populous and polished cities, where every species of the learning of the age was concentrated, and whither men of learning resorted. Damascus, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi and Rome furnished the theatre for the first preachers of the gospel. It is believed, that there was no conspicuous city in the central part of the Roman empire, in which the Christian church was not planted before the death of the apostles. And it ought to be

remembered, that this did not occur in a dark age, but in what is acknowledged by all to be the most enlightened age of antiquity: it was the period which immediately succeeded the Augustan Age, so much and so deservedly celebrated for its classical authors. If the gospel had been an imposture, its propagators would never have gone to such places in the first instance; or, if they had, they could not have escaped detection.

3. The obstacles to be overcome were great, and insurmountable by human effort. The people were all attached to the respective superstitions in which they had been educated, and which were all adapted to retain their hold on corrupt minds. How difficult it is to obtain even a hearing from the people in such circumstances, is manifest from the experience of all missionaries in modern times. Philosophers, priests, and rulers, were combined against them. All that learning, eloquence, prejudice, interest, and power, could oppose to them, stood in their way. Not only were priests, philosophers, and rulers combined against them, but the prejudices of the multitude in favour of the corrupt religion in which they had been educated, inspired them with a furious zeal in opposition to all attempts to convert them from their errors. In the Acts of the Apostles, we have many instances recorded of the blind fury of the people leading them to acts of outrage and violence towards the first preachers of the gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles. In one of these tumults, Stephen was martyred; and in another, which took place in the temple, Paul had like to have been torn to pieces by the violence of the people. And at Ephesus, we know what a tumult was excited by Demetrius the silversmith; and at several other places. But it appears that only a few of these tumults which extended to personal violence, are recorded in the Acts, for Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians writes thus:—"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Three times was I beaten with rods—once was I stoned." And it is probable that all the apostles and primitive preachers experienced similar treatment; and had they not been divinely supported and aided, they would never have been able to withstand such infuriated opposition much less could they have brought over thousands and tens of thousands to subject themselves to the yoke of Christ, and expose themselves to the same ignominy and persecution to which they were continually exposed themselves.

4. The terms of discipleship which the apostles proposed, and the doctrines which they preached, were not adapted to allure and flatter the people, but must have been very repulsive to the minds of men. Impostors, when they attempt to propagate a new religion, always endeavour to adapt their doctrines and precepts to the tastes of the people whom they aim to proselyte. But the author of Christianity and his apostles pursued no such man-pleasing course. Their first requisition was that men should deny themselves, and take up their cross. Their hearers were commanded to repent and forsake all their sins, however profitable, pleasant, or inveterate. They were peremptorily required to forsake all their worldly possessions, and even their nearest and dearest friends, for the sake of the gospel. And this was not all; they were explicitly told, that they must hold themselves ready to sacrifice life itself when they could not preserve it without disobeying Christ. And no prospect of ease or honour in this world was held out to them, but they were assured, that persecution awaited them as long as they lived, and that through much tribulation they must pass; and that their only reward was spiritual peace, and eternal life in the world to come. Would any impostors have been so stupid as to propose such terms, or if they could have been so foolish, can any one believe that they would have been successful in converting the world to embrace their system? Nothing more is necessary to prove that the Christian religion was

divine, than to contemplate the terms of discipleship, and then consider the multitude of converts of all ages, ranks, and countries. And the prospect of persecution and death, held up to the first disciples by Christ and his apostles, was fully realized, and yet the success of Christianity irresistible. Many Christians were cut off by persecution, but still Christianity made progress, and was extended in all directions. Because Christianity increased and flourished under bloody persecutions, many persons have adopted it as a maxim, that persecution has a tendency to promote any cause; than which it is difficult to conceive of any thing more contrary to common sense and experience. In most cases, by cutting off the leaders of a party, however furious their fanaticism, the cause will decline and soon become extinct. The increase of Christianity, under ten bloody persecutions, can only be accounted for, by supposing that God by his grace persuaded men to embrace the truth, and inspired them with more than heroic fortitude in suffering for the sake of their religion. Many of the primitive Christians attested the truth by martyrdom. They sealed their testimony with their blood. To this argument it is sometimes answered, that men may suffer martyrdom for a false as well as a true religion, and that, in fact, men have been willing to die for opinions in direct opposition to each other. While this is admitted, it does not affect the argument now adduced. All that dying for an opinion can prove (and of this it is the best possible evidence,) is the sincerity of the witnesses. But in the case before us the sincerity of the witnesses proves the facts in question; for we have seen that they could not themselves have been deceived. Every martyr had the opportunity of knowing the truth of the facts on which Christianity was founded; and by suffering death in attestation of them, he has given the most impressive testimony that can be conceived.* The sufferings of the primitive Christians for their religion were exceedingly great, and are attested by heathen as well as Christian writers. It is a circumstance of great importance in this argument, that they could at once have escaped all their torments by renouncing Christianity. To bring them to this was the sole object of their persecutors; and uniformly it was put to their choice, to offer sacrifice or incense to the heathen gods, or be tormented. One word would have been sufficient to deliver them; one easy action would have restored them to worldly comforts and honours. But they steadfastly adhered to their profession. Some indeed were overcome by the cruelty of their persecutors; but was it ever heard that any of them confessed that there was any fraud or imposture among them? So far from it, they whose courage had failed them in the trying hour, were commonly deep penitents on account of their weakness, all the rest of their days. Let it be remembered, that no person suffered for Christianity through necessity. Every martyr made a voluntary sacrifice of himself, to maintain the truth and to preserve a good conscience.

5. There is yet another light in which these sufferings of the primitive Christians ought to be viewed. It is the temper with which they endured every kind of torment. Here again is a problem for the deist to solve. Persons of all ages, of all conditions of life, and of both sexes, exhibited under protracted and cruel torments, a fortitude, a patience, a meekness, a spirit of charity and forgiveness, a cheerfulness, yea often a triumphant joy, of which there are no examples to be found in the history of the world. They rejoiced when they were arrested; cheerfully bade adieu to their nearest and dearest relatives; gladly embraced the stake; welcomed the wild beasts let loose to devour them; smiled on the horrible apparatus by which their sinews were to be stretched, and their bones dislocated and broken; uttered no complaints; gave no indication of pain when their bodies were enveloped in flames; and when condemned to die, begged of their friends to interpose no obstacle to their felicity (for such they esteemed martyrdom,) not even by prayers for their deliverance.* What more than human fortitude was this? By what spirit were these despised

and persecuted people sustained? What natural principles in the human constitution can satisfactorily account for such superiority to pain and death? Could attachment to an impostor inspire them with such feelings? No, it was the promised presence of the risen Jesus which upheld them, and filled them with assurance and joy. It was the Paraclete, promised by their Lord, who poured into their hearts a peace and joy so complete, that they were scarcely sensible of the wounds inflicted on their bodies. Proud and obstinate men may perhaps suffer for what they are secretly convinced is not true; but that multitudes, of all conditions, should joyfully suffer for what they know to be an imposture, is impossible. Tender women and venerable old men were among the most conspicuous of the martyrs of Jesus. "They loved not their lives unto the death," and have given their testimony and sealed it with their blood. They are now clothed in white robes, and bear palms in their hands, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Blessed martyrs! they have rested from their labours and their works have followed them!

CHAPTER IX("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE JEWISH NATION WHICH HAVE BEEN REMARKABLY FULFILLED

The Bible contains predictions of events which no human sagacity could have foreseen, and these predictions have been exactly and remarkably accomplished. The subject of prophecy is so extensive, and the difficulty of presenting, with brevity, the argument which it furnishes so great, that if I had not determined to give a general outline of the evidences of revelation, I should have omitted this topic as one to which justice cannot be done in so short an essay. But I would not be understood as intimating, that the evidence from prophecy is of an inferior kind. So far from believing this to be the fact, I am persuaded that whoever will take the pains to examine the subject thoroughly, will find that this source of evidence for the truth of revelation is exceeded by no other in the firmness of conviction which it is calculated to produce. Prophecy possesses, as a proof of divine revelation, some advantages which are peculiar. For the proof of miracles we must have recourse to ancient testimony; but the fulfilling of prophecy may fall under our own observation, or may be conveyed to us by living witnesses. The evidence of miracles cannot, in any case, become stronger than it was at first; but that of prophecy is continually increasing, and will go on increasing, until the whole scheme of predictions is fulfilled. The mere publication of a prediction furnishes no decisive evidence that it is a revelation from God; it is the accomplishment which completes the proof. As prophecies have been fulfilled in every age, and are still in a course of being fulfilled; and as some most remarkable predictions remain to be accomplished, it is plain, from the nature of the case, that this proof will continue to increase in strength.

It deserves to be well weighed, that any one prediction which has been fulfilled, is of itself a complete evidence of divine revelation; or to speak more properly, is itself a revelation. For certainly no one but God himself can foretell distant future events, which depend entirely on the purpose of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

If, then, we can adduce one prophecy, the accomplishment of which cannot be doubted, we have established the principle that a revelation has been given; and if in one instance, and to one person, the probability is strong that he is not the only person who has been favoured with such a communication. The remark which is frequently made, that most prophecies are obscure, and the meaning very uncertain, will not affect the evidence arising from such as are perspicuous, and of

which the accomplishment is exact. There are good reasons why these future events should sometimes be wrapped up in the covering of strong figures and symbolical language; so that often the prophet himself, probably, did not understand the meaning of the prediction which he uttered. It was not intended that they should be capable of being clearly interpreted, until the key was furnished by the completion. If these observations are just, the study of the prophecies will become more and more interesting every day, and they will shed more and more light on the truth of the Scriptures.

What I shall attempt, at present, and all that is compatible with the narrow limits of this discourse, will be, to exhibit a few remarkable predictions, and refer to the events in which they have been fulfilled. They who wish for further satisfaction, will find it in the perusal of Bishop Newton's excellent Dissertations on the Prophecies, to which I acknowledge myself indebted for a considerable part of what is contained in this chapter, and to Keith on the Prophecies. The first prophecies which I shall produce, are those of Moses respecting the Jews. They are recorded, principally, in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus and in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy; of which the following predictions deserve our attention.

1. "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." This prophecy had an accomplishment in the invasion of Judea by the Chaldeans and by the Romans, but more especially the latter. Jeremiah, when predicting the invasion of the Chaldeans, uses nearly the same language as Moses. "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from afar, O house of Israel, saith the Lord; it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not."* And again, "Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven."* But with still greater propriety may it be said that the Romans were a nation "from afar;" the rapidity of whose conquests resembled the eagle's flight; the standard of whose armies was an eagle; and whose language was unknown to the Jews. The enemies of the Jews are always characterized as "a nation of fierce countenance, who shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young"—an exact description of the Chaldeans. It is said, 2 Chronicles 36:17, that God brought upon the Jews "the king of the Chaldee, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, nor him that stooped for age." Such also were the Romans. Josephus informs us, that when Vespasian came to Gadara, "he slew all, man by man, the Romans showing mercy to no age." The like was done at Gamala.

2. It was predicted, also, that their cities should be besieged and taken. "And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst." This was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came against Samaria, and besieged it,† when Sennacherib came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, burned the temple, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem round about.‡ The Jews had great confidence in the strength of the fortifications of Jerusalem. And Tacitus, as well as Josephus, describes it as a very strong place; yet it was often besieged and taken before its final destruction by Titus. In their sieges they were to suffer much by famine, "in the straitness wherewith their enemies should distress them." Accordingly, at Samaria, during the siege there was a great famine, "so that an ass's head was sold for four score pieces of silver."§ And when Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, "the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land."* And in the siege of the same city by the Romans, there was a

most distressing famine.[†]

It was foretold that in these famines women should eat their own children. “Ye shall eat,” says Moses, “the flesh of your sons and of your daughters.” And again, “thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body.”[‡] “The tender and the delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness—she shall eat her children for want of all things, secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates.” This extraordinary prediction was fulfilled six hundred years after it was spoken, in the siege of Samaria, by the king of Syria; when two women agreed together to give up their children to be eaten; and one of them was eaten accordingly.[§] It was fulfilled again nine hundred years after Moses, in the siege of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans. “The hands of the pitiful women,” says Jeremiah, “have sodden their own children.” And again, fifteen hundred years after the time of Moses, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, Josephus informs us of a noble woman killing and eating her own sucking child; and when she had eaten half, she secreted the other part for another meal.

3. Great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. “And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude.” In the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, it is computed that eleven hundred thousand persons perished by famine, pestilence, and sword. Perhaps, since the creation of the world, so many persons never perished in any one siege as this. The occasion of so great a multitude of people being found at Jerusalem, was, that the siege commenced about the celebration of the passover; and the people throughout the adjacent country took refuge in Jerusalem, at the approach of the Roman army.

Moses also predicted that the Jews should be carried back to Egypt, and sold as slaves for a very low price, and described the method of their conveyance thither: “and the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, where you shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” Josephus informs us that when the city was taken, the captives who were above seventeen years of age, were sent to the works in Egypt; but so little care was taken of these captives, that eleven thousand of them perished for want. There is every probability, though the historian does not mention the fact, that they were conveyed to Egypt in ships, as the Romans had then a fleet in the Mediterranean. The market was so overstocked that there were no purchasers, and they were sold for the merest trifle.

4. It is moreover predicted, in this wonderful prophecy of Moses, that the Jews should be extirpated from their own land, and dispersed among all nations. “And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other.” How remarkably has this been fulfilled. The ten tribes were first carried away from their own land by the king of Assyria; next, the two other tribes were carried captive to Babylon; and, finally, when the Romans took away “their place and nation,” their dispersion was complete.

5. The Emperor Adrian, by a public edict, forbade the Jews, on pain of death, to set foot in Jerusalem: or even to approach the country around it. In the time of Tertullian and Jerome, they were prohibited from entering Judea. And from that day to this, the number of Jews in the holy land has been very small. They are still exiles from their own land, and are found scattered through almost every country on the globe.

It was foretold that, notwithstanding their dispersion, they should not be totally destroyed, but should still exist a distinct people. "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them." "What a marvellous thing is this," says Bishop Newton, "that after so many wars, battles, and sieges; after so many rebellions, massacres, and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery and misery; they are not "destroyed utterly," and though scattered among all people, yet subsist a distinct people by themselves! Where is any thing like this to be found in all the histories, and in all the nations under the sun?" The prophecy goes on to declare, that they should be every where in an uneasy condition; and should not rest long in any one place. "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." How exactly has this been verified in the case of this unhappy people, even to this day! There is scarcely a country in Europe from which they have not been banished, at one time or another. To say nothing of many previous scenes of bloodshed and banishment, of the most shocking Kind, through which great multitudes of this devoted people passed in Germany, France, and Spain, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; eight hundred thousand Jews, are said by the Spanish historian, to have been banished from Spain, by Ferdinand and Isabella. And how often, when tolerated by government they have suffered by the tumults of the people, it is impossible to enumerate. The prophet declares that "they should be oppressed and crushed alway; that their sons and their daughters should be given to another people; that they should be mad for the sight of their eyes, which they should see." Nothing has been more common in all countries where the Jews have resided, than to fine, fleece, and oppress them, at will; and in Spain and Portugal their children have been taken from them by order of the government, to be educated in the Popish religion. The instances in which their oppressions have driven them to madness and desperation, are too numerous to be stated in detail.

6. Finally, it is foretold by Moses, "That they should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations; and that their plagues, should be wonderful," even great plagues, and of long continuance. In every country the Jews are hated and despised. They have been literally "a proverb and a by-word." Mohammedans, Heathens, and Christians, however they may differ in other things, have been agreed in vilifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews. Surely the judgments visited on this peculiar people, have been wonderful and of long continuance. For nearly eighteen hundred years, they have been in this miserable state of banishment, dispersion, and persecution. The prophecy of Isaiah respecting the restoration of the Jews to their land after seventy years captivity, is very remarkable. Cyrus is designated by name, not only as the conqueror of Babylon, but as the restorer of Israel and rebuilders of Jerusalem. "That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple thy foundations shall be laid."* We are informed by Josephus, that when Cyrus had got possession of Babylon, the predictions concerning himself were made known to him, and that he was struck with admiration at the manifest divinity of the writing. This will account for the kindness of this prince to the children of Israel, and the opportunity which he gave them to return to their own land, and the facilities which he granted for the restoration of the temple. Indeed, it is certain from what is said in Ezra, that, by some means, Cyrus knew that God had appointed him to rebuild the temple for there it is written, "That the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus the king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the

kingdoms of the earth and He hath charged me to build a house in Jerusalem which is in Judah."

He then gave liberty and encouragement to the people of God to engage in this pious enterprise, and to receive pecuniary aid from all who were disposed to co-operate in this good work. And, as the sacred vessels of the temple had been brought to Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, these Cyrus brought forth and delivered to the proper officer, to be brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

"What nation," says the distinguished writer already quoted, "hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country, so long as these have done in their dispersion, into all countries? And what a standing miracle is this exhibited to the view and observation of the whole world!" "Here are instances of prophecies delivered above three thousand years ago, and yet, as we see, fulfilling in the world, at this very time; and what stronger proof can we desire of the divine legation of Moses? How these instances may affect others, I know not, but for myself I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression."

CHAPTER X("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

PROPHECIES RELATING TO NINEVEH, BABYLON, TYRE, &C.

The walls of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, are said to have been a hundred feet in height, sixty miles in compass, and defended by fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high. Diodorus Siculus relates, that the king of Assyria after the complete discomfiture of his army, confined in an old prophecy that Nineveh would not be taken unless the river should become the enemy of the city; that after an ineffectual siege of two years, the river, swollen with long continued and tempestuous torrents, inundated part of the city, and threw down the wall for the space of twenty furlongs; and that the king, deeming that the prediction was accomplished, despaired of his safety, and erected an immense funeral pile, on which he heaped his wealth, and with which himself, his household, and palace were consumed.* The book of Nahum was avowedly prophetic of the destruction of Nineveh; and it is there foretold, "that the gates of the river shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved—Nineveh of old, like a pool of water—with an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof." The other predictions of the prophet are as literally described by the historian. He relates, that the king of Assyria, elated with his former victories, and ignorant of the revolt of the Bactrians, had abandoned himself to scandalous inaction; had appointed a time of festivity; and supplied his soldiers with abundance of wine; and that the general of the enemy apprized by deserters, of their negligence and drunkenness attacked the Assyrian army while abandoned to revelling, destroyed a great part of them, and drove the rest into the city. The words of the prophet were hereby verified. "While they were folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." Much spoil was promised to the enemy, "Take the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store and glory, out of all the pleasant furniture." Accordingly the historian affirms, that many talents of gold and silver preserved from the fire, were carried to Ecbatana. The prophet declares, that the city was not only to be destroyed by an overflowing flood, but the fire was also to devour it; which exactly agrees with the account of the historian. The utter and perpetual destruction of the city was distinctly predicted, "The Lord will make an utter end of the place thereof. Affliction shall not rise up the second time, she is empty, void and waste. The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness. How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in." In

the second century, Lucian, who was born on the banks of the Euphrates, testified, that Nineveh was utterly perished—that there was no vestige of it remaining—and that none could tell where it was once situated. A late traveller who has visited that country, testifies, “that neither bricks, stones, nor other materials of building,” are now to be seen; but the ground is, in many places, grown over with grass, and such elevations are observable, as resemble the mounds left by the intrenchments and fortifications of ancient Roman camps; and the appearances of other mounds and ruins less marked than even these extending for ten miles and widely spread, and seeming to be the wreck of former buildings, show that Nineveh is left without any monument of royalty, without any token whatever of its splendour or wealth; that it is indeed a desolation, “empty, void, and waste;” its very ruins perished, and less than the wreck of what it was. “Such an utter ruin,” says Bishop Newton, “has been made of it: and such is the truth of the divine predictions.”

BABYLON

The prophecies respecting the taking of Babylon, its utter destruction, and the complete desolation which should reign where this proud city once stood, have been remarkably fulfilled. Our limits will only admit of the selection of a few particulars out of many; but for more minute and extended information on this interesting subject, the reader is referred to the works of Bishop Newton, and the Rev. Alexander Keith, on Prophecy, where he will meet with full satisfaction, and to which we acknowledge ourselves indebted for the substance of what is here introduced. The very nations by whom Babylon was to be taken and destroyed, are predicted by name by the prophet Jeremiah. “Go up, O Elam, (this was the ancient name of Persia,) besiege, O Media. The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it.”* And Isaiah says, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.”† Thus saith the Lord “that saith unto the deep, Be dry; and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure. And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates—and the gates shall not be shut.”‡ “Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus his anointed, to subdue nations before him.” This prediction of Isaiah, in which Cyrus is named, must have been uttered at least two hundred years before he was born, and when the Persians were an obscure and inconsiderable nation. A confederacy having been formed between the Medes and Persians, and Cyrus having in person taken the command of the Persians, and having disciplined them with consummate skill, and inspired them with heroic courage, joined his uncle Cyaxares, (by Daniel called Darius the Mede,) and their united forces having conquered the Armenians, the Hyrcanians, the Lydians, the Cappadocians, and other allies of the king of Babylon; and having so treated all these conquered nations as to conciliate their friendship, and add their forces to their own, they marched towards the city of Babylon.

Although Cyrus commenced his military career with a small army of Persians, yet by conquest and wise policy, his army had become exceedingly numerous before he reached the famous city. But what could be done by courage or military skill against a city so defended on every side? This consummate general, as soon as he had arrived on the ground with his army, made it his first business, in company with some of his chief officers, to ride entirely round the walls, and to ascertain whether there was any weak point where an assault might successfully be made. But he found every part fully secured, so that there seemed no possibility of taking the city but by a long siege. He therefore sat down before it, and dug a trench entirely around the walls, and towers were erected, and every other preparation made for a regular siege. Thus, in the prophecy, it is

said, "They camped against it round about. They put themselves in array against Babylon round about. They set themselves in array against Babylon, every man put in array."

Another important circumstance distinctly noticed in the prophecy, is, the cowardice of the Babylonians. Formerly, her armies were a terror to the whole earth, and nothing could withstand their fierce courage. But now, faint-heartedness had come over them. "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight. They have remained in their holds. Their might hath failed, they became as women."* Their timidity was manifest in their shutting themselves up; and all the challenges of their enemies could not provoke them to come out and meet them in the open field. Xenophon relates, that Cyrus challenged the king of Babylon to decide the contest by single combat, which he declined. The people within the walls though very numerous, made no sallies from their gates; nor did they use any efforts to disperse or annoy the besiegers. Literally, "they remained in their hold, and the hands of the king of Babylon waxed feeble."

Cyrus, as we have said, found every thing secure against assault; for what could battering rams, or other engines of war accomplish against walls which were thirty, or, as some assert, fifty feet in thickness? He was, therefore, not a little perplexed until the thought occurred, that an entrance might possibly be obtained by turning out of its channel the river Euphrates, which flowed through the city. This hazardous enterprise as a last resort was determined on, and the work was commenced, but the design was carefully concealed from the besieged; for, as Herodotus observes, if they had had the least intimation of the device, or if they had discovered the Persians while passing through, they could not only have prevented its execution, but have destroyed the whole army of Cyrus while pent up within the channel of the river. All that was necessary to prevent the Persians from entering was, to close the gates which gave entrance to the city through the embankment built upon both sides of the river. To guard against the danger of discovery, Cyrus selected for the execution of this important but dangerous enterprise, the season of a great Babylonish festival, on which occasion he knew the whole population gave themselves up to revelling and drunkenness. The river was a full quarter of a mile wide, and twelve feet deep, but there was an artificial lake in the neighbourhood, prepared to receive the surplus waters, when it overflowed its banks, or when for any other reason it was desirable to diminish the waters of the river. The entrance of this canal was enlarged, and the great trench dug round the walls by the army of Cyrus, was so connected With the river above the town, that this also was capable of containing a large body of water. Moreover, the country was exceedingly low and flat; so that the water, if it could once be diverted from its usual channel, would readily spread itself in all directions. The scheme succeeded to their most sanguine expectation. The channel of the river was left nearly dry by the subsiding of the water, and the army of Cyrus entered by night. One detachment was placed where the river entered the city, and another where it left it; and the Persian army entered so silently, and the inhabitants were so completely drowned in their drunken revels, that no alarm was sounded, and no care had been taken to close the gates leading to the river, no danger being apprehended on that side So completely were the Babylonians surprised, that Cyrus had reached the royal palace before a messenger arrived to tell the king that the city was taken. The noise of the invading army, at first, was not distinguished from the mad tumult of the rioters. Even the guards stationed around the palace were found intoxicated, and slain; when the Persians rushed into the splendid hall, where Belshazzar and his thousand lords, and wives, and concubines, had been drinking out of the sacred vessels of the Lord's house, which had been

impiously brought forth on this occasion. But their profane mirth had already been arrested before the arrival of the victorious Persians, by the appearance of a hand, writing certain words in a strange character on the wall. This had produced the utmost consternation in all the assembly, although none could decipher the writing, until Daniel was brought in, who quickly denounced the fatal destiny of the monarch, and the overthrow of his kingdom; “And in that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain.”

How exactly the events, described above, were predicted, will be at once seen by the following quotations from the prophets.

“I will dry up thy sea, and make thy springs dry—that saith to the deep, Be dry, I will dry up thy rivers.”

“And one post did run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at the end, and that the passages are shut.”

“But a snare was laid for Babylon. It was taken, and it was not aware. How is the praise of the whole earth surprised! For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness, and in thy wisdom, and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee; therefore shall evil come upon thee, and thou shalt not know whence it ariseth; and mischief shall come upon thee, and thou shalt not be able to put it off—none shall save thee.”

“In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord. I will make drunken her princes and her wise men, her captains and her rulers, and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep.”

“The gates (i. e. those from the river to the city) were not shut. The loins of kings were loosed to open before Cyrus the two-leaved gates.”* The king hearing a noise and tumult without, sent some to see whence it arose: but no sooner were the gates of the palace opened, than the Persians rushed in. “The king of Babylon heard the report of them. Anguish took hold of him.” He and all about him perished. God had “numbered his kingdom and finished it.” It was “divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” The multitude of soldiers who now entered the city, and the slaughter of the citizens in the streets, are exactly foretold. “I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars. Her young men shall fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day.” The number of the Persian army, which was reviewed immediately after the capture of the city, is said by Herodotus to have amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand horse, six thousand chariots of war, and six hundred thousand infantry.

Cyrus issued a proclamation that the people should remain in their houses, with strict orders to slay every person who should be found in “the streets.”

Cyrus now became master of all the hidden treasures of Babylon. “The treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places being given into his hand;” that he might know “that the Lord, which had called him by his name, was the God of Israel.” From the time of the first capture of this famous city by Cyrus, her glory began to fade. God had predicted her downfall, and his word never fails. After its first conquest it was, according to Herodotus, reduced from an imperial to a tributary city; which seems to be foretold by the prophet, when he says—“Come down and sit in the dust, O

virgin daughter of Babylon—sit on the ground, there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans.” The next step towards the downfall of this famous city was after the rebellion against Darius. When he captured the city, he ordered the height of the walls to be reduced, and all the gates to be destroyed. To which the prophet alludes, in express terms:—“The wall of Babylon shall fall—her walls shall be thrown down.”

Xerxes, after his return from his unfortunate Grecian expedition, entered the city and rifled its most valuable and sacred treasures, laid up in the temple of Belus. This the prophet Jeremiah had foretold. “I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring out of his mouth that which he has swallowed up. I will do judgment on the graven images of Babylon.” No efforts made by the conquerors of Babylon to restore her glory, or even to prevent her decay, were at all successful. Cyrus made Babylon his usual place of residence, but his successors preferred other cities: and when Alexander conquered Babylon, it was fully his purpose to restore Babylon to her pristine glory; but the counsel of Jehovah was adverse. The prophet had long before signified that all such attempts would prove ineffectual. “Take balm for her pain, if so be that she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed.” The proximate cause of the rapid decline of Babylon was twofold; first, the turning of the river inundated the surrounding country and filled it with stagnant pools; secondly, the building of another city in the neighbourhood, drew off multitudes of inhabitants, who transferred their residence and wealth from the old to the new city. Babylon also was oppressed with some of the most cruel tyrants that ever ruled over any city. One of these, named Humerus, who lived about one hundred and thirty years before Christ, reduced many of the inhabitants to slavery on the slightest pretexts, burned the forum and some of the temples, and banished many of the people into Media. In foresight of such scenes, the prophet says, “They shall remove, they shall depart both man and beast.” The cruelty of the conquerors of Babylon is strongly portrayed by the inspired pen. “They are cruel both in anger and fierce wrath, to lay the land desolate.” This has been in an eminent degree verified, in the Persians and Medes, the Macedonians, the Parthians, the Syrians, the Romans, and the Saracens; all of whom, in their turn, by their cruel anger and fierce wrath, assisted to render desolate this once “golden city,” and these once beautiful and fertile regions.

“A sword is upon the Chaldeans. A sound of battle is in the land and great destruction. I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall burn all round about him. And Chaldea shall be a spoil, all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the Lord. A sword is upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come.” The prophet’s description of the utter desolation of Babylon could scarcely have been more vivid and exact if he had been present to view the scene. “I will punish the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations; cut off the sower from Babylon and him that handleth the sickle in time of harvest. A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up. Behold the hindermost of the nations, a dry land and a desert. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness; a land where no man dwelleth; neither doth the son of man pass by there. I will send unto Babylon farmers that will fan her, and empty her land. The land shall tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.”* The decline of this famous city was gradual but constant. In the second century of the Christian era nothing remained but the walls, and in the fourth century, these were repaired to serve as an enclosure or park for wild beasts, and Babylon became a hunting ground for the kings

of Persia. Under the Saracens the desolation became complete, and for many ages past the following prediction has been literally fulfilled. "No man dwelleth there, and no son of man passeth by. Neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their folds there." The only remains of the former city are heaps of ruins and mounds of half decayed bricks; in exact conformity with the prediction of Jeremiah. "Babylon shall become heaps. Cast her up as heaps. Let nothing of her be left. Babylon is fallen—is cut down to the ground. Her foundations are fallen. It shall never be inhabited from generation to generation." The following are statements made by recent travellers. "Our path," says Mignan, "lay through the great mass of ruined heaps on the site of 'shrunk Babylon.' And I am perfectly incapable of conveying an adequate idea of the dreary lonely nakedness, that appeared before us." Porter remarks, "that a silence profound as the grave, reigns throughout the ruins. Babylon is now a silent scene, a sublime solitude." According to Rauwolf, even as early as the sixteenth century, there was not within the limits of ancient Babylon a single human habitation. "The eye," says he, "wanders over a barren desert in which the ruins are nearly the only indication, that it ever has been inhabited." "It is impossible," says Keppel, "to behold the scene, and not be reminded how exactly the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled." As the wild Arabs inhabit the wilderness, and often visit this region it may seem strange and improbable that they should never pitch their tents on the ruinous site of Babylon; but Mignan informs us that nothing will induce them to remain all night near the principal mound, as they have a superstitious belief that evil spirits dwell there. He informs us, that he was accompanied by six Arabs, well armed, and accustomed to the desert, but no inducement could have prevailed on them to remain on the ground after night. The place is also full of "doleful creatures" and of stagnant pools. Among the ruins, travellers inform us, there are many dens of wild beasts. "In most of the cavities," says Rich, "are numerous owls and bats." On the very mound supposed to have been produced by the ruins of the temple of Belus, Porter saw three large lions. The hyena and the jackal have also their residence here. Who can fail to see, in these circumstances, the exact fulfilment of that prediction—"Wild beasts of the desert shall be there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." The western bank of the Euphrates has now disappeared, and the river having no barrier freely overflows the adjacent land, so that on this side a large part of the ruins of Babylon are inundated; and for a great distance, even after the river has subsided, the whole country is one continued swamp, which is entirely inaccessible to the traveller. To this the prophet seems to have alluded, when he says, "The sea is come upon Babylon. She is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof." But that which at first view appears to be incompatible with this description is nevertheless true. Babylon is described by the prophets as "a dry land, a wilderness, and a desert." But the fact is, that while on one side of the river, the site is inundated, on the other, it is exceedingly dry, and a mere arid desert. As far as the light of history reaches, among all the structures ever reared by the hands of men, the temple of Belus seems to have been the most elevated. This temple was probably built on the foundation of the tower of Babel, and according to the lowest computation, was higher than the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids. The highest mound now among the ruins is supposed, by discerning travellers, to be on the site of this famous temple. This ruin covers more ground than the temple did when standing. "It has," says Mignan, "the appearance of a hill surmounted with a castle." This hill is called by the Arabs Birs Nimrud. Of this vast ruin, Sir Robert Ker Porter has given a very particular and interesting account. "On the summit of the hill are immense fragments of brick-work, of no determinate figures, tumbled

together, and converted into vitrified masses.” Some of these huge fragments measure twelve feet in height by twenty-four in circumference; these fragments have been entirely preserved, while every thing else is crumbled to dust, because they have been exposed to the action of the fiercest fire; they are completely molten. The high gates of the temple of Belus, which were standing in the time of Herodotus, have been burnt with fire. “Bel boweth down. Bel is confounded. The hand of the Lord has been stretched upon it—it has been rolled down from the rocks—and has been made a burnt mountain.” The noble palaces of Babylon, the larger of which was surrounded by three walls of great extent, have entirely disappeared. Although the strength of the walls seemed to promise durability, and almost to bid defiance to time; yet now, of these palaces, the most splendid perhaps that the world ever saw, nothing but the mere vestiges of the walls which surround them, remain. The circumference of this ruin is about half a mile, and its height one hundred and forty feet; but it is a mass of confusion, the receptacle of wild beasts, and full of doleful creatures. Wild beasts cry in the desolate houses, “and dragons in the pleasant palaces.” “Venomous reptiles,” says Mignan, “are very numerous throughout the ruins.” “On pacing over the loose stones,” says the same writer, “and fragments of brick-work, which lay scattered through the immense fabric, and surveying the sublimity of the ruins, I naturally recurred to the time when these walls stood proudly in their original splendour; when the halls were the scenes of festive magnificence, and when they resounded to the voices of those whom death has long since swept from the earth. This very pile was once the seat of luxury and vice, now abandoned to decay, and exhibiting a melancholy instance of the retribution of heaven. It stands alone. The solitary habitation of the goat-herd marks not the forsaken site.” “Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of the viols; the worms are spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.” In this wonderful city there was nothing more wonderful than the height and thickness of the walls. They were so broad that six chariots abreast could be drawn on them, and their original height is said to have been three hundred and fifty feet; or at the lowest computation of the length of the cubit, three hundred feet. Darius, it is true, lowered these walls; but still they were elevated above the height of most walls. Where are they now? Not a vestige of them any where remains. Two travellers, Buckingham and Frederick, have both made diligent search to find some traces of the wall of Babylon. The latter says: “Neither of the wall or of the ditch has been seen the least vestige by any modern traveller. Within twenty-one miles distance along the Euphrates, and twelve miles across it in breadth, I was unable to perceive any thing that could admit of my imagining, that either a wall or ditch had existed within this extensive area.”

Keppel relates, that he and the party who accompanied him, “in common with other travellers, had totally failed in discovering any trace of the city walls.” And he adds: “The divine predictions against Babylon have been so totally fulfilled in the appearance of the ruins, that I am disposed to give the fullest signification to the words of Jeremiah The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken.”

It was predicted that “Babylon should be an astonishment. Every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished.” How exactly this accords with the feelings of modern travellers, may be learned from their own language. Porter says, “I could not but feel an indescribable awe, in thus passing, as it were into the gates of fallen Babylon.” “I cannot portray,” says Mignan, the overpowering sensation of reverential awe that possessed my mind, while contemplating the extent and magnitude of ruin and devastation on every side.” In another place Porter adds the following

interesting remarks, expressive of his feelings while surveying the scene. "The whole view was particularly solemn. The majestic stream of the Euphrates, wandering in solitude, like a pilgrim monarch, through the silent ruins of his devastated Kingdom, still appeared a noble river, under all the disadvantages of its desert-tracked course. Its banks were hoary with reeds: and the gray osier willows were yet there, on which the captives of Israel hung up their harps; and, while Jerusalem was not, refused to be comforted. But how is the rest of the scene changed since then! At that time those broken hills were palaces—those long undulating mounds, streets. This vast solitude, filled with the busy subjects of the proud daughter of the east. Now wasted with misery, her habitations are not to be found, and for herself, 'the worm is spread over her.' " The Rev. Alexander Keith, concludes with these pertinent remarks: "Has not every purpose of the Lord been performed against Babylon? What mortal shall give a negative answer to the questions subjoined by the author of these very prophecies? Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? And there is no God beside me—declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient time the things that are not yet done. Saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Is it possible there can be any attestation of the truth of prophecy, if not witnessed here? "The records of the human race, it has been said with truth, do not present a contrast more striking than that between the primeval magnificence of Babylon, and its long desolation. How few spots are there on earth of which we have so clear and faithful a picture as prophecy gave of fallen Babylon, when no spot on earth resembled it less than its present desolate, solitary site. Or could any prophecies respecting any single place, be more precise, or wonderful, or numerous, or true or more gradually accomplished through many generations?"

TYRE

Tyre is another famous ancient city, which was the object of some very particular and remarkable prophecies, which have been most exactly fulfilled. Isaiah uttered his prediction concerning Tyre when she was in her glory, and flourishing in all the pride and luxury, which were sustained by the richest commerce in the world, at least a century before any danger threatened the place. The reason which the prophet assigns for God's judgments was the pride of this wealthy city. "The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." (Isaiah 23:9.) Ezekiel employs three whole chapters in describing the luxury, wealth, commerce and destruction of Tyre.* The following particulars are clearly included in the divine predictions concerning Tyre.

1. That this luxurious and populous city should be taken by the Chaldeans; who, at the time of the prophecy, were an inconsiderable people. Ezekiel not only predicts that the ruin of this city should be by the Chaldeans, but names the prince by whom it should be taken: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen. He shall slay thy people with the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground."† Josephus informs us, that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for thirteen years while Ithobal reigned there, and for his authority quotes Menander the Ephesian. The Phenician annals, as Dr. Prideaux has shown, agree exactly with this account.
2. It was predicted that the inhabitants should pass over the Mediterranean sea, to the islands and countries adjacent. Isaiah says, "Pass ye over to Tarshish, howl ye inhabitants of the isle.* Arise, pass over to Chittim, there also shalt thou have no rest." Ezekiel foretells the same thing. "The

isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.” Bishop Newton has shown from ancient authors, that the Tyrians planted colonies in many places over sea, and among them were the cities of Carthage in Africa, and Tartessus in Spain, which last is the Tarshish of the prophets.

3. It was predicted, that after seventy years Tyre should be restored. Isaiah is express in the mention of this period. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years according to the days of one king;”† in which reference is made to the duration of the Chaldean dynasty, which was to continue only seventy years. Jeremiah intimates this to be the length of the Babylonish power. “These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”‡

4. It was foretold that Tyrus, after being restored, should be destroyed again. When Nebuchadnezzar took the city, the people took their effects and went into their ships, and escaped, with much of their wealth; so that God promised Egypt as a recompense for his hard service and poor reward in besieging Tyre. When the inhabitants returned, they did not build on the old site, but went to an island separated from the main land by a strait of the sea. Here the new city arose and flourished in commerce and wealth. The prophets not only foretold the overthrow of old Tyre, but of this new city, built, as it were, “in the midst of the sea.” Isaiah says, “Howl ye inhabitants of the isle.” Ezekiel, “What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea.* Zechariah, who had lived long after the first destruction, and must refer to the second, says, “And Tyrus did build himself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire.”† This new city was truly a strong hold, for not only was the sea a defence, but her walls were one hundred and fifty feet in height. Ezekiel also plainly predicts, that the second destruction of Tyre should be by fire. “I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, and it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes on the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” Accordingly, Alexander the Great besieged and took the city, and set it on fire. This is expressly asserted by Quintus Curtius.‡ For a while, the insular situation of Tyre and her command of the sea, hindered the approach of Alexander’s army to the walls; but he took the stones and rubbish of the old city, and made a causeway across the arm of the sea which lay between the island and the continent; thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel, “They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water.”§ This was a work of immense labour, and occupied his army for seven months. On this occasion also, the Tyrians betook themselves to their ships, and fled across the sea. Both Diodorus Siculus, and Quintus Curtius, testify, that during the siege, they sent away their wives and children to Carthage; and when the city was taken, the Sidonians contrived to carry off fifteen thousand persons in their ships. And they were happy who thus escaped, for the conqueror exercised unbounded cruelties upon such as remained. Eight thousand were slain in taking the city, two thousand were crucified, and thirty thousand sold for slaves.

Although Tyre was again rebuilt, and for a considerable time flourished; yet the unchangeable decree of the Almighty had been published and recorded by the prophets, that this once proud city, the mistress of the sea, should become a perfect desolation. Ezekiel, who has given so vivid and so particular a description of the wealth and commerce of Tyrus, and of the pride of her kings and merchants, also furnishes the most exact prediction of her ruin and utter desolation.

“Thus saith the Lord God, behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up, and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus and break down her towers. I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her as the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it saith the Lord.” And to show the absolute certainty of this total desolation of Tyre, he repeats what was last mentioned in the fourteenth verse. “I will make thee like the top of a rock, thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon, thou shalt be built no more; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. And again, I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more, though thou be sought for, thou shalt never be found again, saith the Lord God.”

Now, to show how exactly this is fulfilled, let us hear what account modern travellers give of this famous city.

Cotovicus, a Dutch traveller, who visited Syria in 1598, writes, “that this city so often restored after being overthrown, now at length appears to be utterly ruined; so that it has ceased to be any longer a city, and only some inconsiderable vestiges of her former ruins are now visible. If you except a few arches and baths, and some ruined walls, and collapsed towers, and mere rubbish, there is now nothing of Tyre to be discerned.” And then he refers to the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Dr. Shaw visited Tyre, but could find nothing like a port or secure harbour any where in the neighbourhood. But Maundrell’s account is the most exact and striking. “This city, standing in the sea, on a peninsula, at a distance, promises something very magnificent; but when you come nearer, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes in the 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters of his prophecy. On the north side, it has an old ungarrisoned Turkish castle, besides which you see nothing but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars vaults, &c., there being not so much as one entire house left; its present inhabitants only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly on fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place, by divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, that it should be ‘as the top of a rock a place for fishers to dry their nets on.’ ” And even Volney seems to be constrained to add his testimony to confirm the fulfilment of the divine prediction, respecting Tyre. After contrasting its former glory with its present desolation, he says “The whole village of Tyre contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground and a trifling fishery.” And Bruce describes Tyre, in the very language of the prophet, as “a rock whereon fishers dry their nets.” Several of our missionaries have visited the site of this once populous, refined, and wealthy city, and add their testimony to that of other travellers, of its present desolate condition.

Thus we see how remarkably prophecies, committed to writing above two thousand years ago, are at this day literally fulfilled, in the utter desolation of some of the richest and strongest cities which ever existed in the world. The prophecies recorded in the book of Daniel are very wonderful. There we have described the rise and fall of four successive monarchies or empires, and a prophecy concerning the conquests of Alexander the Great, and concerning his successors, embracing so many particulars that it assumes the appearance of a history of the events which it predicts. Porphyry, an early and learned opposer of Christianity, was so struck with the coincidence between the predictions, and the history of the events by which they are fulfilled, that he declared that the prophecy must have been written after the events occurred. The infidel can make no

complaint of obscurity here, as he commonly does when prophecies are adduced; the objection now is, that the prediction is too explicit and circumstantial. This objection of Porphyry induced Jerome to use the following pertinent language: *Cujus impugnatio testimonium veritatis est. Tanta enim dictorum fides fuit, ut propheta incredulis hominibus non videatur futura dixisse, sed narrasse præterita.* The meaning of which is, "This objection is a testimony of the truth; for such is the perspicuity of the language, that the prophet in the opinion of infidel men, seems rather to be narrating past events, than predicting those which are future."

It will be sufficient to observe, that there is not the least foundation for this opinion of Porphyry, that the book of Daniel was written after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Josephus relates that the prophecies of Daniel were shown to Alexander the Great, when he visited Jerusalem; and that this was the reason of his granting so many privileges to the Jewish people. However this may be, Daniel is spoken of, in the first book of Maccabees; and Josephus himself reckons him among the greatest of prophets. If this book had been written at that late period, it never could have found a place in the Jewish canon, as the prophecies of Daniel. These prophecies are also recognized and quoted by Jesus Christ as the productions of Daniel.

CHAPTER XI("tw:///self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

PROPHECIES RESPECTING MESSIAH—PREDICTIONS OF CHRIST RESPECTING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

The prophecies which relate to the Messiah are so numerous and interesting, and involve so much critical discussion, that to exhibit them in their proper light, a volume would scarcely be sufficient. I must, therefore, be contented to refer to the most remarkable of these predictions, in a very brief and general way.

1. It is plain, from a cursory perusal of the Old Testament, that frequent intimations are given of the coming of a remarkable personage. From these, the Jewish nation have been led, in all ages, to entertain the expectation of a Messiah; and from them, the idea of a distinguished person who was to proceed from Judea, seems to have pervaded the surrounding nations. Some of the passages of Scripture, on which this opinion was founded, were, the promise of "the seed of the woman;" "the seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed;" "the Shiloh who was to come out of Judah, before the dominion of that tribe should depart;" "the prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord would raise up;" "the king whom the Lord would set upon his holy hill;" "the priest after the order of Melchisedek;" "the anointed one or Messiah;" "the righteous branch;" "the corner stone;" "the desire of all nations;" "the Shepherd of Israel."

2. The time of the arrival of the Messiah is designated in prophecy. He was to come before the sceptre departed from Judah; at the end of seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, from the time of the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem, and while the second temple was yet standing.

3. The place of his birth, and the family from which he was to descend, were also explicitly mentioned in prophecy. From the evangelical history, and from the acknowledgment of the Jews, it is evident, that they well know that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, and to be of the family of David.

4. Things of an apparently contradictory nature are predicted concerning the Messiah. At one time he is represented as a king and conqueror, whose dominion would be co-extensive with the earth, and who would flourish in righteousness and peace for ever; at another he is exhibited as one "despised and rejected, a man of sorrow and grief, as wounded and bruised, as cut off out of the land of the living, and as pouring out his soul unto death." These apparently irreconcilable characters led the Jews at one time to entertain the opinion that two Messiahs were predicted; the one a triumphant conqueror, the other a persecuted and patient sufferer. But, however great the apparent inconsistency, there is an exact accomplishment of both characters in Jesus of Nazareth. And certainly, the same cannot be said of any other person who ever lived.

5. It is predicted of the Messiah, that he should be a light to the gentiles; and that under his administration, the face of the world should be changed, and that peace and righteousness should prevail. Although this prophecy is only in part fulfilled, yet so much has been accomplished in the call of numerous Gentile nations to the standard of the Messiah and in the benign and salutary influence of Christianity, that we must conclude that it was uttered under the influence of inspiration.

6. It was not only predicted that Messiah should be cut off, but it is expressly stated that he should die as a vicarious sacrifice, an expiatory victim for sin and transgression. "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." For the fulfilling of these predictions, I need only refer to the recorded testimony of the evangelists That there is a remarkable coincidence between the language of the prophets and the history of the evangelists cannot be denied, however it may be accounted for. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah has a counterpart in the sufferings and death of Christ which has forced conviction on the minds of many unbelievers. But there are also many particular facts and circumstances foretold respecting the Messiah, which it may be proper briefly to mention. His forerunner, John the Baptist, is predicted by Isaiah and Malachi. His miracles, his uncomplaining meekness and tranquil submission under cruel sufferings, by Isaiah. His riding on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass; his being pierced where the wound should be visible; his being sold for thirty pieces of silver which should be appropriated to buy the Potter's Field, by Zechariah. It is predicted in the Psalms, that they would "part his raiment and cast lots for his vesture;" and that vinegar would be given him to drink. The very words too which he uttered on the cross, when forsaken of God, are set down in the twenty-second Psalm.

It was also predicted in the Law of Moses, by an expressive type, "that not a bone of him should be broken;" the fulfilment of which was wonderful, since the legs of both those crucified with him were broken. Isaiah foretold that he should make his "grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," which was literally accomplished when Jesus Christ was suspended on the cross between two thieves, and when he was taken down from the cross by a rich man and buried by him in his own new tomb. The most of these particulars were fulfilled by the free actions of the enemies of Jesus, who had no idea that they were fulfilling any divine prophecy. It is impossible, that so many circumstances, literally predicted, should have been fulfilled by a mere fortuitous concurrence. The whole ritual law is in fact a prophecy of Jesus. To him the Old Testament dispensation had reference. The Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets all testify of him. As said the angel to St. John, The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Christ himself delivered, while upon earth, many clear and remarkable prophecies. Most of his parables have a prophetic character and in a striking manner represent the progress of the gospel, the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the future condition of the Church. He also foretold, in express words, the treatment which his followers should receive from the world, the treachery of Judas Iscariot, the conduct of Peter in denying him three times in one night, the particular circumstances and exact manner of his own death, and his resurrection on the third day. But I must pass over all these at present, and confine my attention to that astonishing prophecy, which Jesus delivered to his disciples on Mount Olivet, concerning the utter destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, and of the whole Jewish nation. This prediction was uttered about forty years before the events occurred, and was recorded by Matthew, according to the common opinion of early writers, thirty, or at least twenty years before it was fulfilled. The same was recorded by Mark and Luke, a few years after the writing of Matthew's gospel, but several years before the occurrence of these prodigious things which are foretold in it. The testimony of antiquity is, that both these evangelists were dead before the invasion of Judea by the Romans. John was the only one of the evangelists, or perhaps of the apostles, who lived to witness the fulfilling of the Lord's prophecy; and it is remarkable, that in his gospel this subject is never mentioned.

Let it be remembered, that when this prophecy was delivered by our Saviour, there was not the least human probability of such an event, as the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews were in a state of profound peace, and the power of the Romans was such that it could not have been conjectured, that, one small nation would think of rebelling against them. The words of this prophecy may be read in the twenty-fourth chapter of the gospel of Matthew; also in the thirteenth chapter of the gospel of Mark; and in the seventeenth and twenty-first chapters of the gospel of Luke.

I will first collect into one view all the most remarkable particulars of this prophecy, and then show how they were fulfilled. The predictions relate, 1. To the signs and precursors of the desolation of the holy city; 2. To the circumstances of its siege and capture; 3. To the consequences of this tremendous catastrophe.

1. The signs and precursors of this event were to be false Christs; seditions and wars; famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and extraordinary appearances in the heavens; the persecution of Christians; the apostasy of professors, and the great want of charity, and depravation of morals among the people.

2. The circumstances of this tremendous judgment of Heaven, are such as these: that the event should occur before the existing generation had completely passed away; that it should be brought on by a war waged against the Jews, by a heathen nation, bearing idolatrous ensigns; that Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed, and the temple so completely demolished, that one stone of that sacred edifice should not be left on another; that multitudes should perish by the sword; that great numbers should be carried away captives; that the distress should exceed any thing which had ever occurred in the world; and that the divine wrath should be manifest in all these calamities, as it is called the day of vengeance, and it is said that there should be wrath against the people.

3. The consequences of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, as predicted by Christ, were to be the dispersion of the Jews through all the nations the total overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth, which is expressed by the prophetic symbols of "the sun being darkened, the

moon not giving her light, and the stars falling from heaven;" the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles; the rising of false prophets and false Messiahs; the extent and continuance of these judgments on the Jewish nation; with some intimation of their restoration The escape of the Christians from these calamities is also foretold, and directions given for their flight; and on their account it is promised, that those days should be shortened; and finally, it is predicted that the gospel should be preached among all nations.

Let us now proceed to inquire, in what manner these numerous and extraordinary predictions were accomplished; and we cannot but remark, that it seems to have been ordered specially by Providence that the history of the series of events by which this prophecy was fulfilled, should be written by a man who was not a Christian; and who was an eye-witness of the facts which he records. I allude to the Jewish historian, Josephus, who is an author of high respectability, and whose testimony is of great value in the cause of Christianity.

1. In regard to false Christs, of which the prophecy speaks so emphatically, we learn from the historian just mentioned, that impostors and magicians drew multitudes after them into the wilderness, promising to show them signs and wonders, some of whom became insane, and others were punished by Felix, the procurator. One of these impostors was that Egyptian spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, who drew multitudes of people after him to Mount Olivet, promising that he would cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall down at his word.

Theudas was another who pretended to be a prophet, and gave out that he would divide the waters of Jordan; but he was quickly routed by Cuspius Fadus, and all his followers scattered. The impostor himself was taken alive, and his head cut off and brought to Jerusalem. In the reign of Nero, and during the time that Felix was procurator of Judea, impostors arose in such numbers, that the historian informs us, "many of them were apprehended and killed every day."

There were also, at this time, great commotions and horrible seditions and wars, in various places, as at Cesarea, Alexandria, and Babylon. There were great contentions between the Jews and Samaritans; and also between the Jews and people of other nations who dwelt in the same cities with them. Both Josephus and Philo give a particular account of these disturbances, in which multitudes of the people were slain.

Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, are mentioned by Suetonius, and by several other profane historians, who are cited by Eusebius, by Josephus, by Tacitus, and by Seneca. That prodigies were frequent, is expressly asserted by Josephus and Tacitus. The former declares that a star hung over the city like a sword, for a whole year; that at the ninth hour of the night, a bright light shone round the altar and the temple, so that for the space of half an hour it appeared to be bright day; that the eastern gate of the temple, which it required twenty men to shut, and which was fastened by strong bars and bolts, opened of its own accord; that before sunset, there was seen in the clouds, the appearance of chariots and armies fighting; that at the feast of Pentecost, while the priests were going into the inner temple, a voice was heard, as of a multitude, saying, "Let us depart hence." And what affected the people, more than any thing else was, that four years after the war began, a countryman came to Jerusalem, at the feast of Tabernacles, and ran up and down crying, day and night, "A voice from the east, and a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple. Wo! wo to Jerusalem!" It was in vain that by stripes and torture the magistrates attempted to restrain him; he continued crying, especially at the

public festivals, for seven years and five months, and yet never grew hoarse nor appeared to be weary, until during the siege, while he was crying on the wall, a stone struck him and killed him instantly. Tacitus, the Roman historian, joins his testimony to that of Josephus, "Armies, says he, "were seen engaged in the heavens, the glittering of arms was observed; and suddenly the fire from the clouds illuminated the temple; the doors of the inner temple were suddenly thrown open and a voice more than human was heard proclaiming, 'The gods are departing;' and at the same time, the motion of their departure was perceived." Men may form what judgment they please of these narratives; but one thing is certain, that the minds of men were, about this time, much agitated and terrified with what appeared to them to be prodigies. There were "fearful sights and great signs from heaven."

2. The circumstances attending the siege and capture of the city, were as exactly foretold as the preceding signs. "The abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, was nothing else than the Roman armies, whose ensign was an eagle perched upon a spear, which ensigns were worshipped as divinities. These stood where they ought not, when they were planted not only in the holy land, but on the consecrated spot where the temple had stood. But the Christians had been warned, at the first appearance of this desolating abomination, immediately to betake themselves to flight, which they did, and, instead of going into the city, retired to Pella beyond Jordan. The distress of the Jews within the city, during the siege, where two or three millions of people were crowded into a narrow space, almost exceeds belief. What with their continual battles with the Romans; what with intestine feuds and tumults; what with famine and pestilence, the sufferings which they endured cannot now be conceived. No such distress was ever experienced by any people before or since.

Jerusalem was hemmed in on all sides by the besieging army, and notwithstanding the great strength of its fortifications, was taken. Although Titus had given express orders that the temple should be preserved, the mouth of the Lord had declared that it should be otherwise; and accordingly it was burnt to the ground, and the very foundation dug up by the soldiers with the hope of finding hidden treasures. After the city had been destroyed, Titus ordered the whole space to be levelled like a field; so that a person approaching the place would hardly suspect that it had ever been inhabited. The number slain in the war has already been mentioned, to which we may now add that the captives amounted to ninety-seven thousand. Josephus, in relating these events, adopts a language remarkably similar to that used by Christ in the prophecy. "The calamities of all people," says he, "from the creation of the world, if they be compared with those suffered by the Jews, will be found to be far surpassed by them." The words of Christ are: "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." That these unparalleled calamities proceeded from the vengeance of heaven against a people whose iniquities were full, was not only acknowledged by Josephus, but by Titus. After taking a survey of the city, the height of its towers and walls, the magnitude of the stones, and the strength of the bands by which they were held together, he broke out into the following exclamation: "By the help of God, we have brought this war to a conclusion. It was God who drew out the Jews from these fortifications; for what could the hands or military engines of men avail against such towers as these?" And he refused to be crowned after the victory, saying that he was not the author of this achievement, but the anger of God against the Jews, was what put the victory into his hands.

3. Finally, the consequences of this catastrophe, were as distinctly predicted, and as accurately fulfilled, as the preceding events. The Jews who survived were dispersed over the world, in which condition they continue till this day. The Christians, availing themselves of the warnings of their Lord, escaped all the calamities of the siege. Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles, and continues to be trodden down until this day.

Jerusalem was rebuilt by Adrian, but not precisely on the old site, and was called *Ælia*, which name it bore until the time of Constantine. The apostate Julian, out of hatred to Christianity, and with the view of defeating the prediction, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," determined to restore the Jews, and rebuild their temple. Immense sums were appropriated for the work, the superintendence of which was assigned to one of his lieutenants; and the governor of the province to which Jerusalem belonged, assisted in it. But horrible balls of fire, bursting forth from the foundations, rendered the place inaccessible to the workmen, who were often much burnt, so that the enterprise was laid aside. The account now given is attested by Julian himself, and his favourite heathen historian Ammianus. The witnesses are indeed numerous and unexceptionable. "Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen; Zemach David, a Jew, who confesses that Julian was divinitus impeditus, providentially hindered in his attempt; Nazianzen and Chrysostom among the Greeks; Ambrose and Rufin among the Latins; all of whom flourished at the very time when this wonderful event occurred. Theodoret, Socrates, Sozomen, and Philostorgius, respectable historians, recorded it within fifty years after the event, and while the eye-witnesses of the fact were still surviving."* That part of the prophecy which relates to the restoration of the Jews, remains to be accomplished, and we hope the accomplishment is not far distant. When this event shall take place, the evidence from this prophecy will be complete and almost irresistible. This shall occur when "the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." The circumstances of this glorious event are more particularly described by Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 11:1-36) "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved." The preaching of the gospel to all nations has been considered in another place.

After this concise review of some remarkable prophecies contained in the Bible, is there any one who can persuade himself that all these coincidences are accidental, or that the whole is a cunningly devised fable? That man must indeed be blind, who cannot see this "light which shineth in a dark place; this sure word of prophecy which holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

CHAPTER XII("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

NO OTHER RELIGION POSSESSES THE SAME KIND AND DEGREE OF EVIDENCE AS CHRISTIANITY; AND NO OTHER MIRACLES ARE AS WELL ATTESTED AS THOSE RECORDED IN THE BIBLE

Having given a brief view of the external evidences of Christianity, it is now proper to inquire whether any system of religion, ancient or modern, is as well supported by evidence; and whether other miracles have testimony in their favour, as satisfactory as that by which the miracles of the gospel are accompanied. The usual declamation of infidel writers on this subject is calculated to

make the impression on unsuspecting readers, that all religions are similar in their origin; that they all lay claim to miracles and divine communications; and that all stand upon an equal footing. But when we descend to particulars, and inquire what religions that now exist, or ever did exist, profess to rest their claims on well attested miracles and the exact accomplishment of prophecy, none besides the Jewish and Christian can be produced. Among the multiform systems of Paganism there is not one which was founded on manifest miracles or prophecies. They had indeed their prodigies and their oracles, by which the credulous multitude were deceived; and their founders pretended to have received revelations or to have held communion with the gods. But what well attested miraculous fact can be produced from all the religions of the heathen world? What oracle ever gave responses so clear and free from ambiguity, as to furnish evidence that the knowledge of futurity was possessed. It is easy to pretend to divine revelation: this is done by every fanatic.

It is not disputed that many impostors have appeared in the world, as well as many deluded fanatics. But the reason why all their claims and pretensions may with propriety be rejected, is, that they were not able to exhibit any satisfactory evidence that they were commissioned from heaven to instruct mankind in religion. In this we are all agreed. Of what use therefore can it be, to bring up these impostures and delusions, when the evidences of the Christian religion are under consideration? Can it be a reason for rejecting a religion which comes well attested, that there have been innumerable false pretensions to divine revelation? Must miracles supported by abundant testimony be discredited, because there have been reports of prodigies and miracles which have no evidence? And because heathen oracles have given answers to inquiries respecting future events, dark, indeterminate, and designedly ambiguous; shall we place no confidence in numerous authentic prophecies, long ago committed to writing, which have been most exactly and wonderfully accomplished?

It is alleged, that the early history of all ancient nations is fabulous, and abounds in stories of incredible prodigies; and hence it is inferred, that the miracles of the Old and New Testament should be considered in the same light. To which it may be replied, that his general consent of nations that miracles have existed, is favourable to the opinion that true miracles have at some time occurred. It may again be observed, that the history of Moses, which is more than a thousand years older than any profane history, has every evidence of being a true relation of facts; and moreover, that the age in which the miracles of the New Testament were performed, so far from being a dark and fabulous age, was the most enlightened period of the heathen world. It was the age of the most celebrated historians, orators, and poets. There never was a time when it would have been more difficult to gain a general belief in miracles which had no sufficient testimony than in the Augustan and succeeding age. Not only did learning flourish; but there was at that period a general tendency to skepticism and atheism. There can evidently therefore be no inference unfavourable to Christianity, derived from the belief of unfounded stories of miraculous events in the dark ages of antiquity. The only effect of the prevalence of false accounts of miracles should be, to produce caution and careful examination into the evidence of every report of this kind. Reason dictates that truth and falsehood should never be confounded. Let every fact be subjected to the test of a rigid scrutiny, and let it stand or fall, according as it is supported or unsupported by testimony. If the miracles of the Bible have no better evidence than the prodigies of the heathen, they ought to receive no more credit; but if they have solid evidence, they ought not to be

confounded with reports which carry imposture on their very face, or at least have no credible testimony in their favour.

There is no other way of deciding on facts which occurred long since, but by testimony. And the truth of Christianity is really a matter of fact. In support of it, we have adduced testimony which cannot be invalidated; and we challenge our opponents to show that any other religion stands on the same firm basis. Instead of this, they would amuse us with vague declamations on the credulity of man, and the many fabulous stories which have been circulated and believed. But what has this to do with the question. We admit all this, and maintain that it does not furnish the semblance of an argument against the truth of the well-attested facts recorded by the evangelists. Because there is much falsehood in the world, is there no such thing as truth? It would be just as reasonable to conclude that, because many men have been convicted of falsehood, there are no persons of veracity in the world; or because there are many knaves, all pretensions to honesty are unfounded. The Mohammedan religion is frequently brought forward by the enemies of revelation, with an air of confidence, as though the pretensions and success of that impostor would derogate from the evidences of Christianity. It is expedient, therefore, to bring this subject under a particular examination. And here let it be observed, that we do not reject any thing, respecting the origin and progress of this religion, which has been transmitted to us by competent and credible witnesses. We admit that Mohammed existed and was the founder of a new sect, and that from a small beginning his religion spread with astonishing rapidity over the fairest portion of the globe. We admit also, that he was the author of the Koran, which he composed from time to time, probably with the aid of some one or two other persons. It is also admitted, that he was an extraordinary man, and prosecuted the bold scheme which he had projected, with uncommon perseverance and address. Neither are we disposed to deny that the Koran contains many sublime passages, relative to God and his perfections, and many sound and salutary precepts of morality. That the language is elegant, and a standard of purity in the Arabic tongue, has been asserted by all Mohammedan writers, and conceded by many learned Christians. But as to his pretended revelations, there is no external evidence whatever that they were real; and there is an overwhelming weight of internal evidence that they are not from God. To bring this subject fairly before us, let the following considerations be impartially weighed:

1. The pretensions of Mohammed were supported by no miracles or prophecies. He was often called upon by his opposers to confirm his mission by this decisive proof; but he always declined making the attempt, and resorted to various excuses and subterfuges. In the Koran, God is introduced as saying, "Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture: thou art a preacher only." Again, that if he did perform miracles, the people would not believe, as they had before rejected Moses, Jesus, and the prophets who performed them.

Dr. Paley* has enumerated thirteen different places in the Koran, where this objection is considered, in not one of which is it alleged that miracles had been performed for its confirmation. It is true, that this artful man told of things sufficiently miraculous; but for the truth of these assertions, we have no manner of proof except his own word, which, in this case, is worth nothing.

If it had been as easy a thing to obtain credit to stories of miracles publicly performed, as some suppose, surely Mohammed would have had recourse to this measure, when he was so pressed

and teased by his enemies with a demand for this very evidence. But he had too much cunning to venture upon an expedient so dangerous; his opposers would quickly have detected and exposed the cheat. At length, however, he so far yielded to the demand of his enemies as to publish one of the most extravagant stories which ever entered into the imagination of man, and solemnly swore that every word of it was true I refer to his night journey to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, under the guidance of the angel Gabriel. This marvellous story, however, had well nigh ruined his cause. His enemies treated it with deserved ridicule and scorn; and a number of his followers forsook him from that time. In fact, it rendered his further continuance at Mecca entirely inexpedient; and having before despatched some of his disciples to Medina, he betook himself with his followers to that city, where he met with a more cordial reception than in his native place. The followers of Mohammed, hundreds of years after his death, related many miracles, which they pretended that he performed: but their report is not only unsupported by testimony, but is in direct contradiction to the Koran, where he repeatedly disclaims all pretensions to miraculous powers. And the miracles which they ascribe to him, while they are marvellous enough, are of that trifling and ludicrous kind commonly to be met with in all forgeries in which miracles are represented as having been performed; such as, that the trees walked to meet him; that the stones saluted him; that a beam groaned to him; that a camel made complaint to him; and that a shoulder of mutton told him that it was poisoned.

It appears then that Mohammedanism has no evidence whatever but the declaration of the impostor. It is impossible therefore that Christianity should be placed in a more favourable point of light than in comparison with the religion of Mohammed. The one, as we have seen, rests on well attested miracles; the other does not exhibit the shadow of a proof that it was derived from heaven.

2. It is fair to compare the moral characters of the respective founders of these two religions. And here we have as perfect a contrast as history can furnish. Jesus Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." His life was pure, without a stain. His most bitter enemies could find no fault in him. He exhibited, through life, the most perfect example of disinterested zeal, pure benevolence, and unaffected humility which the world ever saw. Mohammed was an ambitious, licentious cruel, and unjust man. His life was stained with the most atrocious crimes. Blasphemy, perjury, murder, adultery, and robbery, were actions of daily occurrence in his life. And to shield himself from censure, and open a door for unbridled indulgence, he pretended revelations from heaven to justify all his vilest practices. He had the effrontery to pretend that God had given him the privilege to commit at pleasure the most abominable crimes. The facts which could be adduced in support of these general charges, are so numerous and so shocking, that I will not defile my paper, nor wound the feelings of the reader, by a recital of them.

3. The Koran itself can never bear a comparison with the New Testament, in the view of any impartial person. It is a confused and incongruous heap of sublime sentiments, moral precepts, positive institutions, extravagant and ridiculous stories, and manifest lies and contradictions. Mohammed himself acknowledged that it contained many contradictions; but he accounted for this fact by alleging that what had been communicated to him in one chapter was repealed in a subsequent one: and so he charges his inconsistency on his Maker. The number of abrogated passages is so great, that a Mussulman cannot be easily confuted by proving the falsehood of any declaration in the Koran; for he will have recourse to this doctrine of abrogation. There is nothing in

this book which cannot easily be accounted for; nothing above the capacity of impostors to accomplish. It is artfully accommodated to the religions of Arabia, prevalent at the time. It gives encouragement to the strongest and most vicious passions of human nature; promotes ambition, despotism, revenge, and offensive war; opens wide the door of licentiousness; and holds out such rewards and punishments as are adapted to make an impression on the minds of wicked men. It discourages, and indeed forbids all free inquiry, and all discussion of the doctrines which it contains. Whatever is excellent in the Koran, is in imitation of the Bible; but wherever the author follows his own judgment, or indulges his own imagination, we find falsehood, impiety, or ridiculous absurdity.*

4. The means by which the religion of Mohammed was propagated were entirely different from those employed in the propagation of the gospel. If there is any point of strong resemblance between these two systems, it consists merely in the circumstance of their rapid and extensive progress and permanent continuance. But when we come to consider the means by which this end was attained in the two cases, instead of resemblance we find a perfect contrast. Mohammed did indeed attempt at first to propagate his religion by persuasion and artifice, and these efforts he continued for twelve years, but with very small success. At the end of three years, he had gained no more than fourteen disciples; at the end of seven years, his followers amounted to little more than eighty; at the end of twelve years when he fled from Mecca, the number was still very inconsiderable. As far, therefore, as there can be a fair comparison between the progress of Christianity and Mohammedanism—that is, during the time that Mohammed employed argument and persuasion alone—there is no resemblance. The progress of Christianity was like the lightning which shineth from one part of heaven to the other; extending in a few years, not only without aid from learning and power, but in direct opposition to both, throughout the whole Roman empire, and far beyond its limits. Mohammedanism for twelve years made scarcely any progress, though it commenced among an ignorant and uncivilized people. During this period, the progress was scarcely equal to what might be expected from any artful impostor. This religion never spread in any other way than by the sword. As soon as the inhabitants of Medina declared in favour of Mohammed, he changed his whole plan, and gave out that he was directed to propagate his religion by force. From this time he is found engaged in war. He began by attacking mercantile caravans, and as his force increased went on to conquer the petty kingdoms into which Arabia was then divided.* Sometimes, he put all the prisoners to death, and at other times, sold them into slavery. At first, the order was to massacre every creature that refused to embrace his religion; but he became more lenient afterwards especially to Jews and Christians. The alternative was, “the Koran, death, or tribute.” But it is a great mistake to suppose that the conquests of Mohammed himself were very extensive. He, never, during his life, extended his dominion beyond the limits of Arabia, except that he overran one or two inconsiderable provinces of Syria. It was by the Caliphs, his successors, that so great a part of Asia and Egypt were brought into subjection. But what is there remarkable in these successes more than those of other conquerors? Surely the propagation of Mohammedanism by the sword, however rapid or extensive, can never bear any comparison with that of Christianity, by the mere force of truth under the blessing of heaven.

5. The tendency and effects of Mohammedanism, when compared with the tendency and effects of Christianity, serve to exhibit the latter in a very favourable light. The Christian religion has been a rich blessing to every country which has embraced it; and its salutary effects have borne

proportion to the care which has been taken to inculcate its genuine principles, and the cordiality with which its doctrines have been embraced. What nations are truly civilized? Where does learning flourish? Where are the poor and afflicted most effectually relieved? Where do men enjoy the greatest security of life, property, and liberty? Where is the female sex treated with due respect, and exalted to its proper place in society? Where is the education of youth most assiduously pursued? Where are the brightest examples of benevolence; and where do men enjoy most rational happiness? If we were called upon to designate the countries in which these advantages are most highly enjoyed, every one of them would be found in Christendom; and the superiority enjoyed by some over the others, would be found to bear an exact proportion to the practical influence of pure Christianity. On the contrary, if we take a survey of the rich and salubrious regions possessed by Mohammedans we behold a wide-spread desolation. The fairest portion of the globe, where arts, literature, and refinement formerly most flourished, are now blighted. Every noble institution has sunk into oblivion. Despotism extends its iron sceptre over these ill-fated countries, and all the tranquillity ever enjoyed is the dead calm of ignorance and slavery. Useful learning is discouraged, free inquiry proscribed, and servile submission required of all. Justice is perverted or disregarded. No man has any security for life or property, and as to liberty, it is utterly lost wherever the Mohammedan religion prevails. While the fanatic ardour of making proselytes continued, the fury of the propagators of this faith rendered them irresistible. Indeed, their whole system is adapted to a state of war. The best work that can be performed, according to the Koran, is to fight for the propagation of the faith; and the highest rewards are promised to those who die in battle. There is no doubt that the principles of the Koran greatly contributed to the conquest of the Saracens, by divesting them of all fear of death, and inspiring them with an assurance of being admitted into a sensual paradise, if it should be their fate to be slain in battle. "The sword is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent under arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven. At the day of judgment, his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be replaced by the wings of angels and cherubims." But when they had finished their conquests, and a state of peace succeeded their long and bloody wars, they sunk into torpid indolence and stupidity. While other nations have been making rapid improvements in all the arts, they have remained stationary, or rather have been continually going backwards. They have derived no advantages from the revival of letters, the invention of printing, or other improvements in the arts and sciences. The people who have been subjected to their despotism without adopting their religion, are kept in the most degraded subjection. At present,* the Greeks are making noble exertions to break the cruel yoke which has oppressed them, and though unsupported by Christian nations, have succeeded in expelling the Turks from a large portion of their country. God grant them success, and give them wisdom to make a good use of their liberty and independence when acquired and established!† Mohammedanism was permitted to prevail, as a just punishment to Christians for their luxury and dissensions. It is to be hoped, however, that the prescribed time of these "locusts of the abyss"‡ is nearly come to an end; and that a just God, who has so long used them as a scourge to Christians, as he formerly did the Canaanites to be thorns in the eyes and in the sides of the Israelites, will soon bring to an end this horrible despotism, founded on a vile imposture. The signs of the times give strong indications that the Mohammedan power will shortly be subverted. But it is not for us to "know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." The

only thing further necessary to be considered, in this chapter, is, the miracles which have been brought forward as a counterpoise to the miracles of Christ and his apostles. This is an old stratagem, at least as old as the second century, when one Philostratus, at the request of Julia Augusta, wife of the emperor Severus, wrote a history, or rather romance, of Apollonius of Tyana, a town in Cappadocia. This Apollonius was nearly contemporary with Jesus Christ; but whether he was a philosopher or a conjurer cannot now be ascertained; for as to the story of Philostratus, which is still extant, it is totally unsupported by any reference to eye-witnesses of the facts, or any documents of credit, and has throughout as much the air of extravagant fiction as any thing that was ever published. That the design of the writer was to set up this Apollonius as a rival to Jesus Christ, is not avowed, but is sufficiently evident from the similarity of many of his miracles to those recorded in the gospels, borrowed from the evangelical history. He is made to raise the dead, to cast out demons, and to rise from the dead himself. In one instance, the very words of the demons expelled by Jesus Christ, as recorded by St. Luke, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" are put into the mouth of a demon, said to be cast out by Apollonius. But in addition to these miracles, his biographer pretends that he saw beasts with a human head and a lion's body, women half white and half black, together with phoenixes, griffins, dragons, and similar fabulous monsters. In the fourth century, Hierocles, a bitter enemy of Christianity, instituted a comparison between Jesus and Apollonius, in which, after considering their miracles, he gives the preference to the latter. This book was answered by Eusebius, from whose work only, we can now learn how Hierocles treated the subject, as the book of the latter is not extant. The only conclusion which can be deduced from this history of Apollonius is, that the miracles of Christ were so firmly believed in the second century, and were attended by such testimony, that the enemies of Christianity could not deny the facts, and therefore resorted to the expedient of circulating stories of equal miracles performed by another.

Modern infidels have not been ashamed to resort to the same stale device. Mr. Hume has taken much pains to bring forward a great array of evidence in favour of certain miracles, in which he has no faith, with the view of discrediting the truth of Christianity. These have been so fully and satisfactorily considered by Dr. Douglass, Bishop of Salisbury, in his *Criterion*, and by Dr. Campbell, in his *Essay on Miracles*, that I need only refer to these learned authors for a complete confutation of Hume's arguments from this source. For the sake, however, of those who may not have access to these works, I will lay down a few general principles by which we may distinguish true and false miracles; for which I am indebted principally to the author of the *Criterion*.

1. The nature of the facts should be well considered, whether they are miraculous. The testimony which supports a fact may be sufficient, and yet it may have been brought about by natural causes. The miracles of Jesus Christ were such that there was no room for doubt respecting their supernatural character; but a great part of those performed by others, which have received the best attestation, were of such a nature that they may readily be accounted for, without supposing any divine interposition. The case of the man diseased in his eyes, said to have been cured by Vespasian's rubbing his hand over them, and the lame man cured by a touch of the emperor's foot, were no doubt impositions practised by the priests of the temple where they were performed. The emperor did not pretend to possess any miraculous power, and was induced, only after much persuasion, to make the experiment. It may be admitted that the facts as related by Tacitus, though he was not an eye-witness, are true. Such persons were probably brought forward and a

cure pretended to be made, but there is no evidence that there was a real miracle. There was no one present who felt interested to examine into the truth of the miracle. The priests who proposed the thing had no doubt prepared their subjects; and the emperor was flattered by the honour of being selected by their god to work a miracle. How often do beggars in the street impose upon many, by pretending to be blind and lame! The high encomiums which Mr. Hume bestows on the historian Tacitus, in order to set off the testimony to the best advantage, can have no weight here; for he only related what he had heard from others, and showed pretty evidently that he did not credit the story himself. The same may be said respecting the man at Saragossa, spoken of by Cardinal de Retz, who was represented as having been seen without a leg, but obtained one by rubbing the stump with holy oil. The Cardinal had no other evidence of his having ever been maimed, than the suspicious report of the canons of the Church; and he took no pains to ascertain whether the leg which he obtained was really flesh and blood, or an artificial limb. A great part of the cures said to have been performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, were proved upon examination to be mere pretences; and those which were real may easily be accounted for from the influence of a heated imagination and enthusiastic feelings; especially, since we have seen the wonderful effects of animal magnetism and metallic tractors. The Abbé Paris was the oldest son of a counsellor of Paris, but being much inclined to a life of devotion he relinquished his patrimony to his younger brother, and retired to an obscure part of Paris, where he spent his life in severe penance, and in charitable exertions for the relief of the distressed poor. He was buried in the ground of the church of St. Medard, near the wall, where his brother erected a tombstone over the grave. To this spot many poor people who knew his manner of life, came to perform their devotions, as much, probably, out of feelings of gratitude as any thing else. Some, among the devotees who attended at this place, professed that they experienced a salutary change in their ailments. This being noised abroad, as the Abbé had been a zealous Jansenist all who were of his party encouraged the idea of miracles having been performed; and multitudes who were indisposed, were induced to go to the tomb of the saint; and some, as they confessed before a competent tribunal, were persuaded to feign diseases which they never had. It is a fact, however, that the greater part received no benefit, and that more diseases were produced than were cured: for, soon, many of the worshippers were seized with convulsions, from which proceeded the sect of Convulsionists, which attracted attention for many years.

It was soon found expedient to close up the tomb; but cures were still said to be performed by the saint on persons in distant places. The Jesuits exerted themselves to discredit the whole business, and the Archbishop of Paris had a judicial investigation made of a number of the most remarkable cases, the results of which were various, and often ludicrous. A young woman said to have been cured at the tomb of blindness and lameness, was proved to have been neither blind nor lame. A man with diseased eyes was relieved, but it appeared that he was then using powerful medicine, and that, after all, his eyes were not entirely healed. A certain Abbé who had the misfortune to have one of his legs shorter than the other, was persuaded that he experienced a sensible elongation of the defective limb, but on measurement no increase could be discovered. A woman in the same situation danced on the tomb daily to obtain an elongation of a defective limb, and was persuaded that she received benefit; but it was ascertained, that she would have to dance there fifty-four years, before the cure would be effected, at the rate at which it was proceeding; but as for the unfortunate Abbé, seventy-two years would have been requisite. In short, the whole number of cures, after examination, was reduced to eight or nine, all of which can be easily accounted for on

natural principles; and in several of these instances, the cures were not perfect.

2. A second consideration of great weight is, that in true miracles we can trace the testimony to the very time when the facts are said to have occurred, but in false miracles the report of the facts originates a long time afterwards, as in the case of Apollonius, the miracles ascribed to Mohammed by Abulfeda, and Al-Janabbi, and the miracles ascribed by the Jesuits to Ignatius Loyola their founder; which were never heard of until long after his death.

3. Another criterion of importance is, that the report of miracles should originate and first obtain credit in the place and among the people, where they are said to have been performed. This is too remarkably the fact, in regard to the miracles of the Bible, to require any proof. But many stories of miracles are rendered suspicious by the circumstance that they were first reported and believed in some place far from that in which they were alleged to have been wrought. The miracles ascribed by the Romanists to Francis Xavier, are condemned by both the rules last mentioned. In all his letters while a missionary in the east, he never hints that miracles had been wrought; and a reputable writer who gave some account of his labours nearly forty years after his death, not only is silent about Xavier's miracles, but confesses that no miracles had been performed among the Indians. These miracles were said to be performed in the remote parts of India and Japan, but the report of them was published first in Europe. Almost all the miracles ascribed by the Romish Church to her saints, fall into the same predicament. The history of them is written long after they are said to have been performed, and often in countries remote from the place where it is pretended they occurred or they are manifestly the effect of cunning contrivance and imposture.

4. Another necessary question in judging of the genuineness of miracles, is, whether the facts were scrutinized at the time, or were suffered to pass without examination. When the miracles reported coincide with the passions and prejudices of those before whom they are performed; when they are exhibited by persons in power, who can prevent all examination and put what face they please on facts, they may well be reckoned suspicious. The cures at the tomb of the Abbé Paris were not performed in these circumstances. The Jansenists were not in power, and their enemies not only had the opportunity to examine into the facts, but actually did so with the utmost diligence. We have reason to believe, therefore, that we have now a true report of those occurrences. The defect of these miracles is in their nature, not in their evidence.

But, in most cases, the miracles which have been reported, took place when there was no opportunity of examining into the facts; when the people were pleased to be confirmed in their favourite opinions; or when the ruling powers had some peculiar end to answer.* But supposing these miracles to be ever so well attested, I do not perceive how the evidence of divine revelation can be affected by them; for if it could be made to appear that these were supported by testimony as strong as that which can be adduced in favour of the miracles of the New Testament, the only fair conclusion is, that they who believe in Christianity should admit them to be true—but what then? Would it follow, because miracles had been wrought on some rare occasions, different from those recorded in the Bible, that therefore, these were of no validity as evidence of divine revelation? Would not the fact that other miracles had been wrought, rather confirm our belief in those which were performed with so important a design? Mr. Hume does, indeed, artfully insinuate that the various accounts of miracles which exist cannot be true, because the religions which they were wrought to confirm, are opposite; yet not one of those which he brings forward as being best

attested, was performed in confirmation of any new religion, or to prove any particular doctrine, therefore they are not opposed to Christianity. If they had actually occurred, it would not in the least disparage the evidence for the facts recorded in the New Testament. And especially, it is a strange conceit, that miracles performed within the bosom of the Christian Church should furnish any proof against Christianity.

It is, however, no part of the object of those who bring forward such an array of testimony in support of certain miracles, to prove that such facts ever occurred. This is diametrically opposite to their purpose. Their design is to discredit all testimony in favour of miracles, by showing, that facts acknowledged to be false have evidence as strong as those on which revealed religion rests. But they have utterly failed in the attempt, as we have shown: and if they had succeeded in adducing as strong testimony for other miracles, we would readily admit their truth, and that in perfect consistency with our belief in Christianity. The Romish Church and some other fanatical sects, do still profess to work miracles; but these pretences are never submitted to the test of an impartial examination by opposers. Or if they are ever publicly exhibited, as in the case of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, it only serves to convince all reasonable men that it is a gross imposture.

CHAPTER XIII("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE BIBLE CONTAINS INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT ITS ORIGIN IS DIVINE

As the Old and New Testaments are intimately connected, and form parts of the same system, it is unnecessary to make any distinction between them, in considering this branch of the evidence of divine revelation. A late writer,* of great eminence and popularity, has represented this species of evidence as unsatisfactory; as not capable of being so treated as to produce conviction in the minds of philosophical infidels; and as opening a door to their most specious objections to Christianity. But certainly this is not the most effectual method of supporting the credit of the Scriptures. Another popular writer,* has gone to the other extreme, and seems to set little value on the external evidences of Christianity, while he exhibits the internal in a light so strong that his argument assume the appearance of demonstration.† But these two species of evidence, though distinct are harmonious, and strengthen each other. There is, therefore, no propriety in disparaging the one for the purpose of enhancing the value of the other. I believe, however, that more instances have occurred of skeptical men being convinced of the truth of Christianity by the internal than by the external evidences. It is the misfortune of most infidels, that they have no intimate acquaintance with the Bible; and even many of those who have undertaken to write against it, appear never to have read it with any other view than to find some ground of objection. No doubt it is necessary to come to the examination of this species of evidence, with a candid and docile disposition. If reason be permitted proudly to assume the seat of judgment, and to decide what a revelation ought to contain in particular; in what manner, and with what degree of light it should be communicated; whether it should be made perfectly at once, or gradually unfolded; and whether, from the beginning, it should be universal; no doubt, the result of an examination of the contents of the Bible, conducted on such principles, will prove unsatisfactory, and insuperable objections will occur at every step in the progress. It was wise in Dr. Chalmers to endeavour to discourage such a mode of investigation, as being most unreasonable; for how is it possible that such a creature as man should be able to know what is proper for the infinite God to do, or in what

way he should deal with his creatures upon earth? To borrow the language of this powerful writer,* "We have experience of man, but we have no experience of God. We can reason upon the procedure of man in given circumstances, because this is an accessible subject, and comes under the cognizance of observation; but we cannot reason upon the procedure of the Almighty in given circumstances." But when he speaks "of disclaiming all support from what is commonly understood by the internal evidence," and "saving a vast deal of controversy, by proving that all this is superfluous and uncalled for," I am constrained to think that, instead of aiding the cause of Christianity, the excellent author has attempted to take away one of its firmest props. The internal evidence of revelation is analogous to the evidence of the being and perfections of God from the works of creation: and the same mode of reasoning which the deist adopts relative to the doctrines and institutions of the Bible, the atheist may adopt, with equal force, against the existence of a God. If men will be so presumptuous as to determine, that if God makes a world he will form it according to their idea of fitness, and that the apparent imperfections and incomprehensibilities in the material universe could never have proceeded from a being of infinite perfection, atheism must follow of course. But if, notwithstanding all these apparent evils and obscurities, there is in the structure of the world the most convincing evidence of the existence of an all-wise and all-powerful being, why may we not expect to find the same kind of evidence impressed on a revelation from God? Upon Dr. Chalmers' principles we ought to depend simply on historical testimony, for the fact, that God created this world; and "disclaim all support" from what may, without impropriety, be termed the internal evidence of the existence of God, derived from the contemplation of the work itself. The truth however, is, that every thing which proceeds from God, whatever difficulties or obscurities accompany it, will contain and exhibit the impress of his character. As this is resplendently visible in the heavens and in the earth, it is reasonable to think that it will not be less manifest in his word. If the truths contained in a revelation be worthy of God, they will be stamped with his image; and if this can be in any measure discovered, it undoubtedly furnishes the most direct and convincing evidence of their divine origin. This is, without being reduced to the form of a regular argument, precisely the evidence on which the faith of the great body of Christians has always rested. They are incapable of appreciating the force of the external evidence. It requires an extent of learning which plain Christians cannot be supposed commonly to possess. But the internal evidence is within their reach; it acts directly upon their minds whenever they read or hear a portion of the word of God. The belief of common, unlearned Christians, is not necessarily founded on the mere prejudice of education; it rests on the best possible evidence. And as there is a faith which is saving and to which a purifying efficacy is ascribed; if we inquire on what species of evidence this depends, it must be answered, on internal evidence, not indeed as perceived by the unaided intellect of man, but as it is exhibited to the mind by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. We cannot consent, therefore, to give up this species of evidence, as "superfluous and uncalled for;" but must consider it, if not the most effectual to silence gainsayers, yet certainly the most useful to the real Christian; and if unbelievers could be induced to attend to it with docility and impartiality, there is reason to think that they would experience its efficacy, in the gradual production of a firm conviction of the truth of Christianity. The internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures cannot be fully brought into view, in any other way than by a careful study of the Bible. It cannot easily be put into the form of logical argument, for it consists in moral fitness and beauty; in the adaptation of truth to the human mind; in its astonishing power of penetrating and searching the heart and affecting the conscience. There is a sublime sanctity in the doctrines and precepts of the gospel; a

devotional and heavenly spirit pervading the Scriptures; a purity and holy tendency which cannot but be felt by the serious reader of the word of God; and a power to sooth and comfort the sorrowful mind; all which qualities may be perceived, and will have their effect, but cannot be embodied and presented, with their full force, in the form of argument. But although this evidence, from the nature of the case, cannot be exhibited in its entire body, to any but those who study the Scriptures and meditate on their truths day and night, it is possible to select some prominent points and present them to the reader in such a light as to produce a salutary impression. This is what will be briefly attempted in the following remarks, which might without difficulty be greatly enlarged.

1. The Scriptures speak of God and his attributes in a way which accords with what right reason would lead us to expect in a divine revelation. He is uniformly represented in the Bible as one, and as a being of infinite perfection; as eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and immutable. And it is truly remarkable, that these correct and sublime views of theology were entertained by those who possessed the Scriptures, when all other nations had fallen into the grossest polytheism and most degrading idolatry. Other nations were more powerful, and greatly excelled the Israelites in human learning; but in the knowledge of God all were in thick darkness, whilst this people enjoyed the light of truth. Learned men and philosophers arose in different countries, and obtained celebrity on account of their theories, but they effected no change in the popular opinions; indeed, they could not enlighten others, when they were destitute of the light of truth themselves. However deists may deride and scoff at the Bible, it is a fact capable of the clearest proof, that had it not been for the Scriptures, there would not at this time be such a thing as pure theism upon earth. There is not now in the world an individual who believes in one infinitely perfect God, whose knowledge of this truth may not be traced directly or indirectly to the Bible.

How can it be accounted for that the true theology should be found accompanying the Scriptures in all ages, while it was lost every where else, unless we admit that they are a revelation from God? If the knowledge of the true God, as received by the Jews, was the discovery of reason, why was it that other nations advanced far beyond them in learning and mental culture, never arrived at the knowledge of this important truth?

It is true, indeed, that the Scriptures sometimes represent God as having bodily parts and human passions; but a little consideration will show the attentive reader, that all these expressions are used in accommodation to the manner of speaking among men. Human language is inadequate to express the attributes and operations of the Supreme Being. He is infinitely above our conceptions, both in his essence and his mode of existence and acting. We can do no more than approximate towards just ideas on this subject. When we speak of him we are under the necessity of conceiving of his perfections with some relation to the operations of the human mind, and to employ language expressive of human acts and feelings; for all other language would be unintelligible. The necessity of this accommodation extends much further than many seem to suppose. It exists not only in relation to words which, taken literally, convey the idea of bodily members and human passions, but also in regard to those which express the operations of will and intellect. This mode of speaking therefore, instead of being an objection against the Bible, is an argument of the wisdom of its Author, who has spoken to man in the only way in which he could be understood.

Again, it is seen by the most cursory reader that truth is not taught in the Bible in a scientific or systematic order. We have no profound metaphysical disquisitions of philosophical principles; no array of artificial dialectics; no systematic arrangement of the subjects treated. In all this there may be great wisdom, and whether we can see the reason or not, the objection to revelation on this ground is not greater than the one which may be made to the natural world, because the materials for building which it contains, are not found erected into houses; and because all its fields and forests are not placed in the order of an artificial garden or regular orchard. The method of speaking of God, in the sacred Scriptures, is at once most simple and sublime. Few words are employed, but these are most significant. When Moses wished to receive an appropriate name which he might mention to Pharaoh, he was directed to say, I am that I am, hath sent me. And when on another occasion, the name of the Most High was declared to Moses, it was in the following remarkable words: The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty. If the most perfect simplicity, united with the highest sublimity, would be received as a proof that the writers of these books were inspired, we could adduce hundreds of passages of this description; but we mean not to lay any undue stress on the argument derived from this source. The glory of the Scriptures is the revelation which they contain of the moral attributes of God. These are manifested with but a feeble light in the works of creation; but in the Bible they shine with transcendent lustre. It would by no means comport with the intended brevity of this work, to enter much into detail on this subject, but I must beg the indulgence of the reader while I endeavour to bring distinctly into view the account which the Scriptures give us of the holiness and the goodness of God.

These two attributes are stamped on the pages of the Bible, and form its grand characteristic. It is of no importance whether we consider these as distinct or as expressive of two aspects in which the same infinite excellence is exhibited. Who can open this sacred book without perceiving that the God of the Bible is holy? All his laws, institutions, and dispensations are holy; even those laws which are ceremonial have this characteristic. Every person, edifice, and utensil employed in his worship, must be solemnly consecrated; and all must approach God with caution and reverence, because he is holy. The very ground where he occasionally makes himself known is rendered holy. Every external sign and emblem or profound reverence, is required in them who worship him; and when he manifests himself with more than usual clearness, the holiest men are overwhelmed and become as dead men under a sense of their own vileness. And not only so, but even the heavenly hosts who are free from every stain of sin, seem to be overwhelmed with the view of the holiness of God. They not only cry to one another, as they worship around his august throne, holy, holy, holy, but they are represented, as falling prostrate at his feet, and veiling their faces in token of profound veneration. All those passages of Scripture which speak of the wrath, the indignation, the fury, the jealousy, or the anger of the Almighty, are no more than strong expressions of his infinite holiness. All his severe judgments and threatenings; all the misery which he ever inflicts on his creatures in this world or the next; and above all, the intense and ineffable sufferings of Christ, are exhibitions of the holiness of God.

Now if there be a God, he must be holy; and if he make a revelation of himself, it will be marked with this impress of his character. Wicked men would never have made this attribute so prominent; they would have been disposed rather to keep it entirely out of view. There is no truth more

evident to the attentive observer of human nature than that men do not naturally love holiness, although they are obliged to acknowledge its worth. This, I believe, is the true reason why the Scriptures, although they contain the highest excellence in composition, both in prose and poetry, of which a good taste cannot be insensible, are neglected by literary men, or rather studiously avoided. A mere fragment of any other book, if it could claim an equal antiquity with the Bible, and especially if it possessed any thing like its excellence of composition, would be sought after with avidity by all men of taste; but the Bible remains almost as much unstudied by men of this description as the Koran. This has often appeared to me paradoxical; but I am now persuaded that the true reason is the awful holiness of God, as exhibited in this book and impressed on almost every page. This glares upon the conscience of an unholy man, as the meridian sun on diseased eyes. God is a consuming fire. This common dislike of the Bible, even in men of refined taste and decent lives, furnishes a strong argument for its divine origin. The question before us, is, who composed this book, inspired men or wicked impostors? The characteristic which we have been considering, will accord perfectly with the former supposition; it never can be reconciled with the latter. There is a moral certainty that base impostors never would have written a book, the most remarkable trait of which is holiness. The goodness of God, or that benevolence which he exercises towards his creatures, as it appears in the providence which sustains and feeds so great a multitude of sentient beings, and which is conspicuously manifested to the human family, is often celebrated in the Scriptures. Some of the most beautiful and sublime poems which were ever written, are employed in celebrating the praise of God for his marvellous goodness. The reader is requested to turn to the 34th, 103d, 104th, 145th, 147th, and 148th Psalms, as an exemplification of this remark.

There is another and a peculiar view of the divine goodness given in the Scriptures. It is that form of goodness called mercy. It is the love of creatures who had forfeited all claim to any kindness. It is the bestowing of pardon and salvation on those who are condemned to death by the righteous laws of God; and this without showing himself less displeased with their sins than if he had punished them for ever. This is the view of divine goodness which is peculiar to the Bible. Reason could not have formed a conjecture concerning it. It is the development of a trait in the divine character before unknown. To reveal the mercy of God, may with truth be said to be the principal object of the Bible. But our idea of this divine goodness is very imperfect until we learn in what way it was manifested. No words can express this so well as those of Christ himself: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To many, perhaps, it will appear that this love is so extraordinary, that it rather forms an objection against the Bible than an argument in its favour. If the wonderful and unparalleled nature of any thing were an objection to it, then I acknowledge that there would be some ground for this opinion. But what is there which is not full of wonders, when we come to contemplate it attentively? It is wonderful that there should exist such a creature as man, or such a body of light as the sun; but shall we therefore refuse to believe in their existence? To come nearer to the subject, what is there in the character of God or his works, which is not calculated to fill the mind with surpassing wonder? His eternity, his omniscience, his omnipresence, his creating power, his universal providence are so wonderful, that we are at a loss to say which is most wonderful; or whether any thing else can be more wonderful. But is this any argument against their reality? And if God is so wonderful in his other attributes, shall we expect to find nothing of this kind in his love, which is his highest glory? There is, indeed, no goodness of this sort among men;

but shall we make our faint and limited shadow of perfection the measure by which to judge of the character of the infinite God? How unreasonable such a procedure! The objection derived from the insignificance of man, the object of this wonderful love, is delusive; for the same objection would lie, if his powers were increased ever so much. In comparison with God, all creatures may be considered as on a level; in this view all distinctions among them are, as it were, annihilated. On the same principles, how easy would it be to construct an argument against the providence of God! There are innumerable myriads of animalcules, invisible to man, all of which have a perfect organization, and no more than an ephemeral existence. It might be said these minute creatures are too diminutive to occupy the attention of an infinite being. It might be said that the display of so much skill in the organization of creatures of a day, was unsuitable to the wisdom of God. But however plausible such objections may be made to appear, they are all founded in a presumptuous intrusion into what does not appertain to us, and concerning which we have no ability to form any correct judgment. Man has an infinitude below him as well as above him, in the gradation of being. I do not mean to say that creation is absolutely infinite, but that we can fix no bounds to the possibility of a continual existence of creatures in the scale of perpetual diminution, any more than we can to the possibility of creatures still increasing in magnitude above us. In this respect, as in others, we stand between two infinitudes, the great and the small. A single drop of liquid contains myriads of perfectly organized creatures; and who knows but every particle of the blood of these invisible animalcules may contain other worlds of beings still more minute, without its being possible for us to fix any limit to the diminution in the size of creatures? But to return; unless it can be shown, that such love as that exhibited in the gospel is impossible, which will not be pretended, or that it is repugnant to the moral attributes of God, its wonderful nature can never be used as an argument against its existence. It should be rather argued, the more wonderful, the more like God; the more wonderful, if no appearance of human weakness accompany it, the more unlikely to be the invention of man. And here I would suggest an idea, which, if correct, would shed light on the subject; namely, that wonder is congenial to the constitution of our minds. The soul of man never enjoys more elevated emotions and more exalted pleasure, than in the contemplation of objects so great and vast as to be perfectly incomprehensible. This is the foundation of that perpetual adoration which occupies the inhabitants of heaven. An incomprehensible God is the object of contemplation and wonder to every creature.

2. The account which the Bible gives of the origin and character of man accords, very exactly, with reason and experience. Indeed, this is the only source of our knowledge respecting the circumstances in which man was placed when he came from the hand of his Creator. Here we learn the origin of many things which we observe, but the reason of which we never could have discovered. The Bible teaches us that the wickedness which has existed in all ages and among all people, originated in the apostasy of the first man. It tells us the reason of covering the body with clothing, which is the custom of all nations, even where clothing is unnecessary to preserve the body from the effects of cold. Here we learn the cause of the earth's producing briars and thorns spontaneously, while useful grain and fruits must be cultivated. Here we learn the origin of marriage, and of the curse which has followed the female sex through all ages. Moses has also given us the origin of that species of religious worship which was anciently practised among all people, but of which reason can teach us nothing. I mean the sacrifice of animals on an altar, and the offerings of grain, of incense, &c. He has also related the fact of a universal deluge, of which we have so many ocular proofs in every country and on every mountain, as well as so many

ancient traditions. The dispersion of the human family over the face of the earth, and the origin of the several nations of antiquity, are recorded in the Bible; and although this record is contained in a single short chapter, and has to us much obscurity, yet Bishop Watson declared, that if we had no other evidence of the authenticity of the Pentateuch besides the tenth chapter of Genesis, he would deem that alone satisfactory.* The origin of the diversity of language is also found in the Bible, and not learned from any other source. Indeed, the origin of language itself, concerning which philosophers have disputed so much, is very evident from the history of Moses. Many learned men have thought that alphabetical writing took its rise from the writing of the decalogue by the finger of God upon the tables of stone; and I believe it would be found very difficult to prove by any authentic documents, that this art existed before. Be this as it may, it must be admitted that the earliest specimen of alphabetical writing now extant is contained in the Bible. To these particulars it may be added that we have an account in the Bible of those nations and people, concerning whom the earliest profane historians treat, long before their histories commence; and when history comes down to that period when the affairs of nations are described by others, it receives ample corroboration from their narratives, as well as gives great light to enable us to understand many things which they have imperfectly recorded. But the account which the Bible gives of the moral condition of man is that which is now most to our purpose. In all ages and circumstances the human race are represented as exceedingly depraved and wicked. Every man is declared to be a transgressor, and the root of this depravity is placed in the heart. Many of the gross crimes to which we all are inclined, and into the practice of which many fall, are enumerated; and where these are avoided and concealed the heart is described as deceitful and desperately wicked; and that pride and hypocrisy, which spread a false covering over the true character of man, are denounced as among the things most hateful to God. Now, if this picture is not taken from the life; if the character of man is entirely different from that delineated in the Scriptures, or if the vices of our nature are exaggerated; however difficult it may be to account for such misrepresentation, still it would furnish a strong argument against the inspiration of the writers of the several books of which the Bible consists. But on the other hand, if the character of man, as given in the Scriptures, is found exactly to correspond with universal experience and observation, it will be found an incontestable proof that the writers were guided by a strict regard to truth. To enter into a particular consideration of this subject, does not comport with the plan of this work; but for the truth of the representations of Scripture, I would appeal to all authentic history, and to every man's own observation and experience. The description which the apostle Paul gives of the vices of the heathen world in his time, is corroborated by all the historians and satirists who lived near that period. And who needs a laboured proof to show that men have generally a tendency to be wicked? Every civil institution, and all the most expensive provisions of civil government, are intended to set up barriers against the violence, injustice and licentiousness of man. Indeed civil government itself originated in nothing else than the necessity of protection against the wickedness of men. This, however, is a painful and mortifying conclusion, and it is not wonderful that pride and self-flattery should render us reluctant to admit it; nevertheless, every impartial man must acknowledge that the human character is correctly drawn in the Bible.

There is something wonderful in the power which the word of God possesses over the consciences of men. To those who never read or hear it, this fact must be unknown; but it is manifest to those who are conversant with the sacred volume, or who are in the habit of hearing it expounded. Why should this book, above all others, have the power of penetrating and searching

the inmost recesses of the soul, and showing to a man the multitude and enormity of the evils of his heart and life? This may by some be attributed to early education, but I believe, if the experiment could be fairly tried, it would be found, that men who had never been brought up with any sentiment of reverence for the Bible, would experience its power over the conscience. The very best cure therefore for infidelity, would be the serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures. "The entrance of thy word giveth light." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

3. It deserves our special attention, in considering the internal evidences of Christianity, that the Scriptures contain explicit information on those points on which man stands most in need of instruction. These may be reduced to three: first, the doctrine of a future state of retribution; secondly, the assurance that sin may be pardoned, and the method by which this can consistently be done; thirdly, the means for restoring the depraved nature of man to a state of rectitude. We are not capable of determining in particular, as we have before shown, what a revelation should contain, but it is reasonable to think that if God gives a revelation, it will contain some instruction on these important points. And when we examine what the Scriptures teach on these subjects, it is found that the doctrine is worthy of God, and so adapted to the necessities of man, that it affords a strong argument in favour of their inspiration. The certainty of a future existence to man, is a prominent feature in the New Testament. The connexion between our present conduct and future condition is clearly and expressly inculcated. Many interesting and momentous truths connected with the world to come, are presented in a light the best calculated to make a deep and salutary impression on the mind. It is revealed, that there will be a general judgment of all men, and that God hath appointed a day when this event shall take place. It is moreover taught in the New Testament, that not only will every man be judged, but every action of every individual, whether it be good or bad, will be brought under review; and the eternal destiny of all men will be fixed, agreeably to the judicial decision of this impartial trial. Some will be admitted to everlasting life, in the world above, while others shall go away into everlasting misery, into that place "prepared for the devil and his angels."

Another interesting fact revealed in the New Testament is, that there will be a general resurrection of the bodies of all men, previously to the final judgment. This fact reason could never have conjectured; it must, from its nature, be a matter of pure revelation. We may indeed discover some remote analogy to the resurrection, in the apparent death and resuscitation of vegetables and some animals; but this could never have authorized the conclusion, that the bodies of men, after being mingled with the dust of the earth, would be reorganized and re-animated by the same souls which were connected with them before their death. This doctrine however is very interesting, and to the pious must be very pleasing and animating, as we may learn from the beautiful and striking description of the resurrection given by Paul:—"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

It is worthy of remark that although the Scriptures express the joys of heaven, and the miseries of hell, by the strongest figures, they do not enter much into detail respecting the condition of men in the future world. There is true wisdom in this silence, because it is a subject of which we are at present incapable of forming any distinct conceptions. Paul, after being caught up to paradise and to the third heaven, gave no account of what he saw and heard. How different is this from the ridiculous description of the seven heavens, by Mohammed, and from the reveries of Emanuel

Swedenborg. The account of a future state contained in the New Testament, is just that which is best suited to our present imperfect mode of conceiving, and at the same time adapted to make the deepest impressions on the minds of men. The method of obtaining the pardon of sin, which is made known in the Scriptures, is so extraordinary, and yet so perfectly calculated to reconcile the forgiveness of the sinner with the justice and holiness of God, that it can scarcely be a mere human device. The mission from heaven of a person called the Son of God; his miraculous assumption of human nature; his holy and benevolent character; and his laying down his life as an expiation for the sins of men, are indeed wonderful events, but on that account not likely to be the invention of impostors. The death of Christ may be considered the central point in the Christian system. This was so far from being an incidental thing, or an event occurring in the common course of nature, that it is every where represented to be the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world. This, according to the gospel, is the grand means of obtaining all blessings for sinners. It is the great vicarious sacrifice offered up to God in behalf of the people, in consequence of which God can be just and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. To know Christ crucified, is to know the whole gospel to preach Christ crucified, is to preach the whole gospel; for all its doctrines are involved in this event. The plan of salvation revealed in the Scriptures is founded on the principle of receiving satisfaction for the transgressions of the sinner, from another person who is able to render to the law all that is required from the offender. This satisfaction was made by the obedience of Christ unto death, and is accepted by the Judge of all in place of a perfect obedience of the sinner, in behalf of all those to whom it shall be applied. This method of obtaining pardon is honourable to God, because while he receives the transgressor into favour, he expresses his hatred of sin in the strongest manner, and requires that the demands of his holy law be perfectly fulfilled; and it is suited to man, for it comes down to his impotence and wretchedness, and offers him a finished and gratuitous salvation, without works or merit of his own. And that there may be no room for an abuse of this doctrine of free grace, it is provided that all who hope for the benefits of this redemption shall yield a sincere obedience to the gospel, and thus evince their penitence for their sins, and their love to the Saviour. Ungodly men may pervert this doctrine and turn the grace of God into licentiousness, but this receives no encouragement from the principles of the gospel; it is merely the effect of the perverseness of sinful men. This leads me to speak of the third thing important to be known by man, the means by which a depraved nature may be restored to rectitude, or thorough reformation of a sinner be effected. On this subject philosophy has never been able to shed any light. And this is not wonderful; for the most that human wisdom however perfect could effect, would be the direction and regulation of the natural principles and passions of men; but in this way no true reformation can be produced. Whatever changes are effected, will be only from one species of sin to another. In order to a radical restoration of the soul to moral rectitude, or to any degree of it, there is a necessity for the introduction into the mind of some new and powerful principle of action, sufficient to counteract or expel the principles of sin. It is in vain that men talk of producing a restoration to virtue by reason: the mere perception of the right way will answer no purpose, unless there is some inclination to pursue it. Now the want of virtuous affections, or to speak more correctly, of holy dispositions, is the great defect of our nature, in which our depravity radically consists; and the only way by which man can be led to love and pursue the course of obedience to the law of God, is by having love to God and to holiness excited or implanted in his soul. But to effect this, is not in the power of any creature: it is a work which requires a divine energy, a creating power; and therefore a true conversion from the ways of sin

was never effected without super natural aid. There may be an external reformation. There may be, and often is, a change of governing principles. The man who in his youth was under the predominant influence of the love of pleasure, may in advanced years fall completely under the control of avarice or ambition; but in every such case, the change is effected by one active principle becoming so strong as to counteract or suppress another. It may be laid down as a universal maxim, that all changes of character are brought about by exciting, implanting, or strengthening, active principles, sufficient to overcome those which before governed the man.

Now let us inquire what plan of reformation is proposed in the Scriptures. It is such a one as precisely accords with the principles laid down. The necessity of regeneration by the power of God is taught in almost every variety of form, both in the Old and New Testaments. The effect of the divine energy on the soul is a new heart, or new principles of moral action, the leading exercises of which are love to God and love to man. Let a philosophical survey be taken of the nature of man, with his complete system of perceptions, passions, appetites, and affections; and then suppose this powerful and holy principle introduced into the soul; all the faculties and propensities of man will be reduced to order, and the vices of our nature will be eradicated. Pretenders to reason and philosophy have often ridiculed this doctrine as absurd; whereas it is in every respect consistent with the soundest philosophy. It is the very thing which a wise philosopher, who should undertake to solve the problem, how depraved man might be restored to virtue, would demand. But like the foundation which Archimedes required for his lever to raise the earth, the principle necessary for a sinner's reformation is one which reason and philosophy cannot furnish. The Bible is the only book which ever taught the true method of purifying the soul from sin. A thousand ineffectual devices have been tried by philosophers and devotees of other systems. One of the most common has been to endeavour to extricate the soul from the influence of the body, by various methods of mortification and purgation; but all these plans have adopted the false principle, that the body is the chief seat of depravity, and therefore they have ever proved unsuccessful. The disease lies deeper, and is further removed from the reach of their remedies than they supposed. It is the gospel which teaches the true philosophy respecting the seat of sin and its cure. Out of the heart proceed all evils, according to the Bible. And if we would make the fruit good, we must first make the tree good. This necessity of divine agency to make men truly virtuous, does not, however, supersede the use of means, or exclude the operation of rational motives. When a new principle is introduced into a rational mind, the soul in the exercise of this principle is governed by the same general laws of understanding and choice as before. The principle of piety is pre-eminently a rational principle in its operation. God is loved because he is now viewed to be a most excellent and amiable being. Heaven is preferred to earth, because it is seen to be a far better and more enduring inheritance; and so of all other exercises.

I am naturally led from the consideration of this subject to speak of the moral system of the New Testament. I confine my remarks here to the New Testament, not because it teaches a different rule of moral duty from the Old, but because it teaches it more clearly. I need say nothing in general commendation of the moral precepts of the gospel; they have extorted the highest praise from many of the most determined enemies of Christianity. No man has been able to show how they could be improved in any one point. It has sometimes, indeed, been objected that this system was not suited to man, because it requires a purity and perfection to which he can never attain; but the objection concedes the very point which we wish to establish—the absolute perfection of the

gospel system of morality. It surely requires no argument to prove that if God revealed a rule for the regulation of his creatures, it will be a perfect rule. It will never do to admit, that the law must be lowered in its demands to adapt it to the imperfection of creatures. This would be destructive of all law.

It has again been objected, that in the precepts of the New Testament many splendid virtues acknowledged by the heathen moralists have been omitted. Patriotism, friendship, bravery, &c., have been specified as belonging to this class. To which we reply, that so far as patriotism and friendship are moral virtues, they are included in the general precepts of the gospel, which require us to love our fellow men and do them good; and in those which command us to think of "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" but when the love of country and attachment to a friend interfere with the general obligation of loving all men, they are no longer virtues, but vices. The excellence of the moral system of the New Testament will be manifest if we consider,

1. Its simple yet comprehensive character. All moral duties which can be conceived as obligatory, are here reduced to two grand principles, the love of God and the love of man. The measure of the first is the full extent of our capacity; of the second, the love which we have for ourselves. "On these two," says Christ, "hang all the law and the prophets." The duties which relate to temperance and self-government, do not need any additional principle. If the soul be filled with love to man, self-love will be so regulated and directed as to answer every purpose in moving us to perform what has been called our duty to ourselves.

2. The precepts of morality, in the New Testament, although sometimes expressed in comprehensive language, are often applied to the actual relations and various conditions of men. We are not left to infer particular duties from general principles, but the duties of individuals, according to their circumstances, are distinctly enjoined. Parents and children, husbands and wives, magistrates and subjects, masters and servants, ministers and people, the rich and the poor, the friend and the stranger, have all their respective duties clearly marked out.

3. Moral duties which have been overlooked or misunderstood by other teachers, are here prominently exhibited and solemnly inculcated. The virtues of humility, meekness, forbearance, and the forgiveness of injuries, were not acknowledged by the heathen moralists; but in the New Testament they are made to assume their proper place, and much of true goodness is made to consist in their exercise. At the time of the advent of Christ, many false principles of morality had gained currency. The duty of loving all men had been circumscribed within narrow limits. Men charged with heresy, as the Samaritans, or notorious sinners, as the publicans, were by the Jews considered as properly excluded from all participation in their kindness or courtesy. The duty of subjection to a foreign power by which they had been conquered, and especially the duty of yielding obedience to a wicked tyrannical prince, was one on which it required much wisdom to decide aright. The people were divided among themselves on this point; it was therefore selected by a combination of both parties as a fit subject to entangle our Lord, by obliging him to decide one way or the other, and thus expose himself to the opposition of one of the parties. But when they asked him whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not, he called for a denarius, and looking at the image stamped upon it, asked whose it was; and upon being answered Cæsar's, made the following remarkable reply: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and into

God the things that are God's." By which he decided that, inasmuch as they permitted the coin of Cæsar to circulate among them, which was an evidence of his sovereignty over them, and availed themselves of this money for purposes of trade, there could be no impropriety in rendering to Cæsar what properly belonged to him; and also that this was not incompatible with their allegiance to God. So that virtually in this answer, he reproved both the pharisees and the Herodians; the former of whom made their duty to God a pretext for refusing to pay tribute to the Emperor; and the latter, to secure the favour of the reigning powers, neglected their duty to God.

Paul, living under the government of Nero, prescribes obedience to the existing powers, not from fear of suffering their displeasure, but for conscience' sake. This is the general rule of duty on this difficult subject, than which none can be wiser; but it must not be considered as inculcating passive obedience and non-resistance in all cases. Yet as long as a government has authority, so long we are bound to obey. Christianity is so constituted as not to interfere with any civil institution. It takes men as it finds them, in all the relations of life, and teaches them their duty. It never can therefore be the cause of sedition and opposition to existing governments. It considers all civil rulers as the ministers of God, for the peace and good order of society, and for the punishment of those that do evil. It is made the duty of Christians therefore to be "subject unto the higher powers, and not to resist the ordinance of God; to render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."* But when they, who have the right to change the government of a country exercise it, and put down one set of rulers and set up another the principle of Christian duty remains the same. And if in any country Christians form a majority of the nation, there is no reason why they may not exercise this right of new-modelling their government, or changing their rulers, as well as others.

4. The moral system of the New Testament traces all virtue to the heart, and sets no value on the most splendid and costly offerings, or the most punctilious discharge of religious duties when the motives are not pure. The first inclination of the mind to an illicit object is denounced to be a violation of the law; and words of reproach, and all idle words, are among the sins for which an account must be given in the judgment. Prayers and alms proceeding from vain glory are represented as receiving no reward from God, however they may be applauded by men. The love of this world, and the love of money, are represented as radical sins, from which many others proceed. Pride and revenge are exhibited as not only odious, but incompatible with the divine favour. Purity of heart and heavenly-mindedness, with trust in God and submission to his will, are in this system, cardinal virtues.

5. The moral precepts of the New Testament were exemplified in the lives of the apostles and primitive Christians; but especially, and to the utmost perfection, in the example of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to conceive a character more perfect than that given by the evangelists, of the founder of the Christian religion; and it has already been observed, that this character, embracing every variety of excellence, often exhibited in delicate and difficult circumstances, is delineated by a simple narrative of facts. There is no panegyric, no effort or art to excite admiration; the writers merely inform us what Jesus said, did, and suffered. From this narrative we learn that he connected himself with no sect, and courted the favour of neither the rich nor the poor. He adopted none of the errors or prejudices of his nation; but by his discourses and his conduct showed that he acted from far higher views than national prejudices. The apparent sanctity of the Pharisees he denounced as hypocrisy; the traditions of the elders, as subversive of the law of God; the skeptical

opinions of the Sadducees, as proceeding from ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ continually turned the attention of his hearers from earthly to heavenly things, as alone worthy of their attention and pursuits. Although he flattered no class of men, his attention was particularly directed to the poor; their spiritual necessities and their bodily afflictions excited his most tender compassion; and to them he addressed many kind and encouraging declarations. But his healing power was exerted in behalf of all applicants, rich and poor; and without regard to their sect or nation. Jews, Samaritans, heathens, publicans, and sinners, were the objects of his compassion. He was not deterred by the proud prejudices of the Scribes and Pharisees from associating with penitents, however vile and infamous they had before been. He graciously received returning sinners, and comforted them with the assurance of pardon, and permitted them to manifest their grateful affection to his person, by the most expressive signs and actions. He manifested the kindest sympathy with his friends in their afflictions, weeping with those that wept, and often exerting his omnipotence in raising their dear relations from the bed of sickness or from death. And although he often uttered severe rebukes against the incorrigibly wicked, and was sometimes grieved and angry with them, yet his compassion towards them never failed; and even when their day of grace was ended, he wept over them with the most affecting tenderness.

Jesus Christ was often brought into conflict with insidious, malignant, and learned adversaries. They attacked him with deliberate craft, and proposed to him questions on delicate and difficult subjects, to which he was required to return an immediate answer; but in no case of this sort was he ever confounded, or even puzzled by the cunning craftiness of his enemies. His answers were so appropriate and so fraught with wisdom, that his adversaries were commonly confounded and the audience filled with admiration. The parables of Christ are unparalleled for beauty and force, in the species of composition to which they belong. But this is the smallest part of their excellence. They contain so much important truth, and so happily adapted to the subject and the occasion, that the persons intended to be reprov'd by them were often constrained to give judgment against themselves. In these discourses, the leading doctrines of the gospel are exhibited in a beautiful dress of allegory, which rivets the attention and greatly aids us in understanding the fulness and freeness of the grace of the gospel. They are also prophetic of the rejection of the Jews and of the calling of the Gentiles; of the various reception of the gospel by different classes of hearers; of the mixture of sincere and unsound Christians in the Church; of the cruel persecutions which the followers of Christ should endure; and of the final overthrow and destruction of his enemies.

Jesus Christ spake, in all his discourses, as never man spake. He removed the false glosses which had been put on the law, and set its precepts in their proper light. He mingled the dogmas of no philosophical system with his instructions. He entered into no metaphysical and abstruse disquisitions, but taught the truth with simplicity and authority. His zeal for the honour of God and for the purity and sanctity of his worship, and his dislike of all human inventions and will-worship, are manifest in all his conduct. A spirit of fervent and elevated devotion was a remarkable characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth. Whole nights he spent in prayer; and before day he would retire for the purposes of devotion. He was in the habit of praying and giving thanks on all occasions; but his devotion was free from all tincture of superstition or enthusiasm. He taught that not the words, but the heart, not the length of prayers, but their spirit was regarded. His benevolence, meekness, and laborious diligence, in promoting the welfare of men, were manifested every day of his life. But in his acts of mercy and in his most extraordinary miracles,

there was no appearance of parade or ostentation. He went, about doing good, but he sought no glory from men. He was humble, retired, and contented with the lowest state of poverty. When the people applauded him, he withdrew to some other place. When they would have made him a king, he escaped from their hands. When they asked curious questions, he directed them to something important. When they uttered unmeaning expressions of praise, he took occasion to announce some important truth or deliver some interesting discourse. In nothing did he discover more profound wisdom, than in declining to interfere in any case with temporal concerns, and disputes about earthly possessions. He showed by his conduct, what he solemnly declared on his trial, that "his kingdom was not of this world." In his intercourse with his disciples, we observe a sweet mixture of dignity and gentleness, of faithfulness and humble condescension to their weakness and prejudices. No wonder that they should love such a Master. His last discourses with them before his passion, and the remarkable prayer offered on their behalf, for affectionate tenderness and the sweet spirit of consolation which pervade them, are altogether inimitable. How flat and unsatisfactory are the conversations of Socrates with his friends, when compared with those of Christ recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the gospel of St. John. Indeed it would be impossible to refer to any discourses, in any language, which could bear a comparison with this valedictory of Christ: and to enhance our admiration of the pure benevolence of the author, he was aware that his own sufferings were near and would be most cruel and ignominious; and yet his attention is turned to the case of his sorrowful disciples, and all that he says has relation to them. The institution of the Eucharistical Supper, intended to be commemorative of his death, was attended with circumstances which exhibit the character of Jesus in a very peculiar and interesting light. This scene will be best understood by a perusal of the simple and affecting narrative of the evangelists. The last thing in the character of Christ, which I shall bring into view at this time, is the patience and fortitude with which he endured sufferings intense and overwhelming beyond conception. There is so nothing mysterious in this whole affair. The intense agonies which Jesus suffered, seem to have had no connexion with external circumstances. When he was betrayed, deserted, and arrested, he discovered no signs of fear or perturbation. He gave himself up, and submitted with unruffled composure to every species of contumely and insult. While his trial was going on before the Sanhedrim, and before Pilate, he maintained, for the most part, a dignified silence, uttering no reproaches or complaints; not even speaking in his own defence. When particularly interrogated by the judges, he answered directly to the questions proposed, and avowed himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Under the mockery and insult which were heaped upon him, he remained perfectly composed, and uttered not a word indicative of impatience or resentment. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." When he was bewailed by the daughters of Jerusalem, as he ascended the hill of Calvary, bearing his cross, he requested them not to weep for him, but for themselves and their children, on account of the calamities that were coming on that devoted city. While suspended on the cross, he saw his beloved mother among the spectators, and knowing that she would need a friend and protector, he recommended her to the care of the disciple he most tenderly loved. Although no compassion was mingled with the vindictive feelings with which he was persecuted, he set a glorious example of that most difficult duty, love to enemies. As says the apostle Peter, "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Among his

last words, before he expired, was a prayer for those that were then engaged in crucifying him; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." A penitent thief, who was crucified with him, implored his blessing and remembrance, when he should come to the possession of his kingdom; he replied, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And finally, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and bowed his head and died. The moral excellence of the character of Christ is very remarkable, as uniting, in perfection, qualities which among men are considered almost incompatible. He exhibited a complete indifference to the possessions and glory of the world and a devout and heavenly temper, without the least mixture of austerity. He combined uniform dignity with humility and condescension; manifested strong indignation against all manner of sin and against impenitent sinners, but the most affectionate tenderness towards every humble penitent. He united the spirit of elevated devotion with a life of activity and incessant exertion. While he held free intercourse with men of all classes, he adopted the prejudices and spared the vices of none. On this subject, I will quote a passage from an excellent discourse of Dr. Channing, before referred to: "I will only observe," says the eloquent author, speaking of the character of Christ, "that it had one distinction, which, more than any thing, forms a perfect character. It was made up of contrasts: in other words it was a union of excellencies which are not easily reconciled, which seem at first sight incongruous, but which, when blended and duly proportioned, constitute moral harmony, and attract with equal power, love, and veneration. For example, we discover in Jesus Christ an unparalleled dignity of character, a consciousness of greatness, never discovered or approached by any other individual in history, and yet this was blended with a condescension, loveliness, and unostentatious simplicity, which had never before been thought consistent with greatness. In like manner, he united an utter superiority to the world, to its pleasures and ordinary interests, with suavity of manners, and freedom from austerity. He joined to strong feeling and self-possession, an indignant sensibility to sin, and compassion to the sinner; an intense devotion to his work, and calmness under opposition and ill success; a universal philanthropy, and a susceptibility of private attachments; the authority which became the Saviour of the world, and the tenderness and gratitude of a son." The salutary effects of Christianity on communities and individuals open a wide field for important remarks. It is a subject which we have not time to pursue, yet we must not pass it over in entire silence. The argument from this topic may however be reduced to a point. Take a survey of the whole world, at this time, and let an impartial judgment be formed of the condition of all the nations; and let the question be answered, whether Christian nations are in a less favourable or more favourable condition than others. And again, whether among Christians, those nations who have the free use of the Bible, and are carefully instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, are in a better or worse condition than those to whom the Scriptures are interdicted, and who are permitted to remain in ignorance of the religion which they profess? The answers of these questions are so obvious, that I cannot but presume, that all readers will be of the same mind. It may then be asked, would a vile imposture be the means of meliorating the condition of the world, and prove salutary in proportion as it is known and obeyed? "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say."

We have moreover seen, in our own time, the wonderful effects of the gospel, in civilizing some of the most barbarous people on the face of the earth. Men who seemed to be sunk to a level with the beasts, have been reclaimed, enlightened, and exalted, to a participation of the blessings of civilized life, their ferocious temper being completely subdued and softened. Look at Greenland, at Africa, at the islands of the Pacific; and nearer home, at the Cherokees, Choctaws, and other

Indian tribes, and see what the gospel can effect. I know not what infidels think of these things, but for my own part, I should not esteem one coming from the dead, or a voice of thunder from heaven, so undoubted an evidence of the truth of the gospel, as these effects. Will a series of falsehoods produce such effects as these?

I know that it has been objected, that Christianity has been the cause of many bloody wars and cruel persecutions; but this is impossible. That religion which breathes nothing but benevolence and peace, and which requires its disciples not to resist evil, but freely to forgive their most malignant enemies, can never be the cause of war and persecution. It may indeed be the occasion, and no doubt has been made the occasion of such evils; but it would be absurd to attribute to Christianity the evils of which it has been the occasion, when its own spirit is in direct opposition to those evils. As well might we charge civil government with all the wars and tumults which it has occasioned. As reasonably might we accuse liberty, as being the cause of all the atrocities of the French revolution. The wickedness of man is the cause of these evils; and the most excellent things in the universe, may be made the occasion of exciting it, or calling it into exercise. Christ foretold that his religion would be an occasion of family discord; and to express the certainty of the even predicted, he said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword;" which some superficial readers have strangely misconstrued, as though he had signified that it was the tendency of his religion to produce strife among friends. No man can remain in error on this subject who will take the pains to read the New Testament. And I will venture to predict, or rather to repeat what is already predicted, that as soon as the world shall sincerely embrace the Christian religion, wars will cease to the ends of the earth. Then shall men beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more. But the salutary effects of the gospel on those individuals who cordially embrace it, furnish the most manifest proof of its divinity. How often, by the secret powerful influence of the truths of the Bible, have the proud been humbled; the impure rendered chaste; the unjust honest; the cruel and revengeful, meek and forgiving; the drunkard, temperate; the profane, reverent; and the false swearer and liar, conscientious in declaring nothing but the truth. Under the influence of what other system are such salutary changes effected? Will it be said that many who profess to experience such a change prove themselves to be hypocrites? Admitted; but does this evince that they who give evidence of sincerity by the most incontestable proofs, all their lives, are also hypocrites? All men wish to be thought honest; but if many are discovered to be knaves, does this prove that there is not an honest man in the world?

However this argument may affect those who have had no experience of the power of the gospel, it will have great weight with all who have, by means of the truth, been converted from the error of their ways. There are thousands who can attest that they have experienced the salutary efficacy of the Bible, in turning them away from their iniquities and enkindling within them the love of God and of virtue. They cannot but believe that the Christian religion is from God, and are persuaded that no imposture could so elevate and sanctify the mind, that no human device could possess such a power over the conscience and the heart, as they have experienced from the Scriptures. These persons, therefore, may truly be said to have the witness of the truth in themselves. But there is an efficacy in the truths of the Bible not only to guide and sanctify, but also to afford consolation to the afflicted in body or mind. The gospel brings peace into every bosom where it is cordially received. When the conscience is pierced with the stings of guilt, and the soul writhes under a wound which

no human medicine can heal, the promises of the gospel are like the balm of Gilead, a sovereign cure for this intolerable and deeply-seated malady. Under its cheering influence, the broken spirit is healed and the burden of despair is removed far away. The gospel, like an angel of mercy, can bring consolation into the darkest scenes of adversity; it can penetrate the dungeon, and sooth the sorrows of the penitent in his chains, and on his bed of straw. It has power to give courage to the heart, and to brighten the countenance of the man who meets death on the scaffold or on the gibbet, if its precious invitations to the chief of sinners be sincerely embraced. It mitigates the sorrows of the bereaved, and wipes away the bitter tears occasioned by the painful separation of affectionate friends and relatives. By the bright prospects which it opens, and the lively hopes which it inspires, the darkness of the tomb is illumined; so that Christians are enabled, in faith of the resurrection of the body, to commit the remains of their dearest friends to the secure sepulchre, in confident hope that after a short sleep they will awake to life everlasting. The cottages of the poor are often blessed with the consolation of the gospel, which is peculiarly adapted to the children of affliction and poverty. It was one of the signs of Jesus being the true Messiah, "that the poor had the gospel preached unto them." Here it produces contentment, resignation, mutual kindness, and the longing after immortality. The aged and infirm, who, by the gradual failure of their faculties, or by disease and decrepitude are shut out from the business and enjoyments of this world, may find in the word of God a fountain of consolation. They may while imbued with its celestial spirit, look upon the world without the least regret for its loss, and may rejoice in the prospect before them, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. The gospel can render tolerable even the yoke of slavery and the chains of the oppressor. How often is the pious slave, through the blessed influence of the word of God, a thousand times happier than his master! He cares not for the short deprivation of liberty; he knows and feels that he is "Christ's freeman," and believes "that all things work together for his good," and that "these light afflictions which are for a moment, will work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" Nay, this glorious gospel is an antidote to death itself. He that does the sayings of Christ shall never taste of death; that is, of death as a curse: he shall never feel the envenomed sting of death. How often does it overspread the spirit of the departing saint with serenity! How often does it elevate, and fill with celestial joy, the soul which is just leaving the earthly house of this tabernacle! It actually renders, in many instances, the bed of the dying a place of sweet repose. No terrors hover over them; no anxious care corrodes their spirit; no burden oppresses their heart. All is light; all is hope and assurance; all is joy and triumph. The question to be decided is, whether a book which is replete with such sublime and correct views of theology; which exhibits the true history and true character of man, without flattery, distortion, or exaggeration; which possesses such an astonishing power of penetrating the human heart and affecting the conscience; which gives us information on the very points with which it is most important we should be acquainted; which opens to us the future world, and shows us how we may attain its felicity and glory; which exhibits a perfect system of moral duty adapted to our nature and circumstances, and free from all the defects of other systems of morality; forbidding nothing which is innocent, and requiring nothing which is not reasonable and virtuous; which reduces all duty to a few general principles, and yet illustrates the application of these principles by a multitude of particular precepts, addressed to persons in every relation of life, and exemplifies them by setting before us the lives of holy men, who are portrayed according to truth with such imperfections as experience teaches us belong to the best men; which delineates the character of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, with such

a perfection of moral excellency, by simply relating his words, actions, and sufferings, that nothing can be taken from it, or added to it, without detracting from its worth; and finally which contains the true sources of consolation for every species of human suffering, and comfort in death itself:—whether such a book is the production of vile impostors, and those impostors uneducated fishermen. Would such men have fallen into no palpable blunders in theology or morality? Could they have preserved so beautiful a harmony and consistency between all the parts? Could they have exhibited such a character as that of Jesus Christ? and while they introduce him acting and speaking so often, and in circumstances so peculiar and difficult, never ascribe to him any error or weakness, in word or deed? Would impostors have denounced all manner of falsehood and deceit, as is done in the New Testament? Would they have insisted so much on holiness, even in the thoughts and purposes of the heart? Could they have so perfectly adapted their forgery to the constitution of the human mind and to the circumstances of men? Is it probable that they would have possessed the wisdom to avoid all the prejudices of their nation, and all connexion with existing sects and civil institutions? And finally, could they have provided so effectually for the consolation of the afflicted? What man now upon earth could compose even the discourses, said by the evangelists to have been spoken by Jesus Christ?

If any man can bring himself, after an impartial examination of the Scriptures, to believe that they were written by unprincipled impostors, then he may believe that an untutored savage might construct a ship of the line; that a child might have written the Iliad, or Paradise Lost; or even that the starry firmament was the work of mere creatures. No: it cannot be that this is a forgery. No man or set of men ever had sufficient talents and knowledge to forge such a book as the Bible. It evidently transcends all human effort. It has upon its face the impress of divinity. It shines with a light, which by its clearness and its splendour, shows itself to be celestial. It possesses the energy and penetrating influence which bespeak the omnipotence and omniscience of its author. It has the effect of enlightening, elevating, purifying, directing, and comforting all those who cordially receive it. Surely then it is the word of God, and we hold it fast as the best blessing which God has vouchsafed to man.

O precious gospel! Will any merciless hand endeavour to tear away from our hearts this best, this last, and sweetest consolation? Would you darken the only avenue through which one ray of hope can enter? Would you tear from the aged and infirm poor the only prop on which their souls can repose in peace? Would you deprive the dying of their only source of consolation? Would you rob the world of its richest treasure? Would you let loose the flood-gates of every vice, and bring back upon the earth the horrors of superstition or the atrocities of atheism? Then endeavour to subvert the gospel; throw around you the fire-brands of infidelity; laugh at religion, and make a mock of futurity; but be assured that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. But I will not believe that any who reflect on what has been said, in these pages, will ever cherish a thought so diabolical. I will persuade myself that a regard for the welfare of their country, if no higher motive, will induce them to respect the Christian religion. And every pious heart will say, rather let the light of the sun be extinguished than the precious light of the gospel.

CHAPTER XIV("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WERE WRITTEN BY THE INSPIRATION OF GOD; AND THIS INSPIRATION, HOWEVER IT MAY BE DISTINGUISHED,

WAS PLENARY; THAT IS, THE WRITERS WERE UNDER AN INFALLIBLE GUIDANCE, BOTH AS TO IDEAS AND WORDS: AND YET THE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, HABITS, AND PECULIAR DISPOSITIONS OF THE WRITERS, WERE NOT SUPERSEDED

Having endeavoured to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures, I come now to say something respecting the inspiration of the writers of the several books. These two subjects are, it is true, involved in each other; and many of the arguments for the former are conclusive in favour of the latter; but still there is a distinction which it is important to observe. A book may be authentic, without having the least claim to inspiration, as are all true narratives of facts, written by men of veracity in the exercise of their unassisted powers. The gospel history may be established on the common principles of human testimony, in the same manner as any other history. Indeed, this must be done, in the order of proof, before any convincing argument can be formed in favour of divine revelation. Accordingly, all judicious writers on the Evidences of Christianity first attempt to establish the facts recorded in the Gospels, by an appeal to mere human testimony. This distinction is so clear, and practically so important, that many persons believe in the facts—miracles as well as others—and yet have no conviction that the history of these events was written by divine inspiration. This is understood to be the case in regard to most of those called Unitarians. Dr. Priestley, in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," has established the authenticity of the facts recorded by the evangelists with great force of reasoning; and yet in the same work, he utterly denies the plenary inspiration of these writers; but alleges that they were men of veracity, and that their testimony should be received, just as we receive that of other credible historians, but without ascribing infallibility to them. The same opinions have been maintained by many others. The authenticity of the facts is sufficient to demonstrate that the Christian religion is of divine origin; but it does not follow, as a matter of course, that the historian who gives an account of the facts on which rests was inspired. This is a distinct inquiry, and although not so vitally important as the former, is of great moment, and deserves a serious and impartial consideration.

It may be proper also in this place to distinguish between inspiration and that illumination which every true Christian must receive, and which is the foundation of that saving faith which is produced in the mind by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The distinction is, that the object of inspiration is commonly to reveal some new truths, or more clearly to reveal such as were before but obscurely revealed; or it is intended to direct the mind, in a supernatural way, to write and speak certain things, and so superintends or strengthens its faculties, that it is enabled to communicate, with unerring certainty, truths before unknown; or to form ideas and adopt expressions so sublime, as to be above the range of the natural powers of the person. The illumination of the Holy Spirit communicates no new truths, but enables the soul spiritually to apprehend truths, already revealed. Here then is the grand distinction between those spiritual influences which all Christians enjoy, and enthusiasm which claims something of the nature of inspiration. The sober Christian can appeal to the word of God, as containing all the ideas by which his mind is affected, in its highest elevations of joy and love; but the enthusiast departs from the written word, and trusts to impulses, impressions on the imagination, immediate suggestions, dreams or supposed visions. If these impulses or suggestions were from the Spirit of God, they would be strictly of the nature of inspiration. And, accordingly, most fanatics believe themselves to be inspired; but however strong their persuasion, we are not bound to believe in their pretensions,

unless they can exhibit those external proofs, by which God is pleased to attest such communications as he makes to men.

There is also a difference between inspiration and revelation. All revelations are not made by a suggestion of truth to the mind of an individual. God often spake to people of old by audible voices, and communicated his will by the mission of angels. Many persons have thus received divine revelations who had no pretensions to inspiration. All the people of Israel who stood before God at Mount Sinai, heard his voice uttering the ten commandments, and yet no one would say that all these were inspired. So also when Christ was upon earth, in more instances than one, a voice was heard declaring that he was the beloved Son of God. Indeed, all who had the opportunity of hearing Christ's discourses might be said to receive a revelation immediately from God; but it would be absurd to say that all these were inspired. Dr. Dick is of opinion, that the word revelation would be more expressive, as being more comprehensive, than suggestion, which last conveys the idea of an operation on the mind; whereas, truth, in many cases, was made known in other ways. But for the reason stated above, it would not do to substitute the word revelation for inspiration; inasmuch as multitudes received revelations who had no claim to inspiration. And when inspiration is confined to those who wrote the books of Scripture, no other word would so clearly express the idea.

Inspiration has by theologians been distinguished into three kinds; that of superintendence, of suggestion, and of elevation. The first of these takes place, when an historian is influenced by the Holy Spirit to write, and in writing is so directed as to select those facts and circumstances which will answer the end proposed; and so assisted and strengthened in the narrative of events, as to be preserved from an error and mistake. The facts need not be revealed, because they may be well known to the writer from his own observation, and may be deeply impressed on his memory; but no man can avoid inaccuracies and mistakes in a narrative of facts, long past. If it is important that such a narrative be exempt from error, the writer must be inspired. But as the chief object of inspiration is to communicate truths before unknown, the inspiration of suggestion is requisite in all such cases; as when the prophets were inspired to predict the revolutions of empires, or to communicate a message from God to a whole people, or to an individual, the ideas must of course, have been immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit. The third species of inspiration takes place, when, by a divine influence, persons are enabled to bring forth productions, in speaking or writing, far more sublime and excellent than they could have attained by the exercise of their own faculties. Thus women, under the inspiration of God, have instantly uttered, in elevated strains of poetry, discourses in praise of God, which, by their unassisted powers, they could never have produced. In these compositions, there may be no revelation of truth; nor is there a mere superintendence of the human faculties, as in the first case was described; but the powers of the mind are, for the occasion, wonderfully elevated above their common level, so that the conceptions are more vivid and sublime, and expressed in language more appropriate and striking, than would have naturally occurred to them. By an inspiration of this sort David wrote the Psalms, and Solomon the Proverbs, and the speakers, in the book of Job, the sublime discourses which are there recorded. Many things of this kind are also found in the writings of the prophets.

Here another question of some perplexity demands our attention. It is, whether the words of Scripture, as well as the ideas, were given by inspiration. On the one hand it is alleged, that there is no necessity for supposing that the words used in communicating revealed truth should be

suggested by the Holy Spirit; and that the fact proves that no such inspiration existed, because the style of each of the writers is peculiar, and accords precisely with his education, disposition, and turn of mind. But on the other hand it is argued, that unless the words were inspired as well as the ideas, we cannot be certain that the writer has, in any case, communicated accurately the mind of the Spirit; for men are liable to mistake in the selection of appropriate words, as much as in any thing else; and as men often fail in conveying their own ideas in language which correctly expresses their meaning, they might make similar mistakes in the use of language to express ideas received by inspiration, if in this matter they were left to the guidance of their own minds. It has also been plausibly urged in favour of inspiration extending to the words, that we can scarcely conceive of a revelation of truths to the mind, without supposing that they were clothed in language. We cannot even think distinctly, much less reason conclusively, on any subject, without the intervention of words.

It is probable, that in this controversy as in many others, both parties are right; or rather, that the truth will be fully possessed by adopting the views entertained on both sides, and endeavouring to reconcile them. The same principles which apply to the ideas may, without any alteration, be applied to the words. When the truths revealed were before unknown to the inspired person; and especially—as seems often to have been the case with the prophets—when they did not fully comprehend the import of what was revealed, it is necessary to suppose that the words, as well as ideas, were immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit. This was remarkably the case, when the apostles and others received the gift of tongues: which was nothing else but the inspiration of words, as they were needed, for the communication of the truths of the gospel. But as in the narration of well-known facts, the writer did not need a continual suggestion of every idea, but only to be so superintended, as to be preserved from error; so in the use of language in recording such familiar things, there existed no necessity that every word should be inspired; but there was the same need of a directing and superintending influence as in regard to the things themselves. Here, then, we see that the language of the sacred writers might be preserved from impropriety and inaccuracy, and yet all the characteristics of style peculiar to each writer be retained. Just as if a master should so guide the hand of a child in writing, that the pen should be actually moved by the pupil, but governed and directed by the master, so as not to transgress the limits prescribed. Or this superintendence, both as to ideas and words, may be illustrated by the case of a father conducting a child along a narrow path. The child walks by its own activity, and takes steps according to its ability; but the father preserves it from falling, and keeps it in the straight path. Just so it is with men when under the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit. Their own powers of understanding, memory and invention are not superseded, but only directed, and preserved from inaccuracy and error; but the man pursues his own peculiar method of thinking, reasoning, and expression. He speaks or writes in the language which he has learned, and uses that idiom and style which have become habitual; so that inspired men will, according to this theory, retain their peculiarity of style and expression just as fully, as if they were writing or speaking without inspiration.

Some object to this theory of superintendence, under the impression that it is less perfect, than if every thing were inspired by direct suggestion of the Holy Spirit. But there is really no foundation for this objection. It certainly is a matter of no consequence how our knowledge is obtained, if it is only rendered infallibly certain. There are many things concerning which we could not acquire a

greater degree of assurance than we already possess, by inspiration of any kind: and such knowledge acquired by the exercise of reason or intuition, is not the less valuable because it has been obtained in a natural way. Indeed, these natural faculties, by which we are so constituted as to be capable of certain knowledge of the first principles of truth, are the gift of God at much as any inspiration can be: and the clear intuitive knowledge which we possess of certain truths, may be considered as a sort of permanent inspiration. Suppose a man by a constant plenary inspiration to be made absolutely sure of the truth of certain propositions, so that he could not entertain any doubt respecting them, in what respect would there be any difference between this and the intuitive perception of self-evident principles, which every rational man by nature possesses? There would then be nothing gained by the inspiration of direct suggestion, in regard to our knowledge of those things of which we already possess intuitive certainty. It is also evident that in relation to all our knowledge acquired by experience or testimony, we only need such an influence as will enable us to communicate what ought to be recorded for the benefit of the church, and to do this without error, either as to matter or manner.

Some, who do not deny the inspiration of the sacred writers, in general, have thought it necessary to make concessions on this subject which are not called for from the nature of the case, and have thus involved the cause which they defend in real difficulties. They have granted that, while, in all matters of real importance, the penmen of the Scriptures were guided by a plenary inspiration, they were left to their own unassisted powers in trivial matters, and the relation of unimportant circumstances; and in such matters have, therefore, fallen into mistakes in regard to trivial circumstances. No evil or inconvenience would result from this hypothesis, if the line could be definitely drawn between the parts of the book written by inspiration and those in which the writers were left to themselves. But as no human wisdom is sufficient to draw this line, the effect of this opinion is to introduce uncertainty and doubt in a matter concerning which assurance is of the utmost importance. And it is in itself an improbable supposition, that the Spirit of God should infallibly guide a writer in some parts of his discourse, and forsake him in other parts. If we find a witness mistaken in some particulars, it weakens our confidence in his general testimony. And could it be shown that the evangelists had fallen into palpable mistakes in facts of minor importance, it would be impossible to demonstrate that they wrote any thing by inspiration. The case of Paul is often adduced to prove that a writer who, for the most part, was inspired, may in particular cases be left to follow his own opinions.* If the meaning here ascribed to this apostle, and which is perhaps the most obvious, should be admitted, it would not authorize the opinion which we are now opposing. It would only follow that, in these few excepted cases, Paul was not inspired; which would leave us to enjoy full confidence in what, he says in all other cases, as being spoken by divine inspiration. But it may well be doubted whether this was the true meaning of the apostle. It is much more probable, that all he intended to teach was, that our Lord Jesus Christ had delivered no opinion on the point which he was treating; but that he, by the aid of the Spirit which was in him, expressed an opinion which he evidently intended should be authoritative. And he plainly intimates that he spoke by inspiration, when he says, "And I think also that I have the Spirit of God." The import of this declaration, according to the usage of the New Testament, is, that Paul was persuaded that he was inspired in uttering the sentiments which he did. The words "I think," should not be interpreted as indicating any doubt or uncertainty, for that is not at all the meaning of the original; but as being the expression of the conviction of his own mind. There is, therefore, no need to suppose that Paul intended to intimate that he wrote any thing without the aid of divine

inspiration. It would be strange indeed, if he who was inspired to all other purposes, had been left to himself in this one instance, as this is not to be reckoned among the least important matters which have fallen from his pen. The true definition of inspiration, then, is, such a divine influence upon the minds of the sacred writers as rendered them exempt from error, both in regard to the ideas and words. This is properly called plenary inspiration. Nothing can be conceived more satisfactory. Certainty, infallible certainty, is the utmost that can be desired in any narrative; and if we have this in the sacred Scriptures, there is nothing more to be wished in regard to this matter. That the Scriptures of the Old Testament were appealed to, and constantly spoken of as inspired, and free from error, is capable of the clearest proof. Christ said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." On another occasion, he said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," where it is evidently implied that the Scriptures are an unerring rule. In the same chapter it is recorded, that Jesus confounded the Pharisees by asking them how David could in spirit call Christ Lord, when he was his son. Again, Christ after his resurrection expresses this sentiment in the strongest terms: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you; That all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, on the third day." In the preceding part of the same discourse, this idea is also clearly exhibited: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" So also in the garden of Gethsemane, our Lord addressing Peter said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" The same infallible authority is ascribed to the Old Testament by Christ, in his dispute with the Jews, recorded in the tenth chapter of John. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the scriptures cannot be broken," &c. We have, besides, many passages, in which the evangelists refer to the Holy Scriptures as an infallible standard of truth. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake—Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" "Therefore, they could not believe, because that Esaias saith again—He hath blinded their eyes," &c. "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again, another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they have pierced." The apostles are not less explicit than Christ and the evangelists, in testifying to the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Paul in his second epistle to Timothy put him in mind, that "from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus;" and then adds, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Scriptures, which Timothy knew from his childhood, must have been the books of the Old Testament, for at that time no

others had been written But when Paul goes on to declare, that “all Scripture was given by inspiration of God,” he might have included under this general expression, all the books of the New Testament which had been published before his second imprisonment at Rome; and this would probably comprehend the first three Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and all his own epistles; for this seems to have been the last of Paul’s writings; as he says in it, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” That the writings of Paul were by the Church reckoned among the sacred Scriptures, we learn from the second epistle of Peter, which was probably written about this time or a little before. His words are remarkable, as containing the only clear testimony on record of one apostle to the writings of another. “Account,” says he, “that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned and unstable pervert, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” Hence it would appear, that Paul’s epistles were now well known, and were reckoned among the other Scriptures, by the apostle Peter. Certainly then Paul himself might have included them, as well as the other published books of the New Testament, under the phrase “all Scripture;” and if so, this passage will contain a strong testimony to the inspiration of the whole of the Old Testament, and a large part of the New Testament. And admitting the facts of Paul’s miraculous conversion, divine mission as an apostle, and endowment with the gift of tongues, of healing, of prophecy, &c., we cannot deny that he is a witness, in this case, on whom we may repose the most perfect confidence. The apostle Peter has also given the most unequivocal testimony to the inspiration of the Old Testament prophets. He had been speaking concerning the wonderful scene of which he was a witness on the mount of transfiguration, whereupon he goes on to say: “We have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” There is another testimony of this apostle in his first epistle; in which he clearly speaks of the inspiration of the prophets. “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it certified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” That the Scriptures of the Old Testament were continually recognized by the apostles as given by inspiration of God, is so evident from every mention of them, that it may seem to be a waste of time to adduce the testimonies; but the subject is exceedingly important, and we cannot too frequently have these evidences set before our eyes. In the epistle to the Hebrews, there are many clear testimonies, some of which I will bring forward. In the very first sentence it is said, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” Whatever is spoken by the prophets is represented throughout this book as spoken by God himself. Thus in the same chapter it is declared. “And when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels, he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits. But to the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” Now

all these passages, where God is said to speak, are quotations from the Psalms. Certainly then we may conclude, that whatever is spoken in this book of Psalms is from the inspiration of God. The same is the fact, in the next chapter, where a large part of the eighth Psalm is quoted and applied to Christ. So also the Captain of our salvation is represented as saying certain things, which are found written in the Old Testament: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren:"—"And again, I will put my trust in him." In the third chapter of this epistle we have a quotation from the Psalms in the following remarkable words, "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts." And in the fourth chapter the same style is used as before. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day in this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." And in the fifth: "But he said unto him, Thou art my Son; to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." And God is represented as the speaker, not only in what is written in the Psalms, but in the prophets also. In the eighth chapter we have a long quotation from Jeremiah, which is declared to be the word of the Lord. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord," &c. One more testimony from this book shall suffice. In the tenth chapter, it is said, "Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness unto us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord," &c. In short, as the writers of the Old Testament declared themselves to speak what they received from the Lord, so the whole of the Scriptures are continually referred to, and recognized as given by inspiration; that it would be difficult to find a single passage, in which these Scriptures are mentioned, where this idea is not expressed or clearly implied. And it will be shown hereafter, that the writers of the New Testament claim inspiration for themselves.

CHAPTER XV("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \ "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

If, as has been shown, the Old Testament was written by inspiration, and if the New Testament contains a revelation from God not less important, and is in fact the completion of the Old, can we believe that while prophets were inspired to write the former, the latter was left to be marred and obscured by the weaknesses of uninspired men? To accomplish the purpose intended by revelation, it seems necessary that the writers who communicate it to posterity should be guided by inspiration. The end of revelation is to convey to men a certain knowledge of truth, to guide their faith and practice. But if the book which contains such a revelation is composed by erring, fallible men, we never can be sure, in any particular case, that we are in possession of the truth revealed. The men may be honest and faithful, but we know that all men are liable to errors and mistakes; and all men are more or less under the influence of prejudices and prepossessions. It is evident, therefore, that the purpose of giving a revelation would be in a great measure defeated, unless inspired men were employed to make the record by which it is to be transmitted to the various nations of the earth and to posterity.

Again, when we carefully consider the subject matter of the books of the New Testament, we cannot repose implicit confidence in what is taught, unless we have evidence that the pens of the writers were under the guidance of inspiration. To record the discourses which a man hears, and transactions which he sees, seems, at first sight, to require nothing more than veracity, and integrity in the historian. This might to a certain extent be admitted, if the witness instantly noted down what he heard or saw; but who can believe that after the lapse of eight, fifteen, or fifty years,

the evangelists would be able to record with perfect accuracy, long discourses of their Master, and to relate correctly all the circumstances of the miracles of which they have given an account? It may be said, indeed, that they could give substantially the facts of which they were witnesses; but this is far from being satisfactory. Such a record would lose a portion of that reverence which it ought to possess, in order to give it a commanding authority over the conscience, and make it a solid foundation for unshaken confidence. In regard to the mysterious and sublime doctrines which the apostles teach in their epistles, if once we admit the idea that they were fallible men, we shall continually be liable to doubt: we shall be afraid they have misapprehended, or forgotten what they had heard; or, that, under the bias of prejudice or inclination, they may have been led insensibly to give a distorted view of the truths which they inculcate. But we are not left to conclude from the necessity of the case merely, that the writers of the New Testament were inspired by the Holy Ghost. We have clear and abundant proof that our blessed Lord promised infallible guidance to his disciples whom he chose to be his witnesses to the world; and to whom he committed the propagation of his religion through all nations and all ages. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." And that the Holy Spirit here promised was to guide the apostles in delivering their testimony, may be inferred from what is said in the fifteenth chapter of John: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." The promise of plenary inspiration is, however, more explicitly given in the sixteenth chapter. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." Christ also promised the inspiration of immediate suggestion to his disciples, when called to answer before kings and rulers, and commanded them not to premeditate what they should say, for it would be given to them at the moment what they ought to say. "For," said he, "it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost who speaketh in you." Now we may argue with irresistible force, that if plenary inspiration was granted to the apostles to enable them to make a proper defence when arraigned at a human tribunal, surely they would not be abandoned to their own weakness when preparing a record of Christ's words and actions, which was through all ages to be the guide of his Church. If the apostles were ever inspired, we may be sure that it was when directed to finish and record the testimony of God. The very idea that every book of the Old Testament was given by inspiration, but that the whole of the New was composed without this aid, is revolting to the reason of man. And this will appear the more unreasonable, when we consider, that the light of the new dispensation is seven-fold clearer than that of the old. The very forerunner of Christ was superior to all the prophets that preceded him, but the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. Then certainly, if all the prophets only spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the apostles who were the chosen witnesses of Christ and chief officers of his kingdom, were not left without this infallible guidance, when engaged in performing the most important part of the responsible duty assigned them; when executing that part of their commission which was most effectual in extending and perpetuating his spiritual kingdom. Accordingly, the apostles claim to be inspired men, and speak with an authority

which would be arrogant, if they had not written under an infallible guidance. They do not merely express their own private opinions, and endeavour to support them by argument; they speak as men assured of the truth of what they deliver, and decide with authority and without hesitation, questions, which none but men inspired by the Holy Spirit could undertake thus positively to determine, without exposing themselves to the charge of dogmatism and self-sufficiency.

Besides, some parts of the New Testament, like much of the Old, are prophetic, and if true, could be written in no other way than by inspiration. The Apocalypse or Revelation given to John, is either a mere enthusiastic fable, or it was written by inspiration; and such is the majesty of the ideas here presented, and the awful sublimity of the style, that even Dr. Priestley was constrained to acknowledge that it bore on its face marks of a superhuman origin. If we had time to compare the prophetic representations of this singular book with authentic history, there would arise an evidence of its inspiration which could not be easily contradicted. Such men as Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. S. Clarke, Bishop Hurd, Bishop Newton, and a multitude of others, have seen in this book the most convincing proof of divine inspiration. The same may be said of all the prophecies of the Old and New Testament. If there is any truth whatever in them, they must be inspired; for none but inspired men can foretell future contingent events. Indeed, in the cases where Moses and others declare that God spoke to them, and communicated instructions or laws, they must be considered as divinely directed, unless we deny their veracity. But we are now reasoning on the hypothesis, that the books are authentic and written by men of truth and honesty. The style of the evangelists has often been adduced as an evidence of their inspiration: not that they write with an elegance and sublimity which cannot be imitated; but because they write as persons divested of the feelings which commonly belong to men. They write with an unaffected simplicity, and with an impartial, dispassionate regard to truth, which has no parallel, and has never been successfully imitated. How could illiterate men produce such works as the gospels without inspiration? Select a thousand sensible men, but unaccustomed to composition, and set them to write a simple history of the most remarkable transactions with which they have been conversant, and there will not be in any one of them an approximation to the characteristic manner of the evangelists. Others, and men possessed of more learning than the apostles, have undertaken, without inspiration, to write gospels, as if composed by some one or other of those holy men; but you cannot place the evidence of the inspiration of the genuine gospels in a stronger light than by contrasting them with any or all the apocryphal writings under the names of the apostles. But we are in danger here of repeating what has already been said under the head of the internal Evidences of Christianity. The truth is, that the whole of the arguments from this source, for divine revelation, are directly in point to prove the doctrine of inspiration; and therefore, instead of going over the ground the second time, I would refer to what has been said on the subject of internal evidence.

Miracles also furnish the most conclusive proof of inspiration, where it can be ascertained that the writer of any book of Scripture possessed the power of performing such works; for the very end for which miracles were exhibited, was, to prove that the person speaking was sent from God to deliver some message. As Nicodemus properly said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles which thou doest, unless God be with him." If miracles are sufficient to prove the truth of an oral communication, will they not also be equally conclusive in favour of a written declaration? If there be any difference, it is in favour of the latter, because it is much more important that a written discourse intended for the instruction of all ages should be well

attested, than a discourse from the lips, which is heard by few, and can never be recovered after it has been spoken. In the whole of what has been said on the subject of inspiration, the truth of the facts recorded in the New Testament has been taken for granted; and also, that the Scriptures contain a divine revelation. We are not arguing with infidels, but with those who, while they acknowledge the divine origin of the Christian religion, doubt, or deny that the persons who wrote the books of the Old and New Testament were guided by a plenary inspiration. Now, as these persons admit that the apostles and evangelists were men of veracity and integrity, their testimony on this subject ought to be decisive. If they claim inspiration, we cannot deny it to them, without invalidating all the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity. Why were they endowed with the power of working miracles, but that full credence might be given to what they testified? And when they declare that they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that what they delivered was not the word of men, but the word of God received by divine revelation, do not these miraculous powers which they possessed, as fully confirm what they wrote as what they spoke?

Having before shown that the apostles furnish ample testimony to the inspiration of the Old Testament, we shall now adduce a few texts to prove that they claimed inspiration for themselves. Their message is every where called, the word of God. Paul declares, that what he preached, he received not from man but "from the revelation of Jesus Christ;" that the things which he wrote were "the commandments of the Lord;" and that the things which he and his brethren taught, "God had revealed to them by his Spirit." He therefore declared, that he who despised the things which he taught, despised not men but God. Peter ranks the commandments delivered by the apostles with the words of the holy Prophets; and as has been before remarked, reckons the epistles of Paul with the other Scriptures. John says, "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." The only thing wanting to complete the evidence of the inspiration of the New Testament, and consequently that of the Old, is to show that these writings were received unanimously by the Christian Church as inspired writings. But although there exists abundant evidence of this fact, to pursue it would lead us too much into detail, and would not comport with the studied brevity of this work. And I am the less inclined to enter on the labour of collecting this testimony here, because this will be done in a subsequent part of the work. I may say, however, that in the early ages of the Church, no Christian ever called in question the inspiration of the sacred volume; but all held this as a fundamental point in their religion. It was left for those who chose to style themselves rationalists, in modern times, to admit the authenticity of the facts recorded in the Bible, while they utterly deny the plenary inspiration of the writers. But this is ground on which no consistent reasoner can long stand. If the miracles and prophecies of the Scriptures be acknowledged, and the divine origin of Christianity admitted, the inspiration of the writers of these books must follow as a corollary. It cannot be denied without the greatest inconsistency. And on the other hand, if inspiration be denied, the authenticity of the miracles and prophecies will soon be abandoned. The course of theological opinion among the neologists of Germany, for a number of years past, furnishes a striking illustration of the truth of the aforesaid observations. For a time the assault, in that country, was merely upon the doctrine of inspiration; but no sooner was that ground conceded than the critics directed their artillery against the authenticity of the miraculous facts and prophecies.

There is no end to the objections which may be started against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, just as is the fact in regard to the visible universe as the work of God; and it cannot be denied that there is a striking analogy between the mode of reasoning pursued by atheists and deists. But the foundation of all their arguments is human ignorance. They cannot form the conception of a creation by a being of almighty power and infinite wisdom, and of a supernatural revelation from such a being, which would not be liable to as great and much greater objections, than they are able to bring forward against his works and word, as they do actually exist. If such men could be induced in a calm and unprejudiced manner to examine this subject, I would recommend to them a careful perusal of Butler's Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion; and to the deist I would especially recommend the seventh chapter of the second part, where the author, in a manner peculiar to himself, makes first some observations on the particular evidences of Christianity, and then, in the close, exhibits a view of the evidence arising from a general survey of the contents of the Bible. The argument, as presented in this last form, is so original and striking, that I would insert it in this place, were I not afraid of swelling this volume to an inconvenient size. The whole of the second book of the Analogy may be considered as the most satisfactory method of meeting the popular objections to divine revelation. In regard to particular objections, arising from apparent discrepancies, from extraordinary facts, and from mysterious doctrines found in the sacred volume, it will be sufficient to refer the inquisitive reader to the first volume of Horne's Introduction, and to Dick's deservedly popular work on Inspiration, and also to learned commentators, some of whom have taken much pains to reconcile seeming contradictions, and to elucidate obscure passages, by an application of the rules of sacred criticism. I would only further remark in relation to the usual objections to the inspiration of the Scriptures, that they militate as fully against the authenticity of the facts as against the inspiration of the writers, and therefore do not require to be considered and obviated under this head. A summary of the whole evidence for the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is as follows: all the Internal Evidences of Christianity—whether arising from the peculiar excellence of the matter, or the simplicity and sublimity of the style; from the perfection of the character ascribed to Jesus Christ; from the continual recognition of the over-ruling providence of God, from the pure and elevated spirit of devotion which breathes through the sacred pages, from the penetrating and transforming efficacy of the holy Scriptures, and from their adaptation to the constitution of the human mind, and to the existing relations among men go to prove, that they were written under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Again, every prophecy which has been fulfilled, furnishes undoubted and independent evidence of the inspiration of that particular part of the Scriptures; and all the laws which proceeded from the mouth of Jehovah must be considered as infallible precepts, unless we call in question the whole truth of the narrative. The writers, for the most part, were endued with the power of working miracles. These facts, it is admitted, prove that God spake by them: and if the prophets and apostles were inspired in the discourses which they delivered, then, a fortiori, they must have been inspired in preparing those writings which were intended to guide the faith and practice of believers through all ages.

Moreover, the sacred writers generally lay claim to inspiration. They speak authoritatively in the name of the Lord. They call their message, the word of God, and Christ has set his seal to the plenary inspiration of all the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The apostles and evangelists, in the

moat explicit manner, declare the same truth.

Besides, Christ promised plenary inspiration to his disciples, and they professed to be under the guidance of the Spirit in what they wrote. And finally, while some of the apostles were living, their writings were classed with the divine Scriptures, and were universally received as inspired, and as the infallible word of God, by the whole primitive Church.

We cannot but conclude, therefore, that all the books of the Old and New Testament were written by the inspiration of God, and contain an infallible rule to guide the faith and practice of the church to the end of the world.

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE

CHAPTER XVI("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THE TRUE CANON OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Bible includes a large number of separate books, published in different ages, during a space of more than fifteen hundred years. Each of these books, when first published, formed a volume; or at least, the writings of each author were, in the beginning, distinct: and if they had continued in that separate form, and had been transmitted to us in many volumes instead of one, their authority would not on this account have been less, nor their usefulness diminished. Their collection into one volume is merely a matter of convenience; and if any persons choose now to publish these books in a separate form, they cannot with propriety be charged with casting indignity on the word of God.

Hence it appears, that besides general arguments to demonstrate that the Bible contains a divine revelation, there is need of special proofs to evince that each of the books now included in that sacred volume, has a right to the place which it occupies, or does in reality contain a part of that revelation which God has given.

If, therefore, it could be shown (which, however it never can) that some particular book, now included in the Bible, was not authentic, the conclusion thence derived would only affect that single production, unless it were recognized as divine by the writers of the other books. The credit of the whole volume would not be destroyed, even if it could be proved that one half the books of which it consists were spurious. Infidels have much more to effect in overthrowing the Bible, than they commonly suppose. It is incumbent on them to demonstrate, not only that this or that book is false, but that every one of these productions is destitute of evidence that it has been derived from the inspiration of God. On the other hand, it is manifest, that the advocate of divine revelation is bound to defend the claims of every separate portion of this volume, or to reject from it that part which has no evidence of a divine origin. It is necessary that he should be able to render a good reason why he admits any particular book to form a part of the inspired volume.

It is true, that the antiquity of this collection claims for it a high degree of respect: the transmission of this volume to us, through so many centuries, as holy scripture, should teach us to be cautious how we question what is so venerable for its antiquity. But this only furnishes one presumptive argument in favour of each book. It by no means renders all further investigation unnecessary, much less, impious.

It is easy to conceive that books not written by the inspiration of God, might, by some casualty or mistake, find a place in the sacred volume. In fact, we have a striking example of this very thing in the Greek and Latin Bibles which are now in use, and held to be sacred by a large majority of those who are denominated Christians. These Bibles, besides the books which have evidence of being truly inspired, contain a number of other books, the claim of which to inspiration cannot be sustained by solid and satisfactory reasons. This inquiry, therefore, is far from being one of mere curiosity: it is in the highest degree practical, and concerns the conscience of every man capable of making the investigation. We agree, in the general, that the Bible is the word of God, and an authoritative rule; but the momentous question immediately presents itself, what belongs to the Bible? Of what books does this sacred volume consist? And it will not answer, to resolve to take it as it has come down to us, without further inquiry; for the Bible has come down to us in several different forms. The Vulgate Latin Bible, which alone was in use for hundreds of years before the era of the Reformation, and also the Greek version of the Old Testament, contain many books not in the copies of the Hebrew Scriptures. Now, to determine which of these contains the whole of the inspired books given to the Jews before the advent of Christ, and no more, requires research and accurate examination. The inquiry, therefore, is not optional, but forces itself upon every conscientious man; for as no one is at liberty to reject from the sacred volume one sentence, much less a whole book of the revelation of God, so no one has a right to add any thing to the word of God: and of consequence, no one may receive as divine, what others have without authority added to the holy scriptures. Every man, therefore, according to his opportunity and capacity, is under a moral obligation to use his best endeavours to ascertain what books do really and of right belong to the Bible. An error here, on either side, is dangerous, for, on the one hand, if we reject a part of divine revelation, we dishonour God, and deprive ourselves of the benefit which might be derived from that portion of divine truth; and, on the other hand, we are guilty of an equal offence, and may suffer an equal injury, by adding spurious productions to the Holy Scriptures; for thus we adulterate and poison the fountain of life, and subject our consciences to the authority of mere men.

I think, therefore, that the importance and necessity of this inquiry must be evident to every person of serious reflection. But to some it may appear that this matter has been long ago settled on the firmest principles; and that it can answer no good purpose to agitate questions which have a tendency to produce doubts and misgivings in the minds of common Christians, rather than a confirmation of their faith. In reply to the first part of this objection, I would say, that it is freely admitted that this subject has been ably and fully discussed long ago, and in almost every age until the present time; and the author aims at nothing more, in this short treatise, than to exhibit to the sincere inquirer who may not enjoy better means of information, the substance of those discussions and proofs, which ought to be in the possession of every Christian. His object is, not to bring forth any thing new, but to collect, and condense in a narrow space, what has been written by the judicious and the learned, on this important subject. But, that discussion tends to induce doubting, is a sentiment unworthy of Christians who maintain that their religion is founded on the best reasons, and who are commanded to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in them. That faith which is weakened by discussion is mere prejudice, not true faith. They who receive the most important articles of their religion upon trust from human authority, are continually liable to be thrown into doubt; and the only method of obviating this evil, is to dig deep and lay our foundation upon a rock. If this objection had any weight, it would discourage all attempts to establish the truth

of our holy religion by argument; and would also damp the spirit of free inquiry on every important subject. It is true, however, that the first effect of free discussion may be, to shake that easy confidence which most men entertain, that all their opinions are correct; but the beneficial result will be, that instead of a persuasion, having no other foundation than prejudice, it will generate a faith resting on the firm basis of evidence. The word Canon is derived from a Greek word which literally signifies a rule, and is several times used in the New Testament, as in Galatians 6:6. Php_3:16. And as the inspired books are the authoritative rule to regulate our faith and practice, the early fathers gave to them this name; all such books were called canonical; and thus they have been denominated ever since. Thus Irenæus speaks of the Holy Scriptures as the canon of truth; Clement of Alexandria employs the appellation of the true evangelical canon; Eusebius calls the Scriptures the ecclesiastical canon, and Athanasius speaks of the three sorts of books; 1. The canonical; 2. Such as might be read; And 3. The apocryphal. The council of Laodicea ordained, that none but canonical books should be read in the Church, that is, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. In the same language are the inspired books described by the other fathers and councils. In treating this subject, it will be necessary to inquire into the claims which every book now received by Jews or Christians, Romanists or Protestants, has to a place in the canon. Where there is a universal agreement among all who receive the Scriptures, little need be said; but in regard to disputed points, it will be necessary to be more particular.

CHAPTER XVII("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE CARE WITH WHICH THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE PRESERVED—THEIR CANONICAL AUTHORITY—THE SANCTION GIVEN TO THESE BOOKS BY THE SAVIOUR AND HIS APOSTLES—AND THE METHOD OF ASCERTAINING WHAT BOOKS WERE IN THE CANON AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S ADVENT

It would be reasonable to conclude, even if nothing had been said, that a book written by divine inspiration would, by all pious persons, be carefully preserved. But we are expressly informed, that when Moses had finished writing the law, he "commanded the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."*

Here, in the most sacred part of the sanctuary, the Pentateuch was preserved as a sacred deposite. On one occasion, indeed, it seems to have been displaced, and its integrity endangered, when in the reigns of Manasseh and Anion idolatry so prevailed, that the true worship of God was suspended. During this period of darkness, the law was cast out among the rubbish, where it was found in the reign of the pious Josiah.† But while the autograph of Moses was laid up by the side of the ark, we are not to suppose that there were no authentic copies of this sacred book among the people. Josephus relates, that every tribe, by the command of Moses, was furnished with a copy. And as it contained the liturgy for the public worship of God, the rites of which were very numerous, and the regulations very minute, the priests and Levites must have been supplied with copies, to enable them rightly to conduct the public service. This book also contained the law of the land, and prescribed the duties of kings and rulers; on which account it was expressly commanded, that when there should be a king, "He shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites."‡

It would, however, be unreasonable to expect that the autograph of Moses could last until this period of the world. What became of it is not known. The probability is, that it perished with the ark, in the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. And this fact probably occasioned the tradition which was prevalent among the Jews, that the sacred Scriptures were utterly lost in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; and that they were restored by Ezra, by divine inspiration. Now it is probable that the autographs were lost, and that Ezra the scribe, who was an inspired man, collected the scattered copies of the sacred books, corrected their errors, and thus restored the Scriptures to their original integrity. On account of this important and pious labour, the constitution of the canon of the Old Testament is by the Jews ascribed to Ezra; and they join with him, as assistants, "the men of the great synagogue," some of whom were prophets, by whose and the sacred volume was prepared, and copies circulated among the people. In such a work, he would need many coadjutors; and no more holy or important work could have occupied the time and attention of inspired men. It is reasonable to believe, therefore, that all who were qualified to render effectual aid in this service, would be ready to assist Ezra in correcting and preparing the Holy Scriptures, for general use. That all the copies of the law were not lost, is as evident as any thing can be; for Daniel in the captivity had possession of the prophecies of Jeremiah. And Ezra himself was a "ready scribe in the law;" and in the sixth chapter of Ezra we read, that the functions of the priests were regulated after the second temple was finished, "as it is written in the book of Moses;" and this was many years before Ezra came to Jerusalem. And in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah it is said, that Ezra "brought the law before the congregation, and read therein from morning until mid-day." In regard to the other books, little is said. We read, however, that the writings of Joshua were annexed to the law, and of course deposited with it by the side of the ark; and we may take it for granted, as a matter of course, than when any prophet or inspired man had finished a writing intended for general use, it was added to the volume of the law, and preserved with it.

How carefully the writings of Moses were read and accurately remembered, appears from the frequent reference made to the facts there recorded by the writers who came after Moses; especially, by the holy men who composed the book of Psalms. And that this knowledge was commonly possessed by men not inspired, will appear from the full and accurate recapitulation of the history recorded in the law, in the complete and eloquent answer given by Jephthah to the king of the Ammonites.* The writings of the prophets also abound in references to facts recorded in the law of Moses. On what material the Scriptures were written, in what character or alphabet, whether bound up in a single volume or in several; whether preserved in rolls, as in the synagogues now, or in the common form of our books, are inquiries which are worthy the attention of the biblical student, but no way necessary to our purpose, at present. That which is of the utmost importance is, to know that the Lord Jesus Christ and his inspired apostles, gave their unqualified sanction to the Scriptures which were in use and read in the synagogues, in their time. Christ severely censures the Scribes and Pharisees and Lawyers for neglecting to obey the Scriptures, and for misrepresenting them and rendering the law of God void by their vain traditions: but he never hints that they had corrupted the sacred text. On the contrary, he refers to the Scriptures, then extant among the Jews, as an infallible standard. "Search the Scriptures," said he; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."† Again, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures."‡ He proves his doctrine by the Scriptures, "which cannot be broken,"§ and it is asserted repeatedly, that certain things came to pass, "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." Yea,

Christ himself declares “they must be fulfilled.” And Paul says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration God.”** They are also by this apostle called “the oracles of God,* the word of God.”† And Peter says, “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”‡ And James speaks of the Scriptures with equal confidence and respect “And receive with meekness,” says he, “the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls”§—“And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith,” &c.

Thus it appears, that we have the best possible evidence that the scriptures which were in use when Christ was upon earth, were entire and uncorrupted, and were an infallible rule; and that men erred from not knowing or understanding them. Whether these scriptures were included in one book or in several, is of no consequence. In one place, our Lord refers to the Scriptures of the Old Testament under the name of Moses and the Prophets. They seem, however, to have been divided into three parts, called by our Saviour, “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”** This exactly corresponds with the ancient division of the Jews, into the Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa, which is mentioned by Josephus. But whether there were three separate volumes, or only one, is a matter of no manner of consequence, any more than it is now, whether the canonical Scriptures are included in one or two volumes. The only difficulty which remains is, to ascertain what books were actually extant, at that time, under the name of scriptures. If we can settle this point satisfactorily, the proof of the canon of the Old Testament will be complete. In the first place, then, it may be observed, that the most important parts of the Old Testament are expressly quoted. We have seen that our Lord mentions the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms; and several of the prophets are named, and citations are made from others. Now, as far as this evidence goes, it is complete; but it must be acknowledged, that several books now in the canon of the Old Testament, are not named nor quoted. In regard to these we must resort to other evidence. The next proof is derived from the copies of the Hebrew Bible in the hands of the Jews. If our canon is not the same as the one in use in the time of Christ, the alteration must have been made by the Christians, either by adding or taking away some books. But if this had been done, the fraud could easily have been detected by referring to the Jewish Scriptures; for no one can suppose that they would join in collusion with Christians, to mar or adulterate their own sacred volume. Such has been the hostility between the Jews and Christians from the beginning, that they have been mutually safeguards of the inspired books, to preserve them from alteration by one party or the other. All that is necessary, therefore, is to compare our copies of the Hebrew Scriptures with those found among the Jews. The result of this comparison is, that in regard to this point, there is a perfect agreement between the Jews and Protestant Christians. We claim a place for no book in the canon which they do not acknowledge to be inspired; and they bring no accusation against Protestants for having mutilated the sacred volume by abstracting from it any book or chapter. But again, we are able to approach very near to direct and full proof of the point in hand, from a most unsuspected quarter. Josephus, who was contemporary with the apostle Paul, and himself not only a learned man, but a priest, has left on record a testimony which every impartial man will consider satisfactory. “We have,” says he, “only two and twenty books which are to be believed as of divine authority. Of which, five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the prophets, who were the successors of Moses, have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and instructions of life for the use of men.” Here the number and the description of the books, considered of divine authority, furnish satisfactory testimony, that the canon of the Jews in the time

of our Saviour corresponds entirely with ours. At first view it might seem, that we had many more than two and twenty books in the volume of the Old Testament; but this difficulty will be easily removed, when it is considered, that the Jews always reckoned the twelve minor prophets as one book; and the book of Ruth they considered an appendage to Judges, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah an appendage to his prophecy. Thus the number will be reduced exactly to twenty-two.

We have, besides, the direct testimony of early Christian writers. Melito, bishop of Sardis, who lived in the second century, took the trouble of making a journey into Judea, to inquire into this matter; and although his own work has not come down to us, Eusebius has preserved his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament: from which it appears that the sacred canon contained then the very same books which are now included in it. To Melito we may add the testimony of Origen, who spent much of his time in a place near to Judea, and who was skilled in the Hebrew tongue. This learned man has left a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, which perfectly corresponds with our canon, except that he has omitted the twelve minor prophets; which book, however, he recognizes in other places as a part of the sacred volume.

Besides having catalogues by many other of the fathers, we have the testimony of two councils; that of Laodicea, and of Carthage; both of which made out catalogues of the books of the Old Testament. which are in perfect accordance with the canon as now constituted.

If other proof were needed, it might be found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, as far as the law is concerned; and in the Septuagint version, which contains all the books which are now in the Old Testament, in the Hebrew Bibles. This version was made nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ, and had long been in general and familiar use, even in the land of Judea. It is true, that this version, as it has come down to us, while it comprehends all the books now in the canon, includes what is called the apocrypha; therefore, while it furnishes full proof that nothing has been taken away, we cannot refer to it for proof that nothing has been added. But the inquiry respecting the apocryphal books, which claim a place in the canon, will be taken up in the next chapter.

Further proof of the canon of the Old Testament might be derived from the early versions made soon after the commencement of the Christian era; particularly the Syriac, and Latin Vulgate; as also from the quotations of the early Christian writers; from the Targums, which contain a paraphrase of all the books of the Old Testament in Chaldee. And abundant evidence of the same thing might be drawn from the Talmud, which contains the oral law of the Jews. But as what has already been adduced is sufficient, we deem it unnecessary to multiply proofs in a matter so evident.

Having shown that our canon of the Old Testament is the same as that which existed in the time of our Saviour, to which he gave his full and emphatic approbation, it follows of course, that none of the books which ever made a part of the sacred volume have been lost. But here we are met with an objection derived from the Old Testament itself, where several books are spoken of and referred to, which cannot now be found. For example, it is said of Solomon, "that he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of the trees, from the cedar in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of the fishes."*

We read also of “the book of Samuel the seer,” and “the book of Nathan the prophet;” and “the book of Gad the seer.”* Mention is also made of the book of “Jasher;” and of the book of “the wars of the Lord,” &c.† In answer to this objection it will be sufficient to remark, that there is no evidence that these compositions of Solomon were ever written, as the text only says, that he spake these things; but supposing them to have been written, there is no evidence that they were ever intended to be a part of the sacred canon; or that these compositions were inspired: for it is not necessary to suppose that either prophets or apostles had inspiration to direct them in all matters of common life, or in writing on subjects of natural science. But in regard to the books of certain prophets and seers, it is highly probable, that those men assisted in writing the historical books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. And as to the book of Jasher, and the book of the wars of the Lord, too little is known about them to authorize us to think that they formed a part of the ancient canon; unless we adopt the opinion, that we still possess them under other names. Here it may with propriety be observed, that the Hebrew word for book, is used to signify any list or genealogy; and, accordingly, it is the opinion of judicious commentators, that the “book of the wars of the Lord,” was nothing but a muster-roll of the army. And the book of “Jasher” (rectitude) may have been a compend of moral rules derived from the Scriptures; or a manual (not inspired,) composed by the wise for the conduct of life. The mere mention of a book, or citation of a sentence from it, by no means gives it a place in the canon.

There is no probability that any of the canonical books could have been lost from the Old Testament, when we consider with what religious, and even superstitious care, they have been kept and transcribed by the Jewish scribes. The Rabbis among the Jews view this matter as we do: they never complain, nor even hint, that the sacred volume had been mutilated. And the unqualified testimony in favour of the Old Testament scriptures by Christ and his apostles, already referred to, ought to be decisive on this point, if all other evidence was wanting.

CHAPTER XVIII(“tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0” \l “Evidences_CONTENTS-”)

THE BOOKS DENOMINATED APOCRYPHAL HAVE NO JUST CLAIM TO A PLACE AMONG THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The word Apocrypha probably signifies that which is hidden, obscure, without authority. It is employed to designate such writings as claim a place in the canon, without possessing sufficient evidence to substantiate their claims. This word is said to have been first used by Melito, bishop of Sardis, in the second century. The subject acquires great importance from the fact, that it was formerly and is now a matter of earnest controversy, between Romanists and Protestants, whether certain books which are frequently included in Greek and Latin copies of the Bible, are canonical, or should be considered apocryphal. The number of books in dispute is six, namely, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and the two books of Maccabees; and also, some additional chapters annexed to the book of Esther, which are not in the Hebrew; and to the book of Daniel, the History of Susannah, and the Song of the Three Children are prefixed, and the History of Bel and the Dragon is annexed. These books, and portions of books, are likewise placed at the end of the Old Testament, in our larger English Bibles, under the name apocrypha. The council of Trent, which sat in the sixteenth century, have given a catalogue of the canonical books of Scripture, in which those above mentioned are included; and they are inserted promiscuously with the other books, in the editions of the Latin Vulgate, and in all other versions prepared by members of the

Roman Catholic Church. They consider all copies of the Bible imperfect and mutilated, in which these books are not found; and this has created a great obstacle to the circulation of the Scriptures among the people of that persuasion, as Protestant Bible societies have come to a resolution not to circulate Bibles which contain those books which they deem apocryphal. To show that these books are not canonical, but apocryphal, the following arguments are deemed sufficient.

1. These books are not found in the Hebrew Bible; nor are they written in the Hebrew tongue, but in the Greek or Chaldaic. For the proof of this fact we have the testimony of Jerome, a competent witness, who translated several of them into Latin. There is strong reason to believe, that all these books were composed originally in the Greek language, which was unknown to the Jews until after the canon of the Old Testament was closed. It has been always the current opinion, both among Jews and Christians, that Malachi was the last of the Old Testament writers; and books written by uncertain authors after the spirit of prophecy had ceased, have no just claim to a place in the sacred canon. The date of the composition of these books cannot be accurately fixed; but that it occurred long after the time of Ezra and Malachi, there can be no ground of reasonable doubt.

2. A second argument is, that these disputed books have never been acknowledged by the Jews to be of divine authority, nor have by them been admitted into the canon; and they are the best judges of what books properly belonged to their sacred Scriptures. If these books had been of divine authority, the fact would have been known to the Jewish Church, to which "the oracles of God were committed." And if they had ever belonged to the canon, they would not have been left out afterwards. The opinion of the ancient and modern Jews on this point is the same; and there is among them no diversity of opinion respecting this matter. Josephus, in a passage already quoted, declares, "that no more than twenty-two books were received as inspired by his nation." And although Philo Judæus refers often to the Old Testament, and comments largely on its contents in his writings, he never makes the least mention of any one of these books. But if the ancient Jews knew any thing of these books as a part of their sacred canon, we should certainly find it in the voluminous writings of the Talmud; but not one of these books is recognized as canonical in this great body of Jewish traditions. It may certainly be inferred, therefore, that they were not considered canonical by the ancient Jews. And the more modern Jews are so far from acknowledging them, that their testimony is expressly against them. Rabbi Azariah says, "they are received by Christians, not by us." He means Romanists, who acknowledged them as we have seen. And Rabbi Gedaliah, as quoted by Hottinger, has the following testimony. After giving a catalogue of inspired books received by the Jews, he goes on to say, "It is worth while to know, that the nations of the world wrote many other books which are included in their systems of sacred books, but are not in our hands." To which he adds, "They say that some of these are found in the Chaldee, some in the Arabic, and some in the Greek language."

Rabbi Azariah, before mentioned, ascribes the Wisdom of Solomon to Philo. And Rabbi Gedaliah observes, "That if Solomon ever wrote it, it must have been in the Syriac language, to send it to some of the kings in the remotest part of the east." "But," says he, "Ezra only put his hand to such books as were published by the prophets under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and written in the sacred language. And our wise men prudently and deliberately resolved to sanction none but such as were established by him." "Their wise men," says Buxtorf, "pronounced this book to be apocryphal." The book called Ecclesiasticus, is expressly numbered among apocryphal books in the Talmud; where it is said, "In the book of the son of Sirach it is forbidden to read." And

Manasseh ben Israel, one of the most learned of the modern Jews, observes, "that those things which are alleged from a verse in Ecclesiasticus, are nothing to the purpose, because this is an apocryphal book." In the same way, they are wont to speak of all these books; and Jerome informs us, that he heard one of the Jews deriding the history of Susannah, who said it was invented by some Greek, he knew not whom." It is unnecessary to add further testimonies, because the fact that the Jews never did receive the apocrypha as a part of their canon, cannot be denied.

3. The third argument against the canonical authority of the aforementioned books, is, that they are never cited or referred to as a part of sacred Scripture, in the whole of the New Testament. We are aware that on this point we are at issue with the Roman Catholics. They even pretend to prove their right to a place in the canon, from quotations said to be made from them by Paul. One of the passages alleged is, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?"* And the other is, "For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."† But both these passages are taken from the canonical books of the Old Testament; and there is no reason to think that the apostle had any thought of the apocrypha when he cited these texts.

4. The fourth argument against the divine authority of these books is, that they were not received as inspired by the Christian fathers; but were expressly rejected from the sacred canon, almost with one consent, by those who were best qualified to judge of their claims. In all the catalogues drawn up by fathers and councils, for the very purpose of teaching the Church what books should be received as of divine authority, these are uniformly omitted. Justin Martyr, Origen, Athanasius, Hilary, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Epiphanius, and Cyril, together with the councils of Laodicea and Carthage, have left catalogues of the canonical books of the Old Testament, among which, not one of these is to be found. And they almost all number the books agreeably to the Jewish custom, and make the number twenty-two, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew Alphabet. And not only so, but many of these learned fathers make express mention of these books, and explicitly reject them from the sacred canon. This is especially the case in regard to Jerome, who wrote prefaces to most of the books of the Old Testament, and in these he takes occasion to mention those now in question, and declares them all to be apocryphal. And this continued to be the common opinion among the most learned theologians down to the time of the Reformation, as Dr. Cosins has abundantly shown in his "Scholastic History of the Canon of the Old Testament."

5. As the external evidence is unfavourable to the canonical authority of the books in question, so also is the internal evidence.

Books which contain palpable falsehoods; abound in ridiculous and incredible stories; which contradict the plain acknowledged doctrines of the Bible; and which can by no means be reconciled with the recorded history of the Jews, cannot be a part of the sacred volume. And when the books under consideration are tried by these principles, they manifestly appear to be apocryphal. In the book of Tobit an angel of God is made to tell a downright falsehood, by declaring that he was "Azarias the son of Ananias;" and in the same book, he declares, that he was "Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the glory of the Holy One."

Although Judith is celebrated for her devoted piety, and the book under her name was intended to exhibit her as a bright example of a person wholly consecrated to God; yet she is represented as

speaking scarcely any thing else but falsehoods, to Holofernes; but what is still more inconsistent, she is made to pray to the God of truth, "Smite by the deceit of my lips, the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant." She also commends the conduct of Simeon in the cruel slaughter of the Shechemites, of which God has expressed his strong disapprobation in various ways. Besides the objections to the book of Judith, already mentioned, there is another of great weight arising from the difficulty of finding any room for such transactions and such a state of things as are therein described, in any period of the Jewish history; nor is it easy to identify the places mentioned in this book. These difficulties have led some of its advocates to maintain, that the whole is an allegory, and that by bethulia, we should understand the Church of God, and by Nebuchadnezzar, the enemies of the Church; and that the victory achieved by the courage and address of Judith, is intended to teach us, that the church's deliverance is not to be accomplished by human power, &c. This perhaps is as favourable a view as can be taken of this extraordinary story; but no one ought any longer to claim a place for this book in the sacred canon. In the second book of Maccabees, Razis, an elder of Jerusalem, is much commended for destroying his own life, to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies; but surely suicide has not the approbation of God.

Between the two books of Maccabees there are irreconcilable discrepancies; and some statements respecting Jeremiah's taking the ark and the golden altar to mount Pisgah, and hiding them in a cave, are manifestly fabulous. The book of Wisdom is written under the name of Solomon, the son of David, and he talks about his being appointed to build the temple of the Lord; whereas it has been clearly shown by Jerome, that this book never could have been written by Solomon. The absurd story in Tobit, of driving away the devil by the smoke of the liver of a certain fish, and of healing blindness by its gall, could not have been given by divine inspiration.

There are several things in the book of Baruch, not reconcilable with the sacred record: and the account given of Mardocheus, in the chapters annexed to Esther, is not consistent with what is said of Mordecai in the genuine parts of that book; and in this apocryphal writing, Haman is declared to be a Macedonian, whereas in the canonical book of Esther, he is called an Agagite; and he is represented in the former to have entertained a design of transferring the kingdom of Persia to the Macedonians; which is utterly incredible; for at that time the kingdom of Macedon, if it existed, must have been most obscure, and, in all probability, unknown at the Persian court.

6. And finally, these books are not canonical, because they were not written by prophets, or inspired men; but by writers who speak of their labours in a way wholly incompatible with divine inspiration. The uniform belief of Jews and Christians is, that the spirit of prophecy ceased among the Jews after the time of Malachi. He has, therefore, been denominated the seal of the prophets.

We know not the author of the books of Maccabees. Both Jerome and Eusebius ascribe them to Josephus; but they can scarcely be believed to have the same author, as they contradict one another. By one "Compiler of Jewish History," quoted by Drusius, these books are placed after the writings of Josephus. The second book of Maccabees is professedly an abridgment of the work of one Jason of Cyrene, in which, five volumes are reduced to one. If the original work of Jason was not inspired, neither is this abridgment. The book of Wisdom is the only one which claims to have been written by an inspired man. But this very claim condemns it; for it may be demonstrated that it was composed long after the death of king Solomon. It contains manifest allusions to Grecian customs, and to Grecian philosophy. The author praises himself, and flatters the Jewish nation, in

a style entirely foreign to that of the inspired prophets. It has been by some ascribed to Philo Judæus; but it is more probably the work of some other Jew. If Solomon had written it, it would have been in the Hebrew, and always inserted in the Jewish canon. The book of Ecclesiasticus is the most valuable of those denominated apocryphal, and would have the best claim, as far as internal evidence is concerned, to a place in the canon; but the modest writer of this book is so far from pretending to be inspired, that he professes merely to have reduced to order a work of his grandfather, which he received from Sirach his father. And he entreats the reader to peruse his work with indulgence, and to pardon him if he should be found coming short in some words which he attempted to interpret. Evidently the writer was conscious of no divine inspiration. To evade the force of the above arguments, the Roman Catholic writers have invented a distinction between primary and secondary canonical books; but this is a delusive distinction. A book is either inspired, or it is not; it belongs to the canon, or it does not. There is no conceivable medium in this case. There may be an intermediate class of books, between the canonical and spurious; that is, human compositions, which though not inspired, nor claiming a place in the canon, may be read with profit, on account of the history or moral lessons which they contain. Some of the fathers made this distinction, and call these Ecclesiastical, in contradistinction both from the canonical and supposititious. Such books, too, were read in some churches in the early ages, not as of authority, but merely for edification; and thus they became mingled with the canonical books. The Greek fathers were accustomed to use the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and several of these books, now in question, being also in Greek became mixed with the canonical books, in the copies of this version. The oldest Greek MSS. of the LXX. contain them intermingled with the other books, so that they must have become so at an early period. But from the testimonies of the fathers, and the catalogues of canonical books which they have left, these books do not appear to have been included in the sacred volume, in the very earliest ages of the Christian Church. These books, indeed, were known to the fathers; but they are careful to distinguish them from the canonical books. And as some of them even disapproved of their being read, and warned their hearers against them, it cannot reasonably be supposed, that they were then included in the volume of Holy Scripture.

These books, called apocryphal, may be read with profit by the judicious; but they ought by no means to be placed on a level with the oracles of God; nor should they be bound up in the same volume with the canonical books, nor publicly read as a part of Scripture.

CHAPTER XIX(["tw://\[self\]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-"](#))

CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—METHOD OF SETTLING IT—TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH—CONSTITUTION OF THE CANON—WHENCE THESE BOOKS DERIVE THEIR AUTHORITY—SOLICITUDE OF EARLY CHRISTIANS TO OBTAIN THESE BOOKS—THEIR CARE TO DISTINGUISH THEM FROM OTHERS—AUTOGRAPHS, &C.

Three methods of determining what books of the New Testament are canonical, have been adopted by different persons. The first is the authority of the Church, that is, the Church of Rome, which arrogates this authority to herself. The second is internal evidence, which some have deemed sufficient, without the aid of external testimony. The third is to refer to historical testimony, as has been done in regard to the Old Testament. Some distinguished men among the Roman Catholics have asserted, that the Scriptures owe all their authority to the Church; so that if she did

not give her attestation to the gospels, they would have no more authority than Æsop's Fables. But when asked how the Church can establish her authority, they must answer, that it is proved by the testimony of the Scriptures. This is a perfect example of the sophism called "a circle," for they prove the authority of the Scriptures by the Church, and the authority of the Church by the Scriptures. Some Protestants, to avoid having recourse to the testimony of the Church at all, have verged to the other extreme, and have insisted that internal evidence is sufficient to enable us to determine what books belong to the canon. The Reformed Church of France went so far as to make this an article in her public Confession of Faith. Now it ought not to be doubted that the internal evidence of the Scriptures is exceedingly strong; and that when the mind of the reader is truly illuminated by the Spirit of God, it derives from this source the most unwavering and soul-satisfying evidence of their truth and authority; but in regard to particular books, that every sincere Christian should be able to judge by this evidence alone whether they are canonical or not, cannot be admitted. For example, suppose the books of Ecclesiasticus and of Ecclesiastes were put into the hands of any plain, intelligent man, is it probable that he would be able to determine which of them had a right to a place in the canon? To adopt this principle would have a tendency to unsettle the canon, and there would be no certainty as to the rule of our faith. While, therefore, internal evidence ought not to be rejected, but may afford much light as an auxiliary source of evidence, our principal reliance must be upon historical testimony: and it is a matter of thankfulness that this is so complete, as to leave little more to be desired for the satisfaction of every impartial inquirer. The question to be decided is a matter of fact. It is, whether the books which compose the New Testament, were written by inspired men; that is, by the men whose names are affixed to them, the apostles and disciples of our Lord, who were eye-witnesses of the facts which they have recorded. And the proper method of deciding this question, is to inquire whether there was a general agreement among those fathers who lived nearest to the times of the apostles, on this point; for it can scarcely be supposed, that there could be a general error among them in regard to a point of this kind. A general consent of the early fathers, and of the whole Christian Church, scattered all over and beyond the Roman empire, furnishes the best evidence which the nature of the case admits of, and is that species of evidence which is least liable to fallacy. The learned Huet has, therefore, laid it down as a rule on this subject, "that every book is genuine, which was esteemed genuine by those who lived nearest to the time when it was written, and by the ages following, in a continued series." The reasonableness and certainty of this rule will appear more evident, when it is considered, in what high esteem these books were held, with what diligence they were sought after, how constantly they were publicly read, and how soon they were quoted, and translated into other languages. The early Christians were neither careless nor credulous on this subject. They pursued the only certain method of ascertaining the facts in the case. They searched into the records of the Churches, and learned by the testimony of all, what books had been received into the sacred volume, from the times of the apostles; and some of them even travelled into Judea, to learn accurately all that related to the origin and transmission of these sacred writings. The question is often asked, when and by what authority was the canon of the New Testament constituted? It seems to be assumed as true in such inquiries, that these books could not be of authority until sanctioned by some council or other ecclesiastical body; whereas, they were of authority, as far as known, from the day of their publication. Then right to a place in the canon does not depend on the vote of any council, or the decision of any bishop, but upon the fact that they were given by inspiration; and this is known by the character of the men

who wrote them. The appeal to testimony, therefore, is not to obtain the judgment of the Church, that these books were canonical; but to ascertain the fact, that they are indeed the productions of the apostles, to whom our Lord promised plenary inspiration. The Church confers no authority on these books. She merely testifies that they were written by the persons to whom they have been ascribed. And on this point, we seek testimony not only from the fathers of the Church, but from Jews, Heathen, and Heretics. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, Manes and Marcion, are our witnesses, as well as Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius. The boast of the Romanists, therefore, is vain, that we are obliged to depend on the authority of the Church, for our sacred books. We defer nothing to this authority, but merely appeal to men of earning and probity who lived near the times when they were written, for their testimony, as to the source from which they were derived. That these witnesses were members of the Church is a mere incidental circumstance. If they had held no connexion with the Church, their testimony as to the origin of these books would not be invalidated, but rather strengthened; we call in witnesses from without the Church, wherever we can find them, and consider the testimony of such highly valuable, because altogether unsuspected. If by the constitution of the canon, be meant, the collection of the books of the New Testament into one volume, it is a question of no importance; for every one of these books had complete authority before such a volume was formed; and if they had remained separate, and never been included in a single volume, neither their importance nor authority would have been less. Indeed, the testimony of ancient fathers and manuscripts would lead to the conclusion, that in very early times, the books of the New Testament were not included in one, but in two volumes; one of which was denominated gospels; the other apostles.

Whenever all the inspired books were written and published, then was the canon completed, whether any one Church possessed the whole or only a part; whether they were bound in one volume or two, or remained each separate from the rest. The Church or individual, to whom any book was addressed, or for whom it was written, would of course enjoy the privilege of the first possession; but as these books were never locked up, but freely communicated, the nearest Churches would commonly be first supplied with a copy, and thus the sacred books would soon circulate through the whole Church. Every Christian Church would be solicitous to obtain, as soon as possible, an authentic copy of every writing known to be the production of an apostle, or other inspired man. If, for example, they had ever enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of hearing Paul preach, how eager would they be to read his epistles? And if they had never seen this “chief of the apostles,” their desire to see his writings would scarcely have been less.

It may occur to some reader, that the Churches might have been imposed upon by writings, not the genuine productions of the apostles. To guard against every thing of this kind, and to give full assurance of the genuineness of his epistles, Paul was accustomed to commit them to the custody of respectable men, whose names he commonly mentions in the epistle. And although he appears to have employed an amanuensis in writing; yet he made it a point to pen the concluding salutation with his own hand; and this signature must have been well known among all the Churches with which he held correspondence. Accordingly, we read in the epistle to the Romans, “I, Tertius, wrote this epistle.” And in the first to the Corinthians, “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.” In that to the Galatians, “You see how large a letter I have written to you with mine own hand.” To the Colossians, “The salutation by the hand of me Paul.” And to the Thessalonians, “The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write.”

Thus, what at first view appears to be a mere form of salutation, is found to be an important circumstance in giving authenticity to his epistles; so that they could not be successfully counterfeited.

It may be inquired, what has become of the auto graph of these sacred books, and why cannot the very hand-writing of Paul, by which his epistles were authenticated, be now exhibited? The answer is, that no autograph of any book, as old as the New Testament, can be produced; unless it has been preserved in some extraordinary way, as is the fact in regard to numerous manuscripts found in Herculaneum; very few of which however can be read. The autographs of the apostles could not have been preserved to this time without a miracle, and the occasion did not require such an interposition. And primitive Christians, although they appreciated the truths contained in these books above all price, had no great solicitude about the mere ink and paper. A correct copy was as good as the original; and considering the tendency of men to superstition, and how every pretended relic of the apostles is venerated and even worshipped, it seems to have been a wise ordination of Providence, that these autographs should perish.

How long these originals continued in existence, we have no way of certainly knowing, but it is thought by many, that Tertullian refers to them, as extant in his time, where he says, that the authentic letters of the apostles might be seen by any that would take the pains to go to the Churches to which they were addressed. If he had referred to authentic copies, why send the inquirer to the Churches to which these epistles were addressed? Were there not copies to be found every where, in all the Churches, as well as these? And it would be rather wonderful if these autographs were not in existence when Tertullian wrote, who lived less than a hundred years after the last of the apostles: and we have now manuscripts of the New Testament, which cannot be much less than fourteen hundred years old, and are perhaps older. It is, therefore, a most probable supposition, that the Churches referred to had in possession the autographs of Paul, when Tertullian lived and wrote. As there is no dispute among Christians, of any denomination, respecting the books which belong to the canon of the New Testament, it will be unnecessary to go into any discussion respecting the multitude of apocryphal books, which at a certain period, were put into circulation under the names of the apostles or companions of the apostles. Most of these have long since perished; and were, as soon as published, declared to be spurious by the Church, almost with one consent. Such of these spurious Gospels, Acts, Revelations, &c., as have come down to us, prove themselves to be apocryphal; and only serve by contrast, to reflect a brighter light on the genuine Scriptures. The proof of the canonical authority of the books of the New Testament may be derived from the catalogues which have been left by the fathers and councils; from express testimony of competent witnesses; from the fact that they were read as scripture in the primitive Churches; from the quotations made from them, and appeals made to them as an authoritative rule of faith and practice; and from the early versions of the New Testament.

1. Catalogues of these books which are still extant, were made out by Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Philastrius, Jerome, Rufin, Augustin, and by the ancient author who goes under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. To these may be added the catalogues prepared by two councils; that of Laodicea, and that of Carthage. The catalogue found in the book entitled, "Apostolical Constitutions," and ascribed to Clement of Rome, and the catalogue of the council of Nice, are not referred to as testimony, because we are of opinion, that

neither of these is genuine. But we have no need of additional evidence. We have here thirteen catalogues of the books of the New Testament, all of which were prepared by men the most distinguished, and who had bestowed great attention on this subject. Out of these thirteen, seven (a majority of the whole) agree perfectly with our canon; and several of the others differ only by the omission of the book of Revelation, because it was not read in the Churches, and had fallen into some discredit on account of the use made of it by the Millenarians. The catalogue of Origen has an omission of James and Jude, but this was merely accidental, for he mentions both these epistles in his other writings. The catalogues of Jerome, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Augustin and Rufin, who of all others were the most competent judges of this matter, are perfectly the same as our canon. That of the council of Carthage is also the same; and that of the council of Laodicea differs only by the omission of Revelation, the reason of which has already been assigned.

2. These books were constantly read as Scripture in the Churches. The primitive Christians imitated the Jews, in publicly reading the writings which they considered divine in their assemblies. This practice seems to have been introduced as early as the days of Paul, who says to the Colossians, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." (Colossians 4:16.) Indeed, as Paul's epistles were addressed to the people at large, they could in no way be so conveniently communicated to those to whom they were sent, as by the public reading of them, when the Churches assembled on the first day of the week. But we have express testimony on this point. Justin Martyr, who lived in the beginning of the second century, says, "On the day which is called Sunday, there is a meeting of all (Christians) who live either in cities or country places; and the memoirs of the apostles and writings of the prophets are read."* Tertullian is equally explicit; for in giving an account of the meetings of Christians for worship, he says, "They assemble to read the Scriptures and offer up prayers." And in another place, among the solemn exercises of the Lord's day, he mentions "reading the Scriptures, singing psalms, &c."† Cyprian gives a similar testimony,‡ and so does the ancient writer under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, and others. Now nothing can be conceived better calculated to prevent deception by the introduction of apocryphal books, than this practice of the weekly public reading of the Scriptures, for by this means the people would know what books were of authority.

It is true, that the writings of some men who had been the companions of the apostles, were also read in the Churches for the edification of the people; particularly the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and the "Shepherd" of Hermas; but the fathers were careful to distinguish these from the canonical Scriptures. They were accustomed to call such as were written by inspired men canonical, and the writings of other pious men, such as Clement, Barnabas, and Hermas, ecclesiastical.

3. Another evidence in favour of the canonical books is, that they were quoted as books of decisive authority by the doctors of the Christian Church, living in all parts of the world. Now, this can only be accounted for by supposing that they knew no other books which claimed to be canonical; or that they with one consent rejected such claims, and acknowledged the books now included in the sacred volume, as the only writings which were divinely inspired. The conclusion is clear, then, that those books which were alone cited as authority, to decide questions respecting faith or duty, and which were generally appealed to by the early writers of the Christian Church, are canonical. Thus, the first epistle of Peter is universally acknowledged to be the production of

that apostle, and is cited as authority by all the fathers; but other books under the name of Peter, such as his Revelation, his Gospel, and his Acts, are never quoted as Scripture by any of the fathers. This argument is repeatedly used by Eusebius, and other ancient defenders of the canon of the New Testament; and if the premises are true, it is perfectly conclusive.

Those persons, therefore, such as Toland and Dodwell, who have endeavoured to unsettle our present canon, labour with all their might to prove that other books, now considered apocryphal, were as commonly cited by the fathers as those which are now deemed canonical. But learned men have thoroughly examined this subject, and have shown that this is not the fact; as Nye and Richardson, from an examination of all the passages in the fathers where other books are cited, have demonstrated.

4. The early versions of the New Testament furnish an additional argument in favour of the canonical authority of most of the books now admitted into the sacred volume. As long as the gift of tongues remained with the ministers of the Church, the gospel could be preached to all the nations in their own vernacular language; but when miraculous gifts ceased, there was a great necessity that the sacred books should be translated into the languages of those people who did not understand Greek, in which the New Testament was originally written. Therefore learned men early applied themselves to this work; and although we have no exact information of the time when these versions were made, or the persons by whom the work was performed; yet we have good evidence that they were made very early. The Christians of Syria and Mesopotamia, who were accustomed to the use of the Syro-Chaldaic dialect, would not have remained long without a Syriac or Aramean version of the New Testament, and, as many of the learned in these countries were well acquainted with Greek, there exists a strong probability that a version into Syriac must have been at least begun, early in the second century, if not before the close of the first. And the fact, that the Syriac version called Peshito omits some of the books which were for awhile doubted of by some, favours the opinion that this version must have been made at a very early period, and probably in the beginning of the second century. Marcion, the heretic, lived in this century, and was acquainted with the New Testament; there was then a version into Syriac, his own vernacular tongue. Without such a translation, a large number of the primitive churches must have been entirely destitute of the Scriptures. The New Testament was also early translated into Latin, and from the fragments that remain, it appears that there were several versions into this language, which were in use, when the Latin language prevailed; and especially in Italy. One of these is called by Augustine, *Itala*, and was the *vulgate*, before Jerome undertook a translation; but it was not long before versions were made into various other languages, as the Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, &c. Now all these contain all the books which are now included in our canon, except the Syriac, which is probably the oldest of them all. The books omitted in this version are the Revelation, and some of the minor epistles which were not generally known when this version was made. As it relates to all the other books of the New Testament, this version furnishes a satisfactory proof of their canonical authority. J. D. Michaelis is of opinion, that this is the best translation of the New Testament ever made, and that it is referred to by Melito, bishop of Sardis. In the time of Jerome, the Scriptures were read in Syriac in all the Churches in that country, and in Mesopotamia. When the council of Nice met, and other general councils, there was never any dispute among the venerable bishops who attended, about the canon of Scripture. In regard to this there seems to have been a perfect agreement. The only persons who impugned the commonly

received books were heretics; and even from the testimony of these, much evidence may be derived in favour of our canon. The Arians and Pelagians appealed to the same Scriptures as the orthodox Church. It was impossible, after the Church was widely extended, and the New Testament translated into divers tongues, that any book could have been added to the sacred volume, or abstracted from it. Such an attempt, if it could have proved successful in a single Church, never could have prevailed to any extent. Detection of such a fraudulent attempt would have been certain and immediate. We have, therefore, the utmost certainty, that we now possess the identical Scriptures which were given to the Churches by the apostles and other inspired men. The learned John David Michaelis has very needlessly stirred a question concerning the canonical authority of the writings of Mark and Luke, because they only of the writers of the books of the New Testament were not numbered among the apostles. But the ancient Church never entertained any doubt on this subject, and received their gospels with the same confidence and veneration as the others. Indeed, they seem to have esteemed the gospel of Luke just as if it had been dictated by Paul, and that of Mark as if dictated by Peter. And when we look into these gospels, we find no more evidence of human weakness or error, than in those written by Matthew and John. And we feel no hesitation in applying to this case the rule already mentioned, that books universally received as inspired by those who lived nearest to the times when they were published, ought to be considered canonical by us. And according to this rule, these gospels have as good a claim to a place in the canon as any books in the volume.

It will, we presume, be satisfactory to the reader to have some of the testimonies of the Christian fathers in regard to each book, or each class of books set before him. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XX("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

TESTIMONIES IN FAVOUR OF THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Although the precise time when these books were written is unknown, it has generally been believed, that Matthew's gospel is among the earliest. The uniform testimony of the fathers is, that Matthew wrote in Hebrew; that is, in the vernacular language of Judea. To this opinion, modern critics have made serious objections. They allege, that there is no clear evidence of the existence of the Hebrew codex; that the work has no internal evidence of being a translation; and that this opinion tends to destroy our idea of the integrity of the sacred canon; for, according to it, one inspired work which belonged to the canon is lost, and its place supplied by a translation, made nobody knows by whom. For these, and such like reasons, a large number of our ablest critics have declared in favour of a Greek original. But as a mere argument cannot stand against a body of combined testimony, the opinion of a Hebrew original is likely to maintain its ground, especially as numbers among its advocates are men as learned and sagacious as those who appear on the other side. To reconcile these discordant opinions, an ingenious and plausible theory has been invented, which is, that Matthew first prepared his gospel for the Jewish converts; but others who did not understand the Hebrew, naturally wishing for an authentic account of the life of our Lord from the pen of an apostle, prevailed with him before he left Judea, to put it into Greek; or to cause it to be translated under his own eye. The Hebrew copy being only in possession of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, was soon corrupted and finally lost, when no Church of Hebrew Christians any

longer existed. Thus they reconcile the testimony of the ancients with the opinion that the Greek text is truly inspired, and therefore a part of the sacred canon. There is much internal probability in this theory, and all it wants to commend it fully to our acceptance is the want of external testimony. But let us hear what the fathers say respecting Matthew as an Evangelist.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who had seen and conversed with the apostle John, mentions Matthew's gospel, and says, "he wrote the divine oracles in Hebrew."* We learn from this in what esteem the writings of apostles were held in the very earliest times. Matthew's gospel is here denominated the divine oracles, by a man who was contemporary with John, and who, no doubt, spoke the sentiments of the Church, in that day.

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who was acquainted with Polycarp the disciple of John, says, "Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a gospel in their language, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome."† In another place, he says, "The gospel of Matthew was delivered to the Jews."‡ Origen says, "According to the traditions received by me, the first gospel was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards a disciple of Jesus Christ, who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in their own language."§ Origen flourished about a hundred years after the death of John, lived most of his life near to Judea, and was thoroughly versed in biblical learning.

Eusebius may be placed a century after Origen. No man had taken more pains to search into ecclesiastical antiquities. He gives the following testimony, "Matthew having first preached the gospel to the Hebrews, when about to go to other people, delivered to them in their own language, the gospel written by himself."

Thus, in the Synopsis ascribed to Athanasius, it is said, "Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, and published it at Jerusalem."

Cyril of Jerusalem also testifies, "that Matthew wrote in Hebrew." Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen and Ebedjesu, say the same.

Jerome, in his commentary on this gospel, says, "Matthew the publican, surnamed Levi, wrote his gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language."*

Concerning the time when this gospel was published, there are several opinions; some placing it eight years after the ascension of our Lord; others bringing it down to the fifteenth year; and some so low as the year of our Lord sixty-four. While, on the other hand, some late critics carry it up to the third or fourth year after the ascension. The gospel of Mark is also noticed by Papias, in a passage which has been preserved by Eusebius. He says, "that when Peter had come to Rome, they were so inflamed with love for the truths of Christianity, that they entreated Mark the companion of Peter, and whose gospel we now have, praying him that he would write down for them and leave with them an account of the doctrines which had been preached to them; and they did not desist from their request, until they had prevailed on him, and procured his writing that which is now the gospel of Mark. That when Peter came to know this, he was by the direction of the Holy Spirit pleased with the request of the people, and confirmed the gospel which was written for the use of the Churches."† According to this testimony of an apostolical father, the gospel of Mark received the sanction of Peter, and is as apostolic as if this apostle had written it with his own hand. And as it was nothing else than the substance of Peter's preaching, it is all one as if he had dictated it to an amanuensis.

Irenæus, however, states the matter a little differently, in some respects. He says, "After their death (Peter and Paul,) Mark, also the disciple of Peter, delivered to us the things which had been preached by Peter."[‡]

Augustine called Mark "the abridger of Matthew," on account of his relating things so much in the same style as that apostle; but this gospel is not properly an abridgment, for in some things he is more minute, and enlarges more than Matthew; and he has many particulars not recorded by Matthew. The testimony of Clement of Alexandria is much to the same purpose as what has already been stated; which shows that a uniform tradition existed in relation to this matter. He says, "when Peter was publicly preaching the gospel at Rome, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, many of the converts desired Mark, as having been long a companion of Peter, and who well remembered what he preached, to write down his discourses. That upon this he composed his gospel, and gave it to those who made this request, which when Peter knew, he neither encouraged nor obstructed the work."^{*}

Tertullian informs us, "that the gospel published by Mark may be reckoned Peter's, whose interpreter he was."[†] And Origen concurs in the uniform testimony; "Mark," says he, "wrote his gospel according to the dictates of Peter." And Jerome also tells us, "that Mark, the disciple of Peter, wrote a short gospel, from what he had heard from Peter, at the request of the brethren at Rome, which when Peter knew, he approved and published it in our Churches, commanding the reading of it by his own authority,"[‡] which exactly agrees with what was cited from Papias. We see how full are the testimonies in favour of this gospel; and accordingly, we never hear in all antiquity of any doubt or scruple respecting its canonical authority. The only information that can be depended on respecting the time when this gospel was published, is, that in the testimonies cited above, it is said, that it was written after Peter came and preached at Rome; and one witness says, after his death. We have, it is true, something said on this subject by writers who lived in the middle ages, but their testimony is of little worth on such a subject. And one of these writers asserts, that Mark wrote his gospel at Rome, and in the Roman language; for which opinion there is no ancient authority. It was no doubt written, like the other books of the New Testament, in Greek.

Luke the penman of the third gospel, was selected by the Churches to travel with Paul, and was his companion during his confinement at Rome. Concerning this evangelist, Irenæus also speaks in the same passage in which he mentions Mark, saying, "that Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him." In another place, he says, "Luke was not only a companion but a fellow labourer of the apostles, especially of Paul." "The apostles," says he, "envying none, plainly delivered to all, the things which they had heard from the Lord; so likewise Luke, envying no man, has delivered to us what he learned from them, as he says, "even as they declared them unto us, from the beginning, who were eye-witnesses and ministers of his word."^{*} Eusebius informs us, that Clement of Alexandria, in a work not now extant, bore ample testimony to the gospel of Luke, as well as to the other gospels. And he mentions a tradition which he had received from more ancient presbyters, "that the gospels with genealogies were first written." Tertullian speaks of Mark and Luke as "disciples of the apostles," but he ascribes the same authority to the gospels written by them, as to others. "Luke's Digest," says he, "is often ascribed to Paul." And Origen, in speaking of the four gospels, says, "The third is that according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts."[†] The testimony of

Eusebius to Luke's gospel is very full. He says, "Luke, who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, who had likewise more than a slight acquaintance with the other apostles, has left us, in two books divinely inspired, evidences of the art of hearing souls, which he had learned from them. One of them is the gospel which he profeseth to have written as they delivered it to him who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, with all of whom he had been perfectly acquainted from the first."* And in another place, he says, "Luke hath delivered in his gospel a certain account of such things as he had been assured of by his intimate acquaintance and familiarity with Paul, and his conversation with the other apostles." In the Synopsis ascribed to Athanasius, it is said, "that the gospel of Luke was dictated by the apostle Paul, and writ ten and published by the blessed apostle and physician Luke." To these testimonies it will be unnecessary to add any others, except that of Jerome, which is as follows: "Luke, who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, not unskilful in the Greek language, a disciple of the apostle Paul, and the constant companion of his travels, wrote a gospel, and another excellent volume, entitled the Acts of the Apostles." It is supposed that Luke did not learn his gospel from the apostle Paul only, who had not conversed with the Lord in the flesh, but also from other apostles, which likewise he owns at the beginning of his volume, saying, "Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."† In another place, he says, "the third evangelist is Luke, the physician, a Syrian of Antioch, who was a disciple of the apostle Paul, and published his gospel in the countries of Achaia and Bœotia." This gospel has from the time of its publication, been received as canonical by the whole Christian Church; has been constantly read in the Churches as a part of divinely inspired Scripture; has been cited as authority by all Christian writers; and has a place in every catalogue of the books of the New Testament which was ever published. Its canonical authority is therefore placed beyond the reach of reasonable doubt, notwithstanding the injudicious scruples which some learned moderns have entertained and published to the world respecting it.* The fourth and last of the gospels was written by John, the beloved disciple. This evangelist, according to the universal testimony of the ancients, survived all the other apostles, and did not leave the world until about the close of the first century of the Christian era. The testimonies to the genuineness and canonical authority of this gospel are as full as could be desired.

Irenæus asserts, "that the evangelist John designed by his gospel to confute the errors which Cerinthus had infused into the minds of the people, and which had been infused by those called Nicolaitanes; and to convince them that there was one God who had made all things by his word, and not as they imagined, one who was the Son of the Creator, and another the Christ who was impassible and descended upon Jesus the Son of the Creator."† Jerome fully confirms this testimony of Irenæus. He says, "that when John was in Asia, there arose the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus, and others who denied that Christ had come in the flesh, that is, denied his divine nature; whom he in his epistle calls antichrist, and whom Paul frequently condemns in his epistles. He was forced by almost all the bishops of Asia, and the deputations of many other Churches to write more plainly concerning the divinity of our Saviour; and to soar aloft in a discourse concerning the word, not more bold than felicitous." "It is related in Ecclesiastical history, that John, when solicited by the brethren to write, answered, that he would not do it unless a day of public prayer and fasting was appointed to implore the assistance of God: which being done, and the solemnity being honoured with a satisfactory revelation from God, he broke forth in the words with which his gospel commences, in the beginning was the word," &c.* The same learned father,

in his hook of "Illustrious Men," says, "John wrote a gospel at the request of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics, and especially against the doctrine of the Ebionites then springing up, who say that Christ did not exist before his birth of Mary; for which reason he was obliged to declare his divine nativity. Another reason of his writing is also mentioned, which is, that having read the volumes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he expressed his approbation of their history as true; but observed, that they had recorded an account of but one year of our Lord's ministry, even the next after the imprisonment of John [the Baptist,] in which also he suffered. Omitting, therefore, that year, (for the most part,) the history of which had been written by the other three, he related the acts of the preceding time before John was shut up in prison, as may appear to those who read the four evangelists; which may serve to account for the seeming difference between John and the rest."† This ample testimony of Jerome is confirmed by Augustine, who says, "that this evangelist wrote concerning the co-eternal divinity of Christ, against heretics."‡

Lampe, Lardner, and Titmann, have called in question this account of the occasion of John's writing; but the plausible reasonings of ingenious men have little weight, when laid in the balance with the positive testimony of such men as those who have asserted the contrary. Whether this gospel was written before or after the destruction of Jerusalem, is a matter of dispute among the learned; but the opinion of the ancients, and most of the moderns is, that it was written afterwards; and with this, the internal evidence best agrees. The Acts of the Apostles was undoubtedly written by Luke, for it is dedicated to Theophilus, the same excellent person to whom he had dedicated his gospel, and in this last dedication he refers to his former work. The fact is also confirmed by the testimony of the whole Christian Church, no one having ever called it in question. This book was in great esteem among the early fathers, and is often mentioned in their writings, and always quoted as a part of inspired Scripture.

Irenæus says, "Luke's Acts of the Apostles ought to be equally received with the gospel." "In them he has carefully delivered to us the truth, and given us a sure rule for salvation." So also, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, all ascribe the Acts of the Apostles to Luke.* In the Syriac version of the New Testament, the name of Luke is prefixed to this book; the same is also said to be the fact in some very ancient manuscripts.

It must have been early circulated among the Churches, for it is plainly referred to by Clement of Rome, the fellow-labourer of Paul. And Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians, has cited a passage from the Acts; as also Justin Martyr, in his "Exhortation to the Greeks." It is distinctly cited by Irenæus more than thirty times, and is expressly denominated Scripture, which is also true of Tertullian. The Acts of the Apostles being found in all the catalogues of the books of the New Testament, having always been read in the Churches, uniformly quoted as Scripture, and possessing all the internal evidences of inspiration, as well as the express testimony of the early fathers, has an undoubted right to a place in the sacred canon.

CHAPTER XXI("tw:///self?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF PAUL'S EPISTLES

The fourteen epistles of Paul constitute a very large and very important part of the canon of the New Testament, and the evidence of their canonical authority is complete. Indeed, no question has ever been agitated respecting the divine authority of any one of them; but as his name is

prefixed to all, except the epistle to the Hebrews, it has been doubted whether indeed it was written by Paul. After a thorough investigation, however, the Church, both in the east and west, settled down in the full belief that this apostle was the writer.

Clement of Rome, in an epistle to the Corinthians, refers expressly to one of Paul's epistles to the same people. "Take," says he, "into your hands, the epistle of blessed Paul the apostle. What did he at first write to you in the beginning of the gospel? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself, Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then ye did form parties."* There are, in the epistle of Clement, several other passages cited from Paul, but this is the only one where his name is mentioned.

Hermas and Ignatius also cite words from Paul's epistles, but without designating the book from which they are taken. And Polycarp, the martyr, and disciple of John, when condemned to death, wrote an epistle to the Philippians, in which he makes express mention of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and cites the apostle's words: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?† as Paul teaches." This venerable and apostolical father, in the same epistle, quotes a passage from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians as Scripture. "For I trust," says he, "that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures, as in these Scriptures it is said, 'Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.' "‡ He also cites passages from the second epistle to the Corinthians, from the epistle to the Galatians, from the first and second to the Thessalonians, from the epistle to the Hebrews, and from both of Paul's epistles to Timothy. But as was customary at that time, he does not refer to the book from which his citation in any particular instance is made.

Justin Martyr quotes many texts from Paul's epistles, and in the very words of the apostle, but does not mention his name, or the title of the epistle from which he makes his citations. Irenæus quotes passages from all the epistles of Paul, except the short letter to Philemon. It would fill too much space to put down all the texts cited by this father. Let the following suffice.† "This same thing Paul has explained, writing to the Romans, 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, separated to the Gospel of God.'‡ Again writing to the Romans, he says, 'Whose are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God over all blessed for evermore.'§ This also Paul manifestly proves in his epistle to the Corinthians, saying, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud.'■ Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, says, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.'¶ The Apostle Paul says, in his epistle to the Galatians, 'Wherefore then serveth the law of works? it was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.'*** As also blessed Paul says in his epistle to the Ephesians, 'For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'†† As also Paul says to the Philippians, I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God.'‡‡ Again, Paul says, in his epistle to the Colossians, 'Luke, the beloved physician, saluteth you.'* The apostle, in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, says, 'And the God of peace sanctify you wholly.'† And again in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking of antichrist, says, 'And then shall that wicked one be revealed.'‡ In the beginning of his work against heresies, he says, "Whereas some having rejected the truth, bring in lying words, and 'vain genealogies rather than godly edifying, which is in faith, as saith the apostle.' "§ The first epistle to Timothy is very often quoted in the above work. When speaking of Linus, he says, "Of this Linus Paul makes mention in his epistle to Timothy, 'Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and

Linus.'■ As Paul says, 'A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject.' "¶

Thus Irenæus, who lived in the age next after that of the apostles, and who had conversed with men who had seen some of them, refers as familiarly and frequently to the writings of Paul, as we are accustomed to do now. The epistle to the Hebrews he does not cite in any of his writings, which are now extant, though Eusebius informs us that he had seen a work of his in which there are citations from this epistle; but he does not say that he quoted them as from Paul. Probably he participated in the prejudice of the western Church respecting the author of this epistle. The epistles of Paul are quoted by Athenagoras, who lived in the second century; also, many times by Clement of Alexandria. A few examples only need be here adduced. "The apostle, in the epistle to the Romans, says, 'Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God.'** The blessed Paul, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, says, 'Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.* The apostle, says he, calls the common doctrine of faith 'a savour of knowledge.'† Hence also Paul says, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our hearts from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'‡ Whereupon Paul also writing to the Galatians, says, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.'§ The blessed apostle says, 'I testify in the Lord that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk.'■ Again, 'Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.' "¶ He also quotes the epistle to the Philippians expressly; and in another place he refers to it in the following manner: "The apostle of the Lord also exhorting the Macedonians, says, 'The Lord is at hand; take heed that we be not found empty.' " He also cites Paul's epistle to the Colossians and to the Thessalonians. And from the first epistle to Timothy he takes the following words: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some preferring have erred concerning the faith."** On which he observes, that heretics reject both epistles to Timothy. The epistle to Titus is quoted several times; and in one place he remarks, "That Paul had cited Epimenides the Cretan, in his epistle to Titus, after this manner, 'One of themselves, a poet of their own, said, the Cretans are always liars.' "†† This father of the second century also distinctly quotes the epistle to the Hebrews, and unhesitatingly ascribes it to Paul. "Wherefore writing to the Hebrews, who were declining from the faith, Paul says, 'Have ye need that any teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are such as have need of milk and not strong meat?' "‡‡

Tertullian, who also wrote in the second century furnishes many testimonies in favour of Paul's epistles. He expressly refers to Romans 9:5, where Christ is called "God over all, blessed for evermore," which he interprets as we do now. In his treatise on monogamy he computes, that one hundred and sixty years had elapsed since Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians. He speaks also of the second epistle to the Corinthians, and of the opinion entertained by some, that it was the same person who was here forgiven, who, in the first epistle, was ordered to be "delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." "But of this," says he, "no more need be said, if it is the same Paul who writing to the Galatians reckons heresy among the works of the flesh; and who directs Titus to reject a man who was a heretic after the first admonition, 'knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.' " * "I pass," says he, "to another epistle, which we have inscribed to the Ephesians, but the heretics to the Laodiceans." "According to the true testimony of the Church, we suppose this epistle to have been sent to the Ephesians, and not to the Laodiceans, but Marcion has endeavoured to alter this inscription, upon pretence of

having made a more diligent search into this matter.” “But,” says he, “the inscriptions are of no value, for the apostle wrote to all when he wrote to some.” Paul to the Galatians says, “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”† To the Philippians he says, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I had already attained or were already perfect.”‡ And writing to the Colossians he expressly cautions them against philosophy: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, and not after the instruction of the Spirit.”§ And in his epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostles adds, “But of the times and seasons brethren ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”* And in his second epistle to the same people he writes with greater solicitude, “But I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye be not soon shaken in mind nor troubled.”† And this charge Paul has given to Timothy: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.”‡ That remarkable passage of Tertullian, already referred to, in which he is supposed to speak of the autographs of Paul’s epistles, may appropriately be cited in this place, to show that he did certainly write to those churches to which his epistles are now inscribed. “Well,” says he, “if you be willing to exercise your curiosity profitably in the business of your salvation, visit the apostolical churches, in which the very chairs of the apostles still preside, in which their truly authentic letters are recited, sending forth the voice and representing the countenance of each one of them. Is Achaia near you? you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi; you have Thessalonica. If you can visit Asia, you have Ephesus. And if you are near to Italy, you have Rome, from whence also you may be easily satisfied.”§

Origen quotes Paul’s epistles as expressly and frequently as any modern writer. To transcribe all the testimonies which might be taken from this author, would fill a volume, and would require us to set down the greater part of all Paul’s epistles. In one passage in his work against Celsus, he refers to several of them in the following manner. “Do you first of all explain the epistles of him who says these things, and having diligently read and attended to the sense of the words there used, particularly in that to the Ephesians, to the Thessalonians, to the Philippians, to the Romans, &c.”■ Origen believed that the epistle to the Ephesians was addressed to the Church of Ephesus, for he cites it under that name. And he uniformly ascribes the epistle to the Hebrews to Paul, from which he quotes many passages. And he not only expresses his own opinion on this point, out delivers the current opinion which had come down from the fathers who preceded him. His words are, “for it is not without reason that the ancients have handed it down to us as Paul’s.” Considering the nearness of Origen to the times of the apostles, and that he resided near the people to whom it was sent, perhaps in the very city, and that his knowledge of ecclesiastical and biblical matters was more extensive than that of any other man, his testimony that this epistle belongs to Paul ought to be decisive; especially as it is corroborated by that of all the Greek fathers. Eusebius, indeed, while he admits its canonical authority, expresses some doubt about its authorship; yet in his writings he often quotes it as Paul’s.

Cyprian, Victorinus, Dionysius of Alexandria, Novatus, and Methodius, who all lived in the third century, refer frequently to Paul’s epistles;* but we deem it superfluous to cite further testimonies on this subject, except the full and decisive testimony of Jerome, than whom a more competent witness could not be found. This father, in speaking of the writings of Paul, says, “He wrote nine epistles to seven churches. To the Romans one; to the Corinthians two; to the Galatians one; to

the Philippians one; to the Colossians one; to the Thessalonians two; to the Ephesians one; to Timothy two; to Titus one; to Philemon one. But the epistle to the Hebrews is not thought to be his, because of the difference of argument and style; but rather Barnabas's, as Tertullian thought; or Luke's, according to some others; or Clement's, who was afterwards bishop of Rome, who being much with Paul, clothed and adorned Paul's sense in his own language. Or if it be Paul's, he might decline putting his name to it in the inscription, for fear of offending the Jews."† He seems to have entertained the idea that this epistle was written by Paul in Hebrew, and that it was translated into Greek by some one possessed of a more elegant style than Paul. He says, "he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, it being his own language; whence it came to pass that being translated it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles. This they say is the reason of its differing from Paul's other writings. There is also an epistle to the Laodiceans, but it is rejected by every body."*

Although Jerome sometimes doubted of the authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, which was published without the name of the author, yet he commonly quotes it as Paul's; and in his letter to Evangelius, he writes, "That all the Greeks and some of the Latins received this epistle."† He means, received it as Paul's; for we do not find that any were for rejecting it altogether from the canon. And in a letter to Dardanus, he says, "That it was not only received as Paul's by all the churches of the east, but by all the ecclesiastical writers in former times though many ascribe it to Barnabas or Clement."‡ He also testifies "that it was daily read in the churches; and if the Latins did not receive this epistle as the Greeks rejected the Revelation of John, yet he received both; not influenced so much by the present times, as the judgment of ancient writers, who quote both; and that not as they quote apocryphal books, and even heathen writings, but as canonical and ecclesiastical."§

Ambrose and Augustine received the fourteen epistles of Paul just as we do now,■ and since their time this has been the uniform opinion of all; except that some modern critics have revived the controversy respecting the author of the epistle to the Hebrews but the claim of the apostle Paul has been vindicated by many learned men with such ability, and with arguments so conclusive, that it may be hoped that his question will not be soon stirred again. The time when each of Paul's epistles was written, is a point not capable of any certain determination; and as is usual, in such cases, the learned are divided into various opinions and conjectures. It has commonly been thought that the epistles to the Thessalonians were first written, but of late a prior date has been claimed for the epistle to the Galatians. The subject is not important and may be left to be settled by the critics.

CHAPTER XXII("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE SEVEN CATHOLIC EPISTLES, AND OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Why these epistles received the denomination of Catholic, various reasons have been assigned: but none of them are very satisfactory. Some have said that they were so called, because they contained the one Catholic doctrine which was communicated to the Churches, and delivered to the apostles by our Saviour, and which might be read by the universal Church. But surely this furnished no reason for distinctive appellation of those seven epistles, since the same may be said of all the other canonical epistles.

Others allege, that they received this name because they were not addressed to particular Churches or individuals, like the epistles of Paul, but to the Catholic Church. But this statement is not correct; for several of them are addressed to particular persons. The opinion of Dr. Hammond and Dr. Macknight is, that this appellation was at first given to the first epistle of Peter and first of John, which were addressed to Christians generally, and were universally received. On which last account they suppose that they were originally called Catholic, to distinguish them from such as were not universally received, but, after awhile, the other five being universally received also, were included under the same name. The first epistle of Peter and the first of John, appear to have been circulated and known at a very early period. The apostolic fathers, Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias, cite passages from them, without, however, indicating the source whence they were derived.

Justin Martyr quotes a passage which is nowhere else found, but in the second epistle of Peter.

Diognetus has several passages taken from the first epistle of Peter and the first of John.

Irenæus cites from Peter the following: "Whom having not seen ye love," which he expressly refers to Peter. He also cites the second of Peter, and first and second of John. Several texts are also quoted by this father from the epistle of James, but without mentioning his name.* Clement of Alexandria quotes the first epistle of Peter often; the second sometimes; and also the epistle of Jude.

Tertullian often cites the first epistle of John, and in one instance, that of Jude; but has no quotations from the others.

Origen has given a satisfactory testimony to the epistle of James, and refers to it in the following manner: "For though it be called faith, if it be without works it is dead, as we read in the epistle ascribed to James." And in the Latin translation of his works, by Rufin, this epistle is quoted as divine scripture, and is referred to "James, the apostle, and brother of our Lord." This learned father often cites passages from the first of Peter; but not from the second, except in his Latin works, the originals of which are lost. In his book against Celsus, he says, "as it is said by Peter, Ye as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." And again, "Peter in his Catholic epistle, says, 'put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit.' " His testimony in favour of Jude is also strong. "Jude," says he, "wrote an epistle of few lines indeed, but full of powerful words and heavenly grace; who, at the beginning, says, 'Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.' "

Cyprian has copious citations from the first epistle of John, and first of Peter; but he makes no mention of the others.

Eusebius has a peculiar opinion respecting the epistle of James; he admits that it was written by James, a disciple of Christ, but not by the apostle James, yet in another place he cites the words, "Is any among you afflicted, let him pray; is any merry, let him sing psalms; as the sacred apostle says." But he is not consistent with himself, for where he distributes the books into classes, he places James among the supposititious, or such as were not canonical. The testimony which he gives in his history is important. "One epistle of Peter, called his first, is universally received. This the presbyters of ancient times have quoted in their writings, as undoubtedly genuine; but that called his second epistle, we have been informed, has not been received into the Testament; nevertheless, it, appearing to many to be useful, has been carefully studied with the other

Scriptures.”* And in another passage, “That called the first of John, and the first of Peter, are to be esteemed authentic. Of the controverted, yet well known and approved by the most, are, that called the epistle of James, that of Jude, and the second and third of John, whether they were written by the evangelist or another.”

Athanasius quotes the epistle of James as the work of the apostle of that name; and cites also passages from the first and second of Peter, from the first and second of John, and also from Jude.

Jerome gives the following full testimony to the epistle of James: “James called the Lord’s brother, surnamed Justus, as some think the son of Joseph by a former wife, but as I think, rather the son of Mary the sister of our Lord’s mother, mentioned by John in his gospel. Soon after our Lord’s passion he was ordained bishop of Jerusalem, and wrote one epistle, which is among the seven Catholic epistles; which too has been said to be published by another in his name, but gradually, in process of time, it has gained authority. This is he of whom Paul writes in his epistle to the Galatians, and who is often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; and sometimes, in the ‘gospels according to the Hebrews,’ lately translated by me into Greek and Latin.” Augustine received all the Catholic epistles. He quotes that of James, as the production of the apostle of that name. Both the epistles of Peter are often cited by him; also the three epistles of John; and he quotes Jude, and calls him an apostle. In the works of Ephrem, the Syrian, who lived and wrote voluminously in the fourth century, there are found express quotations from the epistle of James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, and from Jude, as well as abundant citations from first Peter, and first John; so that he received as scripture, the whole seven Catholic epistles. The book of Revelation, for a season, fell into considerable discredit in the ancient Church; principally on account of the support which it seemed to give to the extravagant doctrines of the Millenarians; and it is not found in a number of the ancient catalogues. But another reason why it was permitted to lie in obscurity was, the deeply mysterious nature of its contents; on which account, it was not commonly read in the Churches. And some modern writers have ventured to question its right to a place in the sacred canon. But when its evidence comes to be examined, it is found, that so far as early testimony goes, it is not inferior to that of any other book in the New Testament.

Both Hermas and Papias appear to have been acquainted with this book; as the former imitates several of its descriptions, and makes repeated mention of the “book of life,” and of those, whose names are written in it; and the latter seems to have derived some of his opinions from a too literal translation of some things in this book. But Justin Martyr is the first who makes explicit mention of the Revelation. His words are, “And a man from among us, by name John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the Revelation made to him, has prophesied that the believers in our Christ shall live a thousand years at Jerusalem, and after that shall be the general and indeed eternal resurrection and judgment of all men together.”* In the epistle of the Church of Lyons and Vienne, in France, which was written before the close of the second century, there is found an evident quotation from this book: “For he was indeed a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth.”

Irenæus expressly quotes the Revelation, and ascribes it to John the apostle. “The visions in this book,” he says, “were seen no long time before, at the end of the reign of Domitian.”† And in a passage preserved by Eusebius, he speaks of “the exact and ancient copies of this book, which

were confirmed, likewise, by the concurring testimony of those who had seen John.”

Theophilus of Antioch, as we are assured by Eusebius, cited testimonies from the Apocalypse, in his work against Hermogenes. This book is also quoted by Clement of Alexandria. In one passage, he says, “Such a one, though here on earth he be not much honoured with the first seat, shall ‘sit upon the twenty-four thrones,’ judging the people, as John says in the Revelation.”‡ In another place, he cites from it as the work of an apostle. Tertullian also quoted many things from the Apocalypse; and seems to have entertained no doubt of its being the work of the apostle John.

Hippolytus, of the third century, who had great celebrity, both in the eastern and western Church, not only received the Revelation as the work of the apostle John, but appears to have written a commentary on the book, as is manifest by the monument of this father, dug up in the city of Rome, in the year 1551. His name, it is true, is effaced from this monument, but it contains a catalogue of all the works ascribed to him by Eusebius and Jerome, and some not mentioned by them, among which is one “of the Gospel of John, and the Revelation.”

Origen, who was well acquainted with the Revelation, denominates the author, “Evangelist and Apostle,” and on account of the predictions which it contains, “a prophet” also. Origen declared his purpose to write a commentary on this book; but if he carried his purpose into execution, the work has not reached our times, nor is there any mention of it by ecclesiastical writers who came after him. But Dionysius of Alexandria, one of the most learned men of the age, has furnished more information respecting the canonical authority of this book than any other person. It is from him we learn the fact referred to above, that it was on account of the use made of this book by the Chiliasts or Millenarians that it fell into partial and temporary discredit. These errorists were numerous in the district of Arsinoe, in Egypt, where Dionysius visited them, and took great pains to reclaim them from their errors, and his efforts were not ineffectual, for he had the pleasure of seeing many of them return to the orthodox faith. He informs us, that before his time, many rejected this book altogether, and ascribed it to Cerinthus, the heretic. He professes for himself to believe, that the Revelation was an inspired book, and written by a man whose name was John, but a different person from the apostle John. The only reason which he assigns for this peculiar opinion is, the difference of the style from that of the apostle in his other works. In answer to which, the judicious Lardner remarks, that supposing the alleged difference to exist, it will not prove that the apostle John is not the writer, because the style of prophecy is altogether different from that of historical narrative, and equally so, from the epistolary style. But this learned and accurate writer denies that there is such a difference of style, as to furnish any solid reason for this objection; and in confirmation of his opinion, he descends to particulars, and shows, that there are some striking points of resemblance between the language of the Apocalypse, and the acknowledged writings of the apostle John.*

Cyprian received the book of Revelation as of canonical authority, as will appear by the following citations from it. “Hear in the Revelation, the voice of thy Lord reproving such men as these: ‘Thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ ” Again: “So in the Holy Scriptures, by which the Lord would have us to be instructed and warned, is the harlot city described.” “That waters signify people, the divine Scriptures show in the Revelation.”† That Lactantius received this book is evident from all his writings; especially those in which he attempts from its predictions to

foretell "the future destinies of the Church."‡ Victorinus also, who lived towards the close of the third century, often quotes this book, and ascribes it to John the apostle.§

Thus it appears, that until the beginning of the fourth century, the book of Revelation was universally received as canonical; and only one man expresses any doubt about the apostle John being the author; and he ascribes it to another John, a disciple of our Lord, who also was an inspired man. And although it now fell into some neglect and discredit, yet no man of any authority in the Church, went so far as to reject it altogether. Eusebius, after giving a catalogue of the other books, says, "After these, if it be thought fit, may be placed the Revelation, concerning which there are different opinions."

Athanasius gives the following testimony: "Domitian in the fourteenth year of his reign, raising the second persecution after Nero, John was banished into the isle of Patmos, when he wrote the Revelation which Irenæus and Justin Martyr explain."*

Augustine received the Revelation, and frequently quotes it. He also ascribed it to the same John who wrote the gospel and epistles. Jerome translated it into Latin with the other books of the New Testament. The evidence of the canonical authority of this prophetic vision is therefore as strong as that of any book in the New Testament; and the time is coming when the seals which have so long closed up its meaning shall be broken, and the Apocalypse will appear indeed to be a wonderful Revelation of events of the greatest importance, which are now future. The study of this portion of sacred Scripture should not be discouraged; for as the great wheel of Providence revolves, the mystic page will become more and more illuminated, and the events predicted will be so clearly developed, that all who are endued with spiritual understanding will clearly see, by the developments which will take place, that the sealed book is opened, and that the purposes of God to wards his Church are in the progress of full and rapid accomplishment; even "the things that are, and the things which shall be hereafter."†

CHAPTER XXIII("tw://[self]?tid=13&popup=0" \l "Evidences_CONTENTS-")

RECAPITULATION OF EVIDENCE ON THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The subject of the canon of the New Testament may properly be concluded by a few general remarks.

1. The constitution of the canon of the New Testament did not require the judgment or sanction of any council, synod, or church, except as they might be witnesses that the books were written by man who were known to be inspired. Every book written by an apostle had a right to a place in the canon as soon as published. The sacred books were therefore canonical before they were collected together into a volume. One of Paul's epistles, as soon as received by the Church to which it was sent, had as much authority as it ever could have, and possessed this authority, if that Church were not at the time in possession of any other book. The canon was constituted, or compiled, when the last inspired volume was published. And as the apostle John undoubtedly survived the other apostles, and wrote last, when he produced his last writing, whichever it might be, the canon was closed. And as this must have been prior to his death, so it may be said with certainty, that the canon of the New Testament was completed before the death of John. And as all the books were in circulation while he was living, the Church could enjoy the unspeakable privilege of having his infallible opinion respecting any and all of these books. This will sufficiently

account for the universal consent with which these books were received in every part of the Church. As he gave his sanction to the other three gospels, so doubtless he would do to the whole sacred canon. Accordingly, we find no controversy in the early ages of the Church, respecting the canon. Doubt was entertained by some respecting a few of those books now in the canon, which resulted in a general acquiescence in their claims after the subject was impartially examined; but respecting all other books there was a unanimous consent. This leads to the remark.

2. That the writings of the apostles were from the beginning carefully distinguished from all other books. They were denominated, "Scripture," divine Scripture—inspired writings—the gospels—the apostles—oracles of the Lord—divine fountains, &c., &c. The fathers were not too credulous in regard to this matter, but used all care to search into the claims of such books as professed to be from the apostles.

3. These books, when written, did not lie in obscurity, but were publicly read in the churches; and were sought with avidity by the people, and read with veneration, not only by the learned but by common Christians; for the idea of locking up the holy Scriptures from the people seems to have occurred to no one. That these canonical books were thus read in the churches may be proved by the testimony of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius, Cyprian, and Augustine; and no other books received the same veneration and attention—none others were spoken of as Scripture—as inspired. When any other pieces were read in public for instruction, the fathers were pointedly careful to distinguish these from the canonical books.

4. In all the controversies which arose in the Church, these books were appealed to by all parties, as decisive authority, unless we except some of the very worst heretics, who, to maintain their opinions, mutilated the Scriptures, and rejected such as plainly condemned their impious tenets. But most of the heretics endeavoured to maintain their opinions by the writings of the New Testament. This was the case in regard to the Valentinians, the Montanists, the Sabellians, the Artemonites, the Arians, the Peagians, and the Priscillianists. None of these called in question the authority of the sacred books.

5. It is an argument of great force, that even the avowed enemies of Christianity, who wrote against the truth, refer to the books now in the canon, as those received as sacred by Christians. These enemies of the gospel refer to matters contained in these books, and some of them mention several of them by name.

Celsus, who lived and wrote less than a hundred years after the age of the apostles, says, as his words are quoted by Origen, who answered him, "I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and those, too, different from what has been written by the disciples of Jesus, but I purposely omit them." In another place he says, "These things, then, we have alleged to you of your own writings."

Porphyry also, from the fragments of his writings which remain, appears to have been well acquainted with the four gospels; for the objections which he brings against Christianity are directed against things still found in these gospels. The emperor Julian, called the Apostate, mentions by name Matthew and Luke, and cites various things out of the gospels. He also mentions John, and says, "none of Christ's disciples besides has ascribed to him the creation of the world;" "and that neither Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, had dared to call Jesus, God;" "that

John wrote later than the other evangelists, and at a time when a great number of men in the countries of Greece and Italy were converted.” Now if these books had not been genuine, would not these learned and powerful opponents have known the fact, and would they not have exposed the fraud? But they silently acquiesce in the genuineness of the gospels, and speak of them as the writings of the disciples of Christ, with as little hesitation as Christians themselves.

6. The testimony which we have adduced is not only sufficient to demonstrate that these books were originally written by the men to whom they have always been ascribed, but also, that the books which were in the hands of early Christians contained the same things which are now found written in them. Excepting about half a dozen texts, the genuineness of which is disputed, because the manuscripts and versions vary; as far as can be judged from numerous quotations, from all the early versions, and from the ancient manuscripts which have come down to us, no material change has taken place in these writings. It is true, the fathers in some instances appear to have quoted from memory, and in others to have interpreted the words of the sacred writers differently from what we do, but all evidence goes to show that the Scriptures of the New Testament have come down to us in their original integrity, save those errors which arose from the carelessness or ignorance of transcribers; but even in regard to these, by means of the multitude of copies of the Greek text, and of early versions, with the help of numerous quotations made in Africa, Asia, and Europe, the correct reading can usually be ascertained with very considerable certainty. It is probable that almost every sentence in some books of the New Testament has been cited or referred to by one or other of the fathers. Let any one only cast his eye over a table of texts quoted by Cyprian, Origen, Tertullian, or any other extensive writer among them, and he will be convinced that a large part of the New Testament could be collected from their writings. As the apocryphal books of the New Testament, though very numerous, are never connected with the sacred volume, and as none now plead for the canonical authority of any of these books, there is no necessity, in treating of the evidences of Christianity, to enter into any discussion respecting them. And I would beg leave to refer any who may feel a curiosity to inquire into their character, and to have some specimens of their style and spirit, to Jones’ “New method of settling the canon of the New Testament;” or the volume which the present writer compiled on the subject of the canon.

Having brought this “View of the Evidences of Christianity” to a close, I would entreat the reader who has accompanied me thus far, not to suffer his mind to be disturbed, or his faith unsettled, by objections which ingenious men may raise, which he may not be able to answer. Objections may be made to the most certain principles of science, and even to what we know by consciousness, and the evidence of our senses; but though we cannot remove all difficulties, yet we do not distrust our intuitive judgments, our senses, and the clear deductions of reason. Many of the objections of infidels, however, are easily answered, and have been fully answered again and again; but they still throw back the blunted weapons, so often repelled, as though they had never been used before. There is no room in this brief outline, to enter on a consideration of the popular objections of deists. Such a work would itself require a volume, and he who executes such a work skillfully, will deserve well of the Christian community.

One word more to the candid reader. Rest not, I entreat you, in a mere rational conviction of the truth of the gospel, but speedily reduce your faith to practice. Embrace the gospel, as well as assent to its truth. If Christianity is true, it is the most important concern in the world. Avail yourselves of its precious invitations; obey its salutary precepts, and escape from the dangers of

which it gives you warning.

If the Bible is written by the inspiration of God, how highly should we prize this sacred volume, and how devoutly and diligently should we study its contents! "Search the Scriptures." Pray for divine illumination, that you may understand them. That man who is pronounced "blessed," meditates in the law day and night. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple." What is said at the beginning and at the close of the last book in the canon, may be well applied to the whole Bible: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.

"For I testify unto every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book."

S. A History of the Israelitish Nation

A HISTORY

of the

ISRAELITISH NATION

FROM THEIR ORIGIN

to their dispersion at the destruction of

jerusalem by the romans.

by

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

late professor in the theological seminary at princeton, n. j.

PHILADELPHIA:

WILLIAM S. MARTIEN

1853

Entered, according to the act of Congress in the year 1853

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The nature and design of the following work may be sufficiently gathered from the Preface which follows. It might be unnecessary to say another word, but for the fact that while the labours of the lamented author were taking their present form, it pleased God to remove him to a better world. It will be observed that the materials of the publication had to a certain extent appeared in separate volumes, which were well received by Christian readers. But an important end is attained, by throwing them into a continuous series. The chasm which existed in one great period of the annals has been filled by the hand of a clergyman whose learning and discretion commended him to Dr. Alexander as remarkably fitted for the task. He has performed his part with complete success; and there can be no doubt that the History, as now presented, will be found eminently useful as an instrument of Biblical instruction.

JAMES W. ALEXANDER.

New York, January 1853.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

The revision of the following work was completed by its venerable and much esteemed author only a short time previous to the illness which terminated in his death. Circumstances have delayed its publication until the present time. Although the usual care has been taken to avoid typographical errors, yet it is possible, that in passing so large a work through the press, much of which was printed from manuscript, errors may have occurred, which would have been prevented had the proof-sheets been corrected by the author himself. It is confidently hoped, however, that no material imperfection will be discovered, and that the work will be appreciated as one of the latest literary efforts of a man whose praise is in the churches.

It may be added that the Fifth and Sixth Parts of this work contain all that is important to the Biblical Student in Prideaux's "Connection of Sacred and Profane History."

PREFACE

The importance of the study of History as a branch of knowledge is universally admitted; and of all History, that contained in the Bible is the most ancient, the most authentic, and the most interesting. It gives us information of those events which we can learn no where else, and with which it is most necessary that we should be acquainted. Here we learn the origin of our race—the state in which they were created—their unhappy fall—the revelation of God's merciful designs towards them, and the remarkable dispensations of Divine Providence towards a chosen generation, the descendants of Abraham, with whom God entered into covenant, and to whom and his posterity he made great and precious promises; all of which were punctually and literally fulfilled. In the Sacred Scriptures we have an account of the first religious institutions established by divine authority; and a complete code of the laws given to the Israelites by the hand of Moses, which, being typical, were not intended to be perpetual, but continued to be obligatory until the advent of the promised Messiah, in whom they met with their accomplishment, and, of course, ceased to be any longer in force. The moral law, however, clearly revealed at the same time, is of perpetual obligation; and remains immutable under all dispensations, although its extent and spirituality are much better understood since the light of the gospel has been manifested. The history of the Bible exhibits human nature in its true colours; and furnishes us with a wonderful variety of characters of men, occupying different stations, and acting under different circumstances. The character of the saint, as well as that of the sinner, is here portrayed; not as perfect, or free from every blemish; but as in the main, sincere and upright; as penitent for sins committed, and truly devoted to the service of God. The inspired penmen do not conceal the faults of the servants of God; but, with an impartial and faithful hand, their failings as well as their virtues are exhibited.

Many of the events of the sacred history are, it is true, of a marvellous kind; and as miracles do not take place in our times, and before our eyes, sceptical men are disposed to call in question the truth of events of this kind recorded in the Bible. But the evidence by which miracles are authenticated is too strong to be resisted by an impartial mind; and the events which followed, and the present condition of the world, cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis, but the historic verity of the miracles recorded in the sacred volume.

It may to some seem an unnecessary labour to draw out the history contained in the Bible, as it can be better studied as written in the Sacred Scriptures, than in any abridgment. There is apparent force in this objection; but it should be remembered, that there exists a lamentable

negligence of the Holy Scriptures, and every thing which has any tendency to make the people acquainted with the facts recorded, should be made use of; and, as the sacred narrative of the Bible is often interrupted by genealogies, and ritual laws and ceremonies, it has been found, that by separating the history from other matters, and exhibiting it in the concisest and simplest manner, it may be made interesting to many, who otherwise would not take the pains to seek for it. Such an abridgment may be serviceable, especially to the young, for whose benefit chiefly the work has been prepared.

It should be remarked, also, that this volume contains the history of an important period not contained in the Bible. I mean the period between the close of the Old Testament history, and the commencement of that of the New Testament. For the events and transactions of this period of nearly five hundred years, we have no inspired guide; and are under the necessity of resorting to mere human testimony. But it has been so ordered in Providence, that for the events of this period we have credible historians, on whom we can rely for the principal transactions.

Without some knowledge of the events of the intervening period, the reader of the Scriptures, when he has finished the Old Testament and begins the New, feels himself much at a loss, as here he finds a state of things for which he is not prepared by any thing which he has read in the Old Testament. There are also many collateral events which are requisite to a full understanding of the history of the New Testament; a knowledge of which has a tendency to confirm his faith in the authenticity of the sacred history.

There is also a very important event, predicted indeed by our Lord, but which occurred after the termination of the history of Christ and his Apostles. I refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; an account of which, taken chiefly from Josephus a Jew, who was an eye witness, closes the history contained in the present volume. The attentive reader will no doubt remark, that the several parts of this history are not entirely homogeneous. On this subject it will be sufficient to remark, that originally it existed in several volumes, written at different times, and for different purposes; but these having fallen into the hands of the present publisher, he has determined to make of them a continuous history. One important chasm, however, remained to be filled, namely, from the beginning of the regal government to the end of the Babylonish captivity. To fill this important period, the services of a young clergyman were obtained; but his modesty does not permit us, at present, to mention his name.

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER.

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HISTORY OF THE ISRAELITISH NATION

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THE PATRIARCHS

SECTION I

creation—garden of eden—endowments of man

When God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, it pleased him to bring the work to perfection not in a moment, but gradually, through a period of six days. At first, “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” To reduce this confused mass to order, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” The expanse or atmosphere was next produced, in which the clouds and vapours were suspended. The great body of the waters were gathered unto one place, and thus the dry land arose to view. The name earth was given to the dry land, and seas to the collection of waters.

The vegetable world, in all its freshness, beauty, variety, and fruitfulness, now sprung into existence, at the command of the Creator. “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so.”

From the beginning, there was an alternation of darkness and light, causing evening and morning; but it was not until the fourth day of creation that the luminaries—the sun, moon, and stars—were placed in the heavens; or became visible in the heavens. “The waters now brought forth abundantly the moving creature, that hath life;” and winged fowls of every kind were formed “to fly above the earth, in the open firmament of heaven.” And a command was given that these inhabitants of the water and of the air should be fruitful and multiply.

The sea and air being thus stocked with inhabitants, possessing natures suited to their respective elements, God proceeded to create the animals adapted to the earth. “And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind; and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind.” When the world was thus furnished and prepared, “God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

In the creation of other things, nothing was necessary, but a simple expression of the divine will; but when the lord of this lower world was to be brought into existence, a council is called, and it is said, “Come, let us make man.” With whom did the great Creator take counsel on this memorable occasion, but with his Son and Spirit? both of whom we know were efficient agents in the work of creation.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth. And God said, Behold I have given every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.”

In this grant of food to man there is no mention of the flesh of animals: it has therefore been generally believed that animal food was not in use before the flood.

We have a still more particular account of the formation of man. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, (lives,) and man became a living soul."

"And the Lord God planted a garden, eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The tree of life (lives) also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

This garden was watered by a river which went out of Eden, and was divided into four heads. Two of these, it is thought, were the Euphrates, and the Tigris, called by Moses, Hiddekel, but nothing satisfactory has been ascertained respecting the other two. Indeed, although the situation of Paradise seems to have been well known when Moses wrote, great obscurity now rests upon the whole subject; and the conjectures of commentators have served rather to darken than to elucidate it. The most judicious, however, for a long time supposed that the terrestrial Paradise must have been situated not very far from the mouth of the two rivers before mentioned; and they conjectured, that the other two rivers were streams passing from one of these to the other, as it is known that a communication of this kind did exist between them in after-ages. But the more modern cultivators of sacred geography seem more generally inclined to look for the site of this famous garden at the source of these rivers; and allege, that two other rivers running to the north-east and to the north-west, have their source in the same region.

Man, when created, was taken and put into the garden of Eden, "to dress it and keep it." Even in Paradise idleness was not tolerated. Activity and occupation are among the essential ingredients of human happiness.

The permission to eat freely of all the trees of the garden was explicitly granted, with one only exception. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But why this prohibition? Was the fruit of a poisonous nature? So some have supposed. But no; it was "good for food," and beautiful in its aspect. Why, then, was man interdicted its use? Simply as a test of his obedience to his Creator. That all creatures should make it their first and highest object to glorify Him, from whom they received their being, and on whom they depend, is one of the plainest dictates of reason and conscience. It was therefore reasonable and proper that the Lawgiver should require some test or proof of obedience, before man should be confirmed in a state of blessedness. And God selected this thing, in itself of an indifferent nature, as furnishing a fair probation of man's obedience.

It has already been mentioned, that God made man male and female; but the woman was not created as early as the man. For awhile he was alone. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him." "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, (sides,) and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib (side) which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

That man, from the moment of his creation, must have been endued with all necessary knowledge, cannot reasonably be doubted. Without an original stock of ideas he would have been inferior to all the other animals, for to them instinct is a sufficient guide; but man has no such guide; and if he had been turned loose upon the wide world, without any knowledge until he could acquire it by the slow process of experience, his life could not have been preserved for a single day. Even the danger arising from the common elements of fire and water, which are known to children as soon as they can learn any thing, would have been unknown to him.

Moreover, if man was placed under a law, and required to love and serve his Creator, his new created mind must have been furnished with ideas of the character of God, and of the obligations of a creature to his Creator.

It is also reasonable to think, and indeed may be inferred from the sacred record, that man when created was gifted with the faculty and use of articulate speech. To suppose that Adam and Eve were at first mutes, and incapable of conversing together, except by dumb signs, is neither probable in itself, nor honourable to the wisdom and goodness of their Maker. Indeed, without such a gift, it may well be doubted whether man ever could have invented a language. But we need not argue this point; for we find, that from the beginning of man's existence, God addressed him in words. And as a striking evidence, both of Adam's knowledge and use of speech, the Creator brought to him every beast of the field and fowl of the air, to see what he would call them; "and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field."

This work must have required much time; and if it is true that Adam was able to designate some leading quality of each species by the name given, as seems probable, his knowledge of natural history must have been more accurate and extensive than that of any of his posterity.

But the crowning excellence of the character of this first man, as he came from the hands of his Creator, was holiness, or moral integrity. All his affections were in just proportion to their objects, and his passions so happily balanced and harmonized, that in all the exercises of the various constituent principles of human nature, there was no jar, nor the least irregularity. Objects were loved and pursued according to their value. The higher and nobler powers of the mind governed, and the inferior and animal principles were in complete subordination. This happy state of moral purity seems to have been the chief thing intended by the image of God, in which man is said to have been created.

The perfect purity of their hearts, and the bland serenity of the atmosphere, may be judged of from a single circumstance mentioned in the narrative. "And they were both, naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

SECTION II

fall of our first parents, and their punishment

Satan, by some means, found his way into Paradise, and with much subtlety laid his plan for the seduction and ruin of the innocent pair, whose happiness this fiend envied. Assuming the body of one of the most sagacious and noble of the animal tribes, he accosted the woman, as being the weaker vessel, when she was a little separated from her husband. He had become acquainted

with the prohibition of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and watching his opportunity, when Eve was near to this tree, he said, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This insidious question was intended to suggest a doubt of the reasonableness of the commandment of God. The woman promptly and properly answered, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." It may, indeed, seem strange that she was not filled with astonishment at hearing the serpent speak; but let it be recollected, that, in the beginning of the world, when there had not been time to observe the regular course of the laws of nature, all events were equally new and strange. She might not know but that some of the animal tribes had received the gift of reason and speech. The tempter, finding that the woman was willing to enter into conversation with him, assumed more boldness, and ventured to utter a direct contradiction of the declaration of God. "And the serpent said, Ye shall not surely die." This was the first lie which ever polluted the air of the world; and therefore, he who set this example, which has been followed by so many, is called a liar, and the father of lies. But not contented with simply uttering a falsehood in direct opposition to the word of God, he went on to confirm his assertion, by saying, "For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."

The temptation entered first by the ear. She listened to an insidious speech, which conveyed a poison to her heart, by suggesting a doubt of the Divine veracity. It next entered by the eye, for the fruit, which was beautiful in its aspect, hung clustering within her reach. Her appetite was whetted, probably, by seeing the serpent eating it with great apparent gratification. She believed it to be good for food. But probably the desire of an increase of knowledge, and a curiosity to be as God, knowing good and evil, was the prevailing motive. The desire of knowledge is innocent when restrained within proper bounds; but when our curiosity leads us to pry into the secret things of God, or to use any unlawful means to increase our knowledge, it becomes sinful.

"And she gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." "Whether Adam was deceived by the same artful suggestions of Satan as the woman, or was influenced by his fondness for the society of Eve to connect his destiny with her's even in death, is not easily determined, since the sacred historian is silent respecting the motive. Paul says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." But he probably means no more than that Eve led the way in sinning.

The first sin was marked with peculiar guilt. Our first parents were supplied with every blessing which the heart of man ought to desire. They were pressed by no painful necessity to eat till fruit; the whole garden, with all its variety of delicious fruits, was before them; and they enjoyed unrestrained liberty in regard to every tree, but this one. Ignorance and inadvertence cannot be pleaded in palliation of their crime. The law of God prohibiting this fruit was brought clearly before the woman by the very words of the tempter. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree." Upon which she distinctly repeats the prohibition, with a circumstance nowhere else mentioned, namely, that they were not only forbidden to eat the fruit, but "to touch it." It was then not only a voluntary but a deliberate transgression. And in the case of Adam, the opportunity for deliberation

was even greater. He saw his wife in the very act of disobedience. He saw the forbidden fruit in her hand, and in her mouth; and yet when she offered it to him he did not refuse it; but took it, and did eat, conscious, no doubt, at the moment, that he was disobeying the positive command of his Maker.

The constitution of the human mind is such, that some principles or passions are not developed until certain circumstances occur which call them forth. For example, fear would never be experienced, if we never apprehended any danger: anger would remain latent if we were never exposed to any injury: and shame was a feeling to which our first parents were strangers, until conscious guilt took possession of their minds. When any new thoughts or feelings arise in the mind, it is agreeable to the Hebrew method of speaking, to say that the eyes are opened; so now, Adam and Eve experienced an entirely new state of mind. The clear light of truth was obscured; serenity was exchanged for perturbation, peace for remorse, and confidence for fear. O what desolations hath sin produced!

The intercourse which man enjoyed with his Maker was not only profitable, but in a high degree delightful. But now how sad the reverse! When the well-known voice of the Lord was heard in the garden at the cool of the day, guilty man, instead of running to hail the presence of his Creator, flees to the thickest part of the trees of the garden. Guilty shame of nakedness, not experienced before, impels them to make themselves aprons (girdles) of fig leaves; guilty fear now drives them into a hiding place, as though any covert could conceal from the eye of Omniscience. But no sinner can flee so far, or hide himself so securely, as to escape the justice of God. How terrible now was the sound of that voice which said, "Adam, where art thou?" When God calls unto judgment, man must obey. The trembling culprits are now forced to come forth from their concealment, and to confess their crime. But the man endeavours to palliate his guilt by laying the principal blame on the woman; and the woman excuses herself, by pleading that she had been beguiled by the serpent.

In pronouncing sentence upon the partakers of the crime, the righteous Judge began with the serpent, and said, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

From what is here said, it would seem that the serpent originally possessed a noble form and erect attitude, but was now degraded. It is not necessary to understand the sacred historian as saying that the serpent race are nourished by dust, but only, that in their grovelling condition on the ground, dust would necessarily enter their mouths with their food.

That Satan was really the prime agent in this transaction, is evident from this, that in the book of Revelation he is called "the old serpent," and from the words of our Saviour, who calls him a "liar" and a "murderer," in manifest allusion to this event.

Here we have the first intimation of the Messiah.

As the woman was first in the transgression, there was denounced upon her a peculiar curse, which has descended upon her sex in all generations. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire

shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” But this did not exempt her from her full share of the punishment denounced upon our whole race.

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

That Adam acted in this transaction as a public person, and not as a private individual, is evident from the undeniable fact, that the whole of this denunciation, as it relates to the curse upon the ground, the necessity of labour, and the death of the body, fall as fully upon his posterity as they did upon himself. Well then might Paul say, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”

The loss sustained by the human race, in consequence of the fall of our first parents, is immense. The image of God was defaced, immortality was forfeited, and happiness was blighted.

Concerning the use to be made of the “tree of life,” which stood also in the midst of the garden, the Scriptures are silent; and, as is common in such cases, the conjectures of men are abundant. Some ascribe to it the power of conferring immortality; others are more moderate in their opinions of its virtues, and suppose that the fruit was highly invigorating and medicinal, and would have preserved in health our first parents, as long as it was intended they should continue upon earth; but a third and more probable opinion is, that the tree of life possessed a sacramental character, and was merely a sign and seal of that immortal life which God had promised on condition of obedience. The words of God in the following passage are very extraordinary, and very difficult of explanation: “And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword (or a flame turning on itself), which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” It would detain us too long, even to notice the various interpretations of this difficult passage. Leaving this, therefore, to expositors, I would only remark that we here learn that agriculture was the first occupation of man, after his expulsion from Paradise. He was sent to “till the ground.” The only provision made for his comfort, of which a record was made, was “That unto Adam, and unto his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

It has been remarked by many, that probably the rite of sacrificing was at this time instituted, and that these skins were taken from the bodies of those animals which were offered on the altar.

SECTION III

cain and abel

Of the particulars of their history afterwards very little is known. The sacred historian passes at once from the birth of Cain and Abel, to an interesting narrative respecting their characters, occupations, and destiny. Cain was a cultivator of the ground, but Abel was a keeper of sheep.

Both of them were professedly religious, for we find them engaged in the worship of God; each presenting as an offering a portion of the fruits of his labour. No doubt, the rite of sacrificing is of divine institution, else Abel could not have offered of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, in faith; and it is altogether probable, that the productions of the earth had also been appointed to be offered, as an acknowledgment of the goodness of God, in granting rain and fruitful seasons from heaven; as we know, that after this time such offerings were made by divine appointment. There does not, therefore, appear to be any certain ground for the opinion advocated by some learned men, that Cain failed in his sacrifice, not only by a want of faith, but by an external disobedience to the command of God; refusing to bring a bloody sacrifice, and following the suggestions of his own reason, in the business of religion, rather than the revealed will of God. This may have been the fact, but no intimation of any such thing is given by Moses; at least as his meaning is given in our version. There is, indeed, a translation of the original, which contains a distinct reproof of Cain, because he had not offered a sin-offering, or bloody sacrifice, when the animals requisite for such an offering were in his possession, and even then couching at his door. Leaving it to the critics to settle the true meaning of the passage, I go on to remark, that by some visible manifestation, God expressed his approbation of the worship of Abel, while he gave no sign of approbation to the offering of Cain. How the mind of God was signified, on this occasion, we are not informed; but the conjecture has much probability, that Abel's sacrifice, when laid upon the altar, was consumed by fire from heaven. This evident preference of Abel and his offering, filled the mind of Cain with thoughts the most gloomy and desperate. His cheerfulness forsook him, and his inward anguish appeared in the dejection of his countenance. It would seem, from the history here given, that God was accustomed to speak familiarly to the first men. Whether this intercourse was held merely by articulate sounds, or whether he appeared, as often afterwards, in the form of an angel or a man, it would be rash for us to decide. On this occasion, God inquired of Cain, why his countenance was fallen? and intimated to him the method proper to be pursued by him in order to find acceptance; but this exhortation from his Creator had no salutary effect on the malignant feelings of this first-born of men. He not only remained dissatisfied, but actually began to feel a hatred to his pious and unoffending brother, which would be satisfied with nothing short of his death. Abel seems to have remained unsuspecting of the bloody designs of his brother, and, therefore, took no pains to shun his presence. Cain, having determined to murder him, invites him to accompany him to the field or forest; far, we may presume, from the eye of all human witnesses. Here the first murder was committed. Of the two first-born among men, children of the same parents, the one is slain by the other. Cain had avoided the presence of human witnesses, but the eye of God was fixed on the murderer, and he was soon astonished by the question—"Where is Abel, thy brother?" Irritated, as well as confounded, he answers, "I know not;" and subjoins, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Almighty soon let him understand that his guilt was fully known, and that his brother's blood, which he had wickedly shed, had cried unto him from the ground. That is, the crime of which he had been guilty, in murdering his brother, was so great, that it was as if the blood sent forth a cry for vengeance against Cain. It is well for us that all blood does not cry for vengeance. There is blood, the cry of which, before the throne of God, is for mercy and peace; which, therefore, is said to "speak better things than the blood of Abel."

A curse is immediately denounced against the murderer. As yet there was no civil government instituted, and no human laws or human officers to apprehend and punish this criminal. God took the matter into his own hands; and though he did not inflict immediate death upon the murderer, yet he may be said to have subjected him to many deaths, until it seemed good to him to cut him off from the face of the earth. The curse upon Cain was in the following words: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth." Cain expostulated with his Maker in regard to the intolerable burden of his guilt and misery; and seemed now to fear the face of man, dreading lest every one who found him should slay him. To satisfy him that this should not be the fact, God gave a sign to Cain; or, as it is commonly understood, impressed a mark upon him; concerning the nature of which it would be trifling even to conjecture. The miserable wretch is now driven away from the altar and house of God; and is separated from his parents, and from all his brothers and sisters, except his own wife, who followed her worthless husband into the land of Nod: thus verifying the declaration made at the institution of marriage: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall be one flesh." The same is true in regard to the woman. How many children had, during more than a century, been born unto our first parents, we have no means of knowing. It is pretty clear, however, that Abel died childless; and we may infer from what is said about appointing Seth as a seed in the place of Abel, that his parents were not easily comforted, on account of the premature and unnatural death of such a son. And if there were, besides those mentioned in the record, many other children of the original pair, it would seem that none of them were like Abel; otherwise, it would not have been necessary to raise up a child to take his place. Cain seems to have been the father of a numerous posterity; and among them were found ingenious men, who became distinguished throughout all ages as the inventors or improvers of the useful, and even of some of the fine arts. We learn from this, that God may grant worldly prosperity to man while under his curse. Probably a large portion of the inhabitants of the earth before the flood were the descendants of Cain. Their skill in the arts, so necessary to the refined comforts of human society, would give them a great influence among men. With these, the practice of having more than one wife seems first to have made its appearance. Lamech is the person to whom belongs this bad distinction; and the names of his wives were, Adah and Zillah.

SECTION IV

seth and his posterity

No transactions of any of the children of Adam are mentioned in the brief history of Moses, except the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and the cruel murder of the latter by his envious brother. To Seth, who was the successor of Abel, there was born a son, in the hundred and fifth year of his age. The name of this son, from whom all the inhabitants of the earth since the deluge have descended, was Enos. Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born. It is therefore probable that Cain and Abel were more than a hundred years of age when the latter was murdered, but no mention is made of the age of Adam at the birth of his first-born. The plan of the writer is to give the age of the father at the birth of those sons only through whom the genealogy is reckoned. Commonly, it is presumable, that these were the first-born of their respective fathers; but of this there is no certainty. Indeed, in the case of Cain, we know that the contrary was the fact. At the birth of his grandson Enos then, Adam and Eve were two hundred and thirty-five years of

age. Enos was ninety years old at the birth of his son Cainan, at which time Adam had reached the age of three hundred and twenty-five years. To Cainan a son was born in the seventieth year of his age, which was in the three hundred and ninety-fifth year of Adam's life. The son of Cainan was named Mahalaleel, to whom, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, there was born a son by the name of Jared. This occurred in the four hundred and sixtieth year of the life of Adam.

Jared was one hundred and sixty-two years of age when Enoch was born, one of the most excellent and remarkable men who ever lived. He was a prophet, and a man so distinguished for piety, that at the age of three hundred and sixty-five years, he was taken to heaven without dying. This remarkable event occurred in the eight hundred and fifteenth year of Adam's life. But this holy man was married, and at the age of sixty-five had born to him Methuselah, who is the oldest man mentioned in Scripture. It was three hundred years after the birth of this son, that God took Enoch to himself. At the age of one hundred and eighty-seven years, a son was born to Methuselah called Lamech. And in the hundred and eighty-second year of Lamech's life, another very remarkable person was born, namely, Noah. From an inspection of this genealogical table, it will appear that Adam was living at the same time with Methuselah for two hundred and forty-three years, and died only sixty-five years before the birth of Noah. It is also evident, that Adam lived a number of years after the translation of Enoch, and was living during the whole time of his continuance upon earth. On account of the ages to which these early patriarchs lived, many generations inhabited the world at the same time. Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, and Lamech, (eight successive generations,) were alive together. Among these Adam would, of course, hold the chief authority. He was not only the father of the whole race, but the source of information to them all. Adam had been created in a state of perfection of all his faculties of mind and body; had conversed with his Maker, before sin had perverted his powers; and had received upon his entrance on the world such a stock of knowledge, as was absolutely necessary in his condition. It has sometimes been inquired, whether the antediluvians had any form of civil government; to which it may be answered, with certainty, that in the beginning, the patriarchal form existed, and no other; that is, the oldest person governed when there was any necessity for authority. Adam, by his care and government of his children, would acquire such an authority over them as to constitute him their natural ruler; and his superiority to all others, in knowledge, would serve to render his influence still greater. For nearly a thousand years, this first man ruled his numerous and increasing posterity; except that Cain and his descendants appear to have formed, for a long time, a separate society, and had no connexion with the children of Seth.

SECTION V

great corruption of manners, the consequence of intermarriages between the descendants of seth and those of cain

But when the population of the earth was much increased, an intercourse by marriage took place between these two portions of mankind. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all that they chose." It is not said that these daughters of men were the descendants of Cain; but the supposition is by no means improbable. Cain was driven out from the face of God, that is, from the place where God made himself known. He and his family were, therefore, in a manner, expelled from the primitive church. But they had probably

increased in wealth, luxury, and the arts, above the other posterity of Adam. For a long time, we may presume, it would have been deemed impious to hold any intercourse with the murderer: but at length this distance was diminished; visits were paid from one party to the other. And the young men who belonged to the line of Seth, seeing the daughters of Cain that they were very beautiful, soon formed marriages with them. This connexion seems to have been the source of a grievous corruption of manners. God, however, continued to warn and reprove the people by his Holy Spirit, either immediately by striving with their consciences, or by raising up prophets, who were inspired of God to instruct and preach. He was, however, now almost prepared to abandon them, and to say, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," yet he determined, in his mercy, that he would wait with them for a further period of one hundred and twenty years.

That the marriages above mentioned had an intimate connexion with the corruption of manners which ensued, is expressly asserted. Of their children it is said, "The same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." Their renown, doubtless, was not for good actions, but for high-handed violence, injustice, and oppression. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

SECTION VI

the deluge—the ark

The Almighty now resolved that he would destroy man whom he had created, from the face of the earth; "for," speaking after the manner of men, "it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth." In surveying the millions who now peopled the globe, there was only one man who found favour in the eyes of the Lord. This was Noah, the son of Lamech. As has been mentioned, he was born about sixty-five years after the death of Adam, was a preacher of righteousness, and was directed to prepare an ark for the salvation of himself and family, which consisted of no more than eight souls. Accordingly, Noah set to work to cut down and prepare gopher wood, or wood of a light and resinous quality, of different kinds. This is the first specimen of a vessel for the water, of which we have any account. The dimensions of the building and its interior arrangements were divinely directed. It had a door on the side, and a window or sky-light, which was probably on the top. How much derision and mocking the pious patriarch underwent, while engaged in erecting this edifice, may be left to conjecture. The probable size was about five hundred feet in length, eighty feet in breadth, and about fifty feet in height, which was abundantly large enough for all the purposes for which it was intended.

The ark being completed, and the season of grace and forbearance, already mentioned, having come to an end; and Noah and his three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth, and their wives, having received a command to enter into the ark, took "of clean beasts by sevens, the male and the female," that is, probably, seven of each sex, "and of beasts that were not clean, two, the male and the female." If we have rightly interpreted the former passage, four of each species of unclean animals were taken in. Within seven days after Noah had entered the ark, the flood commenced. This was in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the seventeenth day of the second month of the year. If the original year commenced about the autumnal equinox, as is commonly supposed, then the deluge began, according to the dates here given, about the first week in our November. It is not the business of the historian to account for events, but to state them accurately. This event

was probably produced by a miraculous interposition; but if otherwise, no reason of man can ever do more than form conjectures, which, however plausible, can give no satisfaction to the mind in pursuit of truth. "The fountains of the great deep" are said to have "been broken up; and the windows, or cataracts of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." After this continual rain of forty days, the water was so increased that the ark began to float; and soon the increase of the water was so exceedingly great, "that all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered;" consequently, all the animals that breathed upon the earth and air, except such as could live in the water, died. And there was a general and total destruction, not only of life, but of all the buildings which man had erected. Their cities, however populous, were swept away. The wealth of the world was buried beneath the deep. The cattle of a thousand hills were seen no more. "Noah alone remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." "And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days." If we reckon these days from the commencement of the rain, their end would be about the 20th of February: but if, which is the most probable, they begin with the time when the waters completely covered the earth, and began to raise up the ark, they will bring us to the close of April. The latter reckoning is most probable, because they mark the period in which the waters "prevailed upon the earth," by which I understand, the entire covering or overwhelming of the earth.

"The fountains of the deep, and the windows of heaven were now stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained, and the waters returned from off the earth, continually; and after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen." From this account it appears, that for ten weeks after the ark rested on Mount Ararat, nothing but water was visible; but at the end of this time, the lonely inhabitants of the ark began to spy land. If the first sight of land excites an indescribable emotion of pleasure in the common sailor, after a long and perilous voyage, what shall we say of the feelings of Noah and his family, when, after being tossed upon the bosom of the mighty deep for many months, they at length saw the summits of some lofty mountain left bare by the retiring waters? Some have conjectured that the ark remained near the place where it was built all the time, and was merely raised up by the rising flood; and when this retired, rested on the mountain where it was built; but this is very improbable. During such a convulsion of nature, the air as well as the water must have been agitated by one perpetual storm, and the ark, consequently, must have been exceedingly tossed upon the water; and there is no intimation in the sacred history, that Mount Ararat was situated anywhere near the place of the erection of this vessel. The mountains of Ararat are in Armenia, and tradition still points out one of the highest peaks as the spot where the ark rested.

Forty days after the tops of the mountains first began to be visible, Noah ventured to open the window of the ark, and sent forth a raven to ascertain whether the waters had withdrawn from the earth. This bird found means to subsist by resting on the summits of the mountains, or on articles floating on the water, so that it did not return again to Noah, but "went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth."

Noah also sent out a dove for the same purpose; but the dove, finding no rest for her foot, returned unto him, into the ark; and he put forth his hand, and received her into the ark. After seven days he again sent forth the dove, which returned in the evening, bearing in her mouth an olive leaf, which

she had plucked from this evergreen. By this, Noah ascertained that the waters were abated from off the earth. And after the interval of another week, he sent out the dove for the third time, which, finding the earth free from water, returned no more to the ark.

Noah now received express directions to disembark, and bring out with him all the animals which had been preserved in the immense fabric.

This remarkable event occurred in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, and on the first day of the first month. And as he entered the ark in the six hundredth year of his life, it follows that he remained shut up in the ark exactly one year.

SECTION VII

noah and his family leave the ark

The first act of Noah, after leaving the ark, was worthy of the patriarch. "He builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar." Hence we may learn, that altars and burnt-offerings were before in common use, by Divine appointment; for we have no account of their institution on this occasion; but the history speaks of them as things well known and understood.

We have also in the narrative of this transaction information that worship of the right kind is exceedingly pleasing to God, and powerfully efficacious to obtain rich blessings for man. The Divine acceptance of Noah's offering is figuratively but beautifully expressed in the following words: "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I any more smite every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and gave them two precepts, which are incorporated in the history, though the tradition of the Jews is, that he now repeated the six which he had originally given to Adam, to which he added a seventh. The two on record are—1. To be fruitful and multiply. 2. To eat no flesh "with the life thereof;" that is, the blood. Some suppose that this is simply a prohibition of eating blood, but others think that it respects the eating of the flesh of living animals;—a cruel custom greatly practised in Abyssinia.

A solemn admonition is also given respecting taking away the life of man; and a terrible threatening of the murderer: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

God also made a covenant with Noah and all living things; that is, he entered into a solemn engagement, which was confirmed by establishing the beautiful bow in the clouds, after rain. The thing promised was suspended on no condition whatever. It was that the human race should not again be cut off, with all living creatures, by the waters of a flood. It seems probable, that it had never rained upon the antediluvian world before the windows of heaven were miraculously opened at the commencement of the deluge; or, that partial showers, which left one part of the heavens clear, did not occur then; for I cannot persuade myself that when it is said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant," &c., it had before existed, and was already set in the clouds. If it be inquired how the earth was watered when there was no rain, the answer is,

“There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.” I am aware, however, that many judicious commentators are of opinion, that the bow in the clouds was no new thing, but was now applied to a new purpose; that is, God selected the rain-bow as an appropriate sign of that covenant in which he promised that the world should never again be deluged with water.

After Noah came from the ark, he followed agriculture, the original and most necessary occupation of man. For this work he had brought with him a vast stock of knowledge and experience; and we may be sure, that in his solicitude to preserve animal life, he would not neglect to bring with him into the ark a large supply of vegetables; especially of the species most useful to man. Among other things, he had preserved the roots or shoots of the vine, the fruit of which is among the richest of the productions of the earth, and from which wine is expressed.

When we consider that Noah was a prophet, a righteous man, and perfect in his generation; and that he had been, for more than a century, a preacher to the old world, and a reprover of the vices of the people, we are perplexed and astonished to find him drinking wine to such excess as to become an object of derision to the irreligious part of his family, and a source of grief and shame to the pious. The crime is so unexpected and unaccountable, that it may even lead us to suspect either that wine was not in use before the flood, or that the juice of the grape did not then possess an intoxicating quality. But there is no need of these suppositions. The fall of Noah is sufficiently accounted for, when it is recollected that he was but a man. If Adam, who was made in the image of God, could fall, there is no difficulty in believing that Noah, in whom that image was but imperfectly renewed, might also be overcome by temptation, when left to himself.

Another thing which may be inferred from the history is, that slavery, or the subjection of one to the will of another, probably existed and was common before the flood; because it is threatened here as an evil well understood; but if the practice had never existed, the meaning of the prediction would scarcely have been understood.

Why the curse fell so heavily on Canaan has led to many critical conjectures. It has been observed that parents are never more severely punished than in the disasters of their favourite children. To others, it has seemed probable that Canaan participated in his father's crime; or, that he was the principal actor in the irreverent scene.

Noah reached the great age of nine hundred and fifty years, which did not fall short of the average age of the patriarchs who lived before the flood. Indeed, six hundred years of his life were spent before the flood. The cause of the great age of men before the flood has never been satisfactorily ascertained. If my conjecture is right, that some of the laws and conditions of the atmosphere, and of the surface of the earth, underwent an alteration, it will serve for a general reason: but the special reason why man's life was then so much longer than at present can never be discovered.

The moral reasons for shortening human life are obvious enough. Such length of years furnished both temptation and opportunity to enormous iniquity. It was needful to cut off the perpetrators of violence, that wickedness might cease. There may be some reason to doubt whether they were solar or lunar years; but the probability is, that they were years of twelve months each, and each month of thirty days.

SECTION VIII

the earth peopled again from the three sons of noah

From the three sons of Noah the whole earth was peopled. The children of Japheth, the elder, spread themselves through Asia Minor, along the eastern borders of the Mediterranean sea, and the islands thereof, and towards the Black, and the Caspian sea; and thus became the founders of all the nations of Greece, and of the nations in Europe and Asia north of the 40th degree of latitude. The most powerful and polished nations now on earth are the descendants of Japheth. The Russians, Prussians, Poles, Finns, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Swiss, Belgians, Dutch, Greeks, Italians, French, Scotch, English, Irish, are, for the most part, the posterity of Noah's oldest son.

The descendants of Shem were very numerous, and migrated eastward; and to this day have retained their original habitations. Among them we must reckon the Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Persians, Hindoos, Burmese, Chinese, and Japanese, and most of the islanders in the Southern and Western Ocean.

The descendants of Ham seemed to have settled at first in various places, as in Philistia, or Canaan; in Mesopotamia, and southern Arabia. But Egypt seems to have attracted most of the children of Ham. It is therefore called "the land of Ham." And one of his sons had the honour of giving name to the country; for it was called in the Hebrew, Mizraim, which it appears was the name of one of the sons of Ham. The other Africans were probably descended from his other sons.

During this period of history, no mention is made of any very distinguished person except Nimrod. "He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter." The commencement of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Arad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. In the English version, it is said, "Out of that land went forth Ashur, and builded Nineveh, Rehoboth, and Calah." But most interpreters, by Ashur, understand a country, and they render the passage—"He (that is, Nimrod,) went into Ashur, or Assyria, and built Nineveh." And according to the tradition and testimony of all antiquity, Nimrod had Nineveh as the seat of his empire. There is no one fact in which ancient historians are more agreed; we conclude, therefore, that this is the true rendering of the passage. By his being a mighty hunter, it is commonly understood that he was a great warrior and tyrant. By a careful attention to the names in the tenth of Genesis, some learned men have proceeded far in tracing the nations of the earth to their respective stocks. This is a curious subject; and certainly there is not upon earth a document comparable to that contained in the tenth chapter of Genesis, both as it respects its antiquity and authority. The learned Bochart has found matter enough here to fill a large folio volume, and yet the mine is far from being exhausted.

SECTION IX

babel—the confusion of tongues

The only remarkable event in the history of the human race for many hundreds of years after the flood, was the confounding the language of the people, and thus putting an end to an impious attempt to build a tower whose top should reach to heaven. The professed end of this tower, was "to make to themselves a name, lest they should be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth." Some have supposed that the people were stupid enough to think that they could build a

tower so high, that running up to its top, they would be able to escape a second deluge, if it should come. Others have, with more probability, supposed that the people being of one language, and all united in one body, they wished to erect a building so high that it might be the wonder of all posterity. A third opinion, entitled to fully as much regard as either of the former, was, that it was intended to be a temple for the worship of the heavens; and this accords with the undoubted historic fact, that, in aftertimes, there was at Babylon the temple of Belus, an immense structure, said to have been a mile in perpendicular height. From the description of this temple by Herodotus and others, it could be no other than the tower of Babel. A fourth opinion is, that this high tower was erected as a sort of landmark, which was raised so high as to be visible through the extensive plain of Shinar, that the people might not be scattered abroad, nor separated too far from each other.

Whatever might have been the real design of this structure, it was viewed as a rebellious act by the King of Heaven; therefore a stop was put to the work by a miracle. The account of Moses is the following. "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language, [lip;] and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, [lip,] that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, [Confusion,] because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."

This event must have occurred long after the flood, because the population of the earth was now great. No date, or era, is connected with this history; but it has been supposed that its time could be fixed by the birth of Peleg, the sixth in descent from Noah, concerning whom it is said, "For in his days was the earth divided." Now, if it was certain that the division here referred to was the scattering of the people from Babel, the date of the event can be exactly ascertained; but this word [peleg] is never used in the history of the confusion of tongues, and in the whole Bible it always means a physical rupture or division. It has to some appeared probable, therefore, that the event here referred to was the rupture of the solid part of the globe, by which a vast chasm was made between lands before united. The effects of the flood upon the shell of the earth were not all terminated in a few years, but large continents, which had by that convulsion been undermined and shaken, might about this time have fallen in, by which the different branches of the human family would be separated. For example, suppose that America was at first united to Africa, but was now divided by the water covering the land which once spread across the Atlantic Ocean. That such an event has once happened is rendered probable by many appearances. And this would remove all difficulty as to the manner in which human beings and animals found their way to the western continent, concerning which there has been so much conjecture.

But however plausible this interpretation may appear, it ought not to be received without the most urgent necessity, for it utterly confounds the chronology of the Bible, by taking away one of the essential links from the chain, and renders it impossible to ascertain the age of the world. And of such a convulsion of nature, by which continents once joined were severed, history is totally silent. It seems best, therefore, to adhere to the common understanding of this passage.

There has also been much diversity of opinion respecting the precise nature of the effect wrought in the confusion of tongues, at Babel. Many eminent critics are of opinion, that the confusion had no relation to words, but only to counsels. That, for a while, the people proceeded harmoniously in their work, but at length, providentially a dissension arose either as to the object of the work, or the proper mode of carrying it on. And so the simple interpretation is, they quarrelled and separated from one another. And in confirmation of this opinion they remark, that the word translated language, in this chapter, is not the one usually employed, but literally signifies lip, the meaning of which, in the Hebrew language, is more properly, counsel, or confession; often, worship. This opinion may be said to be the most prevalent among critics in the Hebrew tongue. And they plausibly allege, that for many hundreds of years after this event, we never read of any diversity of language; but, wherever the patriarchs travelled, they seemed to have experienced no difficulty on this score. We do, indeed, read of an interpreter between Joseph and his brethren; but they allege that he was merely a mediator, who conveyed the words of princes and other exalted personages to their inferiors; an office which is known to have had an existence in ancient times. The affinity of many ancient languages to the Hebrew is also considered as hostile to the common interpretation.

Others are of opinion, that while the words remained, by a miraculous influence upon the minds of the builders, they fell into a great diversity in their mode of pronunciation; and this, they observe, would answer the end designed, just as effectually as a real diversity of tongues.

A third and more plausible opinion is, that the original language of man was at this time divided into a number of dialects; that one company used one of these, and a second, another; so that they were unable to hold intercourse in carrying on the work any longer, were obliged to abandon it, and were scattered abroad.

But the common opinion, and that which is favoured by our translators, and also by the Greek translators of the Bible is, that God produced miraculously, on this occasion, a number of languages radically different; from which have proceeded the various tongues spoken by the different nations of the earth. And this opinion is favoured by the fact, that several of the languages of men seem not to have the smallest resemblance to each other; but to be so different, that it is not conceivable that they all proceeded from one root. And it must be confessed, if the object was to scatter men over the face of the earth, by interrupting their intercourse with one another, this would be the most effectual of all. It is also in accordance with the tradition of the Jews, who have an opinion among them, that the number of languages produced on this occasion was just seventy-two; and that this precise number still remains unaltered. It would seem, therefore, that the common opinion is not only safest, but best supported by probable arguments.

It would seem, at first view, that all the inhabitants of the earth were engaged in the enterprise at Babel. Noah was probably still alive, and certainly Shem; but it does not seem probable that these patriarchs had any hand in the work. It is more likely, that the daring scheme was confined to the inhabitants of the neighbouring region. Noah and Shem, probably, never removed from the country where the ark rested. It is, however, useless to inquire what branch of the family of Noah was concerned in this transaction, as there is no history to cast any light on the subject.

SECTION X

posterity of shem

Moses gives us no more than a table of the posterity of Shem, in that particular line from which the Hebrew nation sprang, and from which the Messiah was to descend. According to this table, Arphaxad, the son of Shem, was born two years after the flood. The period of Shem's life after the birth of this son, was no less than five hundred years; so that, if he was a hundred years old when the flood began, continued one whole year in the ark, and lived five hundred and two years after the flood, he must have been at the time of his death just six hundred and three years old; and hence, it may be ascertained, that he lived after his father one hundred and fifty-two years; and was living during the greater part of the life of Abraham. It seems, that the length of human life was not shortened at once, but by degrees; for Arphaxad, though his son Salah was born in the thirty-fifth year of his age, arrived at the age of four hundred and thirty eight years. Salah, though Eber was born in the thirtieth year of his age, lived to the age of four hundred and thirty-three years. Eber did not attain a less age, for his son Peleg being born in the thirty-fourth year of his age, he lived afterwards four hundred and thirty years, which makes his age four hundred and sixty-four. Peleg, the next in succession, did not reach the age of his progenitors; for after the birth of Reu, which occurred in the thirtieth year of his age, he lived no more than two hundred and nine years, so that the length of his life was only two hundred and thirty-nine years. And his son, just mentioned, reached precisely to the same age as his father. For, at the age of two-and-thirty his son Serug was born, and lived afterwards two hundred and seven years, which makes his whole age two hundred and thirty-nine years. Serug did not fall much short of the age of his immediate ancestors; for at the age of thirty his son Nahor was born, after which he lived two hundred years, so that his age, when he died, was two hundred and thirty. Nahor, in his nine-and-thirtieth year was the father of Terah, and lived afterwards a hundred and nineteen years, making his whole age no more than one hundred and forty-eight years.

Terah, at the age of seventy years, is said to have been the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; not in the same year; but the oldest of them was born this year. As Abram is first named, it might seem that he was the oldest of the three, but from facts afterwards related, it appears highly probable that he was the youngest; and that he was first named, not on account of age, but of dignity; and because the whole subsequent history is connected with his family.

This branch of the family of Shem had settled on the eastern side of the Euphrates; and from the testimony of Joshua we learn, that the immediate progenitors of Abraham were all idolaters. In giving his last solemn charge to the tribes of Israel, he called upon them, "Choose ye this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood." And it is remarkable that this is the earliest instance of idolatry which we find recorded in the history by Moses.

The oldest son of Terah seems to have been Haran, who died early, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees; but left a son by the name of Lot, who was taken by his grandfather, and brought up with his own family. Sarai, the wife of Abram, was probably the sister of Lot; though she is here called the daughter-in-law of Terah.

Terah, with Abram, Sarai, and Lot, removed from Ur of the Chaldees, and dwelt at Haran. This movement seems to have been in consequence of some direction from God to Abram; for we find that when they left home they meant to go to Canaan; but for some reason or other, they stopped on the borders of their native country, and dwelt here as long as Terah lived. His whole age was,

two hundred and five years.

SECTION XI

history of abraham

Now commences the history of Abram, who, at the call of God, left Haran, after he had remained with his father for some time; and accompanied by Lot his nephew, and Sarai his wife, went to the land of Canaan, which God had told him was to be his future residence and possession. At the time of this removal Abram was seventy-five years of age. When he arrived at Canaan, he removed from place to place, according to the unsettled kind of life which he and his sons pursued. The Canaanites were, however, still in the land; and though God again promised this land to Abram and his posterity, the full possession was reserved for a future day. Several times during his stay in Canaan, he was forced to leave the country on account of famine.

Lot, the nephew of Abram, increased rapidly in wealth, as well as his uncle, and as they lived together, their herdsmen, with their respective flocks, were mingled together, which gave rise to frequent quarrels between them. Whereupon, Abram saw that to preserve peace, it was necessary for them to separate from each other. Therefore, with a noble generosity, although he was the oldest man, and Lot owed all his wealth to his kindness, yet he offered his nephew his choice of the country. Lot accordingly selected the plains of Jordan, near its entrance into the sea; that is, the country in which stood the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. This was not only a fertile country, but well watered. Lot continued to pitch his tent from place to place, until he was induced, notwithstanding the wickedness of the place, to take up his residence in Sodom, and his family became associated in marriage with the inhabitants of that corrupt city. Abram continued his residence in the more elevated country of Canaan, where he had before pitched his tent. His usual residence, however, was in the plain of Mamre, near the ancient city of Hebron.

In these early ages, almost all people were governed by kings, but their jurisdiction seldom reached farther than a single city, with its suburbs and neighbouring villages: yet sometimes ambitious men, as Nimrod, extended their dominions by war to a considerable distance. Battles, of course, were frequent, and every man was required to be a soldier, when his king demanded his services.

While Lot resided in Sodom, a war occurred, in which the five kings who ruled over the cities of the plain, were joined, against four kings whose dominions lay near the mouth of the Euphrates. The principal of these was Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, to whom these cities of the plain had been subject for twelve years; but in the thirteenth, they rebelled; whereupon, the king of Elam, calling to his assistance several other kings, marched against these rebellious kings. The two armies met and fought in the vale of Siddim, in which battle the king of Elam was victorious. Marching to Sodom, they took the spoil, and, among the rest, took Lot and his family prisoners, and carried away all his goods. Upon hearing this, Abram, calling to his aid his servants, and some of his neighbours, pursued the enemy, and overtook and defeated them near Damascus, and rescued Lot, and recovered all the property which had been taken away, which he restored to the owners, refusing to take any part for himself.

While God repeated to Abram the promise that he would give to him and his posterity the whole extent of the land of Palestine, from the river of Egypt—a small stream at the entrance into the

wilderness—to the great river, the river Euphrates, and confirmed the same by a solemn covenant or oath; he distinctly foretold to him, that his descendants should be strangers in a strange land, where they should be reduced to slavery, and be afflicted four hundred years. As to the beginning of this period, there is still much difference of opinion; but that it should be calculated from the time of Abraham seems to be the most probable, and certainly was the opinion of the ancients, as in the Greek version of the book of Genesis, and in the Samaritan copy, there is an addition to the text, in which this idea is distinctly expressed. At the same time, Jehovah predicted, that the nation by whom they should be oppressed should be punished, and that the people should come out with “great substance.” And to Abram it was promised, that he should be buried in a good old age: and that in the fourth generation, his posterity should gain possession of the promised land. The reason for the fulfilment of the promise being deferred is very remarkable: “For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” This short sentence contains much weighty meaning, deserving the solemn attention of every nation. It teaches them, that though God’s justice is slow in visiting, with deserved punishment, guilty nations, yet his judgments are sure; and that there is a certain fulness of iniquity, which, when it is reached by any people, will certainly be followed by punishment. Then the iniquities of many generations are visited upon the last and most guilty generation. Thus does God visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children after the lapse of many centuries. And this he does, without interfering with justice in regard to individuals.

The wicked nations who now dwelt in this land, and who are sometimes called Amorites, or Canaanites, were the following, namely, the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaims, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. Ten nations; three of which were destroyed or mixed with the others, before the Israelites under Joshua took possession of the land; for at that time, no more than seven nations are mentioned.

Notwithstanding the repeated promises to Abram of a numerous posterity, he had as yet no child. And the mother of his first child was not Sarai, but her maid Hagar, who, according to an ancient usage, was given to him by Sarai, as a secondary wife. The examples recorded in Scripture, of men who had more than one wife, are not intended as examples for our imitation, but may be used for our warning. They all serve to teach us, that every departure from the original institution of marriage is attended with vexation, and evils innumerable. And as to the practice of the pious patriarchs, that apology may be made for them, which the pious in every age need, namely, that through the imperfection of human knowledge and virtue, particular errors and vices obtained the sanction of public opinion, and their evil was not perceived. Thus it was with the Reformers, respecting persecution; and thus it now is, probably, in regard to offensive war, and the military spirit, which is directly hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the practice of the primitive Christians.

The expedient of Sarai, with which Abram complied, was successful. When Hagar the Egyptian maid, knew that she was to have a son instead of Sarai, she could not conceal her contempt for her mistress, who made a heavy complaint against her to her husband. Abram would not interfere, but left it to Sarai to proceed against her according to her will; upon which she began to treat Hagar with severity, until she was induced to flee from the face of her mistress. But the angel of the Lord directed her to return and submit herself to her mistress, promising that she should have a son, and that his name should be called Ishmael, because the Lord had heard her affliction. The angel, moreover, predicted what sort of man he should be, and what should be the character of

the people who should descend from him. "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." Accordingly, Hagar returned, and when her son was born, she called his name Ishmael. It is truly remarkable, how exactly the character of the Bedouin Arabs, to this very day, answers to the description of Ishmael, given by the angel; and their character and mode of life, and place of residence, have never been changed, from the time of Ishmael unto this day.

At the birth of Ishmael, Abram was eighty-six years old. And he seems to have thought that God's promise of a numerous offspring would be fulfilled in this son, for whom he felt a strong affection.

SECTION XII

covenant of circumcision—god visits abram, and promises him a son by sarah—destruction of sodom—escape of lot

But when Abram had reached his ninety-ninth year, God appeared to him in a more remarkable manner than before, under the name of God Almighty, or God the munificent, commanding him "to walk before him and be perfect." On this occasion, God entered anew into covenant with Abram, and as a sign of the certainty of his promise, changed his name to Abraham, the meaning of which is, "the father of many nations."

At this time, also, he instituted the rite of circumcision, as a sign and seal of the covenant, and to be a distinctive mark of all who were received into covenant with God. There is no good reason for supposing that this rite was borrowed from the Egyptians or Ethiopians, as some learned men have thought, but every reason for believing that it was original with Abraham; and that other nations derived it from the Hebrews and Ishmaelites. Lest this ceremony should be neglected, the command enjoining it was very strict, and the punishment for omission nothing less than expulsion from the congregation of the Lord. The blessings promised at this time were the same as before, with some enlargement. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The name of Sarai was also changed to Sarah, and a peculiar blessing was pronounced upon her also:—"And I will bless her, and give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."

This promise of a son by Sarah almost overwhelmed Abraham; he fell on his face and laughed for joy, and said, "Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" But the good old patriarch seems to have been apprehensive, that Ishmael, on whom his affections were strongly fixed, should be cast off; therefore he exclaimed, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Upon which, God, in the kindest and most condescending manner, assured him, that his covenant would be established with the son whom Sarah should have, and whose name should be called Isaac, (Laughter.) "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time, in the next year."

The descendants of Ishmael, now upon earth, who are generally Mohammedans, have retained the rite of circumcision unto this day, and administer it about the same age as that of Ishmael,

when he was circumcised, which was thirteen years.

The next appearance of God to Abraham was very remarkable, as he exhibited himself in visible form, in the shape and appearance of a man; accompanied by two angels, who, in like manner, had the appearance of men.

Abraham was sitting in his tent-door at Mamre, in the middle of the day, when they presented themselves; upon which he bowed himself toward the ground, and addressed one of them by the name, Jehovah: whence it may be inferred, that this person, though appearing in the form of a man, was in some manner known by Abraham to be truly God. It is also remarkable, that they partook of the hospitality of the patriarch. Whether their eating of the prepared calf was real or only in appearance, it is of no importance to inquire.

The object of this visit was, to confirm the promises already made to Abraham; and, especially, that one which related to the speedy birth of a son to Sarah. But the purpose of God to destroy Sodom and the other cities of the plain, for their enormous wickedness, was now communicated to Abraham. The kindness and confidence with which he was treated by Jehovah, on this occasion, are extraordinary. His words were, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Abraham interceded earnestly for Sodom, and did not cease until he obtained a promise, that if only ten righteous persons should be found in that city, it should not be destroyed: but this number, it appears by the event, were not found, and so a fiery ruin overwhelmed the cities of the plain. But God was not unmindful of his servant Lot; for the two angels who had accompanied him to Abraham's tent, were now sent to warn and secure him and his family; and, on this occasion, we have an example of the extreme wickedness of the whole population of that abandoned city. Lot and two of his daughters escaped, while his sons and sons-in-law perished in the dreadful overthrow of the place; and his wife was suddenly transformed into a pillar of salt, for looking back to the town, in direct violation of the injunction of the angels.

The evil consequences of living among a corrupt and licentious people are manifest, in regard to Lot and his family. He himself seems to have continued faithful, for an apostle tells us, that "from day to day he vexed his righteous soul" on account of the wickedness of the people; but the whole of his family appear to have been infected with the prevailing corruption of manners. Of this his daughters, who escaped, gave a humiliating example, when they caused their father to be intoxicated, and became the mothers of two children to him. From this sinful connexion sprang the nations of the Moabites and Ammonites, who had their residence on the east of the Dead Sea; and were perpetual sources of trouble and injury to the Israelites.

The account of Abraham's sojourning in Gerar, on account of famine, is so much the same as what is related of Isaac, that some have supposed that some confusion has occurred in this part of the sacred book; so that what properly belongs to Isaac, is here referred, by the mistake of copies, to Abraham; especially, as Sarah being now above ninety years of age, cannot be supposed to have been as handsome as is here supposed. But as the kind of life pursued by these patriarchs

was similar, there is no improbability in supposing that the disaster of famine might happen during the residence of each of them, and that they might retreat to the same region for relief, which was fertile and near at hand. And as to the names of the kings of Gerar being the same in both cases, it may be observed, that Abimelech seems to have been the common name of their kings, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian kings. The difficulty about Sarah's age is easily removed; for she seems, by miracle, to have recovered her youth. That in both cases the women should have been seized, and taken to the harem of the king, shows us the licentious and arbitrary customs of that country and age.

SECTION XIII

birth of isaac—command to abraham to sacrifice his son

The time had now arrived when Sarah, according to the divine prediction, was to become the mother of a son. His name, as had been directed, was called Isaac; and on the eighth day he was circumcised, according to the commandment. Of course there was great joy and exultation with his parents. On the day on which Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast. This event among the ancient Jews is said to have occurred, not before the third year, and frequently was deferred until the fifth.

It seems to have been on this joyous occasion, that Sarah saw Ishmael engaged in mocking; probably Isaac was the object of his mockery, although this is not said. Wherefore Sarah begged her husband to cast out both Hagar and her son, as it was not intended that the son of the bondwoman, that is, their slave, should be heir with, or thought equal to, her son Isaac. As Abraham entertained a tender affection for Ishmael, he was very unwilling to comply with Sarah's demand; but the Lord told him that he ought to do as his wife wished; and to comfort him respecting Ishmael, the promise that he should be the father of a nation of people, was repeated. Abraham therefore sent Hagar and Ishmael from his dwelling, furnished with bread and water for their journey. They travelled on into the wilderness, and continued their journey until their provisions were spent; on which, Hagar, expecting the lad to die with thirst, laid him down under a bush, and went off to some distance, that she might not see her child die; and here, feeling her desolate and almost hopeless condition, "she lifted up her voice and wept." But God, who heareth the cry of his distressed creatures, had compassion on her, and spoke to her from heaven, and promised not only that the child should live, but that he should become a great nation. At this juncture, the eyes of Hagar were directed to a well of water, and she filled her bottle, and gave drink to the lad.

Ishmael, from this time, seems to have dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, where he became eminent for the use of the bow. His mother appears to have remained with him; for we read, "that she took him a wife of the land of Egypt."

The permanent property of most value to those who led the wandering life pursued by Abraham and his sons, was the possession of wells of water for the refreshment of their numerous flocks. We find, therefore, that wells were the subject of solemn treaties or covenants between the heads of tribes in that country; their most serious disputes were on account of these; and the most bitter enmity was manifested by their filling up the wells of their enemies.

When Isaac was grown up to the size of a man, Ishmael being gone, the affections of the patriarch were fixed on his only and well beloved son. When all causes of trouble seemed to be removed, Abraham received the most extraordinary and heart-rending command from God which was ever given to any parent. "Take now," said God, "thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Never was a more painful duty required, and yet Abraham did not complain or hesitate. He went straight forward in the way of obedience, until his hand was raised to strike the fatal stroke, aimed at the life of his child, who lay meekly bound before him. At this critical and awful moment, his hand was arrested by the call of an angel from heaven. This, perhaps, was the most extraordinary act of faith and obedience ever exhibited by a mere man; but it was no more than a shadow of God's giving up his only begotten and well beloved Son, actually to die a painful and disgraceful death for our sins.

SECTION XIV

death of sarah—purchase of a burying place

At the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died. On this mournful occasion, the patriarch felt that he needed for his family some better title to the land he possessed than he had yet obtained. In his mode of life he did not need to buy the land on which he pitched his tent from time to time, and over which his flocks wandered. But when he saw the wife of his youth, and the constant companion of his pilgrimage, lying dead in the tent, the want of a place of burial, such as could not be disturbed, pressed itself upon him so strongly, that he entered into a negotiation with the sons of Heth for a piece of ground for that purpose. They, indeed, generously offered him the privilege of burying his dead in the best of their sepulchres: but he would not agree to this proposal, and asked them to sell the cave of Machpelah, with the field in which it was situated. Ephron, who seems to have been a chief among the sons of Heth, generously offered to give Abraham the field which he desired; but the patriarch did not wish to bring himself under any special obligation to the people of the land, and therefore insisted on paying a fair price for the property. Accordingly, the sale took place by mutual agreement, and he weighed to Ephron four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And thus "the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre; the field and the cave which was therein; the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of the city."

This being the most ancient example of the transfer of real estate, which is on record, it is curious to remark the particularity with which the property is described, and the several things contained in the purchase; not only the field, but the cave, and also the trees in the field, and on the border. We may observe, also, the publicity of the transaction. It was a bargain made, and an actual conveyance of land, in the presence of all the inhabitants of the city. Thus every thing was made sure. The price was carefully weighed, and consisted of such money as was current with the merchant; that is, it probably had some stamp or mark impressed on the pieces, indicating that it was not spurious but genuine silver. From the whole transaction, it seems evident, that written deeds, or documents signed and sealed by the parties, were not then in use. If writing had been known in Abraham's time, we should most certainly have had some mention of it here, or when he sent Eliezer to his kindred in Mesopotamia; but in the Bible there is not a vestige of any thing like

writing before Moses, unless you choose to place Job at an earlier period. But what sort of writing was used in the time of Job, we know not. It might have been nothing else than writing by pictures, or what are called hieroglyphics.

Abraham, having secured the cave of Machpelah, buried Sarah his wife there; and this became the place of burial for the descendants of Abraham for many generations.

SECTION XV

abraham sends to his kindred for a wife for isaac—rebekah is sent—death of abraham

Abraham, being now advanced in years, was desirous of seeing Isaac, his son and heir, well married and settled, before he died. And as he was on principle opposed to a connexion with the inhabitants of the country, he thought it best to send Eliezer, a trusty servant, and steward of his household, to select a wife for Isaac from among his own kindred. Eliezer, accordingly, set out on his journey, with a caravan of ten camels, not only to give a proof to the people to whom he was sent, of Abraham's wealth—for God had greatly blessed him—but to carry presents for the friends of the person that might agree to accompany him home. This aged and faithful servant had not resided so long in Abraham's family without religious benefit. He appears to have possessed the very spirit of his master, as regarded faith and devotion. For, having arrived in the country of his destination, instead of depending on his own wisdom, he commits the whole matter, by prayer, to the providence of God. The substance of the prayer which he offered up at the well of water to which he had come, was, that it might be so ordered that the woman who should first come down to the well to draw water, according to the custom of the East, and who, upon being requested, should give drink to himself and his camels, might be the one that God had appointed for the wife of Isaac. And before he had finished his prayer, behold, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, who was the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Rebekah was beautiful, and doubtless, Eliezer, as soon as he saw her, believed that his prayer was answered; but his confidence must have been greatly increased when, in compliance with his request, she cheerfully let down her pitcher, and said, "Drink, my lord;" and when, before she was requested, of her own accord, she offered to draw water for the camels. Indeed, the occurrences were so sudden and remarkable, that the man stood astonished, waiting to observe "whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." This satisfaction, however, must have been full, when, upon inquiry, he found that the beautiful and obliging girl was the daughter of Bethuel, and consequently the grand-niece of Abraham, his master.

Eliezer having given some costly jewels to Rebekah, she, after inviting him to her father's house, ran home to tell what had passed, to her friends. Laban, the brother of Rebekah, instantly went out to the well, where Eliezer remained standing, and again most pressingly invited him to the house, saying, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels." The man having complied with this invitation, and having ungirded his camels, and received some refreshment, began to mention fully his business; and telling whose servant he was, and giving an account of the abundant riches with which God had blessed Abraham, he proceeded to explain at once the errand on which he had come; and particularly told the remarkable occurrences at the well, since his arrival. "And now," said he, "if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or the left." Then both Laban and Bethuel said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot

speak unto thee bad or good. Rebekah is before thee, take her, go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." Upon hearing this favourable decision, Eliezer felt constrained, without delay, and in the presence of them all, to prostrate himself on the earth, in a solemn act of worship and praise, to Almighty God, who had so wonderfully prospered his journey. No doubt Rebekah consented to the contract thus made by her father and brother; but in those days the explicit consent of young females was not considered essential; as is the case in the East, at this day.

Things being thus quickly and happily arranged, Eliezer was anxious to return home immediately; but the friends of Rebekah begged for a little delay; but when they found that he was determined to go, and saw that Rebekah was willing to accompany him, they ceased to object. Accordingly, Eliezer had the pleasure of conveying home to his master, a lovely and virtuous bride for his beloved son. She appears to have lived with him in uninterrupted peace; for Isaac in this differed from all the other patriarchs of those times, that he never married more than one wife.

Abraham, after the death of Sarah, took another wife, Keturah. His sons, by this woman, six in number, were not permitted to divide the inheritance with Isaac; to whom Abraham gave all that he had; but these young men, as they grew up, received presents from their father, and were sent away into the east country.

Abraham lived to the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, and then was gathered to his fathers; and was buried by his sons Ishmael and Isaac in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, which he purchased from Ephron the Hittite, and where he buried Sarah. This is the only meeting of the two brothers, Isaac and Ishmael, of which we have any account, after the former was sent away with his mother. We learn, however, that Ishmael's family greatly increased, for he was the father of twelve sons, who were all princes, each being the head of a distinct tribe or nation. Their habitation was in Arabia, where their descendants are found leading the same kind of life unto this day. Ishmael himself lived to be a hundred and thirty-seven years of age, and then "died in the presence of all his brethren."

SECTION XVI

esau and jacob born—esau deprived of the blessing of the first-born by the fraud of rebekah and jacob

At the time when Isaac was married to Rebekah he was forty years of age. For a considerable time he had no children, but in answer to his prayers, twin sons, Esau and Jacob, were born. The former at his birth was in a remarkable manner covered all over with hair, but Jacob, his twin brother, was smooth. Esau being the oldest had a right to the privileges of the first-born, called the birth-right; but on a certain occasion, when the boys were grown, Esau having returned from hunting, to which he was greatly devoted, was so hungry and fatigued, that he believed himself to be dying; and meeting with his brother, who had ready-made a certain kind of red porridge or soup, Esau begged Jacob to give it to him. Jacob seeing his necessity, told him he would give it to him for his birth-right. Esau, believing himself to be at the point of death, said, "What profit shall this birth-right do to me?" Whereupon he sold it for a dish of pottage, and confirmed the bargain by an oath. This act of Esau is described in Scripture as very profane; as it was understood that spiritual as well as temporal blessings were connected with the birth-right, and especially a

superiority over all his brethren: and some suppose it had some relation to the line from which the Messiah should descend. But however wicked the act of Esau in despising his birth-right, and selling it for a mess of pottage, the conduct of Jacob, who took advantage of his brother's necessity, cannot be justified. It was certainly an act in which there was a total absence of that brotherly love which we owe to every fellow-creature; and more especially to our own brothers, who are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

The only disaster which is recorded in the whole life of Isaac was a famine, which compelled him to go to Gerar, of which Abimelech was king; whither Abraham his father had taken refuge from a calamity of a similar kind, in the time of a former king—probably the father of the present—of the same name. And a similar occurrence to that recorded in the life of Abraham now took place. Rebekah, as soon as her beauty was beheld, was carried off to be reserved for the use of the king; for Isaac had, to preserve his own life, which he supposed would be sacrificed for the sake of his wife, pretended that she was his sister; for which falsehood he had not the apology which Abraham employed; as Abraham's wife was in a certain sense his sister. But Abimelech, being a well-disposed man, no sooner discovered that Rebekah was the wife of Isaac, than he restored her to her husband, with a reproof for his conduct. As this land was very fertile, Isaac remained and cultivated the earth with great success, receiving an increase of a hundred-fold of what he sowed; that is, a hundred grains for one; and while he was resident here, his riches increased exceedingly, until he became an object of envy to the Philistines, among whom he dwelt. They contended with him about wells which his servants had dug, until, at length, Abimelech requested him to depart out of the country. He went next to the Valley of Gerar, and pitched there; but still the contention with the Philistines for the wells which he digged continued; until, at Rehoboth, they ceased to be troublesome. But he continued removing his tent from place to place, until he came to Beersheba, or the well of the oath. Here God appeared unto Isaac, and said, "I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake." And Isaac, possessing the same devout spirit as his father, "builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord." While he resided at this place, Abimelech and some of his chief men came to him, and proposed entering into a solemn covenant with him. For on account of his increasing greatness they were afraid of him; and thought, as he had been badly treated whilst residing among them, and had been sent out of their land, that he might feel a disposition to be revenged. Abimelech, however, used it as an argument to enter into this covenant, that they had done nothing but good unto him, and had sent him away in peace. Isaac, who seems to have been a lover of peace, received his old friends kindly, made a feast for their entertainment, and willingly entered into covenant with them, agreeably to their proposal.

Men who are prosperous in the world often suffer affliction and mortification from their children. Esau was a favourite child with his father, who therefore would be the more grieved at the imprudent conduct of his first-born, who married one of the daughters of Canaan, Judith the daughter of Beeri. And, not content with one, he took another wife from the same tribe, Bashemath the daughter of Elon. "Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." Esau was forty years of age when he contracted these marriages.

It was customary for the patriarchs, when about to die, to call their children, and give them their blessing, which, in the case of the inspired patriarchs, was prophetic of their future destiny; and, of course, the richest blessing was pronounced upon the oldest son, or on him who had received the

privilege of the birth-right, which was sometimes transferred from the first-born to a younger brother.

Isaac, being now advanced in years, and being so blind that he could not distinguish one person from another, thought that his days were probably drawing to a close. He, therefore, called Esau, and sent him out to hunt some venison, and to dress it in that peculiar manner, which he knew to be agreeable to him; that being gratified and excited to paternal affection, he might be prepared to give him the benediction of the first-born, before he died. Rebekah, overhearing these directions of her husband, immediately devised a plan for securing the chief blessing to her favourite son Jacob. To accomplish her end, she made him bring her a kid, which she dressed in a manner which she knew would be agreeable to Isaac's taste; and having persuaded Jacob to put on a suit of his brother's clothes, and to cover his hands and neck with the hairy skin of the kid, she sent him into his father, pretending to be Esau, who had not yet returned from the field. The stratagem succeeded. Jacob answered to his father's question, that he was Esau, and accounted for his quick return from the hunt by referring it all to the favour of Providence. Isaac suspected that the voice was that of Jacob, and therefore called him near to satisfy himself by feeling his hands; but finding that he was hairy, his suspicions, in a great measure, vanished. However, he called upon him again to say whether he was his "very son Esau," and upon receiving an answer that he was, he proceeded to bless him with his best and richest blessing; even that of the first-born: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

This scene was scarcely finished, before Esau returned from hunting, and quickly presented himself before his father with savoury meat which he had taken. Isaac was greatly surprised, and said, "Who art thou?" "And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau." Upon hearing this, Isaac knew at once the deception which had been practised upon him, and "he trembled very exceedingly"—but would not recall what he had done. Having blessed Jacob with his richest and best blessing, he now confirmed it, and said, "And he shall be blessed." Esau, upon this, was seized with grief. "He cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry; and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father." Isaac said, "Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing." And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, (the supplanter,) for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birth-right, and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" "Isaac answered, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given him for servants; and with corn and wine I have sustained him. And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father; and Esau lifted up his voice, and wept." Isaac then pronounced a benediction, giving him the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above. Telling him that by his sword he should live; but still repeating the prediction, that his brother should be superior to him; and that he should serve him; only, it was declared, that at those times when he should obtain power, he would break his brother's yoke from off his neck.

The conduct of Rebekah and Jacob on this occasion can never be reconciled with moral rectitude, as long as truth and sincerity shall be reckoned among the virtues; but it is not for us to fix the degree of guilt which attaches to their conduct. In this case it is probable, that Rebekah made the purpose of God the rule of her conduct, instead of his commandments; for it had been revealed to

her, before the children were born, “that the elder should serve the younger;” and Jacob might have thought that as he had purchased his brother’s birth-right, he had a claim to the chief blessing. In this transaction, as in many others recorded in Scripture, we have a clear illustration of the fact, that God accomplishes his own purposes by the free, and even by the sinful actions of his creatures, without being the cause of their sinfulness. But bad conduct and deceitful dealing towards brethren or others is pretty sure, in the providence of God, to be followed by some degree of retribution, even in this world. Rebekah and her favourite son were completely successful in their plan of deception, by which Esau was deprived of the blessing of the first-born; but the malice of the injured brother against his supplanter was so hot, that it became necessary for Jacob to flee to a distant country for safety; and thus a long separation took place between the mother and her favourite son, who, it would seem, had remained constantly at home until this time. Esau’s anger was not a transient passion, but he formed a settled purpose, that after the burial of his father, whose decease he concluded could not be far off, he would take the life of his brother; and this purpose he must have declared, for information of it reached the ears of Rebekah. On which, she advised Jacob to depart immediately from the country, and to go into Mesopotamia, to her brother Laban’s, until the heat of Esau’s anger should abate, when she promised that she would send and fetch him back. “For,” said she, “why should I be deprived of you both in one day?” But as the consent of Isaac must also be obtained, and as he would not be ready to believe a report which attributed so much malice to his favourite son, she had recourse to other arguments to induce the old patriarch to consent to his departure. She complained bitterly of her afflictions, on account of the daughters of Heth, whom Esau had married; and declared that her life would become a burden to her, if Jacob should follow the example of his brother, and take a wife from among the daughters of the land. This consideration had its weight with Isaac, to persuade him to send Jacob away; wherefore, he called him, and solemnly charged him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but to go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, and to take a wife of the daughters of Laban, his mother’s brother. And then he pronounced a blessing on him in the following emphatical words: “And God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: And give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land, wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. And so Isaac sent away Jacob to go to Padan-aram.”

Esau, observing that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away that he might form an alliance with the kindred of his family; and finding that he had vexed and displeased his parents by taking the daughters of Heth, went and married, in addition to the wives which he already had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael.

SECTION XVII

Jacob goes to padan-aram, and is entertained by laban—he is deceived by laban, and receives Leah, instead of Rachel, to wife—Rachel also given to him for seven years’ service

Jacob, having left his father’s house, proceeded on his journey towards Haran, until the sun having gone down, he resolved to spend the night at the place where he had arrived; and, finding no house to receive him, he took some of the stones of the place for a pillow, and lay down to sleep. “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above

it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou licst, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed: and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel, (house of God,) but the name before was Laish. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I can come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

In this transaction, we have the first mention of three different things, which seem, however, to have been established usages. The first is a religious vow; the second the ceremony of anointing a pillar with oil; and the third a promise of tithes, or a tenth of all his property to the Lord. There is, indeed, a mention of tithes in the history of Abraham, when he was met by Melchizedek, he gave unto him the tenth of all the spoils. It seems, then, to have been an early custom for the pious to devote one-tenth of their gains to the service of the Lord. The Mosaic law was nothing more than the recognition of a custom which had been long in use; probably from the beginning of the world. And there is no good reason why all Christians should not follow this example, and consecrate at least one-tenth of all their income to the Lord. Besides the annual tithe, the members of the Hebrew commonwealth gave many offerings in the course of the year, in the form of first-fruits and gifts, and free-will offerings.

When Jacob had arrived in the country of his mother's relations, he met with Rachel, the daughter of Laban, who acted as shepherdess of her father's sheep, and informed her that he was the son of Rebekah, her father's sister. As soon as Laban understood that his nephew was come, "he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house." After Jacob had remained one month, Laban proposed to allow him wages for his services; but Jacob, who had fixed his affections strongly on Rachel his cousin, offered to serve his uncle seven years, if he would give her to him to wife. To this Laban readily assented; for he said, "It is better that I should give her unto thee, than to another." When the time was fulfilled, Jacob demanded his wife; for he had served seven years for Rachel, "and they appeared unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Laban, therefore, made a feast, and invited the men of the place; but instead of Rachel, Leah, the elder sister, was given unto Jacob. Laban excused himself by a reference to the customs of his country, according to which he pretended that a younger sister must not be given in marriage before the elder; but of this he should have informed his nephew before, and not have deceived him. Laban, however, offered to give him Rachel also, if he would serve seven years more; to which Jacob agreed. It must not be understood that he served seven years more before Rachel was given, but that he engaged with his uncle for the service of seven other years. To Leah, Laban gave Zilpah for a maid; and to Rachel he gave Bilhah. Although Rachel was most

tenderly beloved by Jacob, yet Leah was honoured to be the mother of children, while Rachel had none. This she bore with much impatience; and in imitation of Sarah, she gave Bilhah, her maid, to Jacob as a kind of secondary wife. Leah had already borne four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; and now Bilhah bore two sons to Jacob, whom she named Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah also had two sons, Gad and Asher. And after Reuben was grown to be of a good size, Leah had a fifth son, and called his name Issachar; and afterwards a sixth, whom she called Zebulun, and a daughter named Dinah. At length God heard the prayers of Rachel, and she bore a son whom she called Joseph.

SECTION XVIII

Jacob's return—pursued by Laban—Esau comes with a host to meet him, but God turns away his displeasure

After the birth of Joseph, Jacob began to think of returning to his own country, and mentioned it to Laban. But he, having greatly increased in wealth since Jacob had the care of his flocks, was unwilling to part with his nephew, and offered to give him any wages he should ask. Accordingly an agreement was made that Jacob should have for his share the cattle which were marked and spotted in a particular manner; but it was so ordered in Providence, that this agreement turned out greatly to the profit of Jacob. This increase of Jacob's property excited the envy of Laban's sons, and they said, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's, and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all his glory." And their words were reported to Jacob. Besides, Laban himself became dissatisfied, and his countenance was not towards Jacob as before. Wherefore "the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee." He said also, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me; get thee from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." Jacob, having received this divine command, called his wives, and informed them of the directions which he had received from heaven; upon which they readily consented to go. Jacob took the opportunity to prepare for his journey and to leave the country, while Laban was busily engaged in shearing his sheep, lest he should attempt to prevent him from going, or keep back his daughters. And it was not until the third day after Jacob's departure, that the report of the fact reached Laban's ears. And his conduct showed that Jacob's suspicions of his temper were not ill-founded, for immediately "he took his brethren with him, and pursued after Jacob," but on account of the three days' start which the latter had, he did not overtake him until the seventh day, when he had reached Mount Gilead. Laban reproved Jacob for taking away his daughters by stealth, and pretended that he would have "sent them away with mirth and songs, with tabret and with harp;" and complained that he had not been permitted to kiss his sons and daughters before they departed. He also observed that it was fully in his power to do him hurt, but said he, "The God of your father spake unto me yesterday, saying, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob good or bad." One thing, however, he urged in the last place, as the ground of the most grievous of all his complaints, that they had stolen his gods. This shows that idolatry still prevailed in Mesopotamia; and, although Jacob knew it not, had entered his own family; for Rachel had stolen her father's gods when she left his house, but she managed the matter so cunningly, that the theft was not discovered, nor the possession of these idols by his chiefly beloved wife made known to Jacob. When nothing was discovered, after a very particular search, to justify this last accusation of Laban, Jacob began to grow angry at being thus pursued, harassed, and accused, and said to Laban, "What is my trespass? what is my sin, that

thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou has searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before thy brethren and my brethren, that they may judge between us both. This twenty years have I been with thee, thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it: of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction, and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." After hearing this indignant speech of Jacob, Laban felt disposed to put an end to the dispute; he therefore said, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine; and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne? Now, therefore, come thou, and let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee." To this proposal Jacob very cordially consented, and immediately took a stone and set it up for a pillar, and called upon his brethren to gather stones: and they took stones and made an heap, and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it "Jegar-Sahadutha," but Jacob called it "Galeed." And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between me and thee this day;" therefore was the name of it called Galeed, (the heap of testimony;) and also Mizpah; for he said, "the Lord watch between thee and me, when we are absent one from another: If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is with us, see God is witness between me and thee." "And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast between me and thee. This heap be witness and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee; and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us; and Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread; and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and daughters, and blessed them. And Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

The country through which Jacob was now passing afterwards became the inheritance of some of the tribes, the descendants of his sons; and the names of places now given were retained. After his deliverance from the pursuit of Laban his father-in-law, he proceeded on his journey towards Canaan; and as God had protected him and his family, by sending an angel to meet Laban, and to warn him to do Jacob no harm, so now the care of Providence was signally manifested to him, by a vision of angels who met him on the way. This was intended to prepare him for new dangers and difficulties which he must encounter. Upon seeing these angels of God, he said, "This is God's host; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim." It seems from this language, that there was a multitude of the heavenly host, who now appeared as an army to the eyes of Jacob. The dangers alluded to were those to be apprehended from the displeasure of his brother Esau; for, although twenty years had passed, he was not certain that the anger of his brother, which had once induced him to resolve on his death, had entirely subsided. As he drew near to Canaan, therefore, he became anxious to ascertain the temper of Esau's mind towards him. Accordingly, he sent messengers to his brother, respectfully to inform him of his circumstances, and of his

approach; but they returned more speedily than was expected, and brought the unwelcome intelligence, that Esau, accompanied by four hundred men, was on his way to meet him. Jacob was exceedingly alarmed and distressed by this information, and immediately began to make the best arrangements he could, to avoid the wrath of his brother; for as to his hostile intentions he could entertain no doubt, from his being attended with such an army of men. He divided his company and flocks into two bands, so that if the foremost should be smitten, the hindmost might have some chance of making their escape. But his chief hope was wisely placed in God, to whom he addressed himself in the following pathetic prayer. "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and unto thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of the mercies and the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

To be able to plead God's own word of promise in our supplications, is a sure ground of confidence; for the Lord will remember the word in which he hath caused our souls to trust. But Jacob, while he had recourse to God by earnest prayer, did not think that this rendered the use of every lawful means unnecessary; and as he had already made arrangements for escaping, at least with part of his company, so now he determined to try what effect kindness might have on the mind of his brother. Men are softened by a present, accompanied by the words of kindness. Jacob, therefore, sent forward a selection from the several kinds of his cattle, in different droves, directing those who conducted the first, when asked whose property they were, to say, "They are thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my Lord Esau;" and the second and third to say the same words. Jacob, having sent forward this valuable present, began to consult in the best manner he could for the safety of his wives and children, and in the night crossed over the brook Jabbok, with all his wives and his children.

When he had conveyed his family across the brook, he returned to the camp, where he was alone, "and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said, What is thy name? and he said, Jacob; and he said, Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name. And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day."

Undoubtedly the person with whom Jacob wrestled was God in human form, and therefore called a man. This event was so remarkable, that it occasioned a significant name to be given to the place, and also a new name to Jacob, which became also the principal name of the people whom God claimed as his own peculiar nation.

Jacob was now prepared to meet with his brother Esau. He could say, If God be for us, who can be against us! Having arranged his property and his family, “he went forward and bowed himself seven times to the earth before Esau his brother; and Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.” God, it seems, had been with Esau, as he was with Laban, to change his evil purpose, and to revive in his bosom a lively feeling of brotherly affection. God has many ways of preserving his people from their enemies; but the most effectual, and to them the most pleasing, is when he changes their enmity into kindness. Esau inquired affectionately concerning the women and children whom he saw; and did not wish to receive Jacob’s present, which had gone before him; but on being pressed by his brother, he consented to accept it. He seemed also disposed to join himself to Jacob’s company, but the latter wisely declined the offer, on account of the necessity which he was under of journeying very slowly. Esau, therefore, took a friendly leave of his brother, and returned home; leaving him to go on his journey at his leisure.

Thus a second time was Jacob delivered by the interposition of Divine Providence, from a near relation who sought his hurt.

SECTION XIX

Jacob’s residence in Canaan—Dinah’s misfortune—the destruction of the Shechemites—Jacob goes to Bethel—Deborah dies—God appears to him at Bethel, when he builds an altar to Jehovah

The first place where Jacob rested after his wearisome journey, was Succoth; so called from the circumstance of his erecting booths there for his flocks and herds. But he soon removed to Shechem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. Here it seems he intended to take up his abode permanently, as he bought a tract of land from the children of Hamor, for a hundred pieces of silver; and here also he erected an altar, and called it Elohe-Israel; that is, God, the God of Israel. But how little do the wisest of mortals see of the future. An event soon occurred which rendered the patriarch’s longer continuance here altogether inexpedient. Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob, as was very natural, went to visit the daughters of the land; but she was an inexperienced girl, and she ought not to have ventured among these strangers, whose manners were corrupt, without the protection of her parents, or her brothers, several of whom were now grown up. The event was unhappy. The heedless damsel was seduced by Shechem the son of Hamor, the prince of the country; but this man immediately proposed to marry her. Shechem was much in earnest to have this matter brought to a friendly settlement, and urged his father Hamor to use his influence for him with Jacob and his sons. This was a new kind of trouble to the pious patriarch. But he remained silent after he heard of the unhappy affair, until his sons, who were absent with the flocks, returned. When the young men, the brothers of Dinah, heard how she had been treated, they were exceedingly grieved, and not only grieved, but enraged; for being their only sister, she was no doubt very dear to them. They were, therefore, resolved on a bloody revenge; but they suffered the proposal for the marriage to go on, which now was pressed most earnestly, not only by Hamor, but by the young man Shechem himself, who offered to give any dowry which might be asked of him, if he might only obtain Dinah for a wife. Jacob seems to have been an easy tempered man; and in this case he gave up the management of the business to his sons, who pretended to be pleased with the proposed match; but they alleged that there was a difficulty in the way which they could not overcome. It was unlawful for them to give their sister in

marriage to a person who was not a Hebrew; but if the Schechemites would consent to have every male among them introduced into the Hebrew nation, all obstacles would be removed out of the way. Hamor and his son did not refuse to comply with these terms, for the attachment of Schechem to Dinah was exceedingly strong. They, therefore, undertook to persuade all the men of their city to agree to this proposal. And they argued with them thus: "These men are peaceable with us; therefore, let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only, herein will the men consent to dwell with us, if every male among us be circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us." The people hearing this fair representation, were persuaded to consent, and the males of the whole town were admitted by the rite of circumcision to the Jewish nation. On the third day, Simeon and Levi, two of the brothers of Dinah, boldly attacked the men with the sword, and slew all the males. They also took the spoil of the city, and seized their sheep, oxen, and asses, and took their wives captives. As soon as Jacob heard of this unlawful and cruel violence of his two sons, he reproved them for their wicked conduct, and told them that by such doings they would render him hateful to the inhabitants of Canaan; and that as his force was small, they would combine against him, and destroy him and his house. But the young men justified their conduct by referring to the dishonour done to their sister.

Jacob's longer continuance at Shechem being inexpedient, God, who condescended to guide him in all his ways, directed him to go to Bethel, and to dwell there, and to erect an altar to God, who had there appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of Esau. This was the very place where God first appeared unto Jacob, and where was seen by him, in a dream of the night, a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, on which the angels were ascending and descending. Here Jacob vowed a vow, and set up a sacred memorial; but he seems to have forgotten his solemn engagements entered into in this place, until God now put him in mind of his duty.

Jacob having fallen into trouble, and having found much iniquity in his own children, thought it necessary to attempt a family reformation; for however pious the head of a family may be, yet wickedness will often creep into his house, and great corruption may exist among the members of his household, of which he is kept in ignorance. Too often, fond mothers connive at the faults of their sons, and conceal their evil deeds from their father, than which there is no more certain means of leading them to perdition. In ancient times, the propensity to idolatry was unaccountably strong; Jacob, therefore, exhorted his household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange gods, that is, the idols, that were among them. He also called upon them, before his going to Bethel, which was holy ground to him, to change their garments and be clean. This, I believe, is the first instance which we have on record, of an outward religious purification; which was doubtless performed by the use of water, the element used all over the world for cleansing. We are taught by this example, that when we are about to draw near to God, in his house and in his ordinances, we should be careful to put away every thing sinful, and approach the service with reverence.

Jacob said, "Let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." The exhortation of Jacob was not in vain, for his family gave up all the strange gods which were in their hand; and their earrings—which probably had some superstitious use—and Jacob hid them under the oak

which was in Shechem.

It is somewhat surprising that the Canaanites were not roused to vengeance by the treacherous and cruel slaughter of the Shechemites. Nothing would have been easier than to overwhelm Jacob and his family, by joining the forces of only a few neighbouring cities. The reason why this was not done, is given by the sacred historian: "The terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."

Having arrived at Bethel, Jacob proceeded to erect an altar, which he called "El-Bethel, because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

Here Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and was buried beneath an oak, at Bethel. She must have been very far advanced in years, as Rebekah herself, if now alive, was a very aged woman. On what occasion Deborah came into Jacob's family, we know not. Perhaps she was on a visit, as the residence of Isaac, who was still living, was at no great distance. We are not informed that Jacob visited his father immediately after his return; but we may take it for granted, that so pious a man would not be inattentive to the duty which he owed such an excellent parent.

After Jacob had fixed his residence at Bethel, God appeared to him again, and confirmed the change of his name from Jacob to Israel, and renewed his promises to him, saying, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply: a nation, and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land." As a memorial of this renewed proof of God's faithfulness and mercy, the patriarch set up a pillar and anointed it with oil, and poured it upon a drink-offering. These sacred ceremonies were mentioned in a former part of the history, except the drink-offering, which was probably wine, as, under the law, this liquid was constantly used for this purpose. No doubt, all these various methods of honouring and worshipping God, had been divinely appointed. The old name of Bethel, which Jacob had given to this place, instead of Luz, the original name, he now renewed. But after remaining for some time at this place, Jacob journeyed still further to the south, and came to Ephrath. And here occurred one of the most distressing events of the patriarch's life. Rachel, his first and best beloved wife, died while they stopped here. When her soul was about departing, Rachel named her child, which had just been born, Ben-oni, the son of my sorrow; but his father called him Benjamin, the son of my right hand. And thus Rachel died in the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem; there she was buried, and Jacob placed a pillar over her grave, which was remaining, and known as the pillar of Rachel's grave, in the time of Moses.

SECTION XX

reuben's incest—death of isaac—joseph's dreams—jacob's fondness and partiality for joseph—the envy of his brethren—he is sold into egypt

The wandering life led by Jacob and his ancestors often required a change of residence, on account of the failure of pasture and water in particular districts. We find Jacob, therefore, continually removing his tent from place to place. From Ephrath or Bethlehem, he journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar, the exact situation of which place is unknown.

About this time, another grievous domestic trouble arose. In consequence of a great and unnatural crime committed by Reuben, he was cut off from all the privileges of the birth-right, which naturally belonged to him, as he was the oldest son.

Jacob now visited Isaac his father, who seems to have continued his residence all the time of his son's absence, at Mamre, the old dwelling-place of his father Abraham. The life of Isaac was protracted far beyond his own expectations, and that of his friends; for before Jacob left him, he thought that his end was near; and Esau, when supplanted by Jacob, seemed to think that his father's decease would occur very soon; for he deferred the execution of his malicious purpose against the life of his brother, until the funeral of his father should occur; but, after more than twenty years, Isaac is still alive. During this long period the patriarch was blind, and could have but little enjoyment of this life. Soon after Jacob's visit he died, having lived a hundred and eighty years. "And he was gathered to his people, being old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him;" doubtless in the cave of Machpelah, which was near at hand, and where his father and mother were buried.

Jacob had become the husband of four women, only one of whom, it is probable, was really beloved by him; and she was now dead, but had left two infant children, who became the darlings of the aged patriarch. Especially Joseph, the elder of the two, was beloved above all the sons of Jacob. Two of Jacob's wives were of an inferior order, having been the maids of Leah and Rachel, and were by way of distinction called concubines. Concerning one of these a fact is stated, which places her character in a very unfavourable light: of the other we have no particular information. To each of these were born two sons, those of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, were named Dan and Naphtali; the son's of Zilpah, Leah's maid, were called Gad and Asher. It is more than probable, that these boys would be lightly esteemed, in comparison of the sons of Leah and Rachel; and they would be likely to feel their degradation, and resent it. These suppositions, to say the least, are not improbable; but we are distinctly informed respecting them, that their conduct was such as to give ground for an evil report, which Joseph was careful to convey to the ears of his father. This would naturally provoke the displeasure of these youth, for among offenders, no cause produces more fierce indignation than to have their misdeeds reported to a superior: and with such young men as are guilty of secret crimes, an informer is the most odious character in the world. But Jacob appears to have acted imprudently, in showing so plainly his partiality for Joseph. Perhaps he could not help feeling a peculiar affection for this child, both on account of his deceased mother, and the amiable character of the youth; but it is always improper for a parent to show an evident partiality for one child above the rest, since the certain effect will be to excite envy. Jacob distinguished Joseph, by making him a coat of great splendour and beauty, in which many colours were curiously interwoven. The envy of his brothers began to be manifested, and Joseph was not careful to lessen it, but pursued a course calculated to raise it to the highest pitch; for he related to them dreams, the plain interpretation of which was, that he was not only destined to be superior to them all, but that they were to bow down before him, and serve him. The dreams, however, were from above, as the event proved. These things, coming one after another, produced great dislike and hatred in the feelings of the other sons of Jacob towards Joseph. Some of them only wanted opportunity to proceed to the most fatal acts of violence: and it was not long before the desired opportunity was afforded. For, having driven their flocks to Shechem, where Jacob had property, and where he had lived on his return from the east, they had the opportunity of talking with one

another freely, in regard to the partiality shown to Joseph by their father; and concerning the insolence—as it seemed to them—of this petted youth. Grievings of this kind are always increased by mutual communication. The sons of Jacob having been absent for some time, and no tidings having been received from them, the old patriarch began to be uneasy respecting their welfare. He determined, therefore, to despatch Joseph, who was now seventeen years of age, to see how his brothers were doing, and to bring him word. Joseph, suspecting no evil, left the vale of Hebron, where Jacob now dwelt, to go to Shechem, to see his brothers. The lad being alone, lost his way, and was found wandering in the wilderness by a stranger, who also informed him that his brothers had left Shechem, and had driven their flocks to Dothan. Joseph, therefore, receiving from the friendly stranger the proper directions, proceeded to Dothan; no doubt expecting to be received kindly by his brothers, who had been absent from their father's house for some time. But as soon as the youth appeared in sight, wearing the hated garment of many colours, these men began to plot against his life. "And they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh, come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, the oldest of Jacob's sons, though under his father's displeasure for his crime, before hinted at, yet was not of so revengeful a temper as the rest; and not only refused to join in their design of murdering their brother, but had influence to prevent them from killing him at once. He said to them, "Let us not kill him—shed no blood; but cast him into this pit in the wilderness, and lay no hand on him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again." The first thing which they did when Joseph came up was to strip off his coat, which had been the occasion of so much envy in them, and perhaps of some degree of vanity in him. Next, they cast him into a pit in which there was no water; intending, doubtless, to leave him to perish with hunger in this dark and dreary abode. Having satisfied their vengeance, they sat down to eat, as though nothing uncommon had happened. But Providence so ordered it, that at this moment, a trading caravan, partly of Midianites and partly of Ishmaelites, was seen approaching. They had come from Mount Gilead, and their camels were loaded with spices and myrrh, which they were carrying down to Egypt. The thought now occurred to Judah, who seems to have experienced some relents about the course which they were pursuing, that it would be better to sell the lad to these merchants than to destroy his life. And he said, "What profit is there if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, and our flesh." To this proposal all assented who were present, for Reuben had withdrawn from the company, probably thinking on the most safe and effectual plan of rescuing the lad from the hands of his brothers. The bargain was soon made. Money was not the object, and therefore they were satisfied with a small price. Twenty pieces of silver was all that was demanded; and immediately the helpless boy was a slave in the hands of merchants who did not regard his cries and tears: and this we need not be surprised at, when his own brothers had no pity, when they beheld the anguish of his soul. But the scene left an impression on their conscience, which was felt long afterwards, when they were in painful circumstances. Reuben, returning after Joseph had been sold, and on going to the pit not finding him there, was filled with grief. He went to his brothers, saying, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?"

SECTION XXI

method taken to conceal the crime from their father—his grief—the midianites sell him to potiphar—his temptation and continence—is cast into prison

The only difficulty which now remained was to conceal the crime from their father. This, however was not impossible, provided they could all keep the secret. The greatest danger was from Reuben, who had taken no part in the cruel act; but they might prevent his betraying them by threats, or by the knowledge which they might possess of crimes with which he was chargeable. The guilty are often faithful in concealing each other's crimes, through fear of having their own evil deeds brought to light. The device adopted to deceive old Jacob, which seems to have been completely successful, was, to dip the coat of Joseph in the blood of a kid, and to send it to their father to know "whether it was his son's coat or no." The old patriarch instantly recognised the garment, and exclaimed, "an evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." And Jacob clothed himself in sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons, and all his daughters (son's wives) rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning." The mourning of Jacob for his darling son was, no doubt, of the most bitter kind; and his anguish would be increased by the reflection that he was devoured by wild beasts, and that he probably was the occasion of his death, by sending the child without a guide or protector on so long a journey. He also had not the comfort of depositing the body decently in the grave, with his deceased relatives; a privilege highly valued by the members of this family.

When the Midianites arrived in Egypt, Joseph was bought by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And the Lord was with Joseph; and all that was under his hand, in the house of his master, was made to prosper; so that Potiphar could not but observe that his young servant was favoured of the Lord. This induced him to intrust all his property, in the house and in the field, to the care and management of Joseph; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had. But the time of prosperity is commonly the season of temptation. Joseph had the favour and confidence of his master in an unlimited degree, so that he took no account of any of his affairs, "save the bread which he did eat." The wife of Potiphar, however, wished to tempt Joseph to the commission of a great sin. But his resolution was firm; and he said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And when she lay hold of him, he fled from the house, leaving his garment in her hand." Vice is seldom solitary in the human breast. The person who is capable of perpetrating one great crime, will seldom hesitate to commit another, if the temptation is sufficiently strong. This bad woman, finding herself disappointed, and her pride mortified, began immediately to meditate vengeance against the innocent youth. She called to the men of the house, and held up Joseph's garment, and accused him of having attempted to degrade and dishonour her, of which daring impudence, his garment left in her hand was witness. The wife of Potiphar having already committed herself, by falsely accusing Joseph to the other domestics, could not draw back without confessing her own crime, but must go on with her slanderous charges against the innocent and unprotected youth. She, therefore, laid up Joseph's garment, which had been left in her hand when he escaped from her, that she might show it to her lord, as proof positive of the crime which she charged against him. Joseph, though perfectly innocent, was not in a situation to contend with a slander coming from the wife of his lord. It seemed to be of little consequence whether he protested that he was innocent, or remained entirely silent. There are circumstances in which a man's declaration of his innocence will avail him nothing, and will gain no

belief from others. The purest virtue may, for a season, be covered with a dark cloud. The only resource of the righteous, in such cases, is the providence of God. Let them take refuge under his omniscience, and trust in his protection. Let them also look forward to that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, and when injured innocence shall be vindicated from every charge. The result of the accusation was, that Joseph's master caused him to be cast into the public prison. It is rather surprising that he had not put him to death. Perhaps his high confidence in his integrity and virtue, in time past, and his knowledge of his wife's disposition, might have left a suspicion on his mind, that the whole truth had not been told to him; and this especially, if Joseph was permitted to relate the circumstances, as they really occurred. But whatever he might suspect, he could do no less than expel him from his house, and cast him into prison. It does not appear that he ever troubled himself any farther about the young man. In tyrannical governments, it is no uncommon thing for persons to be thrown into prison, and to be entirely forgotten. Thus it might have been with Joseph; for he had no friend in Egypt to inquire after him, or to care for him. But God, by his providence, takes care of the stranger and the orphan. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did not forget this sorely injured and grossly slandered youth; for he gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison. "And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him; that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."

SECTION XXII

dream of the baker and butler of pharaoh in the prison—joseph's interpretation—the fulfilment—dream of pharaoh—joseph sent for to interpret it—his counsel to pharaoh, and exaltation

It so happened while Joseph was here confined, that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt had offended their master, and were put into the same prison. And the captain of the guard, or keeper of the prison, gave these persons in charge to Joseph, and he attended on them. And they both dreamed a dream, in the same night; and when Joseph came in to them in the morning, he observed that they were sad; and he said, "Wherefore look ye so sad to-day? And they said, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said, Do not interpretations belong unto God? Tell them to me, I pray you." And the chief butler told his dream: "Behold, a vine was before me, and in the vine three branches, which budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them in Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand." And Joseph said, "This is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place, and then thou shalt deliver his cup into his hand." But said Joseph, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." The chief baker, hearing that the interpretation of the butler's dream was favourable, was encouraged to tell his own, which, in some respects, resembled it. He said, "Behold, in my dream, I had three white baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket was all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head." And Joseph said, "The three baskets are three days. Yet within three days

shall Pharaoh lift up thine head from thee, and shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.” And accordingly, on the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birth-day, he restored the chief butler to his place, and hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted unto them. But in his joy and prosperity the butler did not “remember Joseph, but forgot him.”

It is well for God’s children that he does not forget them; but whether they are in prison, in poverty, or in sickness, his compassionate eye is ever upon them, and his faithful care will never leave them. Joseph’s prospect of release seemed to have entirely passed away. He no doubt waited anxiously for some time, to see whether his friend the butler would use his good offices with the king, in his behalf; but two whole years having elapsed, and no relief having been obtained, nor any intimation that any effort had been made for his discharge, he must have felt something of that sickness of heart which is produced by “hope deferred.” But God, who can control the hearts of kings as well as others, sent a dream to Pharaoh, which answered the purpose of bringing to the recollection of the butler his own dream, and the interpretation of Joseph, and his sin in forgetting his benefactor. Pharaoh’s dream was double, but both parts had the same signification. The magicians and wise men of Egypt were utterly unable to give any satisfactory interpretation; upon which the chief butler related the circumstances of his own dream, and the interpretation of Joseph. Pharaoh immediately sent to the prison, and ordered the young Hebrew to be brought before him. Joseph therefore shaved himself, and changed his clothes, and then presented himself before the king. Pharaoh said, “I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.” Joseph’s reply was pious and modest. He said, “It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” Then Pharaoh related his dreams, as follow: “In my dream I stood upon the bank of the river, and behold there came up out of the river, seven kine, fat-fleshed, and well-favoured, and they fed in a meadow. And behold seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and behold seven ears came up on one stalk, full and good. And behold seven ears, withered and thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. And I told this unto the magicians, and there was none that could declare it unto me.” Joseph, upon hearing these dreams, did not hesitate, nor ask time for consideration, but immediately interpreted them as follows: “The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine and the seven good ears are seven years, and the dream is one. And the seven ill-favoured kine and the seven blasted ears shall be seven years of famine.”—“Behold there come seven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land. And the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of the famine following; for it shall be very grievous.” And as to the repetition of the dream, Joseph, informed the king, that this was intended to give the greater assurance of the thing, that God had established it, and would shortly bring it to pass. Joseph then proceeded to advise what ought to be done. “Let Pharaoh,” said he, “look out for a man, discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt; and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part [of the produce] of the land of Egypt, in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the fruits of these good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh,

and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land, against the seven years of famine, which shall be in all the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through famine.” This advice of Joseph seemed to Pharaoh and all his servants wise and seasonable. And the king was persuaded, that no better man could possibly be found to set over this business, than the one who had given the advice. He, therefore, said to his servants, “Can we find such a man as this, in whom the spirit of God is.” And to Joseph he said, “Forasmuch as God hath shown thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou.” And Pharaoh said, “See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.” And he said unto Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt.” And Pharaoh gave Joseph a new name, Zaphnath-Paaneah, which means, the revealer of secrets. And he gave him for a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest, or prince of On.

SECTION XXIII

joseph’s administration

the arrival of his brothers—his treatment of them—he retains simeon and sends for benjamin

When Joseph stood before Pharaoh, he was thirty years old. Being now placed in the highest authority by the king, he went forth to the execution of his important office. That he might better understand the condition of the country, he passed through the whole land of Egypt. And as the years of plenty immediately commenced, he began to lay up food in storehouses, throughout the cities; and the quantity was so great that it could not be numbered. And this he did, until the seven years of plenty were ended.

During this period his wife Asenath had two sons: the elder he named Manasseh, forgetting; because, said he, “God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house.” The second he named Ephraim, fruitful; because, said he, “God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

As soon as the seven years of plenty were ended, the years of famine commenced. This dearth was not confined to Egypt, but extended to all the surrounding countries. And when under the pressure of the famine, the people of Egypt cried unto Pharaoh, he referred them to Joseph. Now was seen the wisdom of erecting public storehouses, and filling them with provision; for the people took no care to lay up corn for the approaching scarcity. The famine there was very grievous; and the people must have perished through want, had it not been for the public granaries, which Joseph now caused to be opened, and from which corn was sold to the Egyptians. This distressing famine reached the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his sons dwelt; and he having learned that corn could be had in Egypt, directed his sons, instead of standing and looking on one another, to go down thither and buy, that their lives might be preserved. It is not improbable, that it was unpleasant for these men to think of going to Egypt, when they recollected that they had sold their brother to be a slave there; but in necessity there is no choice. Therefore, all Joseph’s brothers, except Benjamin, set off to Egypt, to buy corn. Jacob’s affections, since the loss of Joseph, seem

to have been fixed chiefly on Benjamin, the only other child of his beloved Rachel. He refused, therefore, to permit him to accompany his brethren, lest some accident should befall him. When Joseph's brethren arrived, it was necessary to present themselves before him; for as he was governor of all the land, no corn could be sold without his permission. When these foreigners, in the garb of shepherds of Canaan, were introduced, they bowed themselves before him, with their faces to the earth—thus fulfilling the dreams which had so provoked their envy. Joseph instantly knew his brothers, although he had been absent from them for twenty-three or twenty-four years; but they had not the least idea that the great man, in whose presence they were, was their injured brother Joseph. Although his heart was full of kindness, yet he determined to make them reflect on the guilt of the enormous crime which they had committed. He, therefore, spoke roughly to them, and said, "Whence come ye?" And he said, "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land are ye come." They protested that it was not so, but that they had come to buy food. "We are," said they, "all one man's sons: we are true men, thy servants are no spies." But Joseph affected not to believe them, and still insisted that they were spies. On which, they, conscious that they were speaking truth, began to be more particular in their narrative. They said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." The feelings of both parties must have been very strong at the mention of this last circumstance, but of a very different kind. They were now in distress in the country to which they had sold their brother, and the remorse of conscience, which at other times they might find means to quiet, now filled them with anguish. Joseph could not help recollecting all their hatred; and especially their cruelty, when, turning a deaf ear to his piteous cries and earnest supplications, they sold him for a paltry sum of money to travelling merchants, who, it was known, would carry him to a distant country to be a slave for life. In such a transaction, though all may consent, there are various degrees of guilt. Reuben, we know, did not join in the crime of his brothers. But there is no evidence that Joseph knew any thing of his favourable disposition and designs. Judah had prevented them from imbruing their hands in his blood, and prevailed upon them rather to sell him than put him to death. Probably, Simeon was foremost in proposing and seeking the death of Joseph, as he is known to have been both cruel and treacherous in his disposition; and Joseph, in selecting one to be bound in prison while the others went home, would naturally fix on the one who appeared to him to be the most guilty. However this may be, he continued to accuse them as spies; and at first proposed that all of them should remain except one, who should be despatched to bring their younger brother; and accordingly, he shut them all up in prison for three days. How wretched must have been the feelings of these men, when thus overtaken with misfortune in a strange land. At the expiration of three days, Joseph changed his plan; reflecting, no doubt, that their families must suffer greatly, or perhaps perish with want, if they did not return with provisions. He now, therefore, told them, that one of them must be left bound in the prison, while the rest returned with corn for their houses. And one thing which he said would have been consoling to them, if they had been pious; that is, that he was a worshipper of the true God. He charged them to bring their youngest brother; that by this proof it might be known that they were true men. Their words would thus be verified, and they should not die. In thus demanding Benjamin to be brought to Egypt, Joseph seems rather to have consulted his own feelings, than the peace of his father's mind, of which he should have been more tender: but it does not behove us to judge with severity the conduct of a man placed in circumstances so peculiar. He had no evidence yet, that these men had ever repented of the crime of which they

had been guilty; or that their feelings towards him were at all changed; and he deemed it necessary to subject all concerned to some uneasiness, well knowing that it would be fully compensated by the kindness which he meant to show them.

They now began not only to reflect on the wickedness of their conduct in their cruel treatment of their brother, but also to speak to one another on the subject; and their conversation was in the hearing of Joseph, but they supposed he did not understand them, as he had uniformly spoken to them by an interpreter. "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben said, "Spoke I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear; therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Upon hearing these confessions and upbraidings of his brethren, the heart of Joseph was affected, and he withdrew from them, that they might not see him weep, and then returned, and conversed with them. And he took Simeon, and bound him before their eyes; and commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way.

SECTION XXIV

their money returned—jacob refuses to let benjamin go—but the famine presses, and he at length consents—joseph, after bringing his brothers into trouble, makes himself known, and sends to his father

When they had proceeded some distance on their journey homeward, and had stopped at an inn, one of them, whose sack was opened on the occasion, found his money in the mouth of the sack; of which, when he gave information to his brethren, they were alarmed, and their hearts failed them; and they said one to another, "What is this that God hath done unto us?" And when they arrived at home, they told Jacob all that had happened to them; and when they had emptied their sacks, every man's bundle of money was in his sack, at the sight of which both they and their father were afraid. But when Jacob heard of their engagement to take Benjamin with them when they returned again for corn, and to redeem their brother who was left bound in prison, he was greatly disturbed, and said, in the language of bitter complaint, "Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me." From these words of Jacob, it would seem that he had received some information, or entertained some suspicion, respecting the true fate of Joseph, and that the first account was not true; for he charges his bereavement of him in particular, on his sons. And it is scarcely possible, that a secret lodged with so many persons would not in time leak out; especially as one of them had not consented to the wicked deed of the others, and had fully resolved to rescue him out of their hands. Reuben was now the only one who seems to have had confidence to reply to the cutting reproaches of his father. And he said, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." But it would not do. Jacob absolutely refused to let Benjamin go, saying, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." But the famine continuing to rage without mitigation, as soon as the provision was spent, which they had brought from Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food." Judah replied, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and

buy thee food. But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? And we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel, his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.” Judah, who was truly eloquent, prevailed at length; though probably want had more influence in gaining the old man’s consent, than the persuasive speech of his son. And Israel said, “If it must be so now, do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds. And take double money in your hand: the money that was found in your sacks, carry back; peradventure it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.” Accordingly, they went, and came and stood before Joseph. When he saw that Benjamin was with them, he invited them all to dine with him that day. But these plain shepherds were abashed when they were introduced into the house of the governor, and thought that some accusation would be brought against them, for the money that they had found in their sacks. They therefore addressed themselves to the steward of the house, and informed him of the discovery made of the money in their sacks; and told him that they had brought it back, and other money to buy corn. But he quieted them, assuring them that he had received their money; and told them that the God of their fathers had given them the money which they found in their sacks. And he brought out their brother Simeon, and gave them water for their feet, and feed for their asses. On their part, they got ready the present, which they had brought for the governor, against his coming at noon. When he arrived, they all bowed themselves before him to the earth. He inquired of their welfare, and said, “Is your father well? the old man of whom you spake, is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive: and they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.” And when he saw his brother Benjamin, he said, “Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.” But Joseph was unable to command his feelings any longer; “and he went out, and sought a place to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.” And when he had composed himself he returned, and gave orders to place the dinner before them. But he and the Egyptians did not eat with them, because the Egyptians thought it wrong to eat bread with the Hebrews. The brethren of Joseph must have been surprised at the order in which he placed them at table; for the first-born was placed first, according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth. From his own table he sent them messes; but five times as much to Benjamin as to any of the rest. By degrees their fears subsided, and they ate and drank, and were merry with him. It seemed to these men, that their difficulties were now ended. But Providence had new trials for them before they left Egypt. Joseph, who began to be impatient of the concealment and constraint under which he acted, was determined to bring the business to a speedy end. He commanded his steward, in filling the sacks with corn, to put again every man’s money in the mouth of his sack, and to put his own silver cup into the sack of the youngest. Next day, as soon as it was light, they

were sent away; and when they had got out of the city, Joseph ordered his steward to pursue them, and to charge them with dishonesty and ingratitude. The steward did as he was commanded; and they said unto him, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again to thee, out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of our lord's house, silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." The steward was more moderate in his demands. He only required that the person in whose possession the cup might be found, should be made a slave, while the rest should be considered blameless. Honesty was the strong point of character in which these men felt themselves to be upright. They were afraid of no accusation on this ground; and felt so much mutual confidence, that they had no fears for one another. They, therefore, promptly unloaded their asses, and submitted to a search, which, beginning at the eldest, went on to the youngest. But, what was their grief and astonishment, when the cup was actually found in Benjamin's sack. They rent their clothes, laded their asses, and went back to the city. As soon as they came into the presence of the governor, they fell before him on the ground; and he said, What deed is this that ye have done? did ye not know that such a man as I can certainly divine? Then Judah, whose simple eloquence has already been noticed, came forward, and addressed to him one of the most pathetic speeches which is on record in any language. Judah seemed to consider that the liberty of all of them was forfeited; but Joseph, like his steward, did not view any one as implicated, except the person with whom the cup had been found. But how could they bear the thought of returning to their father without Benjamin: and, especially, to Judah, who had urged his father so much to send him, and had become security for him, it must have appeared worse than death. He, therefore, drew near, and made the following touching address.

"O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife [Rachel] bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

"Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us, (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;) it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For

how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.”

There is truly something noble in the conduct of Judah, on this occasion—in offering himself as a substitute for his brother. It was a degree of generosity not often to be witnessed; and the offer rises in our estimation, when we take into view, that his governing motive was respect and affection for his aged father.

Joseph’s feelings were so affected by this speech of Judah, which referred to himself in a way that must have touched him greatly, that he was unable any longer to conceal his emotions: and he cried, “Cause every man to go out from me.”—“And he wept aloud; so that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard him. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me: and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen; and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee, (for yet there are five years of famine,) lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them, and after that his brethren talked with him.”

A more interesting scene than this is not recorded in any history, and can scarcely be conceived of. The kindness, tenderness, and generosity of Joseph to his brothers, who had so deeply injured him, is worthy of all admiration. When Pharaoh heard what had happened, and that Joseph’s brethren were come, the event was pleasing to him and to his servants; and he authorized Joseph to invite his father and brothers, with their families, to come and live in Egypt, in the best of the land; and also directed that wagons should be sent to carry their wives and children, and their father. They were directed not to regard their moveable property, as they would enjoy the good of the whole land of Egypt. Joseph gladly executed Pharaoh’s orders, and gave also to each man changes of clothes; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment; and to his father he sent ten asses, laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses, laden with corn, and bread, and meat, for his father by the way. When he sent away his brothers, he exhorted them—“See that ye fall not out by the way.” Upon their arrival at home, they told Jacob that Joseph was yet alive, and was governor over all the land of Egypt. The news was too overwhelming for the mind of Jacob; he fainted and believed them not, at the first; but when he beheld the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of the old man revived.

“And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.”

SECTION XXV

Jacob, after asking counsel of God, goes down to Egypt to his son

But Jacob would not take so important a step as removing his whole family into Egypt, without asking counsel of God, who had hitherto directed him in all his ways. He, therefore, journeyed southward, until he came to Beersheba, and there being on the borders of Canaan, he offered sacrifices unto the God of Isaac his father. “And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob: and he said, Here am I. And he said, I am the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt: for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand on thine eyes.” After this clear revelation of the divine will, Jacob hesitated no longer, but taking his sons, and their wives, and their children, and their flocks and herds, and all that they possessed, they went down into Egypt.

At this time Reuben had two sons; Simeon, six; Levi, three; Judah had had five, but two of them were dead; Issachar had four; Zebulun, three; Gad, seven; Asher, four, and one daughter, and two grandchildren: Joseph was already in Egypt, and had two sons. Benjamin, though the youngest, was the father of ten sons; Dan had only one, and Naphtali had four. These, exclusive of Jacob himself and Joseph and his two sons, make the number sixty-six; and with them, the whole number of Jacob's family, exclusive of his son's wives, was seventy. In this enumeration of Jacob's descendants, there are several things remarkable. The first is, that among so many children and grandchildren, the proportion of females should be so small. Only two are mentioned in the sacred history; Dinah, Jacob's daughter, who was either dead, or gone from her father's house; and Serah, the daughter of Asher. Another thing worthy of remark is, that Benjamin, who is so often called a lad, and sometimes a child, and a little one, should be the father of ten children. On this fact it may be observed, that Benjamin was now thirty-five or thirty-six years of age; and, as to his being called a lad, &c., these appellations are rather to express the tender affection of his father towards him, than to signify that he was not a man. The word little is, in Hebrew, the same as the word for younger.

When Jacob came near the land of Goshen, he sent Judah before him, to announce his arrival. “And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen, and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.” Joseph, having instructed his brethren how to behave, and what to answer, when introduced to Pharaoh, made haste to inform the king of the arrival of his father. His object was to obtain for them the privilege of dwelling in Goshen, which seems to have been that part of Egypt which was next to the wilderness, towards the land of Canaan, because Jacob and his sons arrived here before they came to the city where Joseph and Pharaoh resided. It is probable that this region, on account of its vicinity to the uncultivated parts of the country, was peculiarly suited to be the residence of shepherds. And Joseph directed his brethren, when Pharaoh should question them respecting their manner of life, to confess that their occupation had been to take care of cattle, from their youth; and that their fathers had followed the same; for by so doing, they would gain the privilege of remaining in Goshen. For as all shepherds were despised by the Egyptians, the people would

be unwilling that they should come into the centre of the country, to mingle with the other inhabitants. The business was arranged according to Joseph's direction, and the result answered his expectations. Pharaoh, upon hearing that the men were shepherds, and that it was their wish to remain in Goshen, readily gave the permission. He, therefore, told Joseph that the whole land of Egypt was before him, and that he might give to his father and brethren the best of it; but as they had selected Goshen, he directed that this part of the country should be assigned to them; and requested, that if he knew any of them to be men of activity, he would make them rulers over his cattle.

SECTION XXVI

Jacob's interview with Pharaoh—pressure of the famine—Joseph's policy

Joseph now introduced his father to the king; and Jacob, when he came into the royal presence, pronounced a benediction upon Pharaoh. It is probable that the patriarch had the appearance of being older than he really was, for he was lame, and had passed a life of trial and trouble. Few men have ever experienced greater changes or more heart-desolating calamities. Pharaoh, therefore, as soon as he saw him, asked him how old he was. To this Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." The particular spot which Joseph selected for the residence of his father and brothers, and their families, was Rameses, the best of the land; and there he supplied them with the necessary support, distributing food to every family, according to its numbers. The famine had now risen to its height, and was very sore, both in the land of Egypt and in Canaan. The only resource of the people, to preserve them from death, was in the stores which Joseph had collected; and he, as a faithful servant, considered all this corn as the property of the king, at whose expense it had been obtained and laid up. Instead therefore, of giving it away, he sold it to the people, as long as they had any money to give in exchange; and when their money failed, Joseph offered to take their cattle, which, if they had remained in the hands of their owners, must have died speedily. This supply, however, only saved them for one year; and when this was ended, the people came to him in great distress, declaring that the whole of their money and their cattle were already expended, and nothing now remained but their bodies and their land. "Wherefore," said they, "shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh." And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them. So the land became Pharaoh's. And Joseph removed the people, everywhere into the cities, where provisions were stored. The land of the priests, however, was not sold; for they received from Pharaoh a portion for their support, so that they were under no necessity of selling their lands. Joseph has been much censured by some persons for his course in regard to the people of Egypt; but it would be difficult to show in what the injustice of his conduct consisted. What he ought to have done if the kingdom and stores had been his own, is another question. But as the agent and steward to whom this great business was committed, there is every evidence that he acted justly and wisely. And now, having fairly purchased the land, he gave seed to the people to sow the land; and of the increase he required only a fifth part for the king, leaving the rest for their own use. Surely there was nothing ungenerous or unjust in this regulation, which from this time became perpetual. Joseph might have made all the people Pharaoh's servants, for they

repeatedly offered to become such; but he only established it as a law that the king should have a fifth part of the increase of all the land, except that of the priests, to which Pharaoh obtained no title.

SECTION XXVII

Jacob's resides in Egypt seventeen years—his end draws nigh—his interview with Joseph, and benediction of his sons

Israel having obtained, as has been related, the land of Goshen, and being there supplied with food in abundance, without toil, multiplied exceedingly. Jacob lived after he came down to Egypt, seventeen years; so that the whole age of Jacob was a hundred and forty-seven years. When the patriarch found that his end was drawing near, he called for Joseph, and caused him to swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but carry him to the burying-place of his fathers, in the land of Canaan. Soon after this, Jacob being sick, Joseph came to see him, and brought his two sons, that they might receive their grandfather's blessing before he died. And they informed Jacob that his son Joseph was come, on which he "strengthened himself and sat upon the bed." "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born to thee in the land of Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when as yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and I buried her in the way of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem." When Jacob beheld Joseph's sons, whom he had not before observed to be present, he said, "Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, they are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them." But Jacob's eyesight had greatly failed, so that he could see nothing distinctly. Joseph brought forward the lads, and Jacob said, "I had not thought to see thy face; and lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." And when Joseph presented his sons to his father for his benediction, he bowed himself to the earth. And he held Ephraim in his right hand, opposite to Jacob's left; and Manasseh in his left hand, opposite to his father's right; but Israel stretched out his right hand, and placed it on the head of Ephraim the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh the elder, evidently doing this not by accident, but designedly. He first blessed Joseph himself, and then said, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long to this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head; and Joseph said to his father, Not so, my father, for this is the first-born; put thy right hand on his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh; and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you

again into the land of your fathers. Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorites with my sword, and with my bow.”

SECTION XXVIII

Jacob's dying prophecy respecting his sons—his decease

Jacob now called together all his sons, and being inspired to foretell future events, he went on to prophecy what would befall each of them as a tribe and nation. It is worthy of remark, that the moral character of the father seems to be impressed on his descendants, and their destiny is made to depend in a great measure on the conduct of him from whom they derived their descent.

Reuben was the first-born, but though he was “the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power,” yet, on account of a base crime already referred to, he is excluded from the chief blessing, and is pronounced to be unstable as water, and it is foretold that his tribe shall not rise to high excellence or great power.

The treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi come now into remembrance, in the case of the Shechemites, whom they inhumanly murdered, after deceiving them, when they were unable to defend themselves. “Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.” This last prediction was most exactly accomplished, in the after history of these two tribes. Simeon having lost a large portion of his numbers in the wilderness, obtained an inheritance, not in a district by himself, but in scattered portions among the other tribes; and it is said that the men of this tribe travelled about as schoolmasters; so that they were literally scattered abroad, and divided in Israel. And all know that Levi had no inheritance with his brethren; but, having received the priesthood, his people were divided among the other tribes, each of which furnished a certain quota of cities for their habitation.

Judah receives a rich blessing, and the future dignity and power of the tribe answered to the patriarch's prediction. “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, art thou gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.” This is undoubtedly the chief blessing of all; for two peculiar things are promised—superiority over the other tribes, and the possession of a sceptre and lawgiver; and secondly, that the Messiah should arise from this tribe, for thus must we interpret the word Shiloh. The temporal blessings of this tribe were also very rich. Their country abounded in vineyards and flocks; so that wine and milk were the characteristics of Judah. He is compared to the lion, which became, through all ages, the ensign of this tribe, and is believed to have been the figure on its standard. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is also one designation of the Messiah.

The maritime situation of the tribe of Zebulun is exactly foretold, and the boundaries of its possessions, on the great sea, are described, even unto Zidon. As this tribe was on the coast, so it is described as having harbours and ships.

Issachar is described as having a pleasant land, but an abject spirit; and as a servant of tribute. Accordingly, we scarcely read of a distinguished person from this tribe, nor any distinguished dignity which it possessed.

In most of these predictions there is an evident allusion to the literal import of the names of Jacob's sons; as here, when Dan is introduced in his order, it is said, "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel." (The word Dan signifies to judge.) Dan is compared to a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels: so that his "rider shall fall backward." We know very little of the character and history of Dan, as a separate tribe; but what is recorded, exactly corresponds with this description.

At this point Jacob seems to have been exhausted. He paused, and lifted up his soul to God in an earnest ejaculation, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Then he proceeded. "Gad,"—which name signifies a troop—"a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." "Out of Asher"—which signifies riches, or property—"his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." "Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."

But now the patriarch comes to his beloved Joseph, which as to mere temporal blessings, the benediction may seem to be the richest of all; but does not include the two things before mentioned as peculiar to Judah, namely, government and the Messiah. It is as follows: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

The only difficulty here is to understand who is meant by the shepherd, and stone of Israel, which was to come out of this tribe. These titles apply very exactly to the Messiah, but we have seen that he was to proceed from Judah. It is very probable, however, that these words contributed to produce in the minds of some of the Jews, a notion of a twofold Messiah, the one to spring from Judah, who should be a ruler, and the other from Joseph, who should be a sufferer. May it not be possible, that through the line of females received by marriage into the tribe of Judah, or by some other intermingling of the tribes, Messiah may have derived his descent from both these tribes?

Of Benjamin it is said, he "shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

After Jacob had finished blessing his sons, "he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. (There they buried Abraham, and Sarah his wife: there they buried Isaac, and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.) The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his

feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.”

SECTION XXIX

jacob is buried according to his request in canaan—mourning on account of the patriarch

When Joseph perceived that his father had ceased to breathe, he “fell upon his face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.” The art of preserving human bodies, by embalming them, was certainly better understood in Egypt, in ancient times, than it ever was in any other country, as is evident by the numerous mummies, which unto this day are found in the caves and subterraneous catacombs, and some of which are probably almost as ancient as the time of Joseph. It was customary to mourn forty days for persons embalmed; but in this case, the Egyptians, by reason of their great regard for Joseph, and their veneration for the aged and pious patriarch, extended their mourning to seventy days. And when the mourning was ended, Joseph informed Pharaoh of the oath which his father had made him swear, in regard to his burial, and Pharaoh readily granted him permission to carry the body of his father to Canaan; and all the servants of Pharaoh accompanied him, and, also, all the elders of Israel, and all the elders of the land of Egypt; and all Joseph’s brethren, and all their households, except that they left their young children, and their flocks and herds in the land of Goshen. “And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and they made a mourning for his father seven days.” When the people of the land saw this funeral procession, and observed their bitter lamentation, they said, “This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians,” and on this account the place received the name of Abel-mizraim; that is, the mourning of the Egyptians. And his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre. “And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father.”

SECTION XXX

joseph’s brethren suspicious of his friendship—character of joseph—length of his life—his injunction respecting his bones—his decease

“And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph, peradventure, will hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent messengers unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin, for they did unto thee evil; and now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him;” and said unto them, “Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly to them.”

The character of Joseph, as here exhibited, is exceedingly amiable. His brothers, disturbed by their own guilty fears, could not enter into his kind and benevolent feelings. They could not but think, that now their father was out of the way, and all restraint removed, he would be disposed to avenge himself upon them for their cruel treatment. After so long a manifestation of kindness and

forgiveness, it cut Joseph to the heart, to find them entertaining such suspicions of his motives and designs; so that he wept, when they presented their supplication before him. From this history we learn how troublesome a thing guilt is. These men were, for a while, successful in covering their transgression from men; but after more than a score of years, their sin found them out, and they were sore afflicted by the lashes of conscience, while suffering under the severe pressure of external affliction.

Joseph lived to see Ephraim's children of the third generation; and the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up on Joseph's knees. And when he perceived that his end was approaching, he said to his brethren, "I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he swore to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." And he caused the children of Israel to swear, that when they removed to that land, they would carry with them his bones. "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

PART II("tw://[self]?tid=12&popup=0" \l "History_CONTENTS-")

THE ISRAELITES

SECTION I

the continuance of the hebrews in the land of egypt—the cruel edicts of the egyptians against the male hebrew children—the birth, concealment, exposure, and adoption of moses—miserable bondage of the hebrews—moses kills an egyptian, and flies to arabia, where he enters into the family of jethro, priest of midian, whose daughter he marries

The period of the residence of the Israelites in Egypt, has been understood differently by learned men; for while most maintain that it did not exceed two hundred and fifteen years, some are of opinion, that it could not be less than four hundred years, in conformity with the prediction of God to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." This, taken strictly, decides the question at once. But it has been alleged, with much plausibility, that these four hundred years should be calculated from the time when the prediction was uttered; and includes all the time of the residence of Isaac and Jacob in Canaan, as well as the time spent in Egypt. And this interpretation is strongly supported by the Septuagint version, and the Samaritan text, which contain a clause, which expressly declares, that the four hundred years comprehended the time of their sojourning in Canaan; and even if this is a gloss which has crept into the text of these copies, yet it shows how this matter was understood in very ancient times. But some of the subsequent words of this same prediction appear to favour this interpretation not a little. God says, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again;" for it seems altogether probable, that these generations commenced with Abraham; and the word generation here, evidently is synonymous with a century of years. Another argument in favour of the common opinion is, that the number of successive descendants of the sons of Jacob are too few for a residence in Egypt of four hundred years. For example, when Israel went down to Egypt, Levi had three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Amram, the father of Moses, was the son of Kohath, and grandson of Levi. If we suppose that four hundred years elapsed, or more than three hundred before Moses was born, it will comport very badly with the rapid multiplication which is spoken of. It can hardly be believed, that

in so long a period there would be so few births, in succession. And it is remarkable too, that Jochebed, the wife of Amram, was the daughter of Levi. This man, therefore, married his own aunt; but at this time the law regulating the degrees of kindred within which marriages were forbidden, was not given. The only cogent reason for supposing that the Israelites lived four hundred years in Egypt, is, the great multitude to which they had increased by the time of the Exodus. But where people are healthy, and enjoy the comforts of life without excessive toil, their increase will always be surprising, until an exact calculation is made; for the ratio of increase is geometrical. Let it be considered, also, that God blessed this people, according to his repeated promise, in multiplying them beyond all parallel. It is therefore, no how incredible, that this single family of seventy males should, in the space of two hundred and fifteen years, have grown to be a nation of two millions of persons. In this country, in three hundred years, a few adventurous colonists have swelled to the enormous population of more than twenty millions of souls. The increase of the Israelites was not more surprising than this. It was therefore, an unexpected thing to find the learned Rosenmüller maintaining in his Scholia, that the Israelites resided in Egypt four hundred years.

How long the descendants of Jacob enjoyed good treatment and liberty, cannot be ascertained. Joseph lived nearly a century after he came to Egypt. During his lifetime, there was no unfavourable change in the condition of his brethren. It seems probable that the king that arose, "who knew not Joseph," was not of the same family as Pharaoh, before whom Joseph stood, and whose prime minister he was; but some usurper or invader from a foreign land, who was literally ignorant how great a benefactor Joseph had been to this nation; and how much the royal family was indebted to him. This king, after he ascended the throne, observing that the Israelites were an entirely distinct people from the Egyptians, and that they increased in numbers above the Egyptians, beyond all comparison, was filled with alarm, lest they should seize upon the supreme power; and especially, "lest if war should fall out," that there would be danger that they should join with the enemy. He began, therefore, to consult and contrive how he might check this rapidly increasing population. The plan which he devised was indeed cruel, but if carried into effect, would have answered the purpose. It was to put the male children to death, as fast as they were born. But God disappointed his first attempt to accomplish this end. Another method of attaining the object was then devised. A decree was made, that without exception, every male of the Israelites should be cast into the river Nile. This law, it seems, was executed with rigour, but for how long a time is not known. During this time, Moses was born; and being a child of uncommon beauty, his parents, who were pious, determined that they would conceal him as long as they could. In pursuance of this resolution, they succeeded in evading the king's officers for three months, but such was the vigilance of those charged with the execution of the cruel mandate, that they were unable to conceal the child any longer. Still, however, entertaining, as it would seem, a hope of providential interposition, they prepared an ark of bulrushes, and rendered it water-tight; and placing the little boy in this small vessel, they launched it upon the river, and retired, but left the sister of the child in a covert place, to watch what would become of him. It is probable, that the parents of Moses resided in or near the royal city; for we find the daughter of the king, with her female attendants, coming to the river, near the place where the ark was left, to bathe. And she, having spied the ark among the flags where it had been left, directed her maidens to bring it to her. And when she opened it, she beheld a lovely infant; and the babe wept. The female breast, in every country, is susceptible of the feelings of humanity. The princess conjectured that it must be

one of the Hebrew's children; for she was aware of the cruel edict which had gone forth against the male infants of this afflicted nation, and knew also, the severity with which the law was enforced. But yielding to the emotions of her own compassionate heart, she resolved at every risk to save the child. While she was revolving this purpose in her mind, providentially the little girl left to watch, presented herself, and observing that her little brother was viewed with compassion by the princess, she had the presence of mind and consideration, to ask her if she should call a nurse. This was the very thing needed to carry her design into execution; she therefore instantly expressed her consent; not suspecting, probably, that this officious little girl was sister to the babe in her possession; or that the nurse who was promptly at hand to obey her commands, was the mother of the child. There is, indeed, no evidence that she was ever informed of this fact; or that she ever suspected that the nurse of Moses was his own affectionate mother. The address of Miriam, Moses' sister, was in the following simple words, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" "And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go; and the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said, Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." This believing mother cast her lovely child, when she could preserve him no longer at home, upon Providence; and now that careful Providence casts him back into her own bosom, in circumstances in which she could cherish the infant without fear; yea, God so ordered the affair, that the mother received rich compensation from royal hands, for cherishing the beloved fruit of her own womb. Never did nurse more promptly or joyfully engage in the duties of her vocation. "And she took the child and nursed it; and the child grew; and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son." For humanity's sake, we may hope, that the cruel edict under which Moses was born and exposed, was of short continuance; as we hear no more about it; and it is a fact, that cruel laws soon become odious among any people, whoever may be the victims of them. Human feelings revolt against the murdering of young children by wholesale; and the continued increase of the Israelites proves that this cruel edict could not have been long executed; for then the increase of population must have ceased, and Moses would have had no male contemporaries. It is probable, therefore, that hard and oppressive servitude was substituted for this murderous edict against the infants.

The Israelites were now reduced to a state of oppressive bondage. They still inhabited Goshen, and lived separately from the Egyptians, but they were required to labour in brick and mortar for the king; erecting buildings for his pleasure or caprice. As the object was to keep them at hard service, that they might have no time to meditate any schemes of deliverance, it is not an improbable supposition, that the pyramids were erected by their labours. For unless some such work was undertaken, it is hard to conceive how five or six hundred thousand men could, for many years, be kept employed in making brick.

The first we hear of these oppressive burdens imposed on the Israelites, was, when Moses was grown to be a man, for then "he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens." The mother of Moses had been his instructor, as well as his nurse. She did not fail to communicate to him the secret of his descent, and to inspire him with a desire to deliver his brethren from the cruel bondage under which they were labouring. Moses, however, was educated in the court of Pharaoh, and was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians. He was brought up exactly as if he had been a prince of the royal blood; for the daughter of the king had adopted him as her own son, and educated him as such. It is related by Josephus, that he was received by the king, in

default of male offspring, as the heir apparent to the crown. But while such splendid objects were presented, and within the reach of Moses, his mind was occupied with other thoughts and designs. He sympathized deeply with his oppressed brethren, in their grievous afflictions, and was resolved to exert himself for their relief. Indeed, it seems, that he had early received a divine revelation, that he was destined to be the deliverer of Israel from their iron bondage. And he expected that they would be ready to recognize him as such. When he beheld the oppression which his brethren endured, his heart was warmed with indignation; and observing an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, and being a man of great bodily strength, he slew the Egyptian, first looking around to see that there were no persons present who might inform against him; little suspecting that the man whom he rescued from death would, bring him into danger, by publishing the fact. But going out the second day, he observed two of the Hebrews striving together. "And he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" Upon hearing this, Moses perceived that the transaction of the former day, in which to save the life of a brother he had slain an Egyptian, was known, and would, consequently, soon reach the ears of the king. And in this he was not erroneous in his judgment, for Pharaoh had not only heard the report, but was so much enraged on account of the act, that he resolved to put Moses to death. Probably, he had been growing jealous of him for some time; or he would not have been disposed to proceed at once to extremities, before he knew the exact circumstances of the case. But Moses, having received timely warning, fled from the land of Egypt, and went into Arabia, into the land of Midian. Having come an entire stranger, and a fugitive, into this country, he sat down by a well. It was so ordered in Providence, that he should come into the neighbourhood of a very wise, pious, and distinguished man, namely, Jethro, the priest, or prince, of Midian. Probably, he united in himself, as was customary in many nations, the highest civil and sacred offices. The daughters of this eminent man, seven in number, in accordance with oriental customs, kept the flocks of their father; and on this occasion, they had driven them to the well where Moses was resting himself; "and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away." Probably there existed some dispute respecting the property of this well, as we find was often the case in the time of the patriarchs; for to those who led the life of shepherds, no other permanent possessions were of much importance: or, this part of the country may have been infested with a set of selfish, unaccommodating shepherds, who "felt power and forgot right;" or, they may have been, for reasons unknown to us, hostile to Jethro and his family. Often the very excellence and wisdom, as well as the wealth and power of an individual, makes him an object of envy with the people around him. Moses, observing the rough and uncourteous treatment of these interesting shepherdesses, by these ill-natured shepherds, immediately interposed; and being a man of courage and prowess, and in the prime of life, he found no difficulty in delivering them from their oppressors; and assisted them in watering their flocks. It seems that this was no singular case, but one of common occurrence; for when they returned home, Reuel, their father, said, "How is it that you are come so soon to day?" Commonly, it is probable, they had to wait until all the other shepherds had watered their flocks and had departed. Their modesty prevented these young women from inviting Moses to accompany them home: and he was not disposed to intrude into the family of a stranger, on whom he had no claims. Reuel, who is here called the father of these young women, was their grandfather; for in Numbers 10:29, Hobab, another name for Jethro, is called the son of Raguel, (doubtless, the same name as

Reuel;) when he heard that an Egyptian delivered them out of the hand of the shepherds, and drew water for them to water their flocks, reproved them for being so uncivil as not to bring the stranger to the house; and immediately sent them back to invite the man, that he might receive some refreshment. Hospitality to strangers has been a characteristic of the humblest of the Arabs for four thousand years: no obligation is by them viewed to be more sacred than the duty of hospitality to any fellow-creature whom Providence brings under their protection. Moses was, therefore, kindly received as a respected guest by this amiable family. And the occurrence which brought them to an acquaintance with each other, was attended with very interesting consequences to both parties. One of these young shepherdesses had charms to attract the attention and fix the affections of a man who had been educated in all the learning of Egypt, and had been accustomed to live in all the luxuries and splendours of Pharaoh's palace. Moses, however, had received that wisdom from above which teaches a man the emptiness of all earthly greatness, and which led him to see that more true pleasure is found in retirement, in pious solitude in the wilderness, than in all the pomp and wealth of a royal court. Finding himself an exile from Egypt, and not foreseeing when he should be able to return thither with safety, he was content to take up his abode in the hospitable mansion, and with the agreeable family on which he had alighted; and his affection for Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, being reciprocated, he was united to her in marriage; and she bare him a son, whom he called Gershom, which means, a stranger here: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land. She also bore him another son, whom he named Eliezer, the Lord is my help.

SECTION II

moses sojourns in midian forty years—receives his commission from god to go and deliver the people of israel from their cruel bondage—the strong reluctance of moses overcome—he is empowered to work miracles—aaron is associated with him in the commission

Here, in a country much retired, and to this day very little known, Moses spent forty years of his life; not in idleness, for he kept the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law; and doubtless, acquired stores of wisdom from a contemplation of the works and ways of God; and from more direct intercourse with the Father of his spirit by prayer and holy communion. While, in this retirement, it has been supposed by some, that he wrote the book of Genesis, and perhaps the book of Job. But this is mere conjecture, and possesses no strong degree of probability; for it is by no means certain that alphabetical writing was at this time discovered; and as to leisure, he had enough of it in the forty years which he spent in the wilderness; and there he had access to all the traditions which had been handed down through the patriarchs; from which sources of information he was cut off, while resident in Arabia. Indeed, Moses seems to have relinquished all idea of returning to Egypt; and probably had abandoned the expectation, that he was destined to be the deliverer of Israel from oppression and bondage; until the Lord appeared unto him in the burning bush, at Mount Horeb. These appear to be at least probable inferences, from the reluctance which he manifested to be commissioned to go to Pharaoh, and to his brethren, with a message from Jehovah.

The account of this remarkable transaction is as follows: "And the angel of the Lord (Jehovah) appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see

this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel is come up unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses was much disturbed with this extraordinary manifestation and commission, and was by no means inclined to undertake so arduous a work. His objections originated partly in the low opinion which he entertained of his own abilities, and in some degree of culpable distrust of God. He said, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?" But God said, "Certainly I will be with thee." And told him that it should be a sign unto him that he was sent, "that on that very mountain ye shall serve God, when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt." But Moses continued to excuse himself; and alleged that when he came to the children of Israel, they would ask the name of the God by whom he was sent; "and," said he, "What shall I say unto them?" And God gave unto Moses this name, I am that I am; or, as it might be rendered, I will be that I will be; "And God said unto Moses, Thou shalt say to the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say unto them, The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, appeared unto me, saying I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done unto you in Egypt. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt; and they shall hearken to thy voice, and thou shalt come, and all the elders of Israel unto the king of Egypt; and ye shall say unto him, the Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. And I am sure the king of Egypt will not let you go; no, not with a mighty hand; and I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go. And I will give the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall come to pass that when ye go, ye shall not go empty. But every woman shall borrow (ask) of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

Here it may be proper to remark, that the king from whose anger Moses fled, was before this time dead, and who was his successor we are not informed; but this we know, that he was raised by the providence of God to the high station which he occupied, that in him the divine power might be manifested, and the name of God declared throughout all the earth. All the kings of Egypt were called by the name of Pharaoh, for many generations, although they might be of entirely different families. This man has been rendered conspicuous by the obstinacy which he manifested in refusing to let the people of Israel go, notwithstanding the wonders which were wrought before his

eyes, and which he must have been convinced, nothing but the power of God could produce. His history is also remarkable for the dreadful overthrow which he met, when pursuing after the Israelites, in the Red Sea.

Moses still discovered strong reluctance to be sent on this arduous work; and alleged, that his words would not be believed; on which the Lord changed the rod which he held in his hand into a serpent, and back again into a rod; which sign he was directed to exhibit in Egypt, that the Israelites might believe that the God of their fathers had sent him. He then directed him to put his hand into his bosom, and his hand instantly became white as snow with the leprosy, when he took it out; and again he was ordered to put it into his bosom, and on taking it out, it was as instantly restored to its natural state. And he said, if they will not believe the first they will believe the latter sign. And if they continued obstinate in their incredulity after the exhibition of both these signs, Moses was directed to change the water of the river into blood. Moses now pleaded his want of eloquence, as a reason why he should not be sent, saying, "I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." "And the Lord said unto him, who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what to say." The extreme reluctance of Moses to engage in this expedition was still further manifested; for he now began to supplicate, that the commission might be transferred to another, saying, "O my Lord, send I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." This was too much. The patience of God in bearing with him before was wonderful. But now, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses; and he said, is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be unto thee instead of a mouth; and thou shalt be unto him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." It seems probable from what is here said, that Aaron had heard of his brother's place of residence, and was now on his way to visit him, and consult with him respecting the miserable condition of the people of Israel.

SECTION III

moses takes leave of jethro—circumcision—aaron, his brother, joins him, and receives a full account of the message of jehovah—they go to the hebrews first, and then appear before pharaoh, and exhibit the miracles which they were directed to perform—pharaoh's heart is hardened and the condition of the people is more wretched—god promises deliverance

Moses having received from God this important commission, returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and requested of him permission to visit his brethren in Egypt, and see whether they were yet alive. To which this good man answered, "Go in peace." It was revealed unto Moses, that all those in Egypt who had sought his life were dead; so that he might now return in safety as it related to former transactions. He, therefore, took his wife and his sons, and set off on his journey to Egypt. And as he was commanded, he took with him the wonder-working rod, that he might exhibit to Pharaoh the miracles which he was directed to perform. He was instructed to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my first-born; let my son go that he may serve me; and behold if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born."

Moses, it seems, had neglected the circumcision of his children, on which account he was met and menaced with death, by the angel of the Lord. Zipporah, through whose influence, probably, the neglect had taken place, now performed the ceremony herself; and then pettishly said, "Surely a bloody husband art thou to me."

And when Moses was on his way, the Lord directed Aaron to go forth and meet him; and he went into the wilderness, and met him at the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, and informed him of the commission which he had received, and the signs which he was authorized to exhibit; and let him know the part which he was appointed to act under this important commission. It is probable, that Moses sent back to her father's house, Zipporah and his sons, either from the inn where they must have remained some time, on account of the circumcision; or, from this mount, after he met with his brother, and learned the miserable condition of the Israelites in Egypt. It is not at all probable that she accompanied him to Egypt, and was thence sent back; and we know she was with her father when Moses brought the people out of Egypt, and during the first part of their journey in the wilderness; for in the 18 chapter of Exodus, we read, that Jethro brought to Moses while encamped before the mount of God, his wife "after that he had sent her back."

Moses, accompanied by his brother Aaron, having entered Egypt, as he had been directed, gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron, who acted as the spokesman of Moses, repeated before the people, the message which God had sent. And then, in confirmation of their commission, they exhibited the miracles which Moses had been directed to perform. "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

Moses and Aaron having successfully executed their commission to the elders of Israel, went boldly unto Pharaoh, and demanded, in the name of the Lord, that he would let the people go to hold a feast in the wilderness. The king seems to have been surprised at the communication, and said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." They informed him that the God of the Hebrews had met with them, and required that the people should go out into the wilderness to sacrifice to him. Pharaoh now became incensed, and charged Moses and Aaron with drawing off the people from their work, and ordered them to get to their burdens. And to prevent them from listening to schemes of this sort, he directed the task-masters and officers of the people, to require of them the usual quantity of brick, but instead of supplying them with straw, as heretofore, to leave them to gather it for themselves. "They be idle," said he, "therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let more be laid upon them, and let them not regard vain words." The people were placed in wretched circumstances, the task-masters required the undiminished number of bricks, and yet furnished them with no straw, and "hasted them, saying, fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw." And the officers of the children of Israel, whom the task-masters had placed over them, from among themselves, and who were held responsible for the work of those under them, were now beaten, because the tasks were not finished as before; and they came and cried unto Pharaoh, complaining that they were beaten for not having the work done, when they were not furnished with the requisite straw; declaring that the fault lay not with them, but with his own people. "But he said, ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord." The officers of the children of Israel now found that they were in an evil case; and when they

met Moses and Aaron, they said, “The Lord look upon you and judge, because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us.” This bitter complaint of the Israelites greatly disturbed the mind of Moses. He returned unto the Lord and said, “Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.”

In answer, God assured Moses, that eventually Pharaoh would be constrained to let the people go, and would even drive them out of the land. Then he said, “I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but, also, by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers! And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage: I am the Lord.” Moses now communicated these gracious promises to the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto him, “for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage.”

The Lord now commanded Moses to go again unto Pharaoh and to demand of him to let the people go out of his land: but Moses said, “Behold the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?” But the only answer was a repetition of the former command. And he moreover informed him, that Pharaoh’s heart would be hardened, so that he would not let the people go; and thus there would be occasion for him to multiply his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring the children of Israel from among them.” And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them.

At the time when Moses and Aaron went in to speak to Pharaoh, the former was eighty years of age, and the latter eighty-three.

SECTION IV

aaron’s rod becomes a serpent—the magicians of pharaoh imitate the miracle—moses and aaron turn the water into blood—this also imitated by the magicians—the miracle of the frogs—this also imitated by the magicians—the dust converted into lice—magicians confounded

The Lord now directed them when they went into Pharaoh, to cast down the rod and it would become a serpent. They did so accordingly, in the presence of Pharaoh and his servants. The king then called in the wise men, and the sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt; these also, by the sleight of hand, or by the aid of evil spirits, cast down their rods, and they either really, or in appearance, became serpents: but God’s superiority over their diabolical arts was even now manifested; for Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. But the magicians had been so successful in imitating the miracle of Moses and Aaron, that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he refused to

let the people go.

Moses and Aaron were next commanded to meet Pharaoh at the brink of the river, and again to demand of him to let the people go; and when, as before, he refused, Aaron took the rod and stretched it out over the waters of Egypt, and they were all turned to blood, and the fish in the river died, and the river stank; and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. The magicians imitated this also, by turning water into blood; but it must have been on a very small scale, for all the rivers, streams, and pools were already converted into blood; so that "all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the river."

But Pharaoh remained obstinate, and went into his house, still refusing to comply with the command of the Almighty; and did not lay to heart the wonderful manifestation of divine power; which, in two instances, had taken place before his eyes.

The next plague inflicted on the Egyptians by the command of God, was the multiplication of frogs throughout the whole land. They were found in frightful abundance, not only in the river and in the fields, but came up into their houses, their bed-chambers, and their beds; and even into their ovens and kneading-troughs. And this miracle was also imitated by the magicians; but manifestly, on a contracted scale, and probably in a secret place, where they could play off their arts of jugglery. The land was already filled with frogs, and there was no difficulty in procuring as many as they would for the purposes of deception. But it seems, these sorcerers had no power to rid the country of the frogs which were spread over it: for Pharaoh makes no application to them for relief from the plague; but says to Moses and Aaron, "Entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people: and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord." And Moses promised that on the following day, it should be done as he desired, that he might know that there is none like unto the Lord God. "And Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord did according to the word of Moses." "But when Pharaoh saw there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them."

The fourth miracle which Moses, by divine command, wrought for the punishment of the Egyptians, was still more distressing than any of the preceding. The dust of the land was turned by the stretching out of Aaron's rod into lice.

The magicians were entirely confounded by this miracle: for, when they resorted to their enchantments, they could effect nothing like this; and this furnishes a strong argument to prove, that they were mere impostors; for, if they had really power to produce living serpents and frogs, by their diabolical arts, I see not why they could not as easily produce lice. But in this they failed, and said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." There was no room for their delusive arts, in this case; or, they became alarmed at these manifest indications of Almighty power. Some, indeed, suppose that God himself enabled the magicians to perform the first miracles, and then withdrew his aid to show the superiority of Moses and Aaron; but this seems to me to be an unreasonable supposition, and a course of proceeding unworthy of Almighty God. It would be, in the first place, giving the attestation of miracles to an imposture; and, in the next place, it would be a competition for superiority, in a case where the power of God was exerted on both sides. We have to choose, then, between the hypothesis of a diabolical agency, enabling these magicians to go as far as they did, and that of the arts of imposture and delusion, in which wicked men may become so adroit,

that they easily impose upon the ignorant and unsuspecting, as is proved by the experience of every day.

SECTION V

the miracle of “divers kinds of flies”—the murrain—the hail—pharaoh affrighted by the thunder which accompanied the hail—but his heart remains obdurate—the plague of the locusts—of the miraculous darkness

After the plague of the lice, the magicians relinquished the contest, and made no further effort with their enchantments. The next plague was of flies or gnats, which in Psalms 105:1-45, are called “divers kinds of flies.” Swarms of these troublesome insects filled their houses, and greatly infested the Egyptians. But in this case, a line of distinction was drawn between the people of Israel and the Egyptians; for in the land of Goshen, there were no swarms of flies. The pressure of this judgment was heavy on the people, and Pharaoh began again to relent, and would have compromised the matter, by giving the Hebrews permission to offer sacrifices in the land of Goshen, where they dwelt; but to this Moses would by no means agree, because their sacrifices were an abomination to the Egyptians; consisting of animals held sacred and even worshipped by them; but he insisted, that they should go three days journey into the wilderness. At length Pharaoh seemed to consent, provided they did not go very far away. Upon this Moses again entreated the Lord to remove the swarms of flies, which was accordingly done. But no sooner was the plague removed, than Pharaoh again hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go.

The fifth plague was a grievous murrain upon the horses, the asses, the camels, the oxen, and the sheep in the land of Egypt, generally; while, in Goshen, not an animal belonging to the children of Israel died. Still, however, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he refused to let the people go. Wherefore Moses was directed to take the ashes of the furnace, and sprinkle it towards heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh; “and it became a boil breaking forth on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt;” “and the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.”

When this judgment was no more regarded by Pharaoh than any of the former, Moses was directed to rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say, “Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? Behold, to-morrow, about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now. Send, therefore, now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the Lord amongst the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses; and he that regarded not the word of the Lord, left his servants and his cattle in the field.” Accordingly, when Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, the Lord sent thunder and hail; and the fire ran along upon the ground. And there was hail, and fire mingled with

the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. And the hail smote, throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both of man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail." Pharaoh was greatly moved by the severity of this judgment; and having called Moses and Aaron, he exclaimed, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord (for it is enough,) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." The king was evidently frightened by the unusual thunder which accompanied this storm;—a rare thing in the land of Egypt. Moses, although he knew that Pharaoh would not fulfil his promise, yet prayed for a cessation of the hail; and his petition was granted. "The flax and the barley was smitten; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled; but the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up."

Pharaoh's heart remaining obstinate, and he still refusing to permit the Israelites to depart, Moses and Aaron went in and said unto him, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, how long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go that they may serve me: else if thou refuse, to-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy courts. The condition of Egypt was now so deplorable that the servants of Pharaoh began to entreat him to let the people go. "Knowest thou not," said they, "that Egypt is destroyed?" Upon which he said to Moses and Aaron, "Go, serve the Lord your God, but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, we will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." But Pharaoh would not hearken to this; but insisted that only the men should go, which was the original request, and when Moses and Aaron did not yield in the least, he drove them from his presence.

The plague of the locusts now came upon the land of Egypt; "For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh was now seized with another fit of repentance, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you; now, therefore, forgive my sin, only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only. And Moses went out and prayed to the Lord, who sent a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; so that there remained not one locust in all the land of Egypt."

The next plague sent by the hand of Moses on the Egyptians was not attended with so much danger to human life, as some of the rest, but it was one replete with horror. It was a total darkness for the space of three days. During this period no one saw another, and they were unable to remove from their place; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh now consented that they should go, and take their wives and children; but not their flocks and their herds. But they said, "Our cattle shall go with us, there shall not be a hoof left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither." With this unyielding demand, Pharaoh was so much displeased, that he said in his wrath, "Get thee from me; take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

SECTION VI

institution of the passover—the destruction of the first-born of all the Egyptians—the exodus

Affairs were now coming to a crisis. The Lord commanded Moses to speak to the people, that every man and every woman should borrow, or rather, ask of their neighbours, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. “And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants; and in the sight of the people.”

And Moses made known to the people that about midnight, the Lord would go forth into the midst of Egypt, and would slay all the first-born in the land of Egypt; from the first-born of Pharaoh on the throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant, that sitteth behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. But that against the children of Israel not a dog should move his tongue, against man or beast. “And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.”

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month in the year to you. Speak ye to all the children of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house, take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night; roasted with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs shall they eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roasted with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord, throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.”

Thus the solemn feast of the passover was instituted, to be a memorial of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the desolating plague which fell on every house of the Egyptians, by means of the sprinkled blood of a lamb on the door-posts of their houses. And it can hardly be doubted, that this same ceremony of a slaughtered lamb and sprinkled blood, had a prospective as well as a retrospective aspect; it was a type of the deliverance to be effected by the Lamb of God, as well as a memorial of a deliverance from the destroying angel, who passed through Egypt.

It was ordained that the passover should be celebrated annually, on the same day of the month; that all the Israelites, by families, should partake of it; but that no stranger should be admitted, until all his males were circumcised. And they were directed, when they came to the land of Canaan, and their children should inquire, "What mean you by this service?" they should say, "This is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."

The commands of God were immediately obeyed by the Israelites. And at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt; "and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Pharaoh now gave orders in good earnest, that Moses and Aaron and all the people of Israel should depart from Egypt. "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We be all dead men." This strong desire to get rid of a people who seemed to be the occasion of such dreadful judgments, seems to have had much influence in disposing them to give them whatever they asked; so that the Israelites went out of Egypt, as had been predicted to them, laden with the spoils of the Egyptians, which they had voluntarily given into their hands.

SECTION VII

number of the people—time of sojourning—change of the commencement of the year—redemption of the first-born—the way which they were led—joseph's bones—succoth—pillar of fire and cloud

The number of persons, besides children and a mixed multitude, who went up out of Egypt that night, was six hundred thousand men. And their first journey was from Rameses, in Goshen, to Succoth, so called from the booths which they erected there.

"Now," says Moses, "the sojourning of the children of Israel, [in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan] was four hundred and thirty years." The period, as here given, commences with the first promise made to Abraham, (Genesis 12:2,) after he entered the land of Canaan, which was thirty years before the time when it was foretold that his seed should be oppressed and afflicted in a strange land, four hundred years. It was especially commanded that no part of the flesh should be carried out of the house where the paschal lamb was eaten; and a more important regulation was, "a bone of him shall not be broken."

This month had been originally called Abib, and was the seventh of the civil year of the Hebrews, but its name was now changed to Nisan; and they were directed to reckon it henceforward, the first month of their year.

In consequence of the redemption of the first-born of Israel as above related, God laid claim to every first-born of man and beast, among the Hebrews. When it happened to be of clean animals, appointed to be used in sacrifice, it was offered as a burnt-offering to the Lord; but when it was an unclean animal, as an ass, it was redeemed by a lamb, or its neck was directed to be broken. And all the first-born of the children of Israel were considered as consecrated to the Lord, and must be redeemed; but, afterwards, the Lord took the whole tribe of Levi as a substitute for the first-born, as will be related hereafter.

From the land of Egypt to Canaan, there was a direct way, which the sons of Jacob had passed with ease, several times; but the Lord led not the people along this way, which led through the territory of the Philistines, although that was near; because these people were hostile and warlike; and it would have discouraged the hearts of the people to have encountered such enemies, immediately after commencing their journey, and they might have been disposed to return again to Egypt; but “God led the people through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea,” which was a circuitous route.

The people were not forgetful of the solemn injunction of Joseph to carry his bones with them, when God should visit them, and bring them up out of the land of Egypt.

Succoth has been mentioned as the first stage which they made after leaving Egypt; their next was Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. In conducting this great host, God was pleased to become their guide, in a very extraordinary and miraculous manner. Before the armies of Israel, in the day time, there appeared a bright cloud in the form of a pillar, and at night it appeared like a pillar of fire, which constantly went before them, in their marches, and never forsook them, during the forty years that they wandered in the wilderness. From Etham they were directed to take their route by Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal Zephon. As far as can be judged from the present topography of the country, this route led them in a southern direction along the coast of the Red Sea, until they could in that direction proceed no further.

SECTION VIII

pharaoh pursues the israelites, and overtakes them at the edge of the red sea—alarm of the people—promise of deliverance—the sea divided by the rod of mores

As soon as Pharaoh and his people had time to recover from their consternation on account of the death of the first-born, and it was told to the king that the people fled, he began to repent that he had let them go, and thus was deprived of the services of this great multitude, who had been treated as slaves. Pharaoh, therefore, quickly summoned an army of chariots of war, and of horsemen, to pursue after the Israelites, and overtook them encamping near the sea, in the place before mentioned. And when the Israelites saw the Egyptians marching towards them, they were greatly alarmed, and cried unto the Lord. They also reproached Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, and said, “Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness, wherefore hast thou dealt with us to carry us out of Egypt? It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than to die in the wilderness.” And Moses said, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry land, through the midst of the sea. And I, behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them, and I will get me honour on Pharaoh and upon all his host, and upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.” And now, lest the Egyptians should make a sudden assault upon this great multitude of unprepared people, the angel of the Lord who had hitherto gone before the host in a pillar of cloud and fire, removed, and went behind them; and came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and while it furnished light to the latter, to the former it occasioned dense darkness; so that

during the whole night they did not approach near to the Israelites. And when Moses stretched his rod over the sea, the waters were divided; for “the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind, all that night, and made the sea dry land. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them, to the midst of the sea.” And towards the morning watch, the Lord impeded the progress of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drew them heavily; and the Egyptians began to think of flight; for they said, “The Lord fighteth for them.” By this time the Israelites having reached the opposite shore—for the channel of the sea at this place was narrow—Moses was directed again to reach forth his hand over the sea, and the waters immediately returned, and overwhelmed the flying Egyptians, their chariots, and their horsemen, and all their host; so that of this powerful army not one remained alive. “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.”

On this occasion, Moses composed a song, the oldest poetic composition in existence, unless we should suppose that the book of Job was written before this time. “And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.” And they sung the song which Moses had composed, and accompanied it with their instruments.

SECTION IX

israel in the wilderness—want of water—marah—elim—want of food—manna promised—sabbath—quails—description of the manna—regulations for collecting it—pot of manna to be laid up for a memorial

The Israelites were now delivered from this formidable enemy; but they were in a wide and howling wilderness. The name of that part of the wilderness into which they now had entered, was Shur. And having marched three days without finding water, at length they came to Marah, where they found water, but it was bitter, hence the name given to the place. The people began now to manifest their rebellious disposition, for they murmured against Moses and said, “What shall we drink? And when Moses cried unto the Lord, he showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they were made sweet. And leaving Marah they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees, and they encamped there by the waters.”

At some of these stages they must have continued a number of days, as on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing from the land of Egypt, they arrived at their next resting place, which was in the wilderness of Sin, on the way from Elim to Sinai. The provisions which they had brought with them from Egypt being exhausted, the people began to be in want; and regretted that they had ever left the flesh-pots of Egypt, where they did eat bread to the full; and they murmured against Moses, who constantly had recourse to the Lord for help. And he said, “I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day; that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” This is the first clear intimation which we have in Scripture of the observance of the Sabbath after its institution; and the mention of it is made in that familiar manner, which would induce us to think, that it was no new thing; and there was nothing in the circumstances of the people which could be

a reason for setting apart the seventh day of the week, at this time, as a day of rest. To overawe the agitated people, and to reprove their wicked murmurings, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. What that appearance was, which is called the glory of the Lord, we cannot certainly tell; but it was doubtless a very bright appearance; but whether there was seen, on these occasions, any person in the form of man, cannot be gathered from the sacred record. But the Lord not only promised to furnish bread for this great congregation, but flesh also; the latter was first given: "For in the evening the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host." And when the dew disappeared the people saw "a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost, on the ground." "And when they saw it, they said, manna—what is it?" And thus this extraordinary bread received its name. They were now directed by Moses to go out and gather, every one for himself; and when they brought it in to be measured with an omer, "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered, every man according to his eating." Moses had given strict orders, that no portion of the manna should remain until the morning, but the people disobeyed his voice, and kept of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank; and he was much displeased. Every morning they gathered what was necessary for that day; except that on the sixth day, they collected double the usual quantity, namely, two omers for one man. And Moses said unto them, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning; and that which was laid up on the sixth day did not stink; neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, eat this to-day, for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." Notwithstanding these plain directions, some of the people went to gather on the seventh day and found none. This perverseness occasioned another exhortation respecting the observation of the Sabbath, "See, for the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." That is, no man was permitted to go out to collect food on the Sabbath; but this did not prohibit them from going out to worship; or even to lead their ox or ass to watering; or to relieve the sick and afflicted. "So the people rested on the seventh day." The appearance of the manna was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers made with honey. In order that future generations might have a memorial and sensible evidence of this extraordinary and long continued miracle, Moses directed the people to fill an omer with the manna, and to put it up before the Lord. This command seems to have been anticipated, here; for it is said that Moses and Aaron laid it up before the testimony to be kept: but the ark of the testimony in which the manna was deposited, did not yet exist. The command, however, might have been given now, and the execution of it deferred until this depository was prepared for its preservation.

SECTION X

rebellion of the people at rephidim for want of water—the rock smitten—the people assailed by the amalekites—joshua defeats them

This miraculous bread that fell from heaven, was the sustenance of this great multitude of people, not merely for a day, or a week, or a month, or a single year; but for forty years.

From the wilderness of Sin, the people journeyed again, and came to Rephidim; and here a new distress began to be experienced. They were supplied with bread, and had received an abundant feast of flesh; but now water failed. Never was there a more rebellious, discontented people than those whom Moses was now conducting through the wilderness; and whatever disaster was experienced, the blame was cast upon him, who had no more power to prevent it, than any other man. Instead of humbly crying to God for a supply of water, which they had every encouragement to do, with confidence, they began to chide with Moses; and said, "Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?" But they continued to murmur against him, saying, "Wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattle, with thirst?" The clamour against him, on this occasion, was so violent, that when Moses cried to the Lord for help, he said, "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me." By this time, the host of Israel had approached the mount of Horeb, a part of the range of Sinai; and the Lord commanded Moses to take with him the elders of Israel, and go and stand on the rock of Horeb, and to smite the rock with the rod with which he at first smote the river, when its waters were turned to blood. And Moses did according to the word of the Lord, in the sight of the elders of Israel; and the name of the place was called Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord: the latter of these names signifies chiding, and the former, temptation. Among other impious things, they said, "Is the Lord among us or not?" And now a new calamity befell them. "Amalek came and fought with them at Rephidim." And Moses said to Joshua, "choose out men, and go and fight with Amalek. To-morrow, I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. So Joshua fought with Amalek; and Moses, and Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. And when Moses held up his hand, then Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon, and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the one on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." And the Lord said unto Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi; that is, Jehovah my banner. Because the Lord had sworn that he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Where the Amalekites now dwelt is unknown; long after this they are found inhabiting the south part of the land of Canaan. Saul, the first king of Israel, lost the divine favour by neglecting to execute the divine vengeance on this nation.

Here also we have the first notice of a man more famous than all others after Moses, for the frequent and familiar intercourse which he had with God, and for the wonderful works which he was enabled to perform. It may be asserted that Joshua was the witness of more stupendous miracles than any man who ever lived upon earth. At this time, though appointed commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel, he must have been quite a young man, and is so called, after this time.

Although Moses represented to Pharaoh that he wished to go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices unto Jehovah; yet no favourable opportunity seems to have occurred for this service, until after the defeat of the Amalekites. Moses then, for the first time, as far as appears, erected an altar; and no

doubt offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; for an altar has no other use than for sacrifices. The name given to it seems to relate to the victory just achieved, by the help of the Lord, and to the oath that there should be unceasing war with Amalek. The Lord is my banner, was a fit device to be inscribed on the standard of Joshua, who was the instrument of the Almighty in destroying a great multitude of people.

SECTION XI

jethro's visit to moses—his wise counsel—institution of officers—jethro returns home

While Israel was encamped at Mount Horeb, Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, having heard how he had brought the people out of Egypt, came unto him, with Zipporah his wife, and his two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, whom Moses, after starting with them to Egypt, sent back again, as has already been related. This must have been a most gratifying visit to Moses; and, therefore, as soon as it was announced that his father-in-law had arrived, “he went out to meet him, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel; whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro appears to have been eminently devout as well as wise; for on hearing the narrative of Moses, he was so excited, that he burst forth in praises to God, saying, “Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. And Jethro,” who was a priest, “took burnt-offerings and sacrifices for God;” and as it was customary every where, to feast on the remains of such sacrifices, as were not entirely consumed upon the altar, Aaron and the elders of Israel came and “eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law, before God;” that is, at the altar, where offerings had just been made to God.

When Jethro observed how the people came to Moses with their causes and disputes from morning until evening, and that he had no assistance, and no relaxation from the severe duties of the judgment-seat, he found fault with his arrangements, and told him that at this rate he would wear out both himself and the people; “For,” said he, “this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Harken now unto my voice, and I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee. Provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons. And it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself; and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall go to their place in peace.” And Moses perceived at once the wisdom of the counsel of his father-in-law, and took immediate measures to carry this convenient plan of polity into effect. But as he knew the importance of having the cordial consent of the people to these new measures, he addressed himself unto them, and said, “I am not able to bear you myself alone. The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times as many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you! How can

I myself alone, bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife. Take ye wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.” Thus, in Deuteronomy, we read that Moses left the choice of rulers to the people; but in Exodus it is said, “Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. There is, however, no inconsistency in these accounts. He presided over the whole business and appointed to office such persons as the people elected, and this was a much safer as well as a much more popular method of making a selection, than if he had depended on his own judgment, or on the opinion of a few ministers about his person. Here then, we have the commencement of a genuine, republican government. The idea of a regular gradation of rulers or officers, was suggested by Jethro, but the manner of choosing them by the free suffrage of the people at large, was the plan of Moses himself. It is especially worthy of remark, in the counsel of Jethro, that he offers it on condition it should meet the approbation of God. “If,” said he, “God command thee.” No doubt Moses received an intimation from the Lord that the polity recommended was good; and in this way we may observe how God makes use of the wisdom which he has given to his servants to devise useful and convenient plans, for the government of his people, even when he was daily making revelations of his laws and of his will. Jethro, having aided his son-in-law in forming a system for the government of this nation, took his leave, and departed into his own land, for the present; although, as we shall see in the sequel of the history, he came back again, and probably accompanied Israel to the land of Canaan.

SECTION XII

moses called up into the mount—communicates the words of jehovah to the people—tremendous exhibition on mount sinai—the ten commandments uttered in a voice of thunder—various other laws

Three months had now elapsed from the time the children of Israel had gone out from Egypt; and they entered the wilderness of Sinai; for they had left Rephidim, where they lay encamped near Horeb, for some time, and had proceeded to the desert of Sinai, which was something farther to the east. Sometimes, Horeb and Sinai are taken for the same mountain, as they belong to the same range; but properly they are distinct mountains, at no great distance asunder. Moses had now arrived at the place where God had met with him and spoke to him from the midst of the burning bush. This was a sacred spot; and surely no other place on earth was ever the scene of more stupendous miracles. Moses was now called up into the mount, and the Lord charged him to say to the children of Israel, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle’s wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” And Moses called the elders of Israel and laid before them all these words. And the people answered with one accord, and said, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” So easy a thing is it to obtain the profession of obedience, even from a rebellious people. In all communications from God to the people, and from the people to God, Moses acted as the mediator or internuncius.

Moses now received orders to go and “sanctify the people to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes.” We have already had occasion to remark one instance of this kind of ablution,

or external purification, in the family of Jacob, when he was on his way to Bethel, to fulfil his vow, in the history of the Patriarchs. As it was a cleansing with water, it seems to have had something of the nature of a baptism; and the tradition of the Jewish rabbies, that the custom of proselyte baptism had its origin in this ancient manifestation of the divine presence, which rite of sanctification is not altogether improbable. It was never practised, but in view of some great solemnity, to which the people were approaching: and thus also, when the Lord himself came to sojourn upon earth, John, who was sent to prepare his way, called the whole Jewish nation to repentance, and also to the washing of baptism. In this case, at mount Sinai, the prescribed ablution was to prepare the Israelites for the extraordinary descent of Jehovah upon the mountain on the third day, in the sight of all the people. And Moses was directed to set bounds around the mount, and to forewarn the people, that whoever touched the mount should die; and whether it were man or beast it should either be stoned or shot through. And Moses sanctified the people according to the command of God; "and on the third day, in the morning, there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount; and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount." Again, God gave express orders that the people should keep themselves within the prescribed limits, and not break through to gaze; otherwise, they would bring swift destruction upon themselves; "and thou shalt come up, thou and Aaron, but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord; lest he break through upon them." It is difficult to determine who are to be understood by the priests mentioned here. We know that the Aaronic priests were not yet consecrated, and we never read of any other priesthood among the Israelites. It may, however, be argued with great probability, that wherever there are sacrifices there must be priests; and it is reasonable to suppose, that there existed a set of men appointed to this service. And there occurred a fact in the sequel of the history which confirms this idea; where Moses directed the young men to offer sacrifices, before Aaron was consecrated.

From the midst of the darkness, in a voice of thunder, God now spoke all the words of the ten commandments of the moral law. When the people heard the tremendous voice of God speaking to them, and saw the thundering and the lightnings, and heard the voice of the trumpet, they removed and stood afar off: and they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die." But Moses encouraged them not to fear, though at the first he was himself so terrified, that he said, as the apostle informs us, "I exceedingly fear and quake." These words are not recorded here, but it is remarkable, that in one instance it is said that Moses spake, but what he said is not mentioned. After this the Lord spake only to Moses, and he communicated what was said to the people. The first solemn message related to the worship of idols. The words are remarkable as showing that images and idols were first used as a means of worshipping Jehovah. "Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." Directions were then given to make an altar of earth, and to sacrifice thereon burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, sheep and oxen. And then this important promise was given, which is in force to this day: "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." It was also ordained, that for the sake of decency, they should not ascend the altar by

steps. From what is here said, it appears, that burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, were the two kinds of sacrifices in use, before the institution of the Levitical ritual. The first of these was entirely consumed by fire on the altar, and among the Greeks obtained the name of holocaust, (entirely consumed:) the peace-offerings were presented on the altar, but only a small part of the flesh was consumed, and the remainder furnished a feast for the worshipper and his friends. In every case, however, the blood was entirely drawn from the animal, and partly sprinkled on and around the altar, and partly poured on the ground, at its foot.

The next communication related to Hebrew servants; directing, that in no case, should they be obliged to serve more than six years: if the servant, however, preferred his master's house to liberty, he might remain, but in token of perpetual servitude, he was to have his ear bored to the door post; but this transaction was ordered to take place before the judges; that there might be no injustice done.

SECTION XIII

laws respecting murder—lex talionis—mischiefs by an ox—opening a pit—penalty for stealing an ox or a sheep—the killing of a thief—goods in trust—animals borrowed—seduction—idolaters—witches

It was ordained, that in all cases, wilful murder should be punished with death: but for him who slew a man unintentionally, a refuge from the avenger of blood should be provided.

It was also capital for a child either to strike or to curse his parents; and the person who stole a man and sold him was also punished with death. The man who inflicted a bodily injury on his neighbour, so that he was rendered incapable of work, was bound to pay all the expenses of his cure, and his wages for the time of his confinement.

And it was specially ordained, that a man who killed a servant, by striking him with a rod, should by no means be permitted to escape condign punishment; but if death did not immediately ensue, and yet the servant should die after several days, it was to be presumed, that the death was owing to another cause, since men would not be apt to destroy their own property.

The rule prescribed to the judges in apportioning punishments to crimes, was the most just that could be conceived. It was what has been called, "the law of retaliation." "Life for life; eye for eye; tooth for tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot; burning for burning; wound for wound; strife for strife." But if a man deprived a servant of his eye or his tooth, he was to be deprived of his services, and the servant received his freedom.

An ox that gored a man was directed to be slain; and the owner of an ox, known to push with his horns in time past, if being forewarned to keep him up, he neglected to do it, and the ox kill a man, the ox shall be put to death, and also his owner: but in this case, he was permitted to redeem his life by paying a fine. And where the ox killed a servant, his owner was bound to pay for his loss, and the ox, as before, was to be stoned.

He who opened a pit and left it uncovered, was responsible for all the injuries which might ensue; and where the ox of one man killed that of another, the law was, that both should be equally divided, the living ox by being sold, and the dead ox also; but if the offending ox was known to push in time past, and his owner kept him not in, then he was bound to pay for the slain ox, and

take his carcase to himself.

For the stealing an ox, the penalty was, to restore five for one; and four sheep for a sheep.

In the day time, it was reckoned murder to put the thief to death, if apprehended in the act; but not so in the night; because death is not the proper punishment for theft, but restitution; and yet the law of self-defence will exculpate a man for killing a thief when found breaking into his house in the night.

The same principle of responsibility recognized in the law respecting a noxious ox, is applied to fire. This being a dangerous element, when not carefully guarded, the man who lets out fire which destroys his neighbour's property, is liable for all the injury suffered; so also, if a man put his cattle into another man's field; out of the best of his own he was bound to make restitution.

If money or other property were committed in trust to any one, and was stolen, the person from whom it was stolen, was required to take an oath before the judges, that he had not put his hand to his neighbour's goods.

An animal borrowed, if it died when the owner was present, the borrower was not bound to make it good; but if he was not present, then the borrower was responsible.

It was a law, that the man who seduced a woman should certainly marry her; unless the father of the woman utterly refused, and then a fine was imposed, equal to the dowry of a virgin.

A witch was not to be suffered to live.

Idolaters, and persons guilty of unnatural crimes, were to be punished with death.

SECTION XIV

provision for the poor, the stranger, widow, and orphan—loans to a brother—pledges—speaking evil of rulers—first-fruits—animals torn by wild beasts—slander forbidden—duties to enemies—sabbatical year—annual festivals—the passover—feast of tabernacles—and feast of harvest of pentecost—leaven forbidden in the sacrifices—other laws

A special provision was made for relief to the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless. The very words of this law are worthy of our consideration. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow nor fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

Money lent to a brother who was poor, was to be without interest or usury.

When a neighbour's garment was taken in pledge, the law required, that it should be restored before the going down of the sun.

It was expressly forbidden to speak evil of judges or magistrates.

The firstlings of the flocks and herds, the first fruits of the field, the garden, and the wine-press, were the Lord's.

The flesh of animals torn by wild beasts was forbidden to be eaten by the Israelites.

Slander and false witness are expressly prohibited.

And it was forbidden to follow a multitude to do evil; and especially not to advocate an unrighteous cause, to decline after a multitude.

Neither were they permitted to countenance a poor man in his cause; that is, when it was unjust; neither might they wrest the judgment of the poor.

No enmity of another can exonerate us from the obligations of neighbourly conduct towards him; therefore, it was enjoined, that if a man met the ox or ass of his enemy going astray, he should surely bring it back to him; or if he saw his ass lying under a burden, he should by all means assist him.

Great disapprobation is manifested towards all partiality and injustice in the settling of disputes between man and man. No gift was allowed to be received by judges from either party concerned in a cause.

As the people were commanded to do all their secular work in six days, and rest the seventh day; so they were directed to sow the land and gather in the fruits for six years, but the seventh year they were to let it lie uncultivated. The reason here assigned for the rest of the weekly Sabbath, is a political one, and still of as great force as at first, "That thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thine handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed;" and the reason assigned for a sabbatical year was, "that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat?" for in this year, no man was permitted to gather into his barn any of the spontaneous productions of the earth: these were free to all, and the owner of the field had no peculiar claim to them.

Three times in the year, all the males were required to appear before the Lord. At the feast of the passover, or of unleavened bread, on the fourteenth of Abib or Nisan, of the institution of which, a particular account has already been given; at the feast of harvest, which was to be celebrated fifty days after the passover, and was therefore called by the Greeks, pentecost; and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, which is commonly called, the feast of tabernacles; because during its celebration, the people cut down branches of trees and made themselves booths, in commemoration of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness. This feast was set to the fifteenth day of the seventh month. And as their families and habitations would be peculiarly exposed, when all the males were absent, a special promise was given, that during these visits of piety to the place where the Lord should record his name, no one should desire their land, or molest their families. Thus, also, there was a special promise, that the sixth year should be so abundantly productive, that there would be no danger of want from having their fields untilled on the seventh.

Some laws were given, the reason of which does not clearly appear. Of this sort is the one forbidding leaven to be offered with any of their sacrifices; and that none of the fat of a sacrifice should remain until the morning. Probably many such regulations were intended to guard the people against the superstitious rites of the heathen around them. Some precepts, however, seem to have had no other end than to cherish humanity, and kind feelings even to animals. Such as this, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk."

SECTION XV

the angel of god promised to go before the people

To encourage the people, and prevent their murmurings, the Lord said, "Behold I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice: provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies; and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perrizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them; nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy the people to whom thou shalt come. And I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little, will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea, even unto the sea of the Philistines; and from the desert unto the river; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land; lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods it will surely be a snare to thee."

SECTION XVI

moses, aaron, nadab, and abihu called into the mount—glorious appearance of god—tables of the law

Moses was, after this, called up into the mount, and directed to bring with him Aaron and his two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: but these were to worship afar off, and Moses alone to come near the Lord. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And early in the morning he builded an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. "And he sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord." Some remarks have already been made on the existence of priests in Israel, before the consecration of Aaron, and reference was made to what is here stated. We have also here a more particular account than occurs before, of the ceremonies in relation to the blood of the sacrifices; "And Moses took half of the blood and put it into a basin; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar." Having committed to writing the laws which had been committed to him by the Lord, and which the people had repeatedly promised that they would obey, he now took the book containing this covenant and read it in the audience of the people. "And they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." And Moses took the blood which he had put in basins, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." After this solemn ratification of the covenant, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, went up on the mount. "And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his

feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” The visible appearance, on this occasion, must have been that of the Angel of the Covenant, the Son of God, who often appeared in the form of a man; and sometimes, as in this instance, surrounded with glory.

It was not sufficient that the law of the ten commandments should be uttered by the voice of God, and written by Moses in the book of the law, the Lord now directed Moses to come up to him in the mount, and he would give him tables of stone, which should contain the law and commandments. On this occasion, Moses was accompanied only by Joshua. “And he said unto the elders of Israel, tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have matters to do, let him come unto them. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.”

SECTION XVII

offerings for the tabernacle—pattern—curtains—altar—laver—holy, and most holy place, and their furniture

At this time, directions were given to Moses in relation to offerings of gold, and silver, and brass; blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat’s hair, and ram’s skins dyed red, and badger skins, and shittim wood; oil for the light; spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx-stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breast-plate, for the purpose of making a sanctuary, or house of worship, in which God might, as it were, dwell among them. The exact pattern of this structure was shown to Moses in the mount; and he was ordered to be careful to make a tabernacle, and the instruments and furniture thereof, exactly according to the pattern which he had seen. The tabernacle itself was directed to be made with boards, plated with silver, and inserted in sockets; and held together by cross-bars, and by braces at the corners. Over this frame several sets of curtains were suspended. The first of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: And above these, another set of curtains, of goat’s hair, eleven in number; to be a covering on the tabernacle. And as an outer covering of the whole, there was a canopy of ram skins dyed red, and skins dyed blue.

The tabernacle was to be divided into two compartments, the exterior of which was to be twenty cubits in length, and ten cubits wide; and the interior, which was the most holy place, ten cubits square. The entrance into the outer tabernacle, or holy place, was by an opening covered by a thick impervious curtain; and the separation between the holy and most holy place, was by another curtain of most precious materials and workmanship. The furniture of the exterior apartment was, first, the golden candlestick of pure beaten gold, with its seven ornamented branches, or stems, with their respective lamps and oil vessels. 2. The table of shew-bread covered with plates of gold, on which twelve loaves were placed every Sabbath morning; and those were directed to be eaten by the priests within the sacred precincts. And, 3. The golden altar, or altar of incense. Within the inner veil, in the interior recess of the tabernacle, called the most holy place, was the ark of the

covenant, a chest covered all over with pure gold, the lid of which, called the mercy-seat, or place of atonement, was a piece of gold on which, at each end, were formed cherubims, whose faces were turned inwards, towards the mercy-seat. Within this sacred chest were deposited the two tables of the law, written by the finger of God—the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The tabernacle was so constructed, that it could readily be taken down, and carried from place to place. It was situated within a court, a hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, near the western extremity. This court was everywhere surrounded with pillars, on which were suspended curtains, except in the front, where was a wide gate, closed by a curtain. In this court was also placed the altar of burnt-offerings, at no great distance from the entrance of the tabernacle, and between the altar and the tabernacle stood the laver, which was continually replenished with water, where the priests washed their hands and feet, and the pieces of the victims, which were placed on the altar.

SECTION XVIII

designation of aaron and his sons to the priest's office—sacerdotal garments—materials offered freely—wisdom given to execute the work—amount of gold and silver contributed—whence obtained

As there was now to be a sacred edifice for the worship of God, and a great increase of ritual services, it became necessary to have a priesthood entirely consecrated to this service. Accordingly, the whole tribe of Levi was selected to aid, as there might be occasion, in the religious services of the tabernacle: but the family of Aaron who belonged to this tribe, were sanctified to be priests, of whom Aaron was chief priest. The priests were consecrated with many ceremonies, and a particular costume was prescribed to them, which they were bound to wear, whilst ministering in or about the sanctuary. The robes of the high-priest were as splendid and rich as the most precious materials and costly work could make them. No prince or potentate ever wore habiliments more elegant and decorous. It is not necessary to describe the several parts of the high-priest's dress. A good painting or print will give the reader a clearer idea of it, than any description which we could give in words. It may, however, be satisfactory to specify the mitre and the breast-plate. The former was an elegant turban encircled with a crown, on the front of which was a golden plate, inscribed with the words "Holiness to the Lord." The breast-plate was, however, the richest, most splendid, and most important part of the whole. In it were inserted twelve precious stones, each of a different species from the rest; and on each of these was inscribed the name of one of the tribes of Israel; so that the twelve tribes of Israel were engraven on these stones, which were set in ouches of gold. And on the shoulders where the breast-plate was fastened to the other parts of the dress, there were two clasps containing two very large stones of the most valuable kind, on which also were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes; six on the one, and six on the other. The high-priest wore this precious and splendid dress, when he ministered in the tabernacle, except when he officiated on the day of atonement, on which occasion he put on what were called the linen garments, which he wore in common with the other priests.

The offerings requisite for the costly edifice now erected, and for all the furniture of the court, and the tabernacle, and for the garments of the priests, were made voluntarily by the people, not grudgingly, but willingly, and with so much liberality, that it became necessary for Moses to make proclamation, that materials sufficient for the whole work were already in hand, and to request the

people to withhold their hands, and bring no more offerings.

There were also men inspired with wisdom and ingenuity by the Spirit of the Lord, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary. The chief of these wise-hearted men were Bezaleel and Aholiab, to whom the execution of the whole work was committed. There were also wise-hearted women, “who did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen.” And others spun goats’ hair; and to make the laver, the women gave up their brazen mirrors. Thus “the children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord; every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.”

The whole amount of gold used in the structure of the tabernacle was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels: and the silver, an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels. It has sometimes been inquired, whence had the Israelites, who had just come out of the oppressive bondage of Egypt, resources to supply so much gold and silver and other precious materials, for the building of the tabernacle? To which it may be replied, that some of them, especially the descendants of Joseph, were rich, for we do not read that their property was taken away by the Egyptians. Again, they received large quantities of gold and silver from the Egyptians the night on which they forsook Egypt, as has been before related; and it is exceedingly probable that they found great spoils at the Red Sea; for the bodies of the Egyptians were washed on shore; and the Israelites were thus enriched by their enemies, in more ways than one.

SECTION XIX

erection of the tabernacle—laws respecting sacrifices and offerings—sin-offerings—unbloody sacrifices—drink-offerings—flour-offerings

The erection of the tabernacle took place in the first month of the second year, and first day of the month, after they left Egypt. When the tabernacle was reared up, and all its furniture disposed in its proper place, “the cloud covered the tent of the congregation; and the glory of the lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onwards in all their journeys. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not, till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and a fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”

The laws now given respecting sacrifices, offerings and various other things, were exceedingly numerous, and need not be recited in detail. Some general remarks, together with a notice of some remarkable statutes and ordinances, will be sufficient for our purpose.

The earliest kind of sacrifice of which we have any account, was the burnt-offering, which might be of the herd or of the flock; or in case of poverty, doves or pigeons. The ceremonies used in this sacrifice, were the following: the animal, of whatever kind, whether of the herd or flock, was required to be a male, and without blemish. The place of making the offering was at the door of the tabernacle. The person making it did it “of his own voluntary will,” and when the animal was presented, the offerer put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it was accepted from him, “to make an atonement for him.” When the bullock or the lamb, was killed by the person presenting him, and the officiating priests caught the blood, and brought it and sprinkled it round

the altar. The animal was then skinned, and cut in pieces; and the priests having kindled a fire on the altar, placed the pieces in order on the wood, and the whole was consumed; the inwards and legs were, however, first carefully washed in water. This was called, "an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord." The place of slaying the burnt-offering was on the north side of the altar.

The next sacrifice, which was in use before the time of Moses, was the peace-offering. Of these, the only part burnt on the altar was the fat; the breast and the right shoulder were waved or heaved before the Lord, and belonged to the officiating priests, by means of which they received a large part of their support. The remainder of the peace-offering was for the use of the offerer, who made a feast upon the same, and eat it within the sacred precincts of the courts of the Lord, where there were conveniences for cooking, and rooms in which families and select companies might meet. The peace-offering might be male or female, of the flock or the herd.

The sin-offering and trespass-offering are treated of distinctly in the law, but in what the difference between them consisted it is not now easy to say, except that the former was in some cases offered for the whole congregation; the latter only for private persons. It will be sufficient, therefore, to give a brief description of the sin-offering.

When the priest himself sinned, he was required to offer a young bullock, without blemish, for a sin-offering; and he was to bring the animal before the Lord, that is, to the door of the tabernacle, and lay his hand upon his head, and there kill him; the officiating priest then received the blood, and dipped his finger into it, and sprinkled it seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary, and also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense, and poured the remainder of the blood at the bottom of the altar. The fat was burnt upon the altar, as in the case of the peace-offerings, but the skin and the flesh, and other appurtenances of the bullock, were not burnt upon the altar, but carried out to a clean place, entirely without the camp, and there burnt.

When a sin-offering was made for the whole congregation, the ceremonies were the same as now described, except that the elders of the congregation laid their hands on the head of the sacrifice.

The sin-offering of a ruler of the people was different. He was required to bring before the Lord a kid of the goats, a male, and the blood was put on the horns of the altar of burnt-offerings. And the sin-offering of one of the common people differed in nothing from that of the ruler, except that the animal offered was to be a female, instead of a male. In every case, this offering was made on account of some sin committed, of which the offerer was conscious: and when he presented his sacrifice he laid his hands upon its head, and made confession of his sin; and the priest by sprinkling the blood on the altar, made an atonement for him, and his sins were forgiven.

In regard to the trespass-offering, the law provided, that when the offerer was too poor to bring a lamb or a kid, he might present two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; or if he was unable to provide even these, he might bring the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, on which no oil or frankincense was to be placed: and the priest burned a portion of this offering on the altar, and the remainder fell to him.

But when a man sinned in relation to the holy things of the Lord, he was required to make amends for the injury in the holy thing, and to add a fifth; and to make an atonement for his offence, he was to bring a ram for a trespass-offering.

Besides these bloody sacrifices there were prescribed various offerings of the fruits of the earth. These commonly consisted of fine flour, on which frankincense was poured, and also oil. The officiating priest took a handful of this flour, thus prepared, and burnt it upon the altar, for a memorial. This was an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. Every offering of flour was seasoned with salt; but neither leaven nor honey were ever permitted to be mingled with these offerings. Sometimes, the flour was baked in a pan, or formed into cakes; the ceremonies were in this case the same as before. The priest burnt a handful on the altar, and the remainder was allotted as a compensation unto him. These offerings of flour or cakes often accompanied the sacrifices, especially the peace-offering. The offerings of flour, baked and unbaked, which the law enjoined, are, in our version, called meat-offerings, which, as the word meat is now commonly understood, is wrong; they should be denominated bread-offerings, flour-offerings, or grain-offerings. They never consisted of the flesh of animals.

Drink-offerings of wine, also accompanied the various animal sacrifices; the quantity poured out being answerable to the size of the sacrifice.

SECTION XX

consecration of the priests and levites—holy fire

Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priest's office with many solemn ceremonies. The whole congregation was assembled at the door of the tabernacle; and Moses washed Aaron and his sons with water; and put on them their sacerdotal robes; and then anointed them with the holy oil; and he also anointed with the same the tabernacle and all its furniture, and the altar and all its vessels, and the laver and its foot, and sprinkled a portion of it on the altar seven times. Then Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the bullock for a sin-offering, and slew it; and Moses took the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar. And he took all the fat of the inwards and burned it on the altar, with the liver and the two kidneys; and burnt the flesh and skin and other appurtenances without the camp, as in the case of other sin-offerings. Then Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the ram for the burnt-offering, and killed it, and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar, round about; and he burnt the head and the fat, and the legs upon the altar.

Next, Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon its head, and slew it; and Moses took of the blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot: and did the same to his sons. Aaron then waved the shoulder of the sacrifice, together with the fat, and unleavened bread, which when it was done, Moses received them from the hand of Aaron and his sons, and burnt them on the altar: but the breast he waved before the Lord, but did not burn it, but reserved it for himself, as being the portion of the officiating minister. And again, Moses took of the blood and the anointing oil, and sprinkled it on Aaron and his sons, and on their garments. After these solemn ceremonies, Aaron and his sons were forbidden to go out of the door of the tabernacle for seven days, when the period of their consecration would be ended.

On the eighth day, Aaron and his sons entered on the public duties of the sacerdotal office, by sacrificing a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. And the people were commanded to bring a kid for a sin-offering, and a calf and lamb for a burnt-offering; also a bullock

and a ram for peace-offerings; and an offering of flour mingled with oil. These sacrifices were intended as a preparation for the manifestation of the divine presence which was about to take place. These also Aaron offered for himself and sons, and for the people, and put the blood upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the remainder at the bottom of the altar, and with the other ceremonies appropriate to each kind of sacrifice. When these offerings were completed, Aaron, as being now fully invested with the office of high-priest, "lifted up his hands towards the people, and blessed them." After which Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle, and when they came out, they again blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed the burnt-offering on the altar, and the fat of the other sacrifices. "And when the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces."

This fire, thus kindled, was to be kept alive, and never to be suffered to go out; and all offerings made by fire, whether on the altar of burnt-offerings, or on the altar of incense, must be made by the holy fire on the altar.

SECTION XXI

the sin and fearful punishment of aaron's eldest sons

Nadab and Abihu, the oldest sons of Aaron, who had just been with him consecrated to the priest's office, and one of whom would doubtless have been his successor in the office of high-priest, regardless of the commandments of the Lord, and probably elated with the distinction which they had received, took their censers, and put common fire therein, and offered strange fire before the Lord, instead of the holy fire from the altar. "And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." Moses, upon this manifestation of the divine displeasure, spoke to Aaron and said, "This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." This was indeed a heavy affliction and sore trial to Aaron; but he behaved himself as became a saint, for he "held his peace." Moses directed that the bodies of these men should be taken away from the sanctuary, out of the camp. He then forbid Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, to make any of the usual expressions of grief, such as uncovering or making bald the head, and rending their garments, lest they should die; "but," said he, "let your brethren the whole house of Israel bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle; for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you."

It is not an improbable conjecture, that these young men had made too free a use of wine, and that intoxication might have been the occasion of their sin; for in the very next precept which was delivered, it is enjoined, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a statute, for ever, throughout your generations; and that ye may put a difference between holy and unholy; and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them."

Moses became more exact in looking into the conduct of Aaron and his remaining sons; and gave them special directions what offerings were to be eaten in the courts of the Lord. And after scrutiny, finding that the kid of the people for a sin-offering had been burnt, instead of being eaten by the priests, as had been commanded in regard to this particular sin-offering, contrary to the

custom in other cases of the sin-offering, he was displeased with Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, and said, “wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place? Behold the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place; ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place.” But Aaron excused himself on account of some impurity contracted by accident; which rendered it unsuitable that he should partake of what was so holy. When Moses heard this he was satisfied.

SECTION XXII

clean and unclean animals—leprosy, laws respecting it

The distinction between clean and unclean animals existed anterior to the deluge; for we find it made the ground of a great difference in the number of each admitted into the ark; and there can be little doubt, but that this distinction originated with the divine institution of sacrifices. Those animals which, according to the primitive institute, might be offered in sacrifice, were considered clean, and all others unclean. And this does not exclude the idea that the former were better suited for human food than the latter; for the selection of certain species for sacrifice may have been made with some reference to this very thing. It is true, that sacrifices were only offered from the herd and the flock, and one species of birds; but the obvious reason was, that other clean animals were wild and could not always be had, when any particular sacrifice was required to be offered.

In the Levitical law, all unclean animals are prohibited as articles of food; and all clean animals are allowed. In regard to quadrupeds, the rule of distinction was, that all animals, both dividing the hoof and chewing the cud, are clean, and might be used as food; all other quadrupeds were prohibited, as unclean. In regard to birds, there were no clearly marked criteria, whereby the clean and unclean were distinguished, the law therefore contains an enumeration of the species which were unclean.

In regard to fishes, the criteria were as distinct as of quadrupeds. Those animals, in the water, which were furnished both with fins and scales might be eaten, but all others were unclean.

Insects, and all creeping things, in general, were prohibited; yet some few species were allowed to be used as food.

As this distinction of clean and unclean animals originated with the institution of sacrifices, it ceased when they were abrogated; and now nothing is “common or unclean;” although, some animals are much better adapted for human food than others; and generally those animals are most used for food, which, according to the ritual law, were reckoned clean. Some animals are said to be very unsuitable for food in one climate and country, which may be eaten without inconvenience in another country, where the climate is different. Thus in the hot countries of Asia, particularly in the sandy regions of Arabia, where cutaneous diseases are frequent, and of a malignant kind, it has been thought, that the flesh of swine is very unfavourable to health.

The leprosy was a disease of so impure, and probably, also contagious a nature, that persons infected with it were carefully separated from the rest of the people; and as some skill was requisite to distinguish this foul disease, in its incipient state, from other cutaneous diseases of a less noxious kind, this whole matter was committed to the priests, who were authorized to determine when it was proper for any one to be sent out of the camp, on the account of the leprosy; and when the cure was so complete, that the leper might be again restored to the society

of his friends. And when a leper was pronounced clean, there were certain things required of him, which might on no account be neglected. The signs by which the leprosy might be distinguished are particularly laid down in Leviticus 13:1-59; and the ceremonies to be used when the priest pronounced a leper clean, are as particularly detailed in Leviticus 14:1-57.

Rules are also given for detecting a cankerous, consuming disorder, analogous to the leprosy in man, which invaded and destroyed garments and houses, in that climate.

SECTION XXIII

laws of purity and health

A woman, after childbirth, was reckoned unclean for one week, if she had given birth to a male; for two weeks when a female; but for her complete purification, one month must elapse in the former, and two months in the latter case. After which, it was prescribed, that she should offer a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or turtle dove for a sin-offering: but in case of such poverty as rendered the offering of a lamb impracticable or inconvenient, the law was fulfilled by two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering and the other for a sin-offering. It may not be improper here to remark, that the Virgin Mary, the blessed mother of our Lord, was so poor, that she was able only to make the offering of two turtle-doves.

Laws were also ordained, declaring that all running issues, and impure discharges, rendered the subjects of them unclean, and showing how they were to be purified.

No ceremonial uncleanness, however, was so great as that contracted by touching a dead body; or a bone, or the grave of a human being. Whoever, however necessarily, or accidentally, touched the dead body of a man, was unclean for seven days; and in order that he might be clean, at the end of this period he was required to purify himself on the third day, and on the seventh. Whoever was defiled by the touch of a dead body, and entered the sacred enclosure without purification, defiled the tabernacle of the Lord, and exposed himself to the punishment of excision. The death of any person in a tent rendered all who were present unclean, for seven days; and not only the persons but the vessels in the tent were unclean. It is difficult to account for the rigour of this ceremonial law. It probably had its origin in the necessity of counteracting some superstition respecting the relics of the deceased, which is not now known. Certainly, the shameful superstition of Christians in relation to relics, would render any regulation important which would have had the effect of putting an end to it.

The method of purifying those rendered unclean by the touch of a dead body was singular. A red heifer on whose neck the yoke had never come, was slain by the priest, and her blood sprinkled seven times towards the tabernacle. Then one took the heifer and burnt her wholly in the presence of the priests, who took cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. The priest then washed his clothes and bathed his flesh, and was unclean until the even. Next, a man who was clean gathered up the ashes of the heifer, and laid them up without the camp, in a clean place; and then it was to be kept for the people, as "a water of separation," "a purification from sin." Whoever then was defiled by a dead body was purified by putting some of the ashes of the heifer into a vessel of running water, which a clean person sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on the unclean person; or, on the tent and its furniture; and on the seventh day the man was to purify himself and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water,

and at even he should be clean.

Another extraordinary law in the Mosaic code was that relative to the woman suspected of adultery by a jealous husband. A potion, called bitter water, was, after much solemn ceremony, given to the suspected wife to drink, by the priest; the effect of which, if she was guilty, was, that her body swelled in an extraordinary manner, and the woman, according to the awful denunciation of the priest, became a curse among her people. But if she was innocent, no such effects ensued. The whole ceremonial of this appalling transaction may be read in Numbers 5:1-31; but these ceremonies the Jewish rabbies multiplied tenfold.

SECTION XXIV

the vow of the nazarite

Any persons who chose might take upon themselves the vow of the Nazarite, "to separate themselves unto the Lord." The person thus separated, was bound to drink no wine, nor strong drink, nor vinegar of wine, or of strong drink; nor to drink any liquor formed from grapes; nor to eat grapes, moist or dried; nor, indeed, any thing from the vine tree, from the kernel to the husk. All the days of his separation, no razor was to come upon his head, but he was to let the locks of his hair grow. And during his separation he was carefully to avoid the touch of a dead body; and even if his father, mother, brother, or sister, should die in the time, he was not to touch their bodies. But if any one happened to die suddenly by him, then he was required to shave his head on the seventh day, and on the eighth day to offer two turtles or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering, and thus make an atonement for him that had sinned by the dead, and hallow his head that same day. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the day of his separation, and shall bring a lamb for a trespass-offering; but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. And when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and he shall offer one male lamb for a burnt-offering, and a female lamb for a sin-offering; and a ram for a peace-offering; and the usual offerings of flour, oil, and wine, the accompaniments of the aforesaid sacrifices; "and the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings." And the priest took the shoulder of the ram, and unleavened cakes, and put them on the head of the Nazarite after his hair was shaven, and the priest waved them for a wave-offering before the Lord. When this ceremony was ended, then the Nazarite might drink wine.

There were, however, Nazarites who became such by the vow of their parents, before they were born, as Sampson. These abstained from wine and strong drink all their lives, and suffered their hair to grow, without being shorn or shaven.

SECTION XXV

great day of atonement

The only service performed in the interior recess of the tabernacle, called the most holy place, was on the tenth day of the seventh month, which was, "the day of atonement," a day of humiliation and fasting; for, although the word for fasting is not found here, nor in the whole Pentateuch, yet

the Jews have ever understood, that this “afflicting of the soul” was by fasting; and, therefore, this day obtained the name of the fast; as being the only day of this kind prescribed in the law. On this interesting day, the high-priest himself officiated; and to prepare himself for his work, which was not only solemn, but difficult and laborious, he prepared himself for several days before; and in the morning of this day, he put on his linen garments, after bathing himself in water. Then he took a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. He took also two goats, and presented them before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he cast lots on the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other for azazel, rendered scape-goat, in our version. The goat on which the Lord’s lot fell, was to be offered as a sin-offering unto the Lord; but the scape-goat he presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness. And the high-priest took the bullock which was for a sin-offering for himself and his house, and slew it. And he took a censer full of burning coals of fire, from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and brought it within the inner veil, into the Most Holy Place. And he put the incense on the coals of fire on the censer before the Lord, that the cloud of incense might cover the mercy-seat, that was over the ark of the testimony, that he might not die. Then the high-priest took of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat he sprinkled of the blood with his finger, seven times.

Having completed this solemn service, on his first entering the Most Holy Place, he returned and slew the goat which was for a sin-offering for the people, and carried its blood within the vail, and sprinkled that after the same manner, as the blood of the bullock. And this sin-offering was intended to be “an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins.” While the high-priest entered within the vail, no man was permitted to be in the other part of the tabernacle, until he returned. When this part of the service was finished, he went out, and sprinkled of the blood of the bullock and of the goat upon the horns of the altar seven times, “to hallow and cleanse it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” Then the high-priest took the live goat, and laid both his hands upon its head, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, and putting them on the head of the goat, sent him away by a fit man into the wilderness. “And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited. And he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” The high-priest, when he completed the work of atonement, changed his garments, laying aside those in which he had administered in this solemn service, he washed his flesh, and put on his official robes, which he usually wore in the tabernacle, and came and offered the burnt-offerings for himself and for the people. But the bodies of the sin-offerings, whose blood had been carried within the vail, were carried without the camp and burnt there; and both he who carried away the scapegoat, and he who carried the bodies of the sin-offerings were required to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh, after which they came into camp. “And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.”

SECTION XXVI

laws respecting the priests and levites—sacerdotal benediction

No man could be admitted to the priesthood who was not of the family of Aaron: Providence stood pledged therefore to preserve this family from extinction as long as the Levitical priesthood continued; and the event corresponded with the pledge; for although the office of high-priest was transferred from one branch of Aaron's family to another, the succession continued without interruption until the destruction of the second temple. As every priest must be a legitimate descendant of Aaron, it was necessary that every one claiming a participation in this sacred office should be able to show by undoubted genealogical tables his regular descent; hence the great importance of such tables. And to this the Apostle refers in the epistle to the Hebrews, when treating of Melchisedek, whom, says he, was "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life;" which was as much as to say, his name is nowhere found in the genealogical tables of the priests.

But a regular descent from Aaron was not sufficient to entitle a man to this office, if he had any deformity or bodily defect. Every thing of this kind was considered a complete disqualification for the priesthood. And that there might be no doubt respecting the kind of defects which were intended, a particular enumeration of them is given in the law, which the curious reader may find in Leviticus 21:1-24.

As the priests, when on service at the tabernacle, lived upon the holy things which had been offered on the altar, it became necessary to point out the persons who might partake of this sacred food, and the state of ceremonial purity requisite in the priest himself, to qualify him to eat of the holy things. These regulations may be found in Leviticus 22:1-33.

The priests were not required to lead a life of celibacy, but there were some restrictions in regard to their marriage which were peculiar. A priest was required to marry a virgin, or the widow of a brother priest. And their families were bound to be peculiarly studious of purity; and a violation of chastity by the daughter of a priest was visited with a severity of punishment unknown to the Mosaic law, in other cases. She was ordered to be burnt with fire.

Besides the service of the altar, where the priests officiated by rotation, and by lot, it belonged to them to instruct the people in the law of the Lord. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge;" and on public occasions to pronounce a solemn benediction on the people; which was in the following form: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee! The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!" And the Lord said, "They shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

The remainder of the tribe of Levi, although not priests, were solemnly consecrated to the service of God, and were given to the family of Aaron as assistants in carrying the tabernacle and its furniture; and in keeping guard around the sacred precincts; and in conducting the music used in the public service of the sanctuary. This tribe received no allotment of land with the other tribes, but had forty-eight cities with their suburbs, assigned to them, of which thirteen were appropriated to the priests, and thirty-five to the Levites. They were much occupied in giving instruction through the tribes, and in administering justice. They were under peculiar obligations to be holy men, "Let them that bear the vessels of the Lord be holy."

SECTION XXVII

laws respecting incest

Although in the family of Adam, brothers and sisters must have intermarried, and hence it is evident that there can be nothing simply immoral, or repugnant to the feelings of nature, prior to education, in such a connexion; yet, as soon as the human race became numerous, reasons both moral and political would readily suggest themselves, against marriages between very near relatives. It would, however, have remained a perplexing and difficult subject, and much corruption and confusion might have ensued, had not positive directions been given to regulate this matter. Some rules relative to this point doubtless were in force before the time of Moses; but now it seemed good to the great Legislator, to draw a distinct and definite line between the lawful and incestuous intercourse of the sexes. It has, indeed, been doubted how far this law extends in its prohibitions; and it has also been questioned, whether these laws are now in force, or were abrogated with the ceremonial part of the Levitical economy. On this subject it may be sufficient for our purpose to remark, that the institution of marriage is not one which can be considered of a fluctuating or variable nature. There could be no reason why stricter laws should be prescribed to the Jews, than are now necessary. It may be presumed, therefore, that if we can ascertain what the divine will was, under one dispensation relative to this matter, this should be considered as still obligatory; except when it can be shown, that some special regulation had relation to the political condition of a people peculiarly situated. The laws in Leviticus, chap. 18, respecting the degrees within which marriage was prohibited, had no connexion with the ceremonies instituted by Moses; but were given to preserve the people of Israel from conforming to the corrupt customs of the Egyptians, and Canaanites. And, if we conclude that these laws are not now in force, the consequence will be, that we have no positive laws whatever, in the whole Bible, forbidding incest; and if so, marriages are lawful, so far as the Bible is the rule, between the nearest relatives; not excepting parents and children. Some are willing to go the full length of the law, so far as the relationship is one of consanguinity, but they are unwilling to admit, that persons related by affinity only, are guilty of the crime of incest, when they marry within the limits prohibited to blood relations. But if we take the law as a rule, we must take it as a whole, and submit to it in its full extent; and if we deny that the prohibition of marriage between relations by affinity extends as far as to those of consanguinity, where shall we draw the line? Will not the consequence be, that a man may marry his father's widow; or a woman marry her mother's husband? Either, there is no incest in the marriage of relations by affinity, or the prohibition extends as far in regard to such relationship, as to that of consanguinity. It may still, admitting this rule, be difficult to decide precisely in regard to some degrees of kindred, whether they are lawful or unlawful. Then it is best to keep on the safe side. No man is liable to offend by avoiding to intermarry with a near relation, but he may offend by marrying within the prescribed limits.

SECTION XXVIII

miscellaneous laws

The poor were provided for by having the privilege of gleaning, after the reapers, and picking up what they dropped; and so also in regard to the vintage, and olive-yards, something was to be left for the poor and the stranger.

The wages of a hired man were required to be paid on the evening of the same day in which the work was performed. Regard is had, in the law, to the misfortunes of the blind and deaf; and a prohibition was given, not to place a stumbling-block before the former, nor to curse the latter.

There must be no respect of persons in judgment; neither in favour to the poor or the rich. Tale-bearing is particularly and expressly forbidden; and officious appearance against another as a witness, is forbidden. Fraternal rebuke is enjoined; and the neglect of it is considered in the law a species of hatred of our brother. All hatred and revenge are expressly forbidden, on the ground that we are bound to love our neighbour as ourselves. Heterogeneous mixtures of animals in breeding or ploughing, and of different materials in weaving garments, and of diverse kinds of seed in sowing the ground, are prohibited, as being contrary to nature, which is beautiful in its simplicity.

The eating of blood or fat, or the flesh of strangled animals, is repeatedly forbidden.

All enchantments, or observance of times, and consulting of wizards or witches, is forbidden on heavy penalties. Old age was to be specially respected. The law was, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." Strangers dwelling among them were not to be oppressed, but treated kindly, for they were never to forget that they were once strangers, in Egypt, themselves.

Strict justice and equity were required in traffic; "just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin." All unnatural lust, and idolatrous practices, are repeatedly forbidden; and especially the cruel practice of sacrificing children to Moloch.

An Israelite could not be brought with his family into perpetual bondage. If, through the pressure of poverty, he sold himself, yet at the year of Jubilee he had the privilege of going out free with his children. But of the heathen round about, they were permitted to buy bond-men and bond-women; and of the strangers that sojourned among them. "And ye shall take them for an inheritance to your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men for ever." And an Israelite, who through poverty had been obliged to sell himself to a stranger might be redeemed by any of his near kindred; and the price of redemption was made to depend on the number of years between the time and the return of Jubilee, when, of course, every Israelite obtained his liberty, to whomsoever he might be bound.

SECTION XXIX

daily service of the tabernacle

The fire on the altar was to be kept continually burning; and, therefore, several fires or piles, according to the Jews, were built up. As the offering of sacrifices produced, necessarily, much defilement, the first thing in the morning was to cleanse the altar, by carrying away the ashes, and the fragments of the sacrifices of the former day that might remain. This was done by the person to whom it was allotted, very early in the morning, and here, it may be proper to remark, that the services of the altar, especially at the public festivals, requiring many persons to be employed, to prevent confusion, the several parts were apportioned by lot; so that every man knew precisely what duty he was to perform.

The prescribed daily service, consisted of the sacrifice of two lambs, as a burnt-offering; the one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. These sacrifices were accompanied with prayers, and hymns of praise, sung by the choir of Levites in attendance. The blowing of trumpets when the sacrifice was laid on the altar, was a part of the ceremony observed. The offering in the afternoon

was about the hour of nine; or, three o'clock, according to our computation of time.

The burning of incense within the sanctuary took place at the same time that the morning and evening sacrifices were laid upon the altar without. It was also a part of the daily service to trim the lamps of the golden candlestick. From our version, it would seem, that the lamps were put out in the day time, and burnt all night; but it may well be questioned whether this is correct. The original word means "to cause to ascend," that is, to trim the lamps so as to cause the light to rise. And as the tabernacle had no window, the light of the lamps was as much needed in the day as in the night, and more, because the service performed in the sanctuary was all required to be done during the day.

SECTION XXX

tables of the law

Moses having been called up to the sacred mount, was kept there for no less than thirty days, during which time he did neither eat nor drink. Here God communed with him face to face, as a man with his friend. "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him, upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." "The tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."

The people becoming impatient at the long delay of Moses on the mount, insisted on it that Aaron should make them gods to go before them. To this impious proposal, Aaron, through fear, too readily acceded, and directed them to bring him their ear-rings, out of which he made a golden calf; which when they saw, they exclaimed, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Aaron directed an altar to be built for it, and proclaimed a feast to the Lord, for the ensuing day. "And they rose up early and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." The Lord now commanded Moses to go down, as the people had grossly corrupted themselves, and had made themselves a calf and worshipped it; and the Lord proposed to Moses that he would destroy this stiff-necked people, and make a great nation of him; but this disinterested man preferred the glory of God to his own advantage. "And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." This earnest prayer and expostulation had the desired effect, "for the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." And Moses went down unto the people with the two tables of testimony in his hand. And Joshua, who was with him said, "There is the voice of war in the camp." "And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, nor the cry of those that are overcome." And when Moses drew near, he saw the calf, and the people dancing around it; "and his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel

drink of it." Moses then upbraided Aaron for what he had done; who excused himself by alleging the perverseness of the people. He then stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Moses commanded them to gird on their swords, and to pass through the camp, "and slay every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, and every man his companion." And the sons of Levi did so; "and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." Moses after this expression of holy indignation, went to the Lord and entreated him to pardon the sin of the people; and in the disinterested fervency of his spirit, he went so far as to say, "If thou wilt not forgive their sin, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whoever sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made."

And the Lord directed Moses to hew two tables of stone like unto the first, and said, "I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up to mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee; neither let any man be seen through all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before the mount." And Moses did as he was commanded. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and to the fourth generation." "And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped."

And the Lord communed with Moses on the mount; and repeated to him some of the laws which had before been given; "and he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water." And when Moses came down from the mount, with the tables of testimony in his hand, he was not aware that the skin of his face shone; but when Aaron and all the people saw him, they were afraid to come nigh him. Moses called unto them; and he put a veil on his face while he talked with them: "And he gave them in commandment, all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai." When Moses went in before the Lord, he took the veil off until he came out. And when he spake to the people, he put the veil again upon his face, "And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone."

SECTION XXXI

departure from mount sinai—order of march

Before they began their march, Moses received orders to make two silver trumpets, for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. When they sounded both trumpets it was a signal for the assembling of the whole congregation; but when the princes only were to be convened, they blew upon one of the trumpets only. When they blew an alarm, or made a broken sound with the trumpets, the eastern part of the camp was to go forward; upon a second alarm, the southern part of the camp were to put themselves in motion. The blowing on these trumpets was at all times made the duty of the priests; and they were to be sounded when the people went

to war; and also in days of rejoicing; and particularly, at the commencement of every month, when the priests were commanded to blow the trumpets over the sacrifices which were then offered.

It was on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the signal for marching was given, by the taking up the cloud from off the tabernacle of the testimony. "And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran."

In the first rank marched the tribe of Judah with Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, as their leader.

Then Issachar, whose chief captain was Nathancel, the son of Zuar.

Then Zebulun, whose leader was Eliab, the son of Helon.

These three tribes marched in the front, before the tabernacle, which was borne after them by the sons of Gershon and Merari.

Then marched the tribe of Reuben, led on by Elizur, the son of Shedeur.

After him came the tribe of Simeon, whose captain was Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai.

And next the tribe of Gad, over which was Eliasaph, the son of Deuel.

Then came the Kohathites bearing the ark and other holy vessels of the sanctuary, in the centre of the camp.

Behind the Kohathites, and next in order, marched the tribe of Ephraim, over which was Elishama, the son of Ammihud. And Manasseh led on by Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur.

Next marched Benjamin, whose leader was Abidan, the son of Gideon.

Then followed the tribe of Dan, over which was Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai.

And Asher, whose leader was Pagiel, the son of Ocran.

And Naphtali brought up the rear, whose leader was Ahira, the son of Enan.

This order of march was uniformly observed at all times; during all their journeyings through the wilderness.

SECTION XXXII

moses' invitation to hobab

"And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto a place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest, we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Although it is not said here whether Hobab, which seems to be another name for Jethro, went along with his son-in-law or not, yet his offering no further objection gives ground for the inference, that he did. And that this was the fact, can be ascertained from

what is said in the first chapter of Judges, where we read, “And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees, with the children of Judah, into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad: and they went and dwelt among the people.”

After leaving Sinai, the Israelites marched three days before they came to a resting-place; “And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day when they went out of the camp. When the ark set forward, Moses was accustomed to employ the following solemn prayer, “Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.” And when it rested, he used the following, “Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.”

The prospect was now, that in a short time the Israelites would have been at the end of their journey; and doubtless this would have been the event, if they had not rebelled against the Lord. So, when the time came for their departure from Horeb, the Lord said, “Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount. Turn ye, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereto, in the plains, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, and unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you, go in and possess the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give it to them and to their seed after them.”

SECTION XXXIII

the people rebel against moſes—a burning ſent among them—the lord puts his ſpirit on the elders

Notwithstanding all the miracles which they had wiſſeſſed, and all the wonderful deliverances which they had experienced, the people continued to murmur and complain; and the anger of the Lord was again kindled againſt them; “and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and conſumed them that were in the uttermoſt parts of the camp.” And when the people cried unto Moſes, he prayed unto the Lord, and the fire was quenched. On account of this burning, the name of the place was called, Taberah.

But ſoon the perverseneſſ of this ſtiff-necked people diſcovered itſelf again. They remembered the fiſh, the cucumbers, and melons, which they enjoyed abundantly in Egypt; and alſo the leeks, onions, and garlick, of which they were very fond: and they had become weary of the manna, which was dry and always the ſame; for when they gathered it, it had the appearance of coriander ſeed, or bdellium; but before it was eaten, it was ground in mills, and then baked into cakes, in pans; and when thus prepared, its taſte reſembled that of freſh olive oil. This ſpirit of murmuring revived ſo frequently, and was now ſo general—for all the people wept throughout their families, ſtanding in the door of their tents, and was ſo unreaſonable, ſince they were well ſupplied, every day, with nutritious and pleaſant food—that Moſes was much diſturbed in mind, and poured out the following bitter complaint before the Lord: “Wherefore haſt thou afflicted thy ſervant, and wherefore have I not found favour in thy ſight, that thou layeſt the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay unto me, Carry them in thy boſom (as a nurſing father beareth the ſucking child) unto the land which thou ſwareſt unto their fathers? Whence ſhould I have fleſh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, ſaying, Give us fleſh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, becauſe it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I

have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.” The Lord, therefore, directed Moses to assemble to him the seventy elders of Israel, who had already been appointed judges and elders over the people, and when they were convened at the door of the tabernacle, the Lord took of the spirit that was upon Moses, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied, and did not cease. But two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, remained in the camp, and the Spirit rested upon them also; for they were of the number that were written, but went not up to the tabernacle. And a young man ran and told Moses that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp. And Joshua said, My Lord, Moses, forbid them. And Moses said, enviest thou for my sake? Would God, that all the Lord's people were prophets; and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.” Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

But as the people had complained so bitterly of the want of flesh, the Lord promised that they should have it, not for one or a few days, as on the former occasion, but for a whole month, until it came out at their nostrils, and became loathsome. Thus did God in righteous judgment grant the requests of this discontented people. As it is said in the Psalms, “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls.” And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp on every side. And the people gathered the quails all that day and night, and next day; so that he that gathered least had ten homers. “And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague.” The name of this place was, therefore, called Kibroth-hattaavah, (the graves of the lusts;) “because there they buried the people that lusted.” It is altogether probable, that this pestilence was produced by the quails; in that hot region, so much flesh was unwholesome; and so much animal matter putrifying about the camp, must have greatly infected the air.

SECTION XXXIV

new troubles arise from an unexpected quarter

Moses, as we have seen, had married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, prince of Midian, in Arabia. This is the country which was originally called Ethiopia, (Cush,) which name was afterwards transferred to the country on the other side of the Red Sea. Miriam and Aaron, it would seem, were not well pleased with this woman; or they felt the prejudices which are common against people of a foreign nation; and as marrying among strangers had met with the disapprobation of the patriarchs, they took occasion, at this late hour, to find fault with their brother for bringing an Ethiopian woman into their family. But the real spring of this behaviour appears to have been spiritual pride. They both had received, in some degree, the gift of inspiration; and Aaron had been highly honoured by being made high-priest, and also the instrument of God and Moses, in the wonderful works wrought in Egypt; and they envied the authority which Moses exercised, and thought that he took too much upon him, and did not bring them forward before the people, as much as they wished. Therefore, they said, “Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us?” Now, there never lived a man upon earth, who was less ambitious of power and authority than Moses; or who was less disposed to arrogate to himself what did not belong to him, or to deprive others of their just rights. On this occasion, he seems to have remained entirely passive, as there is not a word recorded, as having been spoken by him. But the Lord espouses the cause of the meek, and quickly vindicates their rights, and their

character. "And the Lord spoke suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, the Lord will make himself known unto him in a vision, and speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was enkindled against them, and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and behold Miriam became leprous white as snow; and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and behold she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly and have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed, when he cometh out of his mother's womb." "And Moses," whose spirit of forgiveness and forbearance knew no bounds, "cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. And the Lord said, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days; and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. And afterward the people removed from Hazaroth and pitched in the wilderness of Paran."

Why Miriam only was punished for this offence, in which Aaron was engaged with her, must be left to conjecture. Probably, the discontent originated with her, and her brother had been influenced by her to join in the complaint against Moses: or the sacerdotal character of Aaron rendered it unsuitable that he should be visited by a judgment of this sort, which would have utterly disqualified him for the duties of his sacred office.

SECTION XXXV

men sent to explore the promised land

Having passed through the terrible wilderness of Paran, the children of Israel came to Kadesh-barnea, which is near the mountain of the Amorites, on the border of the land of Canaan. And Moses now exhorted the people to go up immediately, and possess the land which lay before them; and told them not to be afraid nor discouraged. But the whole of the people united in a petition that they might be permitted, in the first place, to send men, to search out the land, and bring them word by what way they must go up, and into what cities they should first come. This proposal was entirely pleasing to Moses; and also met with the approbation of God; for we read in Numbers, that "God spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men that they may search out the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. And Moses, by the command of the Lord, sent them from the wilderness of Paran. And these were the names of the men. Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua, the son of Zachur; of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat, the son of Hosi; of the tribe of Judah, Caleb, the son of Jephunneh; of the tribe of Issachar, Igal, the son of Joseph; of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea, the son of Nun; of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti, the son of Raphu; of the tribe of Zebulun, Gadiel, the son of Sodi; of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi, the son of Susi; of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel, the son of Gemalli; of the tribe of Asher, Jethur, the son of Michael; of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi, the son of Vophsi; and of the tribe of Gad, Geuel, the son of Machi. In catalogues

of the tribes, Levi was no longer numbered, as being consecrated to the service of the sanctuary; and by means of Joseph's two sons, the number of the twelve tribes was kept up, without counting Levi.

The orders given to these men were, that they should go up and “spy out the land of Canaan, and see what it is; and the people that dwell therein, whether they be weak or strong, few or many; and what sort of land they inhabit, whether it be good or bad; and what kind of cities they have; whether they dwell in tents, or in strong holds; and whether the country was covered with wood, or was bare; and finally, they were directed to bring back with them some of the fruits of the land, as the season was that of the first ripe grapes. So these men explored the country from the south, where they entered it, even unto Hameth. Among the places which they visited, was Hebron, one of the oldest towns in the world, for it was built seven years before Zoan, in Egypt. Near this spot their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been accustomed to pitch their tents; and here also was the cave, where these patriarchs lay sleeping in the dust. But, at this time, it was in the possession of the sons of Anak, three of whom, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the spies saw with terror and dismay; for they were men of gigantic stature. And in passing through the country, they came to a certain valley of extraordinary fertility, where they found clusters of grapes of such enormous size, that they resolved to cut down a branch, and suspend it on a staff or pole, so that the grapes might not be crushed, and carry it back to the camp, in compliance with the orders which they had received. This valley and the brook which passed through it, received the name of Eshcol, on account of the cluster of grapes, which the children of Israel did cut down from thence. And they returned, after having spent forty days in exploring the land. And they came to Moses at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, and reported what they had seen, and showed the fruit of the land. And they all testified that the country was exceeding good, a land flowing with milk and honey: nevertheless, the majority said, “The people be strong that dwell in the land; and the cities are walled and very great;” and above all they said, “We saw the children of Anak there.” They also reported that the Amalekites dwelt in the south, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites in the mountains, and the Canaanites along the sea coast, and along the valley of Jordan. This report of the majority of the spies greatly intimidated the people, and a fearful state of commotion was produced in the camp; but Caleb and Joshua endeavoured to compose and encourage the people; and exhorted them to go up at once and take possession of the land; for said they, “We are well able to overcome it.” But the men who went up with them said, “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.” And thus they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, saying, “The land eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of stature; and there we saw the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

SECTION XXXVI

the people rebel against Moses again—God's displeasure—declares with an oath that none but Caleb and Joshua of all that generation should ever possess the promised land

The people became more and more agitated; and “the whole congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the congregation murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or, would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by

the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly; and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun, who were of the number of those that went to spy out the land, rent their clothes, and addressed the multitude, saying, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us; a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord; neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not." But the spirit of rebellion had become too violent to be quelled with words, however reasonable or persuasive. Therefore, instead of yielding to Caleb and Joshua, they resolved to put them to death by stoning; and would instantly have executed their purpose, had not the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel. "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me; and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they. And Moses said unto the Lord, The Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land; for they have heard, that thou, Lord art among this people; that thou Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them; and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy; and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened unto my voice; surely they shall not see the land, which I swore unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that have provoked me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. To-morrow, turn ye, get ye into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea." "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless, ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore, to make you dwell therein, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I, the Lord, have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed,

and there they shall die.” Accordingly, “the men which Moses sent to search out the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still.” And when Moses told all the words of the Lord unto the children of Israel, they mourned greatly. “And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned.” But Moses commanded them not to go up, for the Lord was not among them; and told them they would be smitten by their enemies. “But they presumed to go up to the hill-top; nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.”

SECTION XXXVII

the rebellion of korah, dathan, abiram and on, with two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation

The great rebellion mentioned in the last section, and the heavy punishment incurred, did not terminate the perverse conduct of this stiff-necked people; nor relieve Moses from further and even greater troubles. For now, certain leading men of the tribes of Levi and Reuben, formed a combination with two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, men of celebrity and influence, against Moses and Aaron. Their pretext was, that Moses and Aaron took too much upon them, and lorded it over God’s heritage. They said, “Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” And when Moses heard their allegation, he fell on his face. But he simply referred the whole matter to the proper tribunal, to the decision of God. “To-morrow,” said he, “the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; take you censers, Korah and all his company, and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow: and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy; ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord; and to stand before the congregation, to minister unto them. And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi with thee, and seek ye the priesthood also? for which cause both thou, and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?” It is evident from this cutting reproof and expostulation, that this rebellion was instigated by Korah, who was the cousin of Moses and Aaron; and who envied the latter the honour conferred upon him in being invested with the office of the high-priest. And by his artful representations he had brought over almost all the leading men of Israel to be on his side, and to join with him in his complaint against Moses and Aaron, for usurping an undue share of power over the people. It seems that Dathan and Abiram were not present at this altercation between Moses and Korah; and when they were summoned to make their appearance, they said, “We will not come. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us

inheritance of fields and vineyards. Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up." Upon hearing this accusation, Moses was exceedingly angry, and said unto the Lord, "Respect not their offering. I have not taken one ass from them; neither have I hurt one of them." As is usual in such cases, different persons entered into this rebellion with different motives. Dathan and Abiram were dissatisfied that the people were kept so long in the wilderness; and especially, since the prospect was, that they would continue wandering there for many years to come.

On the next day appeared Korah and all his company, two hundred and fifty princes, with their censers, before the tabernacle; and Aaron stood also with his censer; and the whole congregation were assembled; and they took every man his censer and put fire in them, and laid incense therein, and stood in the door of the tabernacle with Moses and Aaron; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from the congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

But Moses and Aaron entreated for the people, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and wilt thou be wroth with the whole congregation? And the Lord said, Speak unto the congregation, saying, get you up from out of the tabernacles of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents; and their wives and their sons and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." And he had no sooner finished speaking, "than the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that was round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." By the command of God the censers of these men were made into broad plates, for the covering of the altar, because by being offered before the Lord, they had, as it were, been hallowed.

But on the succeeding day, the children of Israel, whose rebellious spirit nothing could subdue, began again to murmur against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." And the congregation assembled against Moses and Aaron; but when they looked toward the tabernacle, behold the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, "Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them, as in a moment; and Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces. And Moses said to Aaron, "take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar and put on incense, and go quickly into the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. And Aaron ran into the midst of the congregation, and behold the plague was begun among the people;

and he put on incense and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.” The number who died of the plague, on this occasion, was fourteen thousand seven hundred, beside them that fell with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

To prevent all future contests about the right to the priesthood, all the tribes were commanded of God, each to bring a rod; and on every rod was written the name of the chief of the tribe who brought it; and Aaron’s name upon the rod of Levi. These rods were directed to be laid up before the testimony, and it was declared, that the man’s rod whom the Lord had chosen, should blossom. And when an examination was made of the rods, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, had budded and blossomed. And Moses was directed to lay up Aaron’s rod for a memorial, and it was preserved for generations in the ark, with the pot of manna.

SECTION XXXVIII

second murmuring on account of the want of water

While Israel remained encamped at Kadesh, Miriam who was several years older than either Moses or Aaron, died, and was buried there. “And there was no water for the congregation; and the people chode with Moses and Aaron, saying, Would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord. And why have ye brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have you made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs or vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.” Upon this trying occasion, as before, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, at the door of the tabernacle; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. And the Lord directed Moses to take the rod, and collect the congregation, and to speak to the rock, and it should bring forth water. But Moses, chafed and provoked with the unceasing rebellion of the people, instead of simply doing what the Lord commanded, said to them, “Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their beasts also.” But this conduct of Moses greatly displeased the Lord, therefore he said, “Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring the congregation into the land which I have given them.” This place also, like the former, received the name of Meribah, because there the children of Israel strove with the Lord.

SECTION XXXIX

message to the king of edom—death of aaron

From Kadesh, the direct way for the march of the children of Israel was through the country of Edom. Moses therefore sent messengers to the king of Edom, to solicit a peaceable passage through his territory; and they were commissioned to say, “Thus saith thy brother Israel, thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us; how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt, a long time, and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers; and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel and hath brought us forth out of Egypt, and behold we are in Cadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy borders. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells. We will go by the king’s highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left until we have passed thy borders.” But the king of Edom would not grant this favour to Israel; and

threatened them with a hostile attack if they should attempt to enter his country. And when they repeated their request, offering to pay for the water which their cattle might need, still they met with a positive refusal. They were, therefore, under the necessity of turning their march another way; endeavouring to pass around the land of Edom; and in their progress they came to mount Hor, which became famous on account of the death of Aaron; for he having been a partaker of the sin of Moses which excluded him from the land of promise, was also prevented from entering Canaan. The circumstances of Aaron's death were unusual and solemn. Moses was directed to take him and Eleazar, and bring them up unto mount Hor; and they went up in the sight of all the congregation. And then Moses stripped off Aaron's sacerdotal robes, and put them upon Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there, in the top of the mountain; and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

While Israel was endeavouring to encompass the land of Edom, where they found the way exceeding difficult, so that the hearts of the people were much discouraged, they were attacked by Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the south. At first he had some success against Israel, and took some of the people prisoners, but they vowed a vow, that if the Lord would deliver their enemies into their hand, they would utterly destroy their cities; and the Lord heard them, and gave them the victory: and accordingly they utterly destroyed them and their cities, and called the name of the place, Hormah.

SECTION XL

fiery serpents infest the people on account of their rebellion

The people having again sinned against God and Moses his servant, saying, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread; therefore, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." They now began as usual to repent, and came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and thee. Pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." And again Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, and whoever that was bitten of the fiery serpents, when they looked upon it, lived." From our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, we learn, that the erection of this brazen serpent on a pole for the healing of the dying Israelites, was a type of the lifting up of the Son of man on the cross, for the salvation of sinners; and that the manner of obtaining the cure was the same. "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The armies of Israel continued their march and came successively to Oboth, Ije-Abarim, which is on the coast of Moab, Zared, and Arnon, which river is the boundary between the territory of Moab and of Ammon; and thence they journeyed to Beer, or the well, where the Lord gave water to the people; on which occasion Moses composed a hymn which the people sang. "Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it. The princes digged the well; the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." Their next stage was Mattanah; then Nahaliel; then Bamoth, in the valley, which is in the country of Moab, and from thence to the top of Pisgah. Having now reached the borders of the Amorites, Moses sent messengers to Sihon, the king of the country, to obtain

permission to pass through his country, promising not to turn aside from the highway into the fields or vineyards, nor to drink the water of his wells, but to march directly through the land, until they had passed his borders. But Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his borders, and not content with a refusal of this reasonable request, he collected an army and went forth to attack Israel, in the wilderness. And at a place called Johaz, a battle was fought, in which Sihon was completely overthrown. And Israel took possession of the country of the Amorites, from Arnon to Jabbok on the borders of Ammon, and dwelt in their cities; and they took Heshbon the royal city, which Sihon had built and ornamented with much pains.

After vanquishing the Amorites, and taking possession of their country, they went up by the way of Bashan; and Og, king of Bashan, came out and fought with them at Edrei; but was utterly overthrown, and all his people destroyed.

SECTION XLI

balak sends for balaam to curse israel

The children of Israel having conquered the Amorites who dwelt on the east side of Jordan, had nearly reached the end of their journey; for they were now encamped on the plains of Moab, over against Jericho. And it does not appear that they had the least intention of attacking Moab; indeed they were prohibited to meddle with the children of Lot. But Balak the son of Zippor, who was at this time the king of the Moabites, was greatly alarmed at seeing so great a multitude of people on his borders; and especially after he had witnessed the utter overthrow of the Amorites, by the armies of Israel. He was convinced that in the usual course of war, he had no prospect of success against such a host, now accustomed to the use of arms. After consultation, therefore, he sent messengers to Pethor, on the Euphrates, to bring from thence, Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse the people of Israel, because they were too mighty for him. The fame of Balaam must have been very great in the east, when it was believed in remote lands, that he had power to destroy whom he would, and to render whom he would prosperous.

At this time it would seem that Moab and Midian formed one nation, or were confederate, for Balak at first, consulted the elders of Midian, and then joined them in the embassy with the elders of Moab, to Balaam. They carried with them "the rewards of divination;" no doubt, a royal present; and delivered to Balaam the message of Balak. Balaam, although a bad man at heart, was really a prophet, and had been accustomed to receive by inspiration communications from God. He hoped that in this case he might receive a permission to engage in a work which promised him so much profit. He did not, therefore, give an immediate answer to the messengers, but detained them that night that he might know the mind of God. And, accordingly, God did come to him and inquired, who they were whom he had with him in the house. And then said, "Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." In the morning, therefore, Balaam sent back the messengers, saying, "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." It is probable from the turn of this answer, and from other circumstances, these ambassadors were convinced, that the inclination of the prophet was to accompany them; and this may account for Balak's sending another embassy of princes, more in number and more honourable than the first, who were authorized to promise the highest honours and rewards which he could ask, if he would go and curse the people of Israel. But Balaam assured them, that if they were to give him a house full of gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord to do less or more. But instead of giving a

prompt and decisive refusal, which he should have done, he detains them, that he might again inquire of the Lord. Well, in the night, "God came to Balaam, and said, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab."

God sometimes grants the earnest requests of his creatures in judgment for their wickedness in entertaining such desires. This was evidently the case in regard to Balaam; for although he now directed him to go with the men, in direct opposition to what he had at first commanded, yet "God's anger was enkindled, because he went." Perhaps what was said by way of permission, was merely meant for trial, to see whether the avarice of the prophet would lead him to embrace the opportunity of going. And now when he was on his journey, the princes of Moab had probably gone on before, "the angel of the Lord stood in the way, an adversary against him." Balaam was riding on his ass, accompanied by his two servants, "and the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way; and his sword drawn in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of the way and went into the field. And Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way. But the road here passing between two walls, the angel placed himself so exactly before her, that the ass in avoiding him turned to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, and he smote her again. The angel then removed forward to a place, where the passage was still narrower, so that the ass had no way to turn; and when she saw the angel she fell down under Balaam; and his anger was kindled and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for then would I kill thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine, unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times; behold I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. And the ass saw me and turned from me, these three times; unless she had turned from me surely I would have slain thee and saved her alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me. Now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. But the angel of the Lord said, Go with the men; but only the word that I speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak." As he was so intent on going, the Lord permits him to follow the bent of his inclination; but lets him know how much he was displeased with him for entertaining such a wish, after what he had said to him at the first; and although he permits him to go; yet he places him under such a restraint, that he would be able to say or do nothing of what Balak wished. Balak, however, was greatly pleased when he found that Balaam had come, and went out to meet him to the extreme border of his coast. And when he saw him, he gently upbraided him for not coming at once, since it was in his power to advance him to honour. But Balaam assured him that although he had come, it was not in his power to say any thing, but that word which God should put into his mouth. And Balak invited him to a rich feast at Kirjathuzoth.

SECTION XLII

balaam blesses israel

Balak, with raised expectations, took Balaam up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might take a view of the hosts of Israel, who were encamped on the plains of Moab. Balaam directed that seven altars should be erected on the elevated spot to which he had been conducted; and a bullock and a ram for each altar, should be prepared for burnt-offerings. And leaving Balak by the sacrifices, he went himself to another place alone, in the hope of receiving a message from God, and in this expectation he was not disappointed; for God met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, "Return unto Balak and thus shalt thou speak. And he returned unto him; and lo, he stood by his burnt-sacrifice, and all the princes of Moab. And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them altogether. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me into another place, from whence thou mayest see them; thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shall not see them all; and curse me them from thence. And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah; and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by the burnt-offering, while I meet the Lord yonder. And the Lord met Balaam and put a word in his mouth." And when he returned, "Balak said unto him, what hath the Lord spoken? And he took up his parable and said, Rise up Balak and hear, hearken unto me thou son of Zippor. God is not a man that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath, as it were, the strength of a unicorn. Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought? Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. But Balaam answered, Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that must I do. And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee to another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence." And he brought him to the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon; and there he builded seven altars and offered a bullock and a ram on each, as before. "And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face towards the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side; as the trees of lignaloës,

which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn; he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee; and cursed is he that curseth thee. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together and said, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore, flee now to thy place. I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour. And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak. And now, behold, I go unto my people; come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days. And he took up his parable, and said, I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel; and shall smite the corners of Moab; and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion; and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock; nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable and said, Alas, who shall live, when God doeth this? And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur; and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. And Balaam rose up and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way."

SECTION XLIII

seduction of the israelites by the daughters of moab

But although Balaam now returned home, it was not long before he was recalled; for we learn from an apostle, that the plan of enticing the children of Israel to sin, by means of the daughters of Moab, was of his devising. For we not only read that he fell into error, and loved the wages of unrighteousness; and that his going after the messengers of Balak, was a madness, which was rebuked by the speaking of the dumb ass; but in the book of Revelation, we read of some at Pergamos, who held the doctrines of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. This extraordinary man and inspired prophet, although he was not permitted to curse Israel, yet could devise a plan by which they might be seduced into idolatry and fornication, by which means a multitude of the people perished.

SECTION XLIV

punishment of the israelites

The plan of seduction recommended to Balak by Balaam, seems to have been to invite Israel to the sacrifices of their gods. At these sacrifices, luxurious feasts were celebrated; and where licentious indulgences were not only tolerated, but formed a part of the service required of them, by their impure religion. The principal deity of the Moabites, was Baal-peor, one of the most abominable of the heathen gods; whose rites were a mixture of cruelty and obscenity. To this strange god, the Israelites invited to the sacrificial feasts, bowed down; so that "Israel was joined to Baal-peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord, against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And slay ye every one his man that were joined unto Baal-peor." And while the children of Israel were weeping before the door of the tabernacle, one of the children of Israel brought into the camp a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses and all the congregation. Upon which Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the chief-priest, seized with a holy zeal, rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and went after the man into his tent; and thrust both of them through the body with the javelin. And the act, though violent, was pleasing to God; so that from this time, the plague which had commenced its ravages among the children of Israel was stayed. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore, say, Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it and his seed after him; even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." The person who was thus made the victim of a holy indignation was no common man; but a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites; whose name was Zimri, the son of Salu. And the Midianitish woman also was of a chief house in Midian. Her name was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur. The Lord now commandeth Moses henceforth to treat the Midianites as enemies, "for," said he, "they have vexed you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor; and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake." Whether these Midianites, who now seem to have been incorporated with Moab, were of the same nation as Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, it is difficult to determine. The identity of the name renders it probable that they were a part of the same tribe; for the Arabs then, as now, were a migratory race, often shifting their place of abode, but still delighting in the wilderness; thus exhibiting in all ages, the justness of the description of sacred writ, in which they are represented by "a wild ass."

SECTION XLV

second census of the people

It is an inevitable inference from the result of the enumeration, which was now ordered, that the tribe of Simeon were chief in the transgression and in the punishment; for it will appear by a comparison with the former census, that this tribe had lost more than half its number.

And the Lord said unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, saying, "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward."

Upon a comparison of this census with the one taken after the people came out of Egypt, the result will be as follows: The tribe of Reuben had decreased, during their wandering in the

wilderness, by the number of 2770. The decrease of the tribe of Simeon was 37,100, nearly two-thirds of the whole number. The tribe of Gad had diminished by 5150. Judah had increased 1900. Zebulun had increased by 3100. The increase of Manasseh was 20,500. The decrease of Ephraim was 8000. The increase of Benjamin was 10,200. The increase of Dan was 1700. The increase of Asher, 11,000. And the decrease of Naphtali, 8000. Taking all the tribes together, there was a decrease of 1820. This census, however, does not include the tribe of Levi; but they were numbered by themselves; and their increase during the forty years of their sojourning in the wilderness was 1000. The reason why this tribe was not numbered with the others, was, that they had no inheritance among the children of Israel; and the intention of taking an accurate census of the tribes was, to prepare the way for an equitable distribution of the land of Canaan among them. For the Lord said unto Moses, "unto these shall the land be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few the less inheritance. To every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him."

By the census now taken in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho, the fulfilment of God's threatening against the rebellious Israelites was most manifest; for among those now numbered, there was not a man whom Moses and Aaron the priest had before numbered, when they took the census of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, "they shall surely die in the wilderness, and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun."

But as the males alone were numbered, and the inheritances were to be distributed according to the enumeration, it is obvious, that if in any family the male line should fail, and females only remain, they would be deprived of their just share of property. A striking instance of this kind actually occurred. For the children of Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, were all daughters, five in number; and finding, that by the operation of the general law they would be deprived of their share of the inheritance, stood before Moses and Eleazar and the princes of the congregation by the door of the tabernacle, saying, "our father died in the wilderness, and he was not of the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons, why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore, a possession among the brethren of our father. And Moses brought the case before the Lord; and the Lord said, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right; thou shalt surely give them an inheritance among their father's brethren; and cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And this became a statute in Israel, that where there were no sons, daughters should inherit; only they were required to marry within their own tribe, that the possession of one tribe might not be transferred to another.

SECTION XLVI

overthrow of the midianites

As the Midianites, had a chief hand in seducing the Israelites from their duty, God commanded Moses, to avenge the children of Israel on the Midianites, before he was gathered to his people. Moses, therefore, directed that each tribe should furnish a thousand men for the war; and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest was sent with the army, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand. And they warred against the Midianites, and slew all the males. And they slew the five kings of Midian; and also Balaam the son of Beor they slew with the sword. And

they burnt all their cities and their goodly castles, and took the women and children captives; and took possession of all their flocks, and all their goods. But when they returned to the congregation, Moses expressed strong displeasure with the officers of the army because they had saved the women alive; for these, said he, caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor; on which account there was a plague sent among the people. The order was therefore given to slay all the male children and all the women, except virgins who had not been contaminated. But the men who went on this military expedition, as having been stained with blood, and as having necessarily touched the dead bodies of the slain, were not permitted to come into the camp for seven days; and all their raiment, and all their vessels were required to be purified; and all the metallic substances were ordered to be made to go through the fire; the purification of other things to be by water.

And on the seventh day they were all required to wash their clothes, and then to come into the camp.

As a very rich prey had been taken, Moses, by the command of God, directed that it should be divided into two equal parts; the one moiety to be given to the men of war who went out to the battle; and the other to the congregation; and from the part allotted to the army one five-hundredth part was to be levied, and given to Eleazar the priest; and of the part assigned to the people, a levy of one-fiftieth to be given to the Levites. The number of sheep taken was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand. And the beeves seventy-two thousand; sixty-one thousand asses; and of human persons, thirty-two thousand virgins. These females, it is highly probable were all children; and therefore unpolluted with the vices which were prevalent among the adult women. According to this calculation, the number of persons slain must have been very considerable. It was remarkable evidence of an extraordinary protection, that when the officers mustered their men, on their return, there was not one man missing. And the officers who went out on this expedition, having been so remarkably preserved and prospered, “brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man had gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for their souls before the Lord.” And the sum of their offering was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels, which Moses and Eleazar brought into the tabernacle, for a memorial of the children of Israel before the Lord.

SECTION XLVII

the tribes of reuben and gad ask permission to take their inheritance on the east of jordan—also the half tribe of manasseh—their request is granted

The children of Reuben and of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle; and seeing that the land of Jazar and the land of Gilead was a place for cattle, they came to Moses and Eleazar, saying, “If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.” To which Moses answered with displeasure, “Shall your brethren go to war, and shall you sit here? And wherefore discourage you the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land, which the Lord hath given them? Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. For when they came up into the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the Lord had given them. And the Lord’s anger was kindled the same time; and he sware, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall

see the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, because they have not followed me fully, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord. And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed. And behold ye are risen up in your father's stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people." And they came near to him and said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones. But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side of Jordan, because our inheritance is fallen to us, on this side Jordan, eastward. And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, and before Israel, then afterwards ye shall return, and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out." So the children of Reuben and Gad fully assented to the proposal of Moses, and answered, "as the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do."

And Moses gave unto the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad, (and now the half tribe of Manasseh had united with them,) the kingdom of Sihon, the king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land with the cities thereof, and all the coasts round about.

And they immediately began to build cities, and prepare places for their families, and for their flocks; or rather, they repaired the cities which already existed in that country, and changed their names. In this distribution, Gilead fell to Machir, the son of Manasseh; and Heshbon, Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, to Reuben; and Dibon and Aroer and Ataroth, to Gad.

Thus two tribes and a half, out of the twelve, were already provided for; and their armed men were in a much better condition to carry on the war against the Canaanites, than those who were accompanied by their families.

SECTION XLVIII

a retrospect of the journeyings of israel in the wilderness

For forty years this whole nation were made to wander in the wilderness, on account of their sins and rebellion against God, and against his servant Moses. Where they spent the greater part of their time, or how they were occupied, during this long period, we have no means of knowing. It is not improbable, that they remained years in the same place; but in all their movements they were guided by the pillar of cloud in the day, and of fire by night; so that they were never at a loss when they should march, or where they should encamp. And during all this time they were regularly supplied with "angel's food;" and with water from the rock, which followed them. But respecting a large portion of the incidents which befell them in their journeying, we have no record; and we may be sure therefore, that the knowledge of these things is no how necessary for the edification of the Church. As it is, we have a number of striking facts, well suited to furnish admonition and warning to all who seriously consider them. And in a country so barren, and to a people who had no

occupation but marching from station to station, there must have been great sameness in the transactions of every day.

Moses, it is true, has given us, in Numbers 33:1-56, forty-two stations, where the Israelites successively encamped; but we are not informed of the distances between these stations; nor of the time spent at any one of them; and it is now impossible to ascertain where they were situated; or in what direction they were journeying when passing from one to another.

There are some difficulties attending this long residence in the wilderness, which we know not how to solve; as, for example, how the numerous flocks and herds were supplied with pasturage; but we need not perplex ourselves about such matters, because He who could provide food for more than two millions of human beings for forty years, could easily provide provender for the sheep and cattle also. Indeed, it is probable, that the same manna which furnished sustenance to the men, was made use of to feed the beasts which accompanied them. A greater difficulty would be to understand, how so great multitude of people could be furnished with decent clothing during their residence in this inhospitable region, if we were not expressly informed that their shoes and raiment did not wear out during the whole journey. As, at the end of their march, Moses says, "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness, your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy feet." Deuteronomy 29:5.

The whole distance from Mount Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, which was on the borders of the wilderness next to Canaan, was no more than a journey of eleven days. And from the time of leaving Kadesh-barnea, until they crossed the brook Zered, was no less than thirty-eight years. Thus long did they remain in the wilderness after they once came almost in sight of the promised land.

SECTION XLIX

deuteronomy, or recatitulation of the law

Moses having been expressly informed that he should not go into the land of Canaan, and the people having now arrived near to Jordan, in the plains of Moab over against Jericho, he was aware that he was approaching the close of his earthly pilgrimage; and was therefore desirous of putting the people in remembrance of the various divine laws and institutions which he by the command of God had delivered to them. He recounts to them therefore, how he had appointed judges by taking "wise and understanding men from among themselves, and made them officers of different ranks, to assist in the administration of affairs. He then relates how he had, at the suggestion of the people, selected twelve men to explore the land; and how on account of the murmuring and rebellion of the people they were then prevented from taking possession of the country; and how the Lord declared that none of those then above twenty years of age should ever enter Canaan; but their children only. He reminds them that they were prohibited from meddling with Edom, Moab, or Ammon; since God had not given them their countries for a possession. But he recounts to them the conquest which they had made of the country of the Amorites, when Sihon and Og made war upon them. He solemnly charges them to avoid every species of idolatry: calls to their remembrance the awful exhibition of the divine glory at Horeb, and the various commandments and ordinances which they had then received; and desires them to recollect that they had there seen no manner of similitude, when the Lord spoke to them out of the midst of the

fire. This was intended to teach them not “to make a graven image the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female; the likeness of any beast that is on the earth; the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air; the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground; the likeness of any fish that is in the waters, beneath the earth. And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the nations under the whole heaven.” He next tells them how the Lord was angry with him, for their sakes, and swore that he should not go unto the good land. After which he returns again to repeat his warnings against idolatry, and predicts the dreadful consequences of this crime. He speaks of the cities of refuge which he was directed to set apart. Then calling the attention of all the people, he repeats unto them the ten commandments which they had heard from the mouth of the Lord at Horeb, and which he had written afterwards on two tables of stone; which he followed with the following solemn and impressive exhortation to obedience: “Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” Moses directs the people to exterminate the nations of Canaan; to form no covenants or marriages with them, lest they should turn their hearts away from following the Lord. Their altars and images and groves they were commanded to destroy. He admonishes them of the danger of forgetting God in the time of their prosperity, and recounts the way by which they had been led, and the deliverances which they had experienced. He encourages them to expect the presence and guidance of God, in taking possession of the promised land, and warns them not to provoke God as did their fathers when they made the golden calf; and repeats all the transactions connected with that memorable transgression. He again exhorts them to render love and obedience unto God, and to destroy all memorials of idolatry; and commands that enticers to idolatry should certainly be put to death, whoever they might be. He also recited some of the ceremonial laws which had been given them, particularly those which related to clean and unclean animals; to tithes and offerings; to the seventh year; to the three great annual festivals, the passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. He also instructs them anew respecting the rites of sacrificing; and the provision made for the priests and Levites. He recites the law respecting the setting apart six cities as places of refuge for the manslayer; and gives rules respecting the number of witnesses which should be required, making it necessary that in the proof of any crime, there should be two or three witnesses; no man was to be convicted on the testimony of one witness. He also directed what punishment should be inflicted on false witnesses; the rule which he established was severe but equitable; whatever punishment the false witness would have brought upon the innocent person arraigned, the same should he be adjudged to suffer; “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” Moses also gave precepts respecting making war and peace; and directed that a priest should be appointed to accompany the army to encourage the people; and the very words which he should speak to the people were set down.

“Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies; let not your hearts be faint. Fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified, because of them; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.” And the officers of the army were to permit every one who had built a new house and had not dedicated it, and him who had planted a vineyard and had not yet eaten of its fruit, and him who had betrothed a wife and had not taken her; and also every one who was fearful and faint-hearted, to return home. Proposals of peace were always to be offered, and if the people submitted they were merely to be made tributary; but this rule had no application to the inhabitants of Canaan who were doomed to utter destruction; lest they should teach you to do after their abominations, which they have done unto their gods. In besieging cities, fruit-trees were to be preserved. He gives directions for expiating a murder, where the perpetrator was unknown; and for the punishment of a rebellious son, who was both a glutton and a drunkard. Persons suspended on a tree must be taken down, before night; “for he that was hanged was accursed of God.” He gives a variety of laws respecting matters of minor importance; as in relation to strayed cattle and articles of property lost; concerning the unlawfulness of an interchange of apparel between males and females; respecting fringes or tassels on the borders of the garments; respecting garments of different materials, as linen and woollen. Peculiar laws were given for the detection and punishment of incontinency before marriage. Laws of discipline to regulate the receiving of persons into the congregation of the Lord are made known. Cleanliness is strongly inculcated by the Mosaic laws. It was allowed, when in the vineyard or field of a neighbour to eat what was needed, but not to carry any thing away. Moses permits divorce, on condition that the husband write a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and then she might be married to another. The stealing of their brethren to make merchandise of them, was punishable with death. Punishment by stripes was not allowed to exceed forty; and lest this law should be transgressed they commonly stopped at thirty-nine. A peculiar law is announced respecting the treatment of the man who refused to marry his deceased brother’s widow. Modesty in women is provided for by a severe law; and perfect justice and fairness in trade is again strongly enjoined. The laws respecting first-fruits, tithes, and other offerings, are particularly announced. When Moses had finished revealing all these laws, a solemn form of covenanting between God and the people is given; and they avouched the Lord to be their God, and promised obedience; and the Lord avouched them to be his peculiar people.

SECTION L

the law to be inscribed on plaistered stones—the blessings from mount gerizzim, and curses from mount ebal

Moses having now completed the recapitulation of the laws and ordinances, which had been given by divine command, with the elders of Israel exhorted the people, saying, “Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee; a land that floweth with milk and honey, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye are gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister. And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift up an iron tool upon them. Thou

shalt build the altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon, unto the Lord thy God. And thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.”

“And Moses and the priests, the Levites, spake unto all Israel saying, Take heed and hearken O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments and statutes, which I command you this day.”

“And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan, Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse, Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.” Then he enumerated the curses which the Levites should denounce with a loud voice; and at every denunciation the whole congregation were to say, Amen. The crimes unto which these curses were annexed, were idolatry; dishonouring of parents; removing a neighbour’s land-mark; perverting the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow; incest with a father’s wife; bestiality; incest with a sister, half-sister, or wife’s mother; secret assault upon a neighbour; the slaying of the innocent for reward. And at the close, there was a general curse upon every man who did not confirm all the words of the law to do them. Then Moses proceeded to enumerate the blessings with which the Lord would bless them if they should prove obedient. “The Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth; and all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face. They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle; and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee her good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season; and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God; which I command thee this day to observe and do them. And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words, which I command thee this day, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.”

Then Moses went on with a series of curses answering to the blessings already mentioned. But not contented with these general denunciations of the divine judgments, he enters into a particular enumeration and vivid description of the kinds of misery which should certainly overtake them, if they proved disobedient and rebellious. “The Lord,” says he, “shall send upon thee cursing,

vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do; until thou be destroyed, and thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee until he have consumed thee off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass; and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down upon thee until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall make thee to be smitten before thine enemies. Thou shalt go out one way, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways; and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee." "Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given to another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them, all the day long; and there shall be no might in thy hand. The fruit of thy land and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always; so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the soul of thy foot unto the top of thy head. The Lord shall bring thee and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee. Thou shalt carry much seed into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it. Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them; but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes, for the worms shall eat them. Thou shalt have olive trees through all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. All the trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. The stranger that is within thy land, shall get above thee very high: and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee and thou shalt not lend to him, he shall be the head and thou shalt be the tail.

Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee and consume thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not to the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes, which he commanded thee. And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not thy God with joyfulness, and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."

SECTION LI

a prophecy of the destruction of jerusalem, and captivity of the jews

“The Lord will bring a nation against thee from afar, from the ends of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. And he shall eat the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil; or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest, throughout all thy land; which the Lord thy God hath given thee; in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. So that the man that is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom; and towards the remnant of his children which he shall have; so that he will not give to any of them the flesh of his children, whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and tenderness; her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, and towards her young one that cometh from between her feet; and towards her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them, for want of all things, secretly in the siege, and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this dreadful and glorious name, The Lord thy God. Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful; and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues and of long continuance; and sore sickness, and of long continuance. Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of, and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou art destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number; whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even to the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee. And thou shalt fear day and night; and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning, thou shalt say, Would God it were even! And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning; for the fear of thine heart, wherewith thou shalt fear; and for the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women; and no man shall buy you.”

SECTION LII

covenant of horeb renewed in the plains of moab

Moses having finished the recital of past events, and having pronounced blessings on obedience, and denounced curses on disobedience, now, in the plains of Moab, assembled the whole congregation, and caused them afresh to enter into covenant with God, saying, “Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers,

with all the men of Israel. Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee, this day. That he may establish thee this day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God; and also with him that is not here with us this day.” He seizes this opportunity to warn them against the idolatry of the heathen which they had seen in Egypt, and by the way. “Lest there should be among you, man or woman, or family or or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations. Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man; and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him to evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, that are written in the book of the law.”

SECTION LIII

valedictory of moses concluded

The dreadful denunciations of judgments upon the people in case of disobedience, left, no doubt, a deep and melancholy impression on the minds of the considerate. Moses, therefore, goes on to inform them, that when under their calamities they should be disposed to consider their ways, and repent, and return unto the Lord their God, and obey his voice; they, and their children, with all their soul; that then the Lord their God would turn their captivity, and have compassion on them and would return and gather them from all the nations, whither the Lord their God had scattered them. And that even if they should be driven out to the utmost parts of heaven, from thence would the Lord God gather them, and fetch them. “And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land, which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses on thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy land for good; for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers. If thou hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes, which are written in this book of the law; and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee, this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it. See I have set before this day, life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, and to keep his commandments, and his

statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee, in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you, this day, that ye shall surely perish; and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou goest over Jordan, to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record, this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice; and mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

"And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel, in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates; that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

And Moses, by the command of God, gave to Israel a song, which they were to teach their children; which would be a witness against them when they should forsake the law of the Lord. This sublime and instructive song is recorded in Deuteronomy 32:1-52; and as it cannot be read too often, the reader is requested to turn to it and peruse it, before he proceeds farther.

SECTION LIV

inauguration of Joshua, and blessing of the twelve tribes

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thy days approach that thou must die; call Joshua and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the congregation. And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud; and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be amongst them, and will forsake me and break my covenant, which I have made with them. Then shall my anger be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because God is not among us." "And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong, and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them; and I will be with thee."

"And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran; and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people, all his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, and the tribes of Israel were gathered

together. Let Reuben live and not die, and let not his men be few. And this is the blessing of Judah. Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people. Let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou a help to him from his enemies. And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and Urim be with thy Holy One, whom thou didst prove at Masseh, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah. Who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, for they observed thy word and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of those that rise up against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again. And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long; and he shall dwell between his shoulders. And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun; and for the precious things put forth by the moon; and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof; and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock; and his horns are like the horns of unicorns, with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth. And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. And of Zebulun he said, rejoice Zebulun in thy going out; and Issachar in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand. And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad; he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people; he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel. And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp, he shall leap from Bashan. And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, possess thou the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his feet in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall, say, Destroy them. Israel shall then dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be in a land of corn and wine; and his heaven shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency. And thy enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

It is remarkable, that in the above benediction, Simeon is entirely omitted; the number twelve is made by Levi, who, in other cases is not numbered with the tribes. The reason for the omission may be conjectured, but cannot be assigned with any certainty. There is a similar omission of Dan in the book of Revelation.

SECTION LV

death of moses

Moses, having finishing his farewell instructions, and having laid his hands on Joshua, and consecrated him to be his successor and the leader of the hosts of Israel, "went up from the plains of Moab, unto the mountain of Nebo, one of the peaks of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho; and the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan; and all Naphtali; and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plains of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zohar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over the river. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." But the devil, it appears, had some knowledge of the place; for he entered into a contention with Michael, the archangel, respecting the body of Moses, as we are informed by the apostle Jude. What the object of Satan was, is not mentioned; but it probably was to make the body of this distinguished servant of God an occasion of idolatry, by inducing the Israelites to pay divine honours to it. And it has been conjectured, that some of the heathen deities originated in the history of Moses. Some are of opinion that God raised Moses immediately to life and translated him to heaven; but if this had been the fact the Scriptures would have mentioned so remarkable an event. It is true, he appeared with Elijah on the mount of transfiguration, and conversed with our Saviour respecting his decease which was shortly to take place at Jerusalem, but whether in his own body, or in one borrowed for the occasion, we are not informed.

And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old, when he died; forty of which he spent in Egypt; forty in Midian; and the remaining forty in the wilderness. No man, perhaps, ever underwent as much toil and painful solicitude, and certainly no other mere man was ever admitted to an intimacy with God, so familiar and lasting. But although he was subjected to so much anxiety and unceasing trouble from the people, yet, at the close of life, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." His death therefore was neither the effect of the decay of vitality by old age, nor of the wasting of sickness; but was miraculous. God, who had supported his breath thus far, now took it away; and he breathed out his soul, probably, without pain. If men's future reward is to be proportioned to their works, then will Moses stand high in the ranks of heaven; for his works were many and great; and if we look at the motives by which he was actuated, we shall not find among the children of men one whose spirit was more disinterested and entirely devoted to the service and honour of God.

"And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days." "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

PART III("tw:///self]?tid=12&popup=0" \l "History_CONTENTS-")

THE ISRAELITES

FROM THE DEATH OF MOSES TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REGAL GOVERNMENT

SECTION I

entrance of the host of israel into the promised land under the conduct of joshua, the successor of moses

“Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, to the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites; and unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. Have not I commanded thee, be of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Joshua having received this divine direction and encouragement, without delay proceeded to execute the orders of Jehovah. “Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go to possess the land which the Lord giveth you to possess it. And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word which Moses, the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; until the Lord hath given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them. Then shall ye return unto the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord’s servant gave you on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising. And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words, in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.”

The spirit and conduct of these two tribes and a half, who had received their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, was truly disinterested and noble, through the whole transaction of taking possession of the promised land. For nearly seven years, they were absent from their homes, separated from their wives and children, and engaged in an arduous warfare, in the results of which they had no personal interest. Indeed, it seems probable, that the heaviest brunt of the war fell to their lot; for being light armed, and free from the incumbrances which impeded the operations of others, they were placed in the front of the battle, and when exploring parties were needed, it would be natural to select them for such services.

When the necessary preparations were made in the host for the invasion of Canaan, Joshua thought proper to send two men from Shittim, where they were encamped, to act as spies, and to bring back a report of what they observed. The city which was nearest to them, and situated at no great distance from the Jordan, was Jericho, sometimes called "the city of palm trees," because in ancient times many trees of this species grew there. These two men having passed over the river, came secretly to Jericho, and found entertainment in the house of a harlot, whose name was Rahab. Some have endeavoured to establish the opinion, that Rahab was not a harlot, but a keeper of a tavern, or house of entertainment for travellers. This last may be true, but there is no need to depart from the common acceptation of the word rendered "harlot:" it is used commonly in one uniform sense, and we know no good reason why it should not be so interpreted here. It may be observed, however, that among the heathen, in ancient times, no peculiar disgrace was attached to persons of this description. Even among the Greeks and Romans, women of high distinction and great accomplishments, and who were admitted into the highest circles of fashion, and rolled in wealth and luxury, lived a dissolute life. One of the judgments of God upon those who wilfully turned away from the knowledge and worship of the true God to idolatry, was, the giving them up to vile affections—to work all manner of uncleanness with greediness. The crime of fornication was so common among all classes, that all sense of its evil was obliterated; and it was scarcely reckoned among the vices. It is altogether probable, therefore, that Rahab was not more profligate than most or all of her sex in Jericho; for we must remember, that the sins of the Amorites were now full; and we learn, that long before this, they were addicted to the most unnatural crimes. But whatever might have been the wickedness of this woman's former life, in the days of her ignorance, she was a vessel of mercy, and received from the Lord the precious gift of faith, and with it all other spiritual graces. Though these men whom Joshua sent were not long in the house, yet probably, they were there long enough to give this woman a history of God's wonderful dispensations towards the people of Israel; and doubtless she had heard much of the wonders which God had wrought in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness; for these events were noised abroad far and near; so that the hearts of all the nations round about trembled at their approach; and now they had been encamped for some time in the plains of Moab, which were over against Jericho.

As every eye was now watchful, the entrance of the spies into the city, and into the house of Rahab, was observed, and immediately information was given to the king of Jericho; for it was told him, "behold there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel, to search out the country." Upon which, the king sent instantly to Rahab's house; ordering, that she should bring out those men who had come "to search out all the country." They were now placed in circumstances of peculiar jeopardy; and had not their friendly hostess possessed much presence of mind, as well as faith and courage, their lives would have been forfeited. But she brought them up to the flat roof of her house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had spread out on the roof. And having secreted the spies, she said to the king's officers, "There came in men unto me, but I wist not whom they were; and it came to pass, about the time of shutting the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I wot not. Pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." The king's officers hearing this from an inhabitant of the city, concerning whom they entertained no suspicions, pursued after the spies on the way to Jordan; but when they went out they took the precaution to shut the gates after them, so that if they should happen to be still lurking within the walls, they might be prevented from escaping.

Having put the pursuers upon a wrong scent, Rahab went up to the roof of the house where she had concealed the men, and said, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will show kindness also to my father's house, and give me a true token. And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." The spies solemnly promised, that her request should be granted. "Then she let them down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town-wall—and she said unto them, Get ye to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, and the pursuers be returned; and afterward may ye go your way." Before the men departed they agreed with her respecting a sign by which the Israelites should be able to distinguish her house; and the token agreed upon was, that the same scarlet line by which she was now about to let them down, should be fastened to the window, and that all her father's house should be collected in her house, and remain there; for if any of them went out into the street, they would not be security for his life, and his blood should be on his own head. "And whosoever shall be in the house with thee, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath, which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According to your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed, and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned. And the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. So the two men returned and descended from the mountain, and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befel them. And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country faint because of us."

That Rahab was a true believer at this time, and that her conduct in receiving and concealing the spies was pleasing to God, we have the testimony of our inspired Apostle, who places her in that famous list of believers, whose names are recorded in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, and says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." There is no difficulty in understanding how a woman who had lived a licentious life should become a true believer; for many women of the same character became penitents in the time of our Saviour. Indeed, they were more ready to receive his doctrine, and to attach themselves to him as his disciples, than the self-righteous Pharisees. But how can we reconcile with piety, the conduct of Rahab, in telling a palpable falsehood to the king's officers, in order to preserve the lives of the spies? Is it lawful to do evil that good may come? Is it right, on any occasion, to violate truth? Some have maintained that a falsehood was no sin, when the only end to be answered by it was the preservation of human life, or female chastity; and that there is no moral evil in deceiving those who are engaged in perpetrating a horrible wickedness. They allege, that we are not bound to declare the truth to those who have no right to know it, and whose only motive in demanding it, is that they may commit an atrocious crime. This is a plausible doctrine, and in many cases, would be very convenient to prevent evils which are imminent. But

however plausible it may appear, at first sight, it is not sound. If admitted, how far would it lead us? Would it not follow, that, in every case, where we thought we could do good by a falsehood, we are at liberty to resort to it? The consequence then would be, that all confidence among men would be destroyed. We should not know when good men declared any thing, whether to credit it or not; for they might be persuaded, for some reason, that a lie would be promotive of some good end. It will not answer, to say, that the right to tell a lie is confined to cases of great importance, and when by this means evils not otherwise to be avoided, can be prevented; for if we may violate truth for a greater good, we may also for a less; and if the principle be once established, the distinction between greater and less will be of little consequence. Every man will judge for himself, whether the occasion is such as to justify a falsehood; and he will have no clear rule by which to form his judgment. The establishment of such a principle of morality, if it did not expel all truth from the earth, would have the effect to destroy all confidence among men; and would, in this way, introduce innumerable evils. We must maintain, therefore, that a lie is never justifiable; and that, although it is not always necessary to declare all the truth that we know, we are never at liberty to declare that which is not true. This being the correct principle of morals, in regard to speaking the truth, we cannot justify the conduct of Rahab, in resorting to a falsehood to deceive the men who were in pursuit of the spies; and although her faith in receiving the spies is celebrated by Paul, yet he does not praise the means which she used to secrete them. The difficulty still returns, how can we reconcile the commission of such a sin with the existence of piety. On this I would remark, that the best of human beings are frail and imperfect. Good people often labour under grievous mistakes in regard to the law of God, as well as other things. In early ages there was less light on the subject of moral duty, than in later periods: many things which were then uncertain and obscure, have been elucidated by the experience of ages, and more especially, by the clearer revelation of the Divine will. In all past ages, some things which are now almost universally reckoned sinful, were not viewed to be wrong. I might give as instances, the persecution of men for their religious opinions when erroneous, and the slave-trade. All the reformers agreed in opinion that heretics ought to be pursued with punishment by the secular power; and until within half a century, no one seems to have considered the moral evil of trading in human beings, and of bringing them into a state of involuntary servitude. During the prevalence of these errors, all sorts of persons participated in the sins which arose out of them. Calvin and Cranmer were concerned in bringing heretics to the stake; but their conduct met with the general approbation of good men at that time. So John Newton, after his conversion, followed the slave-trade, without a suspicion, as he informs us, of its evil; and so did many other good men. But sins of ignorance differ exceedingly from the same sins committed against light. From a careful attention to the history recorded in the Old Testament, it appears, that it was commonly received as a principle, and acted upon by the patriarchs and others, that to preserve life, it was lawful to depart from the truth. Thus, we find Abraham teaching Sarah to say, that she was his sister, which, though true in a certain sense, was nevertheless intended to deceive. We find Isaac guilty of similar conduct, on a similar occasion. The same is true of many others, and particularly of David, who, on several occasions, declared what was not true; and none of these persons appear to have been sensible that they were doing wrong. It seems, therefore, that in former times, it was admitted as a principle of morals, that it was lawful to utter a falsehood, or to use deceitful words, to preserve life. Is it to be wondered at then, that a woman who had been brought up in idolatry, and had lived a licentious life, and was but just converted to the true religion, should have erred in such a case? It would have been truly

wonderful, if in opposition to the universal current of opinion, she had perceived the moral evil of deceiving those who came to apprehend the men whom she believed to be the servants of Jehovah. While therefore, we cannot justify the means which she employed to do good, we can readily believe that her motives were pure, and her faith strong. She erred, indeed, but it was the error not merely of one, but of the age; yea, of all antiquity; in which she had as participants, some of the most eminent saints who ever lived. And we should not be too rigid and censorious in judging the faithful of former ages, when it is not improbable, that our more enlightened posterity may see, that most Christians of the present day, have been living in the practice of some things which to them will appear to be inconsistent with the purity and perfection of Christian morals.

SECTION II

the passage of the israelites over the river jordan

When Joshua had obtained the information which he desired, he removed from Shittim, and encamped on the bank of Jordan. Here he remained for three days; and the officers passed through the host, and marshalled and prepared them for the invasion of the land, which lay before them. "And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Come not near to it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go, for ye have not passed this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know, that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Here-by ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Gergashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth, passeth over before you into Jordan. Now, therefore, take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man; and it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests, that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand upon an heap. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the waters, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks, all the time of harvest,) that the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down from the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." The Lord now said to Joshua, "Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man; and command you them, saying, Take you hence, out of

the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night." And Joshua directed these twelve men to pass over before the ark of the Lord, and to take up a stone, every man upon his shoulder; that when, in time to come, children should ask their fathers, saying, "What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord"—"and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." And agreeably to the orders of Joshua, twelve stones were taken up by the men selected, one from each tribe, and they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there;" and Joshua set them for a memorial, where they remained standing for many years. When the congregation of Israel had finished crossing the river, then the priests who had stood all this time at the entrance, also passed over. In the van of this army were forty thousand light armed soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh, who, according to their previous engagement, having received their own inheritance on the east side of the river, now went forward in the front of the host, to aid their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan. This passage of Jordan was effected over against the plains of Jericho. Joshua was now held in reverence by the people, as Moses had been before him; and as soon as the priests had come up out of the channel of the river, over which all the people had passed, as on dry land, immediately, the waters of Jordan returned to their place, and flowed over all the banks, as they did before. This remarkable event occurred on the tenth day of the first month, which corresponded with our March or April. The place of the first encampment of the Israelites was at Gilgal, a name given on account of an event to be mentioned immediately. Here the pillar, or monument formed with the twelve stones taken from the bed of the river, was erected, on which occasion, they were commanded to hand down to their children a particular explanation of the purpose for which this monument was raised. "Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land, for the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until you were passed over; as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever."

SECTION III

circumcision of the israelites at gilgal—the passover is observed—the manna ceases—the captain of the host of the lord appears to joshua

When the kings who resided on the west side of Jordan understood that Israel had actually passed the river, and that the Lord had dried up the waters before them, their heart melted within them.

Joshua now received a commandment from the Lord to circumcise the males of the children of Israel; for, although all who came out of Egypt had there been circumcised; yet this rite had not been performed on any born in the wilderness, on account of their continual journeyings: and nearly all the males therefore, of the whole host had now to submit to this ceremony; for of all who had come out of Egypt, in adult age, no more than two remained. All the men of war, except Caleb and Joshua, had fallen in the wilderness; but many who were children when the Exodus took place, were still living, as indeed God promised that this should be the event, when he swore, that none of the adults should ever enter the promised land. During the time that the people were recovering from the effects of this painful ceremony, they remained in their camp, at Gilgal. "And

the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you," therefore, the name of the place was called Gilgal, which word means, "to roll away."

There was a peculiar reason for attending without delay to the duty of circumcision, because the time for the celebration of the passover was near at hand, and it was expressly provided, that no uncircumcised man should be permitted to partake of this ordinance. Whether the passover had been celebrated in the wilderness, we are not informed. If it was, the qualification of circumcision must have been wanting. The probability however is, that this ordinance also was omitted, during the long period of Israel's sojourning in the wilderness; for they knew not, when stationary, at what moment they might receive the signal to march; and the celebration of the passover with the accompanying feast of unleavened bread, required a period of seven days leisure. But having now entered into Canaan, they kept the passover at the appointed time, on the fourteenth day of Nisan. "And they did eat of the old corn of the land, on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn in the self-same day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." These words of the sacred historian suggest another reason why we should suppose that the passover was not celebrated while the people remained in the wilderness; because during that period, they had no bread suitable for the purpose. They had plenty of manna, but this was a very different thing from bread of wheat or barley. If their enemies had come upon them while sore, in consequence of circumcision, or even while engaged in the observance of the passover, they would have found them in a poor condition to defend themselves; but God had struck such a terror into the minds of the Amorites and Canaanites, that they had no spirit to attempt any thing. Joshua, doubtless, felt great solicitude, in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed; but like Moses, he trusted confidently in the Lord, whose commands he was executing. While the army lay encamped near Jericho, he seems to have taken a solitary walk towards that city, when there appeared to him a man with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua was not a man to be intimidated, and marched up to this armed man, and said, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come." Joshua perceiving that it was a manifestation of Jehovah himself, "fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, loose the shoe off thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

SECTION IV

the conquest of jericho—the curse denounced by joshua against the man who should rebuild this city

This captain of the Lord's host who appeared unto Joshua, was Jehovah himself; the Angel of the covenant, who attended the children of Israel in all their pilgrimage. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, see, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city, seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the rams' horns, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the

city shall fall down flat, and every man shall ascend up straight before him. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let the seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord." When these orders were obeyed by the priests and people, they were further commanded by the leader, not to shout nor to make any noise with their voice, until they should receive a command to do so. And when they had encompassed the city every day for six days, returning each day into the camp, that on the seventh day, Joshua gave orders for the people and priests when they had gone round the city, and which on this day they repeated seven times, to shout, for the city was given by the Lord into their hands. And it was declared, that the whole city and all its inhabitants should be devoted to destruction; except, that Rahab and her friends should be spared, because she hid the messengers that had been sent, and had received a solemn promise that she should be preserved. And the people were warned by all means, "to keep themselves from the accursed thing," lest they should themselves fall under a curse, and bring trouble into the camp of Israel. It was declared, however, that "the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron should be consecrated to Jehovah, and should belong to the treasury of the Lord." And as soon as the priests and people had encompassed the wall the seventh time, on this seventh day, the trumpets were sounded, and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, they shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell flat, so that the people went up every one straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua gave special orders to the young men who had been sent as spies, "Bring out the woman, and all that she hath, as ye swore unto her; and they brought out Rahab and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel." "And they burnt the city with fire and all that was therein; only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

And Joshua denounced a heavy curse on the man who should rise up and rebuild Jericho, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city, Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." This first onset in the invasion of Canaan, and the miraculous overthrow of Jericho, while it raised the fame of Joshua very high, as being the instrument of God's vengeance, spread consternation among the people of the land.

The imprecation of Joshua in this case was not spoken of himself, but from the inspiration of God; and the words spoken were not a vain, empty threat, but the prediction was literally fulfilled many hundred years afterwards, when Hiel, the Bethelite, laid the foundation of Jericho in his first-born, Abiram, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub. 1 Kings 16:34.

SECTION V

the transgression of achan—the attack upon ai, and the defeat of the israelites—joshua's distress—the lord's communication to him—achan detected and punished with all his house—righteousness of god in this transaction

Notwithstanding the solemn warning which Joshua gave to the people respecting the spoil of the city of Jericho, which was all accursed, and not to be touched, except the silver and the gold, the

iron and brass, which were consecrated to the treasury of the Lord, there was found a man, among the children of Israel, who had not faith and virtue enough to enable him to resist the temptation of purloining and hiding in his tent, some articles on which he had set his covetous heart. This was Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah. On account of this deliberate disobedience of his positive commandment, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel."

Jericho being in ruins, Joshua next directed his attention to a city named Ai, which was beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el. According to his usual custom, he took the precaution of sending spies to examine the strength and situation of the place. Their report was, that the inhabitants of this place were not numerous, and that there would be no need for the whole army to be put in motion against a city so inconsiderable; and they recommended, that two or three thousand men should be detailed for this service. Accordingly, Joshua sent three thousand men upon this apparently easy expedition. But the event did not answer the expectation; for, when the men of Ai came out against this band, they seemed to be panic struck, and fled with precipitation, and thirty-six of their number were left dead on the field; and the enemy pursued them from before the gate, even unto Shebarim. Upon this the hearts of the people melted, and became as water; and Joshua appears to have been afflicted and confounded in the greatest degree, for "he rent his clothes, and fell to the ground, upon his face, before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, alas! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought the people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs upon their enemies! For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and have put it even amongst their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, sanctify yourselves against to-morrow for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought, according to your tribes; and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the households which the Lord shall take, shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing, shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath; because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel. So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken." Then the family of the Zarhites was taken—Next, Zabdi was taken; and he brought his household man by man, and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, and hide it not from me. And Achan said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment,

and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, of fifty shekels weight, then I courted them, and took them, and behold, they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and behold it (the Babylonish garment) was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen and his asses, and his sheep and his tent, and all that he had, and brought them to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day; and all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones;" which remained for a long time in this valley, a monument of God's displeasure against sin.

In this portion of sacred history, there are several things highly worthy of particular observation. The first is, that "the love of money is the root of all evil." This man, like Judas, was led away by covetousness. Thousands and tens of thousands are slaves to the same vice. Perhaps no sin is more common in the pale of the Church; for although it often prompts men to rob and steal, and thus expose themselves to infamous punishments, yet this may strike its roots deep, and have entire possession of the man, while no irregularity appears in the outward actions. Often, indeed, covetousness restrains its votaries from vices which can only be practised with expense, because such conflict with its nature.

The next remark is, that however secret men's crimes may be, and however successfully concealed from the eyes of men, there is an eye which strictly marks them; and often, in the providence of God, sins which were committed in darkness, are unexpectedly and wonderfully revealed. In the case of Achan, the appeal seems to have been to the lot, and this mode of detection was ordered by God himself, and was, therefore, infallible; but unless God direct to such means, for the discovery of secret crimes, it would be presumptuous in us to resort to the lot for the detection of the guilt of a culprit. The displeasure of Jehovah against a deliberate transgression of his positive commandment, is here strangely exhibited; and for the sin of one man, his wrath is enkindled against the whole congregation of Israel. Achan seems to have been penitent, but this could not save him from condign punishment. Repentance sometimes comes too late; or to speak more properly, the regrets of a sinner when his crimes are detected, and punishment about to be inflicted, has in it nothing of the nature of true repentance. And if the unhappy man was pardoned, yet it was necessary that a public example should be made, on such an occasion, for a terror to others. We are taught here also, that God punishes a man's family with himself. It does not appear that they personally participated in the crime of Achan; but they must suffer with him. His wife and children, and even the dumb animals, are made partakers of his punishment. Men may pronounce this to be unjust, but God will not subject himself to be judged at our bar. The Judge of all the earth will do right; but little do we know, in many cases, what it becomes him to do. The truth is, that his whole administration by his providence, recognizes this same principle. Children are involved in the poverty, in the disgrace, and in the diseases of their parents; and who will undertake to arraign the Almighty, and pronounce sentence of condemnation upon him? His ways are always just and equal, although the reasons of his conduct may not be revealed unto us. Burning alive was not one of the punishments usually inflicted in the Jewish commonwealth; but in this case, and some

others, the bodies were burned after death.

This translation furnishes the only instance, as far as I recollect, of any thing censurable said or done by Joshua. His confidence in God, and obedience to his will, seems to have approximated near to perfection; but when he saw the people, in a dastardly manner, fleeing before their enemies, his spirit was overwhelmed, and he said, "Would to God that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!" This was wrong; for God had promised Canaan to Israel, and had specially commissioned Joshua to invade the land, and had miraculously opened his way to take possession. But Joshua, like Moses, his predecessor, was more concerned for the glory of God's great name, than about his own welfare or reputation. We see what misery and confusion a single sin may produce in a family, and a nation. As to the punishment inflicted on this unhappy man and his family, Joshua had nothing to do with it, but to execute the commandment of Jehovah. In this, as in all the other severe inflictions of vengeance on the inhabitants of Canaan, Joshua can no more be charged with cruelty than the angel who slew the first-born of Egypt, or on him who in one night slew a hundred and four score thousand men in the Assyrian army. Whatever God commands must be done. No obligation can exist to the contrary, when he makes known his will. Even Abraham must consent to slay his only and well beloved son, in whom all the promises concentrated, when Jehovah commanded him to make this sacrifice. And as it relates to the divine attributes, there is nothing more derogatory to justice and goodness in taking away the lives of men, women, and children, by the sword of men, than by the hand of an angel; and nothing in either of these methods of putting an end to human life, more inconsistent with these attributes, than accomplishing the same thing by an earthquake, a famine, or a plague. The objection to this part of the sacred history is, therefore, without foundation.

When the wickedness of a nation rises to a certain pitch, or fulness, it seems necessary that they should be exterminated. In the time of Abraham, it is given as a reason why God did not put him in possession of the land of Canaan, "that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full;" but now, in the time of Joshua, they were ripe for destruction. When a people are universally addicted to unnatural and abominable crimes, it is right—it is best, that they should be swept from the earth. Such was the moral condition of the old world, before the deluge—such was the state of Sodom and Gomorrah; and such now was the moral character of the inhabitants of Canaan.

SECTION VI

ai again assaulted and taken by strategem, and utterly destroyed—joshua erects an altar in ebal and offers sacrifices—writes a copy of the law on stones—from mount gerizim and ebal pronounces the blessings and the curses

Achan being now removed, the obstacle to a successful attack upon Ai no longer existed, and God commanded Joshua to march fearlessly against the place; saying, "I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; and thou shalt do to Ai, and her king, as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves." Joshua was directed to place an ambush behind the city. Accordingly he selected thirty thousand men, and sent them off by night to take a position near the city, but behind it; with directions, that as soon as he and the main body of the army should come before the city, and by a feigned retreat should draw out the men of the city in pursuit, then they should rise up from their ambush, and seize the city, and set it on fire. That night Joshua lodged in the midst of

the people; and early in the morning he arose and marshalled the host, and marched in their front, with the elders of Israel, up to Ai, and pitched on the north side of the city. Between the camp of the Israelites and Ai, there was a valley; here he placed another ambush on the west of the city, of five thousand men; and he himself spent that night in the midst of this valley. The king of Ai, flushed with his former victory, and confident of success, was not backward to commence hostilities; but he was not aware that he was almost encompassed by his enemies; and, especially, he had no suspicion of the ambush which lay concealed behind the city. Joshua and all Israel, as soon as they were attacked, "made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness." All the men of Ai instantly pursued after them, and were drawn away from the city; so that there "was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel." And fearing nothing, they left the city open. Joshua now gave the preconcerted signal to the men who lay in ambush, and "they arose, and entered into the city, and took it, and hasted, and set the city on fire." And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way; and the people of Israel who had fled towards the wilderness, turned back upon the pursuers, and seeing the smoke of the city ascending, they fell upon the men of Ai, and slew them. And the men who had seized the city now came forth, and attacked the men of Ai on the other side; so that being hemmed in by two armies, none of them were permitted to escape. But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. When the Israelites had smitten the inhabitants of Ai in the field, they proceeded, according to the commandment of the Lord, to put to the sword all who remained in the city. "And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand." "For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil, Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according to the word of the Lord, which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it a heap and desolation for ever. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree, until eventide; and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones.

Joshua having again proved victorious over his enemies, and being an eminently devout man, who had feared God from his youth, he availed himself of the interval of rest which he now enjoyed, to fulfil the command of God given to Moses, and he erected an altar in mount Ebal, to the Lord God of Israel. "As Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses. An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lifted up any iron. And they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he wrote these upon the stones, a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark, and on that side, before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord; as well the stranger as he that was born among them: half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them against mount Ebal; as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." (Josh. 8.)

SECTION VII

the gibeonites deceive joshua and the princes, and obtain from them an oath that they should not be destroyed—the people would have had them to violate their engagement and destroy this people who had imposed on them—joshua considers the oath obligatory—the general subject of the obligation of vows

Hitherto the people of Canaan appear to have been so panic struck, that they had not the consideration to enter into any league or combination with one another, to make opposition to the formidable host who had invaded the country. But at length, recovering, in a manner, from the stupor into which fear had cast them, they began to concert measures for their own defence. The kings which were in the hills and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, received intelligence of the progress of the invading army, and gathered together, with one accord, to fight with Joshua and with Israel.

But the Gibeonites, who were near, when they heard of the utter destruction of Jericho and Ai, and probably knew that Joshua's orders were to exterminate all the nations of Canaan, resolved to have recourse to deceit and cunning to avoid the impending destruction. "They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors; and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-bottles, old and rent, and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them. And all the bread of their provisions was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country, and therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, (for the Gibeonites belonged to this nation) peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, we are thy servants. And Joshua said, Who are ye? And whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God; for we have heard the fame of Him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth; wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake unto us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them; and say unto them, We are your servants, therefore, now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses, in the day we came forth to go unto you; but now behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy. And these bottles of wine which we filled were new, and behold, they are rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them; and made a league with them to let them live; and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. And it came to pass, at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them." And on the third day, the children of Israel came to their cities, the names of which were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. "And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel." But the congregation were not contented with the conduct of their princes in sparing the Gibeonites, and murmured against them on account of this thing, probably because they were disappointed in their expectation of the spoil of these wealthy cities. "But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, now, therefore, we may

not touch them. This we will do to them, we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation.” “And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, we were very far from you, when you dwell among us? Now, therefore, ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. And they answered Joshua and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore, we were sore afraid of our lives, because of you, and have done this thing. And now behold, we are in thine hand; as it seemeth right unto thee to do unto us, do. And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hands of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.” It would seem that it was attended with some difficulty to rescue these people out of the hands of the congregation, who were intent on their destruction. I have ascribed this destructive inclination to avarice; but it may have originated in a conscientious regard to the divine authority; and to an opinion that an oath obtained by fraud and falsehood was not obligatory.

We noticed one wrong thing in Joshua, when Israel fled before the men of Ai; and here we find that he failed again in that vigilance which was required by his high and responsible station. When the ambassadors of the Gibeonites appeared before him, and told a false but plausible story, Joshua entered into a treaty with them, without applying to the Lord for direction, which he had the privilege of doing at all times. By depending on appearances, and confiding in his own judgment, he was led into error, and connected Israel in a league with a people whom the Lord had positively commanded him to destroy.

In this transaction, we learn how solemn and inviolable is the obligation of an oath. Although this oath was obtained by fraud, and was injurious to the interests of the children of Israel; yet it was not judged lawful to nullify or violate it. No doubt there may be cases in which an oath, obtained by falsehood and fraud, is void, and the person swearing is free from guilt, although he fails to perform what he has bound himself by an oath to do; but when we are deceived through our own negligence, and the thing promised is not in itself unlawful, an oath or vow is obligatory. No injury or inconvenience which the fulfilment will occasion the person, can exempt him from its sacred obligation. To take an oath is a solemn act of religion, but should never be resorted to, unless there exists a real necessity for it; and when a man has laid such a bond upon his soul, he should with all sincerity and fidelity perform the thing which has proceeded out of his mouth. “It is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay.” And the upright man described in the fifteenth Psalm, is represented “as swearing to his hurt and not changing.” The subjection of these Gibeonites to a state of bondage and servile labour, was a just punishment for the imposition which they practised.

SECTION VIII

powerful combination of the kings of canaan to destroy the gibeonites—joshua is made acquainted with their danger, and hastens to their relief—combined kings defeated—wonderful miracle of the sun standing still—the execution of five kings

The combination of most of the kings of the country was rendered more firm, in consequence of the conduct of the Gibeonites; for “Gibeon was a great city,” and was situated in the very heart of the country. The chief of this combined force was Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, who associated

with himself, Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Deber king of Eglon; and their first object was to smite Gibeon, on account of the defection of which city they were greatly incensed; and policy led them to wish to destroy an enemy existing in their midst. These five kings, therefore, marched against Gibeon, and besieged the city, while Joshua and the Israelites were still encamped at Gilgal. The Gibeonites being utterly unable to resist so great a force, as now appeared before them, sent an express to Joshua, to come speedily to their succour, saying, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants, come up to us quickly, and save us and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us." When Joshua received this urgent message, he determined to march immediately to the aid of his new allies, or subjects rather; and in doing this, he did not proceed without Divine direction, as in the case of forming a league with his people; for "the Lord said unto him, Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee." Joshua, that he might come upon the combined forces of the kings of the Amorites unexpectedly, marched during the whole night, and suddenly fell upon them and smote them with a great slaughter, and he chased them along the way that goeth to Beth-horon, Azekah, and Makkedah. And to aid Joshua in this important battle, the Lord fought from heaven, by sending upon the Amorites hail-stones of enormous size; so that there were more that died with the hail-stones than were slain by the sword.

As the natural day was insufficient for the destruction of this numerous host, Joshua was enabled to perform one of the most stupendous miracles which ever took place on our globe. Inspired with a strong faith in the power of God, he said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day: and there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel." Many ingenious conjectures have been indulged by the learned critics, by which the extraordinary character of this miracle might be so explained, as to render it more easy to be believed. But their learned labour is not needed. It is as easy for God to stop the sun in his course, as to perform any other work. It need not be objected, that the language is not consistent with sound philosophy, because the sun does not move, or go down and rise; for the language used is agreeable to the usage of all nations, and of all individuals who speak intelligibly. The most accurate and learned astronomer, when speaking or writing for the instruction of the common people, or indeed, for any people, always employs the popular language. To do otherwise would not only be insufferable pedantry, but ridiculous folly. It is poorly worth while for any to strive to make the miracle less than it appears to be; for, as was hinted, it is as easy for God to work a great as a small miracle—to stop the wheels of nature, as to move an atom. It has also been solicitously inquired, whether profane history contains any vestige of this wonderful miracle; and it has been supposed that both in Egypt and China some vague tradition of the event had been handed down. But here again, we need care but little whether heathen writers contain any notice of this astonishing event or not; for we know that their authentic histories do not commence until a thousand years after the time of Joshua. The five kings, whose army was utterly defeated, fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua, upon being informed of this, directed the cave to be closed with great stones, and guarded, to prevent their escape. The fleeing remnants of the routed army were pursued, and many of them slain, before they could enter into their famed cities. When Joshua and his men had

returned from the pursuit and slaughter of their enemies, he gave orders that the mouth of the cave should be opened, and the kings brought out; and he called for all the men of Israel to assemble, and ordered the captains of the men of war to put their feet upon the necks of these kings. And Joshua said, "Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong, and of good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." These five kings were now brought out and slain, and hanged on five trees, where they remained suspended until the evening. And at the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded that they should be taken down off the trees, and cast into the cave in which they had hid themselves. He now proceeded to destroy the city of Makkedah, as he had destroyed Jericho. He left nothing remaining alive, according to the word of the Lord. And from Makkedah, Joshua marched against Libnah, which he treated in the same manner. And from Libnah he passed to Lachish, and although Horam king of Gezar came to help Lachish, it availed nothing; for this city was devoted to destruction in the same manner as those already mentioned. And from Lachish he marched against Eglon, "and fought against it, and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed." The next city which they attacked was Hebron, which was devoted to utter destruction. The same was done to Debir. Thus Joshua conquered all the hill-country, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings; all the country from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza; and from Goshen to Gibeon. "And all these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal."

SECTION IX

a new combination under jabin—joshua defeats him, and takes hazor, his capitol—conquest of the whole hill-country—parts unconquered

These rapid conquests and the total destruction which ensued, struck terror into the inhabitants of the land far and wide. A new combination of kings was therefore formed, under the influence and direction of Jabin, king of Hazor, who associated with himself, Jobab king of Madon, together with the kings of Shimron, and of Achshaph. To these were added the kings that were on the north of the mountains; and on the plains of Cinneroth; and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor, on the west. And besides these, Jabin called to his aid the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh. When all these were gathered together, with their horses and chariots, they formed a very numerous army, who, in multitude, were like the sand upon the sea-shore. And this mighty host came and pitched at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them, for to-morrow, about this time, I will deliver them all slain before Israel; thou shalt hough their horses and burn their chariots with fire." So Joshua came suddenly upon them at the waters of Merom, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who chased them and smote them to great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward. And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire; and he turned back and took Hazor, the capital of Jabin, which was the head of all the surrounding kingdoms; and after putting all the inhabitants to the sword, he burnt the city with fire. In the same manner did Joshua destroy all the cities of the kings, who were confederated with Jabin. "And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves." But as to those cities which stood still, and entered not into this confederacy, Joshua burned none of them.

Thus did Joshua subdue all the hill-country, and all the south country; and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel and the valley of the same; even from mount Halak that goeth unto Seir, unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under mount Hermon. For a long time Joshua was engaged in making war with all those kings. "There was not a city that made peace with the Israelites, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour; as the Lord commanded Moses."

The Anakims who dwelt in Hebron, Debir and Anab, who had filled the Israelites with so great dismay formerly, were now attacked by Joshua, and cut off from the mountains of Judah. The only remnants of the children of Anak, inhabited Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions, by their tribes. And the land rested from war."

The following is a succinct view of the country conquered, and taken possession of by the children of Israel. On the other side Jordan, towards the rising sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east; and from Aroer, which is on the bank of Arnon, unto the river Jabbok, which is on the border of Ammon. And from the plain to the sea of Cinneroth on the east, even to the sea of the plain, which is the salt-sea on the east. This country which had belonged to Og king of Bashan, who was of the family of the giants; and to Sihon king of Heshbon, did Moses, the servant of the Lord, give to the Reubenites and Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

And the country which Joshua subdued, on this side Jordan, extended from Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, to mount Halak. The towns conquered were thirty and one, viz: Jericho, Ai, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, Gezer, Debir, Geder, Hormah, Arad, Libnah, Adullam, Makkedah, Tappuah, Hepher, Aphek, Lasharon, Madon, Hazor, Shimron-meron, Achshaph, Taanach, Megiddo, Kedesh, Jokneam of Carmel, Dor, Gilgal, and Tirzah.

The conquests which Joshua made were very important, as the cities which he subdued were situated in the centre of the country, and contained the densest population. But many districts and towns remained still in the possession of the original inhabitants, whom God directed Joshua to exterminate. He was now, however, far advanced in years, and less fit than formerly for the incessant labours and watchings which appertained to a military commander. "And the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." The unconquered country extended from Sihor on the confines of Egypt, to the borders of Ekron, northward. This territory lay along the Mediterranean Sea, and included the five lords of the Philistines, who are so conspicuous in the wars waged by the Israelites. The Canaanites, who inhabited the south; the region round about Sidon, together with the country on the east of Lebanon, and extending to mount Hermon, unto the entrance of Hamath, were still unconquered. All these nations the Lord had promised to drive out from before the children of Israel.

SECTION X

joshua divides the land among the nine and a half tribes—caleb's speech and portion—othniel conquers kirjath-zepher, and receives caleb's daughter achsah as his reward—lot of judah—of ephraim—half tribe of manasseh—the case of zelophehad—children of joseph complain of the narrowness of their limits

Orders were now given to Joshua to proceed to the division of the land by lot, between the nine and a half tribes, who as yet had not received their inheritance; for, as has been related, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, had received their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, agreeably to their own request; still, however, the land allotted to them was not entirely subdued; for some of the former inhabitants continued to dwell in the land among the Israelites. This was particularly the case in regard to the Geshurites and the Maachathites. The country of the Amorites, on the east of Jordan, which was distributed by lot among these two tribes and a half, was very rich in cities, and abundant in pastures; on which account, it was chosen by the Reubenites and Gadites, because they abounded in cattle. It will be remembered, in all the accounts of dividing the land among the twelve tribes, Levi is never reckoned, for with the two sons of Joseph, whom Jacob adopted as his own sons, there were twelve without counting the tribe of Levi; that is, Joseph himself is not reckoned, but each of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, was counted as a distinct tribe. The reason of the exclusion of the tribe of Levi from a share in the division of the country, is very remarkable, and is often and emphatically repeated—"Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire, are their inheritance;" or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance." Besides Joshua, there was but one man remaining in Israel, who was grown to maturity, when the people came out of Egypt. This was Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite. He was of the spies whom Moses sent to survey the land, and with Joshua, not only gave a true report of the goodness of the land, but having faith in God, these men encouraged the people to go up immediately and take possession of the country. While by a solemn oath Jehovah declared that none of the rest of the people who came out of Egypt at adult age, should enter Canaan, it was promised that this honour and reward should be conferred on Joshua and Caleb. In this respect, they had the preference to Moses himself and Aaron the saint of the Lord, both of whom were excluded from this privilege, on account of improper conduct at Meribah. When Joshua and Eleazar, and the heads of the fathers, had come together to make a division of the land, the venerable patriarch Caleb presented himself before them, and delivered the following speech: "Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning thee and me, in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to to spy out the land, and I brought him word again, as it was in my heart. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me, made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware, on that day, saying, surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever; because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God. And now, behold the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day four-score and five years old: and yet I am strong this day, as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so now is my strength for war, both to go out and to come in. Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day, (for thou heardest in that day, how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced,) if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive

them out as the Lord said.” “And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron, for an inheritance.” This city was therefore established to his family, and was possessed by them for a long period; “because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.” The original name of Hebron, was Kirjath-arba, which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. Caleb, however, had to dispossess the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, who had their residence in Hebron. And as Debir, the former name of which was Kirjath-sepher, belonged to his inheritance, Caleb promised his daughter Achsah, to whomsoever would smite this city and take it out of the hands of the inhabitants. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, enterprised the conquest of this place, and accomplished it, and received the prize which had been offered. Achsah was probably the only daughter of this venerable patriarch; and she seems to have possessed a great influence over her father; for although he had given her a possession, called the “South land,” yet she requested another, which contained springs of water. “And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.” The inheritance of Caleb fell within the limits of the tribe of Judah. The land which was allotted to this numerous and important tribe, was bounded on the west by the great, or Mediterranean sea, on the south by the river of Egypt, which was the southern boundary of the Holy Land; on the east by the salt, or Dead sea, and by a line running north from this sea to Jerusalem, which passed through the valley of the son of Hinnom, and terminated in the midst of Jebus or Jerusalem, where it met the possession of Benjamin; and the northern boundary passed off to the great sea, in a line somewhat circuitous. This was an exceedingly fertile and populous region, and was crowded with strongholds and walled towns. The sacred historian mentions nearly a hundred cities which fell within the inheritance of Judah. Many of these were large and populous; but we should remember, that every town which was enclosed by a wall, and entered by gates, is, in the language of Scripture, called a city.

The next tribe which received its inheritance was that of Ephraim, which included a large territory, extending from Jordan to the Mediteranean; and contained within its limits the inheritance of some of the lesser tribes; as did also that of Judah.

Manasseh had received on the east of Jordan, the one-half part of their inheritance; the remaining part was allotted to them along-side of the territory of Ephraim.

In regard to one family in this tribe, there occurred a case which was brought for decision “before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes.” The case was, that Zelophehad the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. These laid claim to the inheritance of their father; and indeed, Moses had determined by Divine direction, that when there were no sons, the daughters should inherit; so that the land might be kept within its proper tribe. These heiresses were, however, required to contract marriages only with men of their own tribe.

Several of the cities allotted to Manasseh, were situated within the limits of Ephraim; for the sacred historian says, “Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh, belonged to the children of Ephraim. And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river; these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh.” This must mean that some of the cities which were allotted to Manasseh lay within the borders of Ephraim. And the river Kanah was the dividing line on one part between these tribes; for it is said, “southward it was Ephraim’s

and northward it was Manasseh's; and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. And Manasseh had also several towns within the borders of Issachar and Asher.

On account of this mixture of the tribes, in their possessions, it is rendered impossible, to delineate distinctly, the geography of the habitations of the several tribes. Most maps are in this respect very inaccurate, and the possessions of the tribes laid down by mere conjecture. That territory which included Bethshean, Ibleam, Dor, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, with the towns and villages which lay in these districts, was the principal part of the inheritance of the tribe of Manasseh. But although this fine country was allotted to them, they possessed really only a small portion of it; for they "could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land;" yet when the Israelites waxed strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not utterly drive them out.

The children of Joseph, although they obtained the best of the land, yet were not well satisfied with their portion, therefore, they spake to Joshua, saying, "Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto? And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there, in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. And the children of Joseph said, the hill is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the valley have chariots of iron. And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people and hast great power, thou shalt not have one lot only, but the mountain shall be thine, and thou shalt cut it down; and the outgoings of it shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."

SECTION XI

shiloh the residence of the ark—seven tribes yet destitute of an inheritance—the lots of benjamin—of simeon—of zebulun—of issachar—of asher—of naphtali—of dan—joshua's inheritance

About this time Shiloh was selected as the place to which the tribes of Israel should resort for divine worship; and at this place the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation.

"But there remained among the children of Israel, seven tribes which had not received their inheritance." And as they seemed reluctant to go forward to take possession of the land allotted to them, Joshua exhorted them earnestly, and said, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you." And he directed them to select three men from each tribe, to go through the land and describe it, according to the inheritance of each; and to divide it into seven parts, not interfering with the allotments already made. These men went forth through the land, and described it by cities, into seven parts, in a book, and brought it to Joshua, who cast lots for them, in Shiloh, before the Lord.

As we have seen, Judah had a large territory in the south of Palestine, and the sons of Joseph to the north. Now, upon casting lots, the inheritance of Benjamin came up between these two; that is, between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. Their possession extended from Jordan

to the Mediterranean Sea, but was very narrow, being a mere slip of land, running along the north border of the tribe of Judah. Jerusalem was partly within the lot of Benjamin, and partly within the tribe of Judah. The inheritance of Benjamin was of an irregular shape, for while it lay along the northern limit of Judah, it also included a slip of land on the east of Judah, extending from Jericho to the mouth of the Jordan. The number of cities which fell to this tribe was twenty-six.

The next lot came forth to Simeon, whose inheritance was entirely included within the limits of Judah; for it was found, that the children of Judah had an undue proportion allotted to them; therefore, seventeen cities were given to the Simeonites, out of their inheritance. This was by far the smallest tribe of the twelve, and owing to a destruction caused by the divine judgments upon them, when they entered Canaan, their number was not half as great as when they left Egypt. And as these cities were not contiguous to each other, but scattered through various parts of the tribe of Judah, that prophecy by the mouth of Jacob was fulfilled, which saith of Simeon and Levi, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

The next lot which came up was for Zebulun. The inheritance of this tribe was in a very fertile country, near the sea of Cinneroth or Galilee, as it was afterwards called; and, indeed, the territory of this tribe formed a part of the district of country, which, in after times, obtained the name of Galilee. The number of cities allotted to Zebulun was only twelve, but the soil was exceedingly fertile, and they could extend their border northward without restriction.

The inheritance of Issachar touched upon that of Manasseh, and extended from mount Tabor on the west, to the river Jordan. The number of their cities was sixteen.

The inheritance of Asher lay along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, including mount Carmel on the south, and the "strong city of Tyre," and "great Zidon," on the north. This territory though small in extent, was the richest of all, on account of the very lucrative trade which was carried on within its borders; answering to Jacob's prophecy, "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties."

Naphtali had a fertile inheritance along the Jordan, and on the sea of Cinneroth, along-side of Zebulun. These two tribes are therefore commonly mentioned together, in the prophets. "The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." This prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, when the Lord Jesus Christ came and dwelt in Capernaum, which city was on the borders of these two tribes. And by his preaching and miracles, in that dark region, was fulfilled the other part of the prophecy, which is thus applied by the evangelist Matthew: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

Dan was the last tribe which received their inheritance. Their territory lay on the extreme north, and the land which was left from the other lots was too small for Dan, which was a numerous people. They were, however, an enterprising and warlike tribe, and therefore, they marched against a place called Leshem, which they took, and having put the inhabitants to the sword, they dwelt in their place; but changed its name from Leshem to Dan, after the name of their father. This name has given rise to an infidel objection to the sacred Scriptures; for it is alleged, that this place was called Dan as early as the time of Abraham, for it is related in Genesis, that he pursued the army who had taken Lot, unto Dan. To this objection, bishop Watson answers, first, that there is no

proof that by the word Dan a city is intended; that in ancient maps the river Jordan is laid down, as formed by two streams in this very region, the one of which was named Jor, and the other Dan; out of which two words, was formed Jordan. And in the second place, he shows that where the name of a city is changed, the old name becomes obsolete, and is forgotten, and the name substituted is usually inserted in all documents which are in common use; for otherwise the people would not know what place is spoken of.

After the division of the land among the tribes, the children of Israel requested Joshua to select an inheritance for himself; for this disinterested man had as yet appropriated no portion of the country to his own use, nor had he laid in any claim; but now at the request of the people, he asked for Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim. There he built a city, which he made the place of his residence until his death.

Thus was the land of Canaan divided by lot among the several tribes, by Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the children of Israel. This whole transaction took place in Shiloh, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. It was a solemn, religious act; an appeal to Jehovah, to designate the habitations and possessions of each tribe; and it would seem from an attentive consideration of the history, that not only the inheritance of each tribe, but of each family, was determined by the religious use of the lot. Indeed, unless this was the fact, the utmost confusion must have attended the distribution of the land among the people.

SECTION XII

cities of refuge appointed—cities for the levites—suburbs to the cities also granted

The important business of dividing the land among the several tribes having been accomplished, Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, proceeded to execute certain orders which Jehovah had given to Moses. The first was, to appoint cities of refuge, to which “the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee,” when he was pursued by the avenger of blood. By this law it was ordained, “that when he that doth flee unto one of these cities, shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand, because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not before-time. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment; and until the death of the high-priest that shall be in those days. Then shall the slayer return and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.” “And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba (which is Hebron) in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.”

The next thing which claimed their attention was a provision for the residence of the Levites. As they received no inheritance in land, with the other tribes, it was altogether necessary that they should have cities assigned to them, in which they might dwell. This had been directed in the time of Moses, and now, when all the other tribes had been put in the possession of their inheritance,

“the heads of the fathers of the Levites came unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. And they spake unto them at Shiloh, in the land of Canaan, saying, The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites, out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their suburbs.” The first allotment of cities was made to the family of Aaron, thirteen cities, most of which were selected from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. There was a wise providence in placing the priests in cities near to the place of the tabernacle, that they might be at hand to take their turn of service in the sanctuary. The remainder of the family of Kohath received their allotment of cities from the tribe of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

The family of Gershon received by lot out of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali; and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

The children of Merari out of the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun, twelve cities.

The whole number of cities given to the Levites was forty-eight; and with every city there were suburbs, including a certain territory round about the city, for their flocks and herds.

“And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land, which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all he sware unto their fathers. And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”

SECTION XIII

the armed men of the two and a half tribes have leave to return—joshua’s testimony and exhortation—they build an altar near jordan—impression of this event on israel—their deputation and solemn message—their satisfactory answer—the people rejoiced at the successful issue

The conquest of Canaan being now so far completed that there was no longer any occasion for the services of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who had aided their brethren through the whole war, they were dismissed by Joshua, to return home to their families beyond Jordan, with the following ample testimony of their fidelity, and solemn warning to be obedient to the commands of God. “Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them; therefore, now, return ye unto your families, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you, on the other side Jordan. But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him and serve him, with all your heart, and with all your soul.” “So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away, and they went unto their tents.” And Joshua said, “Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.”

The children of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh took their leave of their brethren at Shiloh, and took up their march for their possessions in the land of Gilead. But when they came to the border of Jordan, they built there a great altar, which was intended to be a visible memorial of their relation to that land. Their brethren of the other tribes, upon hearing of this transaction, supposing that the object was to set up a separate place of worship, and to forsake the tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh, were greatly excited, and having assembled at Shiloh, they determined to go up and prevent this schismatical course by the force of arms. But wiser counsels prevailed; and they resolved before going against their brethren in hostile array, to send a deputation to inquire into the affair. Accordingly, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, was selected as the head of this embassy, and with him ten princes, each one of whom was the head of the house of their fathers, among the thousands of Israel. And when they came to their brethren, they said, "Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord? And it will be, seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord, that to-morrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us; but rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God. Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man perished not alone in his iniquity." To which deputation and message, the children of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, returned the following answer: "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel shall know, if it be in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day,) that we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord; or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let the Lord himself require it; and if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come, your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan between us and you; ye children of Reuben and children of Gad, ye have no part in the Lord. So shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord. Therefore, we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice; but that it may be a witness between us and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before him, with our burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children, in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord. Therefore, said we, it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not for burnt-offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you. God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the Lord our God that is before his tabernacle."

Phinehas and the princes associated with him were entirely satisfied with this explanation, and said to the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord: now, ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord." And when the deputation returned to the children of

Israel, and made a report of their interview with their brethren, the thing pleased “the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwell.”

“And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar ED: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God.”

SECTION XIV

prosperous condition of israel—joshua's solemn address to the elders and people—his valedictory—his proposal that they should now choose whom they would serve—decease of joshua and eleazar

Things now went on prosperously with the Israelites for many years. Their enemies round about were subdued, and they had taken possession of their respective inheritances. Joshua still lived in the midst of them; and there are many strong proofs, that this generation which took possession of Canaan, was more distinguished for ready obedience to the commandments of God, than any other before or after. Their zeal for the purity of God's worship, according to his appointment, is remarkably manifest in the preceding history. The disposition of the people generally may also be inferred from the good conduct of the children of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh, as appears by the testimony of Joshua, and by their pious and conciliatory conduct as evinced in the foregoing history.

But Joshua having now become an old man, called for all Israel and their elders, and for their heads and their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, “I am old and stricken in age, and ye have seen all that the Lord God hath done unto all these nations, because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the Lord your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight, and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised to you. Be ye, therefore, very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom, to the right hand or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them; neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand; for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. Take good heed, therefore, unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised

you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from this good land, which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them: then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.”

Some time after the delivery of this solemn and admonitory discourse, Joshua collected, not merely the princes and heads of the tribes, and elders and officers, but gathered unto Shechem all the tribes of Israel, and addressed them as follows: “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac; and I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau; and I gave unto Esau, mount Seir, to possess it, but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and plagued Egypt, according to that which I did amongst them, and afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers, with chariots and horsemen, unto the Red sea. And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt; and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel; and sent and called Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse you; but I would not hearken unto Balaam, therefore he blessed you still, and I delivered you out of his hand. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho; and the men of Jericho fought against you; the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him, in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” “And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods. For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drave out from before us, all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve the Lord, for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God: he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him; and they said, We are

witnesses.” “Now, therefore,” (said he,) “put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there, under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said unto all the people, behold this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he hath spoken unto us: and it shall, therefore, be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. And Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.”

“And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.

“And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

“And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.”

Thus all the men of this pious and obedient generation were gathered to their fathers. Probably the period which intervened between the conquest of the land, and the decease of Joshua, Eleazar, and their contemporaries, was the most peaceful and prosperous which this nation ever enjoyed; confirming practically the truth of that aphorism of Solomon, Righteousness exalteth a nation.

SECTION XV

Judah and Simeon directed to attack the Canaanites—though successful they could not expel the Canaanites from every part of their lot—Benjamin not able to expel the Jebusites—Manasseh very unsuccessful in reclaiming their possession—solemn message of the angel of God—character of the generation who first possessed Canaan—the people forsake God after the decease of this generation—God raises up judges—when the judges were dead they again grievously provoked God to anger

After the death of Joshua, it was determined to make a fresh attack upon the Canaanites, a large number of whom continued in the midst of the Israelites, and retained the possession of some very important places; but it was piously resolved to ask counsel of God, and to ascertain his will, in regard to the particular tribes which should engage in this expedition. The answer of the Lord was, that Judah should go up against the Canaanites; and it was promised that the land should be delivered into his hand. But as the lot of Simeon was included in that of Judah, so that they might be said to have a common interest in the conquest, it was agreed that they should unite their forces, until the conquest was completed. The king who made most resistance was Adoni-bezek, whom they found in Bezek, which no doubt was his residence and possession; for his name signifies “the lord of Bezek;” and they readily subdued all that opposed them, and slew ten thousand men in Bezek. Adoni-bezek, seeing his forces routed, fled, but the Israelites pursued

after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And this was a just retaliation for his own acknowledged cruelties; and he seems to have felt the justice of the treatment, for he said, "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table. As I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died."

The tribe of Judah engaged in many successive expeditions against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

In the former part of this history, we saw that Moses earnestly entreated Jethro, his father-in-law, to east in his lot among them, and go with them; for his past experience of his piety and wisdom led him to think that his presence would be very serviceable in all their journey through the wilderness. This invitation Jethro at first declined; but Moses entreated him with great earnestness not to leave them. It does not there appear, however, whether he prevailed with his father-in-law to accompany him or not. But here the writer of the book of Judges decides this point, by saying, "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees, with the children of Judah, into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people." But although the children of Judah and Simeon were successful in their wars with the Canaanites, and extended their conquests into the country of the Philistines, which was included in the inheritance of Judah, and although they were able in general to expel the Canaanites from the mountains, "they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." And although the children of Judah had succeeded in taking that section of Jerusalem which lay within their border, yet the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites continued for a long time to dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem. (Judges 1:8-21.)

The children of Joseph also were not negligent in endeavouring to expel the Canaanites from their inheritance. They directed their efforts against the city of Bethel; but the former name was Luz. They sent spies to explore the condition of this city, and when they drew near, they saw a man come out of the city; and they promised that they would show him mercy, if he would discover to them the entrance of the city; and when the city was taken, and the inhabitants slain with the sword, this man and all his family were preserved. "And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and named it Luz."

But Manasseh was not so successful as the tribes just mentioned, in driving out the people who remained in the lot of their inheritance. In Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo, the Canaanites continued to dwell, and could not be expelled. But when Israel was strong they were made tributary. Besides, there were many places in all the remaining tribes, from which the Canaanites were not driven out; but the children of Dan were not only unable to dispossess the original inhabitants, but "the Amorites forced them into the mountain, and would not suffer them to come down to the valley. The fact was, that the Israelites did not faithfully address themselves to execute the commandment of Jehovah, in relation to the inhabitants of Canaan; but after a while began to live familiarly with them, and to engage in commerce, and enter into alliances with them. This disobedience, from whatever motive it might spring, was very displeasing to God; and as those leaders were dead through whom the Lord commonly had communicated his will to the children of Israel, he now sent them a solemn message and reproof by his angel; that is, the angel

of the covenant, who had accompanied them through all their journeyings in the wilderness, and who appeared to Joshua, when he entered Canaan, as the captain of the Lord's host. This angel now came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; and ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land, and shall throw down their altars. But ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore, I also said, I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you." And when the angel of Jehovah spake these words unto all the children of Israel, the people lifted up their voice and wept. And hence, the place was called Bochim (weeping). And they sacrificed there unto the Lord. This was doubtless by the express direction of Jehovah, who had spoken unto them, otherwise it would not have been lawful to offer sacrifices anywhere but at Shiloh, where the tabernacle of the Lord was erected.

It has been already remarked, that that generation of Israel who conquered and first inhabited the land of Canaan, was, perhaps, the most righteous of that nation. This seems to be implied in what the sacred historian says of the generation that succeeded them. "And," says he, "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim," who was the principal deity of the Canaanites. "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, and served Baal and Ashtaroth: and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers, that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil; as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed." But they were not utterly forsaken, for, from time to time, the Lord raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them. "And when the Lord raised up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them." But they would not hearken to their judges, but bowed themselves down to other gods, and turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord. "And when the judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and to bow down unto them: they ceased not from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice, I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua."

SECTION XVI

othniel delivers israel—ehud delivers them from moab, and slays ten thousand men

"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the

Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war; and the Lord delivered Chusanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died."

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. And he gathered unto him Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm-trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed; and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh, and he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. But he himself turned again from the quarries that were in Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer-parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. And the haft also went in after the blade, and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out again." Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. When the servants came and saw that the doors of the parlour were locked, they supposed that he wished to be in privacy, and they waited a long time, until they were ashamed. At length they took a key and opened the door, and behold their lord was fallen down dead upon the earth. And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and fled to Seirath. And he blew a trumpet in mount Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount; and he said, "Follow me, for the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hand; and they went down after him and took the fords of Jordan, towards Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over; and they slew of Moab at that time, about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel; and the land had rest fourscore years."

SECTION XVII

shamgar—deborah judges israel—barak associated with her—the tribes summoned to the help of the lord against jabin—sisera defeated—his death by the hand of jael—song of deborah and barak

The next deliverer raised up to Israel after Ehud, was Shamgar, the son of Anath; but of him, only one particular action is left on record, but this is a very remarkable one, and shows that in bodily strength he must have been indeed a mighty man. The event to which reference has been made, is, that with an ox-goad, he slew of the Philistines six hundred men: and it seems, that by this heroic act he delivered Israel from subjection to these troublesome neighbours. As no period of time is mentioned, during which Shamgar ruled over the people, it is probable, that he is only

mentioned as a deliverer on account of this one extraordinary exploit.

“And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead; and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.”

At that time the Lord raised up a woman to be a prophetess, and to exercise judgment over his people Israel. Her name was Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth; and her usual residence was under a palm-tree, between Beth-el and Ramah, in mount Ephraim; to which place the Israelites resorted for judgment.

Under the impulse of Divine inspiration, Deborah sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam, out of Naphtali, and said unto him, “Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and the children of Zebulun; and I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into thine hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh; and Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And he went up with ten thousand men at his feet, and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. And they showed Sisera that Barak, the son of Abinoam, was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not the Lord gone up before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots and all his host, with the edge of the sword, before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles; and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left. Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty; and she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground, (for he was fast asleep and weary,) so he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples: so God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.”

Upon occasion of this victory, Deborah and Barak sang a song of triumph and of praise. It abounds with striking thoughts and bold figures, and may be taken as a specimen of the earliest poetry. The only song or poem, of earlier date, which has come down to us, is the song composed by Moses, and sung by Miriam, with her female companions, after crossing the Red sea. The reader will be gratified by some extracts from an ancient poetical composition.

“Praise ye the Lord, for the avenging of Israel,

When the people willingly offered themselves.

Hear, O ye kings, give ear, O ye princes:

I, even I, will sing unto the Lord,

I will sing praise to the God of Israel.

Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir,

When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,

The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped;

The clouds also dropped water.

The mountains melted from before the Lord;

That Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath;

In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,

And the travellers walked through by-ways.

The inhabitants of the villages ceased,

They ceased in Israel, until that I, Deborah, arose—

That I arose, a mother in Israel.

They chose new gods—then was war in the gates;

Was there a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?

My heart is toward the governors of Israel,

That offered themselves willingly among the people.

Bless ye the Lord.

Speak, ye that ride on white asses,

Ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

—From the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water;

There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord;
Even the righteous acts towards the villages in Israel;
Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.
Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive,
Thou son of Abinoam.
Then he made him that remaineth have dominion
Over the nobles, among the people.
The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.
Out of Ephraim was a root of them against Amalek.
After thee, Benjamin, among thy people.
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,
Even Issachar; and also Barak.
He was sent on foot into the valley.
For the divisions of Reuben, were great thoughts of heart.
Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds,
To hear the bleatings of the flocks?
For the divisions of Reuben were great searchings of heart.
Gilead abode beyond Jordan:
And why did Dan remain in ships?
Asher continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches.
Zebulun and Naphtali were a people
That jeopardized their lives unto the death, in the high-places of the field.
The kings came and fought;—
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.
They took no gain of money.

They fought from heaven—
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river of Kishon swept them away—
That ancient river—the river of Kishon.
O, my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.
Then were the horse-hoofs broken
By the means of their prancings—the prancings of their mighty ones.
Curse ye Meroz—said the angel of the Lord—
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof:
Because they came not to the help of the Lord—
To the help of the Lord against the mighty.
Blessed among women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be:
Blessed shall she be above women, in the tent.
He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workman's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera:
She smote off his head, when she had pierced,
And stricken through his temples.
At her feet he bowed—he fell—he lay down—
At her feet he bowed—he fell—
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
And cried through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered her—
Yea, she returned answer to herself:

Have they not sped—have they not divided the prey?

To every man a damsel or two—

To Sisera a prey of divers colours of needle-work—

Of divers colours of needle-work on both sides,

Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.

So let thine enemies perish, O Lord:

But let them that love him be as the sun

When he goeth forth in his might.”

In this song, those tribes who willingly came forward to fight the battles of the Lord, are celebrated with due praise; but severe censures are passed on those who remained at home at this time, when the services of all were needed. Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, and Naphtali, are recorded as having done their duty. While Reuben, on account of his divisions and internal distractions, was not in a situation to render any aid. And Dan and Asher, though near to the field of battle, clung to their ships and sea-coast, and furnished no help in the contest. But why do we hear nothing of Judah, commonly the foremost in all pious enterprises; and on whose borders the battle was fought? I know not the answer to this question. One place, nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, is here made memorable, by the curse denounced against it by the angel of the Lord, for not coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Why Meroz was singled out for this anathema, when so many others were delinquent, cannot now be ascertained. But this city stands as a beacon to all future generations.

SECTION XVIII

Midian oppresses Israel—a nameless prophet is sent with a message from God to Israel—the angel of the Lord appears to Gideon, who sacrifices a kid to Jehovah, and the angel, after delivering his message, ascends in the flame—Gideon throws down the altar of Baal by divine direction—Joash, Gideon’s father, refuses to give him up—a great host gathered against Israel—Gideon collects the people—asks for a two-fold sign, which is granted

The national distresses of Israel, in every instance, were owing to their transgressions. The language of the sacred history is, “The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,” and then the Lord “sold them,” or “delivered them into the hands of their enemies.” The nation which next obtained the dominion over them, was Midian; and their rule was exceedingly oppressive; so that the children of Israel were driven to take refuge in the dens of the mountains, and in the caves and strongholds. And the labours of agriculture were rendered almost useless, for when “Israel had sown, the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou came unto Gaza; and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers, for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.” It is a remarkable

evidence of the goodness, long-suffering, and gracious condescension of the Lord, that in all cases when the people cried unto him, he mercifully interposed for their deliverance. On this occasion, he sent a prophet, who said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up out of Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage. And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you; and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, that I am the Lord your God. Fear not the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not obeyed my voice." Whence this prophet came, or whither he went after he had delivered his message, we are not informed; neither are we able to tell his name, or designate the family or tribe to which he belonged. This mission of a prophet was evidently intended to bring the people to repentance for their sins in departing from the worship of Jehovah, and going after the gods of the Amorites.

But a more august ambassador was now sent. "The angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak, which was in Ophrah, that belonged to Joash, the Abi-ezrite; and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. And Gideon went in and made ready a kid, and leavened cakes of an ephah of flour; the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out to him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon the rock, and pour out the broth; and he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom." And this altar remained for many years in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. The Lord now gave direction that he should, on that very night, throw down the altar of Baal, which was erected on a rock in that place, and should build there an altar to the Lord, and offer upon it the second bullock of seven years old; and he was directed also to cut down the idolatrous grove, which had been planted by the altar of Baal, and to use the wood for the burnt-sacrifice which he was about to offer. "Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him; and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered on the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they

inquired and asked, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said to all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? He that will plead for him, let him be put to death, whilst it is yet morning. If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal.”

“Then all the Midianites, and Amalekites, and the children of the east, were gathered together; and they went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abi-ezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also was gathered after him. And he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali, and they came up to meet them. And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said,” let the sign which I request be granted. “Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early in the morning, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece; a bowl-full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.”

SECTION XIX

gideon collects his forces—a mere handful in comparison of midian, yet the lord tells him there are too many—all are dismissed except three hundred—gideon goes to the midianitish host, and hears a dream which encourages him—the enemy are thrown into confusion, and slay one another—two princes of the midianites are taken, oreb and zeeb—their heads cut off

When Gideon had collected his forces, he pitched by the well of Harod; and the Midianites were on the north side of them, in the valley, by the hill Moreh. Although the men of Israel who were with Gideon, were few in comparison of the host of Midian, yet in the Lord's account they were too many; for he said unto Gideon, “The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now, therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart early from mount Gilead; and there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many, bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.” The method of trial, which, by Divine direction, decided who were to go and who return, was singular. Gideon was commanded to place by themselves as many of the men as took up the water in their hands, and lapped it as a dog; but all those who bowed down on their knees to drink were directed to return home. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped, will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets, and went forth to meet the Midianites, who lay encamped in the valley beneath. “And the Lord said unto Gideon, Arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thy hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant, down to the host, and thou shalt hear

what they say, and afterwards shall thy hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant, unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites, and all the children of the east, lay along the valley, like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it, that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And when Gideon heard the dream, and the interpretation thereof, he worshipped, and returned to the host of Israel, and said, Arise, for the Lord hath delivered Midian into your hand. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, with lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, When I come unto the outside of the camp, as I do, so shall ye do. When I, and all that are with me, blow with the trumpet, then blow ye the trumpets also, on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came to the outside of the camp, in the beginning of the middle watch, and they had but newly set the watch; and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake their pitchers; and held the lamps in their hands, and the trumpets in their right hands, to blow withal; and they cried, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. And they stood, every man in his place, round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets; and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host; and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zerether, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together, out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. And Gideon sent messengers through all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb, and pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon."

SECTION XX

the men of ephraim complain of gideon—the conduct of the men of succoth and penuel—zebah and zalmunna, kings of midian, taken and slain—the people wish to make gideon their permanent and hereditary ruler—he refuses—his idolatry—midian subdued—the people enjoy a long repose

"And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply. And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated towards him, when he had said that. And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hands, that we should give bread unto thine army?

And Gideon said, Therefore, when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then will I tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers. And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. And he spake unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men; all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east; for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents, on the east side of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host, for the host was secure. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, and discomfited the host, and returned from the battle before the sun was up, and caught a young man of Succoth, and inquired of him, and he described the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof; even threescore and seventeen men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. And he said unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they: each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them: but the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks."

So great a deliverance having been wrought by the hands of Gideon, the people were very desirous that he should become their permanent governor. "Rule thou over us," said they, "both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you." This conduct of Gideon was both pious and disinterested. Men, in common, are disposed to grasp at power, whenever the prize is within their reach, and make little inquiry whether they can rightly exercise it or not. But Gideon understood that God himself had undertaken to be the king over Israel, and therefore he was right in declining the authority with which they wished to invest him. He was, however, contaminated with the idolatry in the midst of which he had so long lived; and now he requested of his men, that every one should give him the ear-rings of his prey; for many of the people whom they conquered, being Ishmaelites, wore golden ear-rings. These were they who by the sacred historian are called "the children of the east;" for the Ishmaelites or Arabians dwelt on the east of Palestine. It seems, however, that from a very early period, the Midianites and Ishmaelites were mingled together, as the travelling merchants to whom Joseph was sold by his brethren are called both Midianites and Ishmaelites; or the Ishmaelites may have been called Midianites.

Gideon's army made not the least objection to this proposal of their leader, but said, "We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein, every man, the ear-rings of his prey; and the weight of the ear-rings was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold, besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and the

chains that were on their camels' necks." Now the request of Gideon did not proceed from avarice, but from a love of idols; for having received this large present of gold, he proceeded to make an ephod, and placed it in Ophrah, the city where he dwelt. And this became a snare not only to himself, but to all Israel; for they were led away to worship this golden ephod.

Midian being completely subdued, the people of Israel enjoyed a long repose; and Gideon continued long among them, even forty years; but he married many wives, and had a numerous offspring; for the sacred historian informs us, that he had no less than seventy sons by his wives; and one, afterwards more distinguished than all the rest, by his concubine, who dwelt in Shechem. The name of this last was Abimelech. Gideon, who was also called Jerubbaal, "died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites."

Perhaps Gideon's object in making the golden ephod, which became a snare to Israel, was to draw the people off from the worship of Baalim; for as soon as he was dead, we read "that they made Baal-berith their god. And they remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side. Neither showed they kindness to the house of Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel."

SECTION XXI

ambition of abimelech the son of gideon—his cruelty—the parable of jotham—transactions at shechem—contest of gaal and zebul—abimelech suddenly comes and smites gaal and his party—abimelech killed by a woman

Although Gideon was free from ambition, and refused to be king over his people when they requested it, and promised to make the office hereditary in his family, yet a very different spirit actuated Abimelech, his son by his concubine; for no sooner was his father out of the way, than he began to intrigue with the inhabitants of Shechem, where his mother's friends appear to have had influence, to make him king over them. And as the seventy legitimate sons of Gideon stood in the way of his ambition, he did not cease from his machinations until he accomplished the destruction of all of them except one, who escaped the general massacre of his brothers at Ophrah, by concealing himself. The name of this only survivor of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal was Jotham. The people of Shechem and Millo now proceeded to make Abimelech king, which transaction took place "by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem." When Jotham heard of this ungrateful proceeding towards his father's house, "he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you." Then he delivered the following apologue or parable, the first composition of this kind of which we have any account, and which contained a cutting sarcasm on the inhabitants of Shechem, for making such a worthless man as Abimelech their king. "The trees," said he, "went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us; but the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, whereby they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us; but the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us; and the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us; and the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your

trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.” Jotham having uttered this beautiful but cutting fable in the hearing of the Shechemites, with great severity reproached them for their ungrateful and cruel conduct towards his father’s house; putting it to their own consciences to answer whether they had acted “truly and sincerely in making Abimelech king;” and whether they had “dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, according to the deserving of his hands.” “For,” said he, “my father fought for you, and adventured his life far; and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: and ye are risen up against my father’s house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother. If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.” “And Jotham,” having delivered this speech on mount Gerizim, “ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there for fear of Abimelech, his brother.”

Men of cruelty and blood are, in the course of a righteous providence, commonly overtaken sooner or later with condign punishment: “Their sin will find them out.” And frequently the very people whom they have made the instruments of their cruelty become the executors of God’s vengeance upon them. This was the fact in regard to the Shechemites, whom Abimelech had employed as his agents in putting to a violent death the seventy sons of his father; for these same people began now to conspire against Abimelech their king; or, as it is strongly expressed in the sacred history, “God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech; that the cruelty done unto the three-score and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them; and upon the men of Shechem who aided him in the killing of his brethren.”

Abimelech did not make Shechem his usual place of residence, but Arumah, which was at some distance; and Zebul acted as his deputy at Shechem, where he had been left the governor. But there came into the city a certain man by the name of Gaal, with a number of others, his associates; this man appears to have been of insinuating manners and popular address; for he soon gained the confidence of the Shechemites, which Zebul the deputy of Abimelech could not prevent. At the season of the vintage, which was always a time of joy and festivity, and also of religious services in honour of their gods, this man went out with the people to the vineyards. When the people of Shechem had gathered their grapes, and trode them in the wine-press, and when they were thus feasting in the house of their god, and their hearts were merry; while they did eat and drink, they were induced, no doubt by the influence of Gaal and his associates, to curse Abimelech the king, whom they had placed over them. “And Gaal himself said, who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not he the son of Jerubbaal? and is not Zebul his deputy?” “Would to God the people were under my hand, I would soon remove Abimelech.” This seditious discourse of Gaal and the people greatly provoked Zebul the governor; and he sent messengers privily unto Abimelech, and informed the king of the treasonable speeches which had been made; and, moreover, that they were about fortifying the city against him. He advised Abimelech to rise up by night with his people, and to lie in wait in the fields or forests near the city; that as soon as the sun was up, and the gates should be opened, he might attack the city; and when Gaal and the people

came forth to repel the assault, and to pursue the assailants, as being ignorant of their number, Abimelech might fall upon them and obtain an easy victory. This course was pursued by Abimelech, and he arose in the night; and dividing his men into four companies, he laid wait round about Shechem. In the morning Gaal went out and stood in the gate, not being aware of the ambush which was round about the town; and when he saw the men of Abimelech approaching, who had risen up from their ambush, he said to Zebul, the governor of the city, "Behold there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men. And Gaal spoke again, and said, See, there come people down by the middle of the land; and another company comes along by the plain. Zebul well knew who they were that were approaching; and feeling confident that Abimelech would be able to overcome the conspirators, and seize the city, he said, "Where is now the mouth which said, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not this the people whom thou hast despised? Go out, now, I pray thee, and fight with them." Gaal, finding that he must either fight or submit, went out with the men of Shechem who had conspired with him, and fought with Abimelech; but he was unable to withstand him, and fled before him, and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering in of the gate. On the next day, Gaal and the people of Shechem went forth from the city; for Zebul the governor forced them to depart; his party having, by this time, become the strongest. As soon as Abimelech had notice of this movement, he divided his forces into three companies, and laid wait; so that as soon as they came into the field he arose upon them and smote them. And Abimelech and his company rushed forward and stood in the entering of the gate of the city, to cut off the retreat of the conspirators; and then the other companies fell upon those that were in the field, and slew them; and having defeated those that had come out, he now assaulted the city and took it, the same day, and slew the inhabitants who had rebelled against him; and beat down the walls and sowed the place with salt. Part of the people of Shechem, however, had retreated to a hold connected with the temple of the god Berith. When Abimelech was informed that many had taken refuge in this tower, he took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid it on his shoulder, and commanded his men to do likewise, and they set fire to the hold and burnt it, with about a thousand persons who had fled thither for refuge. Thus the city of Shechem was brought to desolation, and its inhabitants were utterly destroyed; a just punishment for their cruel and ungrateful conduct towards the house of Gideon.

And Abimelech himself did not long escape the vengeance of a righteous Providence; for having obtained such a signal victory over the Shechemites, he went on to besiege another city, the name of which was Thebez; and he took it; but there was here also a strong tower, into which the inhabitants fled, and into which they carried their most valuable property. While he was pressing on the siege of this tower, and had come near to it to set it on fire, as he had done at Shechem, "a certain woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man, his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, a woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died." Here we see that the ruling passion of this ambitious man was strong in death. "Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father's house, in slaying his seventy brethren. And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal."

SECTION XXII

tola judges israel for twenty years—is succeeded by jair—the israelites decline to idolatry—fall under the dominion of ammon—a reformation commenced—jephthah called to lead the army

After the death of Abimelech, the chief power, for twenty-three years, was in the hands of Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, of the tribe of Issachar. His usual place of residence was at Shamir, on mount Ephraim. In this place also was he buried; but of his character, or achievements, no record has been left.

Tola was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite, who continued in office two and twenty years. The only remarkable thing which is recorded of him, is, that he had thirty sons, who rode on thirty ass-colts, and possessed thirty cities, which for a long time were called Havoth-jair. These cities were situated in the land of Gilead. We are not informed in what city Jair had his residence, but the place of his burial was Camon.

“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.” The oppression which took place bore heaviest on the tribes who inhabited the east side of Jordan, in the land of Gilead; but after a while the Ammonites passed over Jordan, and invaded the territory of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, so that the whole of Israel was sorely distressed. In this extremity, “the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and have served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites; from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines. The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you, and I delivered you out of their hand: yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, “We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee: deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.”

As the children of Israel had now, by penitence and public confession, commenced a reformation, and of course would be disposed to cast off the oppressive yoke of their enemies, the Ammonites, their oppressors, collected an army, and encamped in Gilead, intending to inflict a heavy punishment upon the tribes of Israel. But the children of Israel were not disposed any longer to submit, and therefore they also assembled their forces, and encamped in Mizpeh. “And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.” There lived, at this time, “a mighty man of valour,” by the name of Jephthah. He was an illegitimate son of Gilead; but as he had sons by his lawful wives, these, as soon “as they were grown up, thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit our father’s house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob, where he gained influence, and probably lived by predatory incursions into the neighbouring countries; for we read, “that there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.” Tob was probably in Arabia, which

was adjacent to the country of Gilead; and we know that the inhabitants of that country, from the days of their forefather Ishmael, have been “wild men,” and have subsisted by carrying on a predatory warfare against the surrounding nations. Their hands were against every man, and every man’s hand was against them.

The elders of Gilead being well acquainted with the valour and military talents of Jephthah, sent a deputation of their number to fetch him from Tob, to aid them, or rather preside over them, as their captain, in the existing war against the Ammonites; for their message to him was, “Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.” “And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father’s house? And why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?” The elders of Gilead assured Jephthah that they were now sincerely desirous of having him for their chief and head, over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And they confirmed their declaration by a solemn oath, saying, “The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.” Upon which, Jephthah consented to go with them, and to take upon himself the charge of the war against the Ammonites. “And the people made him head and captain over them:” and Jephthah entered into a solemn engagement with them, before the Lord, in Mizpeh.

SECTION XXIII

jephthah attempts to settle the dispute by negotiation—claims of the king of ammon—jephthah’s just view of the whole subject in his able answer

Jephthah being now invested with the chief command of the forces of Israel, determined, as became a wise and patriotic man, to make an effort to obtain a redress of grievances by negotiation. He, therefore, sent ambassadors to the king of the Ammonites, instructed to address to him a solemn memorial and remonstrance, in which he clearly exhibited the justice of the cause of Israel. These ambassadors were directed, first, to say, “What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?” To which message, the king of Ammon answered, “Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, even from Arnon unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan; now, therefore, restore those lands again peaceably.” To which Jephthah, by his messengers, replied, “Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon. But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh, then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto; and in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab, and he would not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom; and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab, for Arnon was the border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon. And Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land, unto our place. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel; and the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon, and all his people, into the hand of Israel, and they smote them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok; and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and

shouldst thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now, art thou any thing better than Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? Why, therefore, did ye not recover them within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me. The Lord, the Judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.” From this sensible and just remonstrance of Jephthah, it appears, that he possessed an accurate knowledge of the past history of the Israelites. The narrative of events which he gives, agrees exactly with the history contained in the books of Moses. There is here also an important note of the period of time which had elapsed since the children of Israel arrived at Jordan, on their march from Egypt. Perhaps, however, a round number is used by Jephthah, as coming near to the time; for precision as to the exact number of years was not essential to his argument. He mentions three hundred years, as the period during which the children of Israel had had possession of the country now in dispute. This period would be of great importance in fixing the chronology of the Bible, if we could depend upon it as being entirely exact, for it is extremely difficult to ascertain the time which had elapsed from the length of the government of the successive judges, since there might have been intervals when no judge exercised authority over the people; and we do not know exactly how long it was from the entering Canaan to the commencement of the authority of the first judge, after the death of Joshua.

SECTION XXIV

jephthah's vow—his daughter comes out to meet her father—his distress—her piety and submission—an inquiry whether jephthah actually put his daughter to death—lamentation for her by the daughters of israel

Negotiation having proved ineffectual to bring the Ammonites to reasonable terms, Jephthah prepared for war. “Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.” In the marginal reading, we have or instead of and, in this last sentence; and this, many learned commentators consider the true interpretation; for although the Hebrew particle is used for and, in a vast majority of instances, yet there are many cases in which it must be rendered or, to make a sense consistent with the context. And in this passage there exist strong reasons for such an interpretation. Jephthah seems to have been a man of sense, and to have had a regard for justice and right. He was, moreover, according to the testimony of Paul, a man distinguished for his faith, as his name is inserted in the catalogue of eminent believers, which this apostle has given us in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews: and in this very passage, he is represented as acting under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Now it is not reasonable to suppose that such a man would make a vow to offer as a burnt-offering a human being, much less his own daughter, if one of these should first come out of the house to meet him? Or, suppose a dog, or a swine, to have been the animal to meet him,

would he, as an Israelite, have dared to offer such a sacrifice on the altar of God? Or would the high-priest have permitted such a profanation. The vow to offer as a burnt-offering a human being, or an unclean animal, would have been an impious vow, which God never could have accepted and answered: but the vow of Jephthah was effectual. He obtained of the Lord the very favour which he petitioned for in making this vow. From all these considerations, I am disposed to favour the marginal reading, and this opinion is confirmed by the manner in which the execution of the vow is related; of which an account will immediately be given. The sense of the vow, then, according to this explanation, is, that if he should be successful in overcoming Ammon, Jephthah promises, that whatever person or animal should come out of his house to meet him, should be devoted unto God; or if an animal suitable for sacrifice, should be offered up as a burnt-offering. "So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer even until thou came to Minnith, twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh to his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child. Beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee on thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity: I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass, at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to the vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in a year."

The lamentation made in this case by Jephthah, was not greater than was natural, upon the supposition that his daughter was to spend her life in celibacy, in some retired place: for this cut off all hope of offspring, the desire of which is instinctive, and among the Israelites was peculiarly strong; so that to be without any one to be their heir and successor, was deemed in that nation a grievous curse. But if Jephthah had now felt himself bound by his vow to offer up his daughter as a burnt-offering, his signs of sorrow would have been much more violent. We may well suppose that he would, instead of being contented with a single pathetic lamentation, have rent his clothes, and laid himself down upon the ground, covered with sackcloth and ashes, for at least seven days. It is also reasonable to conjecture, that his eyes would now have been opened to perceive the rashness and impiety of such a vow; and that he would now deeply lament his sin in making it. And if the army of Israel interposed by force to prevent king Saul from putting Jonathan to death, when he had brought himself under the obligation of a vow to that effect, we may well suppose that Jephthah would not have been permitted to sacrifice his only child, if he had felt himself bound to perform the act. The truth, however, is, that all such vows, as being contrary to the law of God, cannot create a moral obligation; for then man, by his own wicked act, might nullify the law of God.

Again, the way in which Jephthah's daughter received the information of her father's vow, shows that it could not be that she understood that she was to be offered up as a burnt-offering. Certainly, the offering of human victims, except to Moloch, was a thing unknown in Israel; and the idea of being thus sacrificed, must, at the first hearing of the intention, have been shocking and overwhelming to the feelings of a young female; and however ardent her filial piety, she could not so calmly and cheerfully have requested her father to fulfil his vow; especially, her piety if at all enlightened, would have revolted against being made a sacrifice in direct violation of the law of God. The request to spend two months with her companions, "to lament her virginity," seems to prove that the vow of Jephthah related not to the death of his daughter, but to a life of celibacy in some recluse place. That there did exist some custom of this kind in Israel, is probable, from many sources of evidence. The same conclusion is deducible from the statement, that she never had intercourse with any man; which on any other supposition would be a strange and irrelevant remark.

The record, "that Jephthah did with her according to his vow" is scarcely reconcilable with the idea that he killed his child. The sacred historian would have entered more into the circumstances of an action so extraordinary, as we find done in the case of Abraham, when commanded to offer up Isaac for a burnt-offering. And we might have expected some remark to justify or condemn the act, lest it should be inferred from the bare mention of the fact, that such vows, and such actions in fulfilment of them, were lawful to other persons.

The last sentence in the history of this transaction is difficult of interpretation. "That it became a custom for the daughters of Israel to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in the year." This does, indeed, as here translated, seem to indicate that she had been sacrificed, at least, was dead. But this version is not literally exact, and was evidently made to suit the hypothesis which we reject. The literal translation here is, as in many other places, set down in the margin: "The daughters of Israel went yearly to talk with the daughter of Jephthah, four days in the year." Now, while this is utterly repugnant to the common interpretation, it not only accords with that which we defend, but furnishes a convincing evidence of its truth. For if the daughters of Israel could talk with her, she certainly was still in the land of the living. And if she was shut up in some recluse place, this visit would be a very natural and proper thing. One other remark on this passage is, that we never find that it was a custom in Israel to have an anniversary mourning for the dead.

From all these considerations, the opinion that Jephthah did not offer up his daughter as a burnt-offering, seems to be highly probable, if not absolutely certain.

SECTION XXV

ingratitude of the people towards jephthah—his vindication of himself and brethren—the men of ephraim smitten at the fords of jordan—detected by their pronunciation of a word—jephthah dies, after a government of only six years

Ingratitude to benefactors and deliverers, and discontent with the most favourable circumstances, are the characteristics of the multitude in every country. The men of Ephraim were not satisfied to enjoy the fruits of Jephthah's great victory. When the country of Gilead, the possession of the Reubenites, was subdued and oppressed by the Ammonites, earnest application had been made

to the tribes on the west of Jordan, to aid in expelling these oppressors; but they, being themselves in no immediate danger, neglected to send any assistance to their suffering brethren, on the other side of the river. But now, when a great victory had been obtained by the courage and generalship of Jephthah, the Ephraimites made it the ground of a fierce accusation against him, that they had not been invited to take part in the war. "Wherefore," said they, "passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? We will burn thy house upon thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand; wherefore, then, are ye come up unto me, this day, to fight against me?" But these unreasonable men would not be satisfied with any explanation. Jephthah was under the necessity of contending with them in battle, or of giving himself and his property into their hands. To threats, the men of Ephraim also added bitter reproaches, saying, "Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim." But their insolence met with a signal chastisement; for in the battle which ensued, they were beaten, and fled: but the Gileadites seized the fords of Jordan, and intercepted and slew the fugitives. It was difficult, however, for the men who guarded the fords to distinguish, in all cases, between friends and foes; therefore, when any one asked permission to go over, "they said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said Nay, then said they unto him, Say now shibboleth; and he said sibboleth, for he could not frame to pronounce it aright." Then they took him and slew him, at the passages of Jordan; and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. This was a severe stroke on this proud tribe; but they had nobody to blame but themselves: they engaged in this war without the shadow of a reason, and God in just displeasure gave the victory to Jephthah, who trusted in him. From this narrative it appears, that by this time some difference had arisen in the pronunciation of the Hebrew language; at any rate, a difference in the sound of one letter; and, as is often the case, the men of Ephraim were unable to frame their organs so as to give the true sound to the word selected as a test. Hence, probably, the origin of the double sound which that letter has to this day.

The government of Jephthah lasted no more than six years. He seems to have died a natural death, as we read that he "was buried in one of the cities of Gilead."

SECTION XXVI

ibzan of beth-lehem—nature of the theocracy—elon of zebulun next judges israel—abdon of ephraim—great increase of population and the number in their armies

The next judge or ruler in Israel, was Ibzan of Beth-lehem. This man seems to have lived in peaceable times, as there is no account of any enemy infesting Israel in his days: the successful war against the Ammonites, under Jephthah, seems to have, for a while, intimidated the foes of Israel. The only thing which the sacred historian has thought proper to relate of this Beth-lehemite is, the remarkable fact, that he was the father of thirty sons and thirty daughters; and by means of these he formed an extensive connexion, and thus enlarged his influence; for he sent abroad his daughters, giving them in marriage to the men of the land; and sent and took wives to his sons from abroad. The period of Ibzan's government was also short; he judged Israel only seven years, and died, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

The rulers of Israel, during the period of which we are now treating, were not taken from any particular family or tribe, but were brought forward by the providence of God, or by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The government of Israel, so far as the enacting of laws was concerned, was a theocracy: no rulers, prophets, judges, or priests, had any authority to alter these laws. The elders of the people, seventy in number, and the officers of different degrees of authority, who were established by Moses, were regularly continued, and in all that related to the ritual law and the worship of the tabernacle, the high priest and other priests had the right to regulate every thing agreeably to the commandments of the Lord by Moses. But when the country was invaded by a foreign foe, or fell under the power of some oppressive tyrant, there was need of an extraordinary ruler, with something of the power of a dictator, who might concentrate the forces of the tribes, and lead them out to battle. Or, when disputes arose between the tribes themselves, there was required a judge, whose authority would be respected on account of his tried wisdom and public services; or more especially, because he gave evidence that he was acting under the direction, and as the vicegerent of God.

The next judge raised up by the providence of God, was Elon, a Zebulonite. I do not remember that mention is made of any prophet or other distinguished man beside, arising out of this tribe. To this fact reference seems to have been had, when it was said, "Search and see, whether any prophet ariseth out of Galilee." Elon judged Israel ten years, and died, and was buried in Ajalon, in the country of Zebulon: and this is the only circumstance left on record concerning him.

The next judge or ruler was of the tribe of Ephraim. His native place, which was also the place of his burial, was Pirathon. His name was Abdon, and that circumstance by which he was chiefly distinguished, was, that he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode upon seventy ass-colts. The duration of his reign was eight years. His father's name was Hillel, and his native town was in the mount of the Amalekites.

From the number of children which are frequently mentioned in the sacred history as belonging to one family, we are led to believe that the increase of population among the Israelites was extraordinary. A former judge had thirty sons, and as many daughters; and Abdon had no less than forty sons. It is by no means necessary to suppose, nor, indeed, is it at all probable, that all these were born of one mother. The custom or polygamy, to a greater or less extent, prevailed through all the period of which we are now treating. Though never expressly sanctioned by divine authority, like divorce, it was permitted to exist. From these instances of a numerous progeny, we may account for the greatness of the population, the accounts of which have appeared to some altogether extravagant, and incommensurate with the narrow limits of the country; and it must be remembered, that, in those days, every man was a soldier, and was expected to turn out when an enemy invaded the country.

SECTION XXVII

an angel appears to the wife of manoah—and again to her and her husband—samson is born—a nazarite from the womb—israel under the yoke of the philistines—samson seeks a wife of this race at timnath—slays a lion on his way to visit her—his marriage—his riddle—its meaning discovered by his wife—his method of paying the forfeit—his wife given to another

The children of Israel furnish a striking proof of the proneness of human nature to depart from God. They were probably no worse than any other nation would have been in the same circumstances; and yet they were for ever disposed to revolt against the Divine government, although, in the providence of God, they uniformly suffered for their disobedience. The surrounding nations, through whose influence they were led astray, were also the instruments made use of by a just sovereign, to chastise them for their sins. For forty years they were under the grinding oppression of the Philistines. At the close of this long period of affliction the angel of the Lord appeared unto the wife of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, who had never borne a child, and said unto her, "Thou shalt conceive and bear a son. Now, therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing. For lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son: and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible; but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name." "Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again unto the woman, as she sat in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, behold the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass: how shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him? And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord: for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said, unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? So Manoah took a kid with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord. And the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things; nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these.

"And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him." When he became a man, he was, at certain seasons, under a divine impulse from the Spirit of the Lord, in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson was a man of supernatural strength of body, which endowment was connected with his condition as a Nazarite; but he seems to have been also a man of strong passions, over which he did not exercise that control which the principles of virtue and piety required. One of the evils arising to the Israelites from their subjection to the Philistines was, the intermarriages to which it gave rise, between their young people. Samson, among others, fell into this snare. Happening, at Timnath, to see a young woman of the daughters of the Philistines, with whom he was greatly pleased, he requested his parents to procure her as a wife for him. In vain did they remonstrate against his purpose, for his passion had obtained the complete mastery over him, and he insisted that his father should get this woman for him. His parents, finding it useless to oppose the headstrong inclination of their son, yielded to his wishes with great reluctance; not knowing that Providence was ordering and disposing of this event to bring about a deliverance of the people from the yoke of the Philistines. They, however, judged it expedient to go down with their son to Timnath.

And when Samson came to the vineyards of Timnath, a young lion came roaring against him: "and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand." At this time his parents were not present with him, and he did not inform them when they came up of the event which had occurred. This visit to the woman of Timnath served to rivet his attachment, and at this time all matters were agreed upon between the parties. Accordingly, at the appointed time, Samson returned to Timnath to celebrate his nuptials; and feeling a curiosity to see what had become of the carcass of the lion which he had slain on his former visit, he turned aside, and "behold there was a swarm of bees, and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat; but he told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion." From this account it is evident that some months must have elapsed between these two visits; for that was required to render it practicable for a swarm of bees to build their combs and prepare their honey in the carcass of the lion. In that warm region, where it rains but seldom in the summer season, it is probable that the carcass had become dry, and so, the intestines being taken out, and the body suspended on the limb of a tree, might furnish a very convenient receptacle for a swarm of bees.

The marriage feast was celebrated for seven days, according to the custom of the place; and thirty companions were provided to attend on the bridegroom. "And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: but if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, entice thy husband that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire. Have ye called us to take that we have? Is it not so? And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not. Thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted; and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him. And she told the riddle to the

children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day, before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend."

This history furnishes us with an instructive example of the evils which attend intermarriages between the children of God, and his enemies. We see also, that that which begins in sport may end in death. A wedding feast has often generated broils which terminated in woful disaster.

SECTION XXVIII

Samson, not knowing what was done, comes to visit his wife—her younger sister is offered by the father—Samson declines all further connexion, and sets the grain of the Philistines on fire—slays a thousand men in Lehi—a miraculous fountain opened in this place

It appears that Samson was not informed that his wife had been given to another, and being sincerely attached to this treacherous woman, he came down in the time of harvest, with the present of a kid, to visit her, and was about to enter her chamber, but was prevented by her father, who now informed him that his wife had been given to his companion. For this strange proceeding her father offered no other reason than the impression which he had received, that he, Samson, had lost all affection for his wife. But willing to conciliate a man whom he had so much injured, and fearing the displeasure of a man whose passions were impetuous, and whose strength was irresistible, he offered to him as a wife his younger daughter. And, said he, "Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her, I pray thee, instead of her." Samson declined all further connexion with this family, and began to meditate vengeance against the whole nation of the Philistines. Having suffered so heavy an injury, he laid a plan to destroy their corn which was standing in the field, and also that which was gathered into shocks. The plan adopted was, to catch three hundred foxes, (or jackals as some suppose,) and to tie them two and two by the tails, and to insert a burning brand, or torch, between each pair, and then to let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines. And the conflagration proved destructive not only to the standing corn and the shocks of grain already reaped, but also to the vineyards and olives. When the Philistines found that this destruction of their property had been caused by Samson the son-in-law of the Timnite, because his father-in-law had taken away his wife and had given her to his companion, they determined to wreak their vengeance on him, as having given the provocation; and accordingly they came up and burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson, when he understood that the Philistines had come up with hostile intentions, attacked them and slew many of them, and then retired from their country and dwelt on the top of the rock Etam. The Philistines being determined to revenge themselves for all these injuries, marched with a considerable force into Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. "And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, and to do to him as he hath done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this thou hast done unto us? And he said, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee,

that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No, but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hands. But surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him from the rock. And when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith." And "he cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi," the import of which is, the lifting up of the jaw-bone. "And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, (or rather in Lehi, for the place had already received this name,) and there came water thereout, and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived; therefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore," that is, the well of him that called; which, says the sacred historian, "is in Lehi unto this day."

From these last words, it is evident that our translators were mistaken in supposing that the water issued from the jaw-bone; for it appears that the bursting forth of the waters was not temporary but permanent; and surely this perennial spring did not run continually from a jaw-bone. The simple fact is most obvious. From the weapon which Samson employed, the place received its denomination of Lehi. In this place there was a hollow, from which God caused a fountain to issue to allay Samson's thirst, and this became a perennial spring or well.

SECTION XXIX

moral character of samson—his love of delilah—by tampering with her the philistines learn wherein his great strength consisted—his head shorn and his eyes put out—is put into the prison at gaza and kept at hard labour

The character of Samson was not very consistent. Although a consecrated Nazarite from his birth, yet he was a man much under the dominion of his passions. If we had nothing else to guide our judgment but this history of his acts, we should not be ready to draw the conclusion that he was a pious man: but as Paul has given him a place, as well as Jephthah, among distinguished believers, we must not hesitate to admit that, with all his imperfections, Samson was a sincere servant of God. The most objectionable part of his recorded life, was his illicit connexion with strange women, of which we have several examples; but in every instance, these amours became a snare to him. At Gaza his enemies surrounded the city, and only waited for the morning light, to put him to death; but this man, of more than human strength, "rose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron."

The most fatal attachment, however, which Samson cherished for the daughters of the Philistines was for a deceitful woman "in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah." The lords of the Philistines, understanding how much he was under her influence, offered her a very large reward if she would find out and reveal to them the secret of his astonishing strength of body, and on what it depended. Samson at first deluded her, and said, "If they bind me with seven green withes that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man." Accordingly, they, receiving the

green withes from the lords of the Philistines, had him bound with them; but as soon as the men who lay in wait attempted to seize him, "he brake the withes as a thread of tow is broken, when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known." Again he was beset by this ensnaring woman to reveal the secret; and she now added reproaches to her entreaties. Upon which he told her, if they would bind him with new cords which had never been used, he would be helpless as another man; but when this experiment was also tried, "he brake them off his arms as a thread." A third time he deceived her, by saying, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web," I shall be weak as another man; but when this was done while he was asleep, and the Philistines arose upon him, "he awaked out of his sleep and went away with the pin of the beam and with the web." Delilah now became exceedingly importunate, and called in question Samson's love for her. "And she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed unto death." He therefore, at length, revealed unto her his whole heart, and said, "There hath not come a razor upon my head, for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." From this it appears, that Samson's extraordinary strength did not depend on any muscular force which he naturally possessed, but was a supernatural endowment; and this is also signified in those passages where it is said, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Delilah perceiving that she had now succeeded in eliciting from him the secret which he had so industriously concealed before, caused, while Samson slept, a man to shave the seven locks of his head; and then brought his enemies upon him. "And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself, and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." The Philistines, now finding that their formidable enemy was completely in their power, proceeded in the first place to put out his eyes; and then took him down to Gaza, "and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house."

Wretched, indeed, was the condition of Samson, and small was the prospect that he would ever again have it in his power to retaliate upon his enemies, and the enemies of God, for their treachery and cruelty; but the providence of God is mysterious, and the retributions of vindictory justice are often terrible, even in this world. It was so ordered, that this judge in Israel, who had in his lifetime destroyed so great a number of this accursed people, should be able, in the moment of his death, to destroy more of the Philistines than during his whole life.

While immured in the prison his hair began again to grow, and his former extraordinary strength was restored. The Philistines were all gross idolaters, and of the devoted race of the Canaanites, whom the Israelites were commanded to extirpate. The god which they worshipped was called Dagon, and was represented by an image or idol, which was partly a fish, and partly man, of which an account has heretofore been given. In Gaza there was a spacious temple dedicated to this idol; and the Philistines, having now overcome their greatest enemy, celebrated a feast in this temple, and "offered a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And when their hearts were merry, they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And when he was brought out of the prison, he made them sport. And they set him between the pillars." It seems that this huge edifice rested upon two large pillars, which stood near to each other. "And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel

the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up; of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Then his brethren, and all the house of his father, came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years."

SECTION XXX

origin of idolatry in israel in the house of micah—the danites send spies to seek a new habitation—six hundred men are sent out to seize a country visited by the spies—they carry off micah's gods and the priest who officiated—these idols they set up and worshipped for a long time

The sacred historian, after finishing the history of Samson, who is thought to have been contemporary with Eli, goes back to give an account of the rise of idolatry among the people of Israel, after the death of Joshua. A certain woman of mount Ephraim had amassed a considerable sum of money, which her son, whose name is Micah, stole. The old woman, who had no pious feelings, seemed to have suspected her son of the theft, and poured out curses on the person, whoever he might be, who had taken her treasure. Micah feeling uneasy in his conscience, and finding that he was suspected, came forward and confessed his crime, and restored the money to his mother. She now declared that she had "wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord." This, at first view, seems to have been a very pious act; but the truth was, that her religion was deeply infected with the spirit of superstition and idolatry; for she designed it for "a graven image, and a molten image." And, accordingly, a sufficient quantity of the restored silver was put into the hands of the founder, and these images were formed, and placed in the house of Micah: and that this idolatrous worship might be conducted with suitable ceremony and pomp, this man erected a building or temple, purposely for the reception of his gods. He also "made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest." This introduction of idolatry met with no resistance, for at that time there existed no king in Israel, nor any other governing power to restrain the practice of iniquity, "but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Soon after the erection of this house of idolatrous worship, a young Levite from Beth-lehem-judah, who by the mother's side seems to have been descended from the tribe of Judah, left his native place, and wandered off in search of a place, until he came to the house of Micah, who invited him to take up his abode with him and officiate as his priest; for he thought that this young man being a Levite was better suited for the sacerdotal office than his own son, whom he had before consecrated. To this proposal, the young Levite acceded, and Micah promised to give him ten shekels of silver, by the year, and a suit of apparel, and his victuals. "Then said Micah, now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

In those days of anarchy, the Danites feeling themselves straitened for want of room, sent five men of valour to look out a suitable place to which some of them might emigrate. These men came, in their expedition, to the house of Micah, where they recognized the young Levite, and finding that he officiated here as a priest, they requested him to ask counsel of God, whether their way would be prosperous. The priest soon gave them a favourable response, saying, "Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go." It may be remarked here, that in the first advances towards idolatry, the object was not to introduce other gods, but to worship the true God by images, or other visible representations. Thus, when the Israelites forced Aaron to make the golden calf, Jehovah was professedly the object of their worship; and when Jeroboam set up the idolatrous calves in Dan and Beth-el, the object was, to worship Jehovah by these images. And so, in this case, Micah and his priest considered their images as means of worshipping the true God.

These five spies of Dan, having received an encouragement from the young priest, proceeded on their journey, until they came to Laish, where they found a good country, and a people living quietly and securely; and they appeared to be without any means of effectual defence against invasion, "for there was no magistrate in the land," and no man was restrained from following his own inclinations by any fear of civil rulers. These people seem to have nominally appertained to the Zidonians, but being far off, and not engaged in commerce, they were suffered to pursue their own course unmolested. When the spies returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, whence they had gone out, they gave a very favourable account of the country which they had discovered. They represented it as "a very good land"—"a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth," and as one of sufficient extent and easy to be possessed. Upon hearing this report, the Danites despatched "six hundred men, appointed with weapons of war." This little army, conducted by the spies, came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah; and being informed of the "house of gods" which was here, they sent in the five men who were acquainted with the place, "to take the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image." And when the priest said, "What do ye?" they said, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people." As soon as Micah and the men of his house were informed of the robbery which had been committed, they pursued after the children of Dan, and overtook them, and cried after them. "And they turned their faces and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his own house."

This company of the tribe of Dan now prosecuted their enterprise against the people of Laish, whom they found in the same careless and defenceless state which had been represented by the spies. "And they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire; and there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon; and they had no business with any man." "And they built a city and dwelt therein; and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father." "And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the

son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh."

Although idolatry was a capital crime, according to the laws given to the Israelites, as being the highest treason against God their king, yet during this period of anarchy, which preceded the raising up of judges to govern the land and enforce the laws, no notice was taken of this open defection of the children of Dan from the worship of the true God. It seems that the worship of these images of Micah continued for a long time, even as long as the tabernacle remained at Shiloh.

The transactions mentioned in this section, and also those recorded in the following, are commonly believed to have occurred while Phinehas was high-priest.

SECTION XXXI

history of the levite and his concubine, and the war against benjamin

How much, under God, we are indebted to the existence of civil government, can only be known by contemplating a people among whom there is no such institution; or where the ordinance is so far perverted, and salutary authority so far relaxed, that wickedness is left without restraint, and lust and violence reign triumphantly. Some memorable examples of this kind we have on record for our instruction and warning in the sacred volume, as in the case of the people whose wickedness provoked the Almighty to inundate the world with a flood of waters. Such also was the character of the cities of the plain, which were overwhelmed with a storm of fire and brimstone; and such likewise was the character of the seven nations of Canaan, whom God ordered the Israelites to exterminate, lest they should be led to learn their abominable ways. And this precaution was not unnecessary, for we find here recorded, a degree of shameful wickedness in a town inhabited by the children of Benjamin, which places them upon a level with Sodom itself.

A certain Levite, who sojourned on the side of mount Ephraim, married a woman of Beth-lehem-judah. She is indeed called a concubine, but concubines, among the Israelites, were really wives of an inferior order; and, as such, were required to be true to their husbands. This woman, however, proved unfaithful, and she also went away from her lord to her father's house, at Beth-lehem-judah, and remained there "four whole months." "And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his own servant with him, and a couple of asses. And she brought him in to her father's; and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him." And for three days his father-in-law entertained him in the most friendly and hospitable manner. And when, on the fourth day, the Levite was ready with his wife and servant, to proceed on his journey homeward, his father-in-law pressed him to take some refreshment before he took his departure; and when they had eat and drunk together, he then urged him to be contented to remain all night. And the next morning, it being the fifth of his sojourning with his father-in-law, the same friendly urgency was used to detain him longer; and while they enjoyed themselves in feasting together, the day wore away, and his father-in-law said, "The day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night. Behold the day groweth to an end: lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow, get you early on your way, that you may go hence. But the man would not tarry that night, but rose up and departed, and came over

against Jebus (which is Jerusalem). And his wife, his servant, and the two asses, accompanied him. And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. And the master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger that is not of the children of Israel. We will pass over to Gibeah. And he said to his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah."

The general principles by which the Levite was governed in selecting a place of lodging for himself and company, were sound and good; for, so far as we consistently can, we should avoid familiar intercourse with the wicked, and should be reluctant to partake of their hospitalities; and we should always seek to cast in our lot, and take up our residence, among the professed people of God. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." But, sometimes, the worst people are found within the pale of the visible church; and certainly no description of wicked men are more to be dreaded than hypocrites. It would be better to fall into the hands of the savages of the wilderness, than to come under the power of false professors. The event, in the case before us, was very unhappy. "For they passed on and went their way, and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. And they turned aside to go in, and lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in he sat him down in a street of the city; for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging." This want of common hospitality was remarkable in a city of the east, and particularly among the descendants of Abraham; and was indicative of a wretched state of morals. In most places, in ancient and modern times, there was a competition to get possession of strangers, as is now remarkably the case in the interior of Arabia. But Gibeah seems to have resembled Sodom in this respect, as well as being addicted to crimes against nature. At length, however, "an old man came from his work, out of the field, at even;" and when he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city, he inquired of him, whence he was and whither going. To which the Levite gave him a direct and satisfactory answer; and let him know that no person who should receive them would be subjected to expense on their account, for they had come furnished with straw and provender for the asses, and with bread and wine for himself, his handmaid, and the young man who was with him. "And the old man said, Peace be unto you, howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me, only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink." While the Levite was enjoying himself in a convivial manner, the house was beset by a company of lawless wretches, the sons of Belial, who beat at the door, and demanded of the master of the house, that the guest whom he entertained should be brought out unto them, for the vilest purposes. Entreaties and expostulation availed nothing in restraining these monsters of iniquity; and as the least of two evils, the Levite gave up his wife to be treated by these men raging with lust, agreeably to their pleasure. The result was, that in the morning the woman was found dead at the door of the house where her lord was; and her hands were on the threshold. Her husband, not suspecting at first that she was dead, said, "Up, and let us be going;" but none answered. Finding that she was really dead, "he put her upon an ass, and gat him unto his place. And when he was come into his house, he took a knife and divided her into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it, said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, unto this day. Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds." The method pursued by the Levite had the effect of arousing the people to indignation; so that they assembled at Mizpeh, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with

the land of Gilead. The host now convened amounted to the number of four hundred thousand men that drew the sword. And, although the messengers who passed through the land with the pieces of the murdered woman, had spread the report of the horrid transaction; yet before inflicting deserved punishment on the inhabitants of Gibeah, they called for the Levite, the husband of the woman, and demanded of him a full declaration of the affair, "saying, Tell us how was this wickedness?" And he related the matter distinctly before them; and concluded by saying, "they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel." When they heard his narrative, all the people arose as one man, and determined on taking vengeance on the wicked city; but as so large an army did not seem to be needed for the enterprise, they selected by lot one tenth part of the whole number, and appointed others to supply them with provisions. Thus were the men of Israel knit together as one man, resolved to inflict condign punishment on this devoted city.

SECTION XXXII

the tribe of benjamin refuse to give up the guilty perpetrators of the enormous wickedness—they defeat the other tribes with great slaughter in two successive battles—on the third day the men of israel placed an ambush, and drew the men of benjamin from gibeon, by a pretended flight—the tribe nearly extinguished—the israelites repent of their exterminating severity

Here we have a striking example of the strength of the spirit of party, or rather of tribe or clan. The great body of the Israelites being now prepared to punish the wicked inhabitants of Gibeah, did not wish to involve the residue of the tribe of Benjamin in the guilt and punishment of this city. They therefore sent messengers through all the tribe of Benjamin, to expostulate with them, and to demand that the perpetrators of this wicked act should be delivered up to them, that they might be put to death, and thus evil be put away from Israel. "But the children of Benjamin would not hearken unto the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel," and immediately prepared for war, determined with their small force to go out against the assembled host of all Israel. Upon being numbered, it appeared that their whole available force was no more than twenty-six thousand men; but this number did not include the men of Gibeah, who amounted to seven hundred. But the Benjamites were skilled in war, and of desperate courage. In their army, at this time, they had a very remarkable corps of seven hundred men, who were all left-handed, every one of whom could sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not miss. As was before stated, the men of war from the other tribes formed an army of four hundred thousand men; but it was not judged necessary that more than a part of these should actually go up against their brethren; and feeling the solemn crisis which had arrived, they wished to take no important step without asking counsel of God. They therefore assembled at the house of God, at Shiloh, particularly to inquire which of the tribes should first go up to the battle against the children of, Benjamin. "And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first." "And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah, and went out to battle against Benjamin. And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day, twenty and two thousand men." This was a most unexpected and unaccountable disaster. No doubt there was something wrong in the conduct or in the spirit of the Israelites, which had provoked the Lord thus to give them into the hands of a small number of wicked men. This event appears the more strange, as the people seemed to have been actuated by a spirit of piety in what they had undertaken, and had in a public manner sought counsel of the Lord. The sacred history does not unfold to us the reason of Israel's

being forsaken of God, on this occasion. Their conduct, however, upon meeting with this unexpected defeat, seems to have been proper and pious. They did not abandon themselves to despair, but encouraged themselves to make another effort, hoping that in a second encounter they should be more successful than in the first: but again they deemed it right to ask counsel of the Lord; and in performing this act of worship, they were much affected, and wept before the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the Lord said, Go up against him." On the second day, battle was joined with the children of Benjamin, and the result was nearly as disastrous as on the former day; for, on this occasion, Benjamin went forth from Gibeah, "and destroyed down to the ground, of the children of Israel, eighteen thousand men." "Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up, and came to the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until the even, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord."

What was before stated, as to the time when these transactions occurred, is expressly confirmed, for it is said, "that Phinchas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before the Lord in those days." The same inquiry was made of the Lord, as on the former occasions of consulting him, "Shall I again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, Go up, for to-morrow I will deliver them into thy hand." Israel had now, taught by experience and misfortune, become less confident in their own prowess, and more attentive to those stratagems of war by which success is often obtained; for they now placed men in ambush round about the city, and then drew off the men of Benjamin to a distance; who, flushed with their two recent and extraordinary victories, thought of nothing else but achieving a third victory, and "began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah." And they succeeded in slaying about thirty men of Israel. "And the children of Benjamin, said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways." And the liers-in-wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah. And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore, but they knew not that evil was near them. "And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel; and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day, twenty and two thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword." While the men of Benjamin were engaged in the battle, and by stratagem were drawn off to a distance from the city, the liers-in-wait rushed into the city, and slew the inhabitants with the edge of the sword. As soon as they had gained complete possession of Gibeah, they signified the fact to their brethren, by kindling a great flame with smoke, which sign had been agreed upon beforehand. When the men of Benjamin looked back, and saw by the flame and pillar of smoke that the city was in the possession of their enemies, they found that they were indeed in an evil case. And when they turned and fled towards the way of the wilderness, still they could not escape, for "the battle overtook them; and the men of Israel inclosed the Benjamites round about, and trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising. And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men: all these were men of valour." That is, this number was slain in the field of battle; but to these must be added five thousand who were taken and slain on the highways; and also two thousand who were pursued to, a place called Gidom, and slain there; so that, omitting smaller numbers, there fell of Benjamin that day twenty-five thousand valiant men. And the only remnant which escaped of their whole army, were six hundred men, who escaped to the rock Rimmon, where they abode four months. The children of Israel, not contented

with the signal vengeance taken on Benjamin, by the destruction of all their men of war, carried desolation into their country, “and smote the people with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand.” It would seem that the whole army of Israel were now filled with such indignation against the whole tribe of Benjamin, for their wicked conduct in screening the men of Gibeah from deserved punishment, and were actuated by so strong a desire to revenge the death of the forty thousand men of Israel slain in the first two battles, that they proceeded to consign to utter destruction the whole of this tribe on whom they could lay their hands. But when the violence of their wrath began to cool, and they reflected on what they had done, and that one of the twelve tribes had perished from Israel, they were penetrated with grief, and went up to the house of God at Shiloh, “and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices and wept sore; and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel? And on the morrow the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.”

SECTION XXXIII

jabesh-gilead severely punished for refusing aid—the young virgins of this place only preserved, for wives to the surviving benjamites—the daughters of shiloh seized and carried off for the same purpose

There was another affair which now engaged their attention, and which eventually was made to have a connexion with the preservation of the tribe of Benjamin from becoming utterly extinct. When the people had first assembled from the tribes of Israel, on the unhappy occasion which has been mentioned, they were inspired with such a zeal against the Benjamites that they entered into a solemn oath that none of them would give them their daughters for wives; and they moreover swore, that whatever city had neglected to come up with the congregation unto the Lord unto Mizpeh, the inhabitants thereof should surely be put to death. And when the people were numbered, it appeared that none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were there; and in fulfilment of the great oath by which they had rashly bound themselves, they now despatched twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. They were, however, directed to save alive and bring back with them all the young virgins whom they might find, that they might serve for wives to the small remnant of the men of Benjamin, who were known to be concealed in the rock Rimmon. This expedition speedily and literally executed their orders upon the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, and returned with four hundred virgins. The congregation of Israel now entered into a negotiation with the six hundred Benjamites in the rock Rimmon: and they entered into a treaty of peace with them, and gave them for wives the females who had been saved alive from Jabesh-gilead; but as their number was six hundred, and the women were only four hundred, there was still a deficiency of wives for the remnant of Benjamin. The human passions are prone to oscillate from one extreme to another. The indignation which had burned so hotly and destructively against this unhappy tribe, was now turned into the tenderest compassion, and with compunction for the severity which led them nearly to extirpate one of the tribes of Israel. Therefore “the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped from Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel.”

The device which was now adopted to supply the deficiency of wives for these men, bears a strong resemblance to the rape of the Sabines by the Romans, at a later period. There was shortly to be a feast at Shiloh, on which occasion it was customary for companies of young damsels to amuse themselves by dancing in the vineyards, which were on the way between Bethel and Shechem. In this place the Benjamites were directed to lie in wait, and to catch every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and to bear them off to the land of Benjamin. And the elders of Israel promised that when the fathers or brethren of the daughters of Shiloh came to make complaint, we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes. And the men of Benjamin did so, and took wives according to their number, whom they caught, and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.

SECTION XXXIV

history of ruth, and naomi her mother-in-law

From the Bible history we learn, that the occurrence of famine was no uncommon event in Judea. If there was a failure of the former or latter rains, there was of course a deficiency in the productions of the earth: the first of these rains occurred in autumn, about the time of sowing the winter grain; the last in the spring, when the wheat and barley were coming to maturity. Between these seasons, during the summer months, very little rain fell; a shower in harvest was reckoned an extraordinary occurrence. As the land was filled with a dense population, a famine was a fearful calamity, and occasioned a miserable death to many. The usual method of avoiding it was to flee to some of the neighbouring countries, where bread was in abundance. Thus, on one of these emergencies, during the government of the Judges, a man of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Elimelech, took his wife Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and went and abode in the land of Moab. But whilst he fled from death in one form, it overtook him in another, soon after his emigration. Often families are induced to seek new habitations on account of the pressure of particular evils, but while they escape difficulties of one kind, they are apt to fall into others not less grievous. This man was in good circumstances in Judea, but in a strange land his property wasted away, and his own life was cut short. As might have been expected also, his sons formed matrimonial alliances with the daughters of Moab, which kind of connexions, in all ages, have been a snare to the people of God. Here, also, they were far removed from the house and ordinances of Jehovah, and exposed to all the abominations of idolatry. Calamities frequently come in clusters. After a sojourn of about ten years, both these young men died also in the land of Moab, it would seem nearly about the same time. Thus was Naomi bereaved of her husband and her two sons, and left destitute in a foreign country. The name of one of her daughters-in-law was Orpah, and of the other Ruth, who after the decease of their husbands chose to live with Naomi; and they seem to have formed a strong attachment to their mother-in-law; for when she, upon hearing that the Lord had visited his people in the land of Judea, in giving them bread, resolved to return to her native country, these young women, although they had parents of their own, insisted upon accompanying her. But as she was reduced to poverty, and had no prospect of any easy method of support, begged them to relinquish the idea of going with her, and to return each to her mother's house. "Go," said she, "return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters,

why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons, would ye tarry for them till they were grown? Would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." When Naomi saw that her determination was fixed, she ceased from all further attempts to dissuade Ruth from going along with her.

After this tender scene, the two widows, poor and desolate, travelled on until they came to Beth-lehem, the former residence of Naomi, from which she, with her husband, had emigrated many years before. The inhabitants of the place were greatly excited when they recognized their old neighbour again restored to them after so long an absence. But they could with difficulty be persuaded that she was indeed the identical person whom they had once known as a resident among them. Doubtless, time and sorrow had made a great change in Naomi's person; and her condition as well as her person was sadly altered. No wonder, therefore, they said to one another, with surprise and some degree of doubt, "Is this Naomi?" When the afflicted widow heard her old neighbours address her by this name, the import of which is "pleasant," she said with emotion, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara," the meaning of which is "bitter:" "for," said she, "the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" The time of the arrival of Naomi and Ruth at Beth-lehem was, "in the beginning of barley-harvest." Thus that death from which Elimelech and his sons fled, overtook them in the land where they sojourned; and that poverty, the dread of which had induced them to leave the holy land, now came heavily upon the family. Their substance had wasted away in a foreign country; so that when Naomi returned, she was in a state of abject poverty. This circumstance will account for the earnestness with which she entreated her daughters-in-law to return and live with their friends; and it furnishes strong evidence of the strength of Ruth's attachment to her, or rather the strength of that piety towards the God of Israel which animated her breast. Naomi, however, had rich relations in Bethlehem, but possessing an independent spirit she would not obtrude herself upon their attention, much less solicit any favours from them.

But Naomi, though poor and desolate, trusted in God, and was blessed with a daughter-in-law who loved her most tenderly, and was not ashamed to labour for her subsistence. As these widows had no harvest to gather in, their only resource for a living was to avail themselves of that provision made for the poor in the law of Moses, by which they were permitted to follow the reapers, and glean such handfuls as they happened to drop, or such stalks as were left standing in the corners of the field. Ruth, of her own accord, proposed to engage in this work; and it so happened, that the first field into which she entered, belonged to a near relation of her mother-in-law, whose name was Boaz, and who was a man of extensive property and wealth. Boaz appears to have been a

man of piety as well as wealth; for when he came out of Beth-lehem to the field to see the reapers, his salutation was, "The Lord be with you." And their answer corresponded with the piety of the master's salutation; for they said, "The Lord bless thee." There is something exceedingly pleasing in these ancient forms of pious intercourse. Very different is often the language of reapers and their employers in the harvest-field in our day. The attention of Boaz was now directed to Ruth, whom he had not before seen; and he inquired of the overseer of the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" To whom the servant answered, "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves, so she came and hath continued even from the morning until now. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter, go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn." This unexpected condescension and kindness from the wealthy owner of the harvest affected this poor young stranger not a little; for "she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly to thine handmaid, though I be not like thine handmaids. And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves and reproach her not, and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." Thus was an acquaintance formed between these worthy persons, who, though in very different external circumstances, Providence had determined should be united in the most intimate and tender bond known upon earth. We see here, that virtuous and praise-worthy conduct, even in humble circumstances, may attract the attention and even the esteem of those in superior stations. Boaz had heard, it seems, the whole story of the devoted attachment of this young Moabitess to her afflicted mother-in-law, and how, for her sake, and more especially for the sake of her religion with which she had become enamoured, that she was willing to leave her own father and mother and her native land, and to sojourn in a land of strangers, where she was under the necessity of gleaning in the harvest field for a scanty subsistence for herself and her aged friend. But great as were the sacrifices which she had made, and urgent as were the necessities under which she laboured, and the privations of abject poverty which she endured, she neither repined nor murmured at her hard lot, but cheerfully submitted to her afflictions, and with alacrity performed the labours required by her circumstances. And until this time it is not probable that she entertained any hope of rising into a more favourable condition. It is evident that Boaz was instantly struck with the appearance of this young woman. Although it is not recorded, it is more than probable that, like many other of the good women who have been honoured with a notice in the sacred Scriptures, she was of a beautiful aspect, and of a modest

and becoming demeanour. But Boaz, a pious and prudent man, was prepared by the good report which he had heard of the kindness of Ruth to her mother-in-law, his near relation, to entertain kind feelings towards her; yet it does not appear that the idea of making her his wife had yet taken possession of his mind. The fact was, that according to the levirate law of Moses, the right of claiming her in marriage belonged to another, who stood in a nearer degree of kindred to the husband of the Moabitess than Boaz.

When Ruth returned in the evening to her mother-in-law, laden with the fruits of her successful gleaning, the inquiry was made, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou?" And when Naomi heard that she happened to fall into the field of Boaz—for this was not the effect of any pre-concerted plan—she was sensibly affected with the providence which led her daughter-in-law to that place, and also with the remarkable kindness and condescension of her rich relative. She exclaimed, therefore, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is of near kin unto us; one of our next kinsmen." Ruth also informed her mother-in-law, that she had received a pressing invitation to glean in the field of Boaz, until the end of the harvest; which was very pleasing to Naomi, for she was glad that she could labour among those who would treat her respectfully. And accordingly she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest, and wheat-harvest, and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

SECTION XXXV

boaz marries ruth—her son obed was the father of jesse, the father of david

There is nothing concerning which we are more likely to fall into grievous mistakes, than by judging of the manners and customs of ancient nations by what is common among us. That which in one age is reckoned perfectly innocent, and as laying not the least foundation for censure or reproach, would, in another country and age, be considered highly indecorous.

Naomi, who understood the laws and customs of the Jews, began now to entertain the hope, that notwithstanding their depressed circumstances, Boaz would be induced to perform to her amiable daughter-in-law the part of a near kinsman, by taking her to wife and raising up seed to his deceased relative. The only difficulty was to bring him to understand that this duty devolved on him, unless another kinsman, who was still nearer should claim his right. Naomi, therefore, formed a plan for bringing the matter to a crisis. Whether her advice was in every respect prudent and becoming, we are not able to judge. Many transactions of the patriarchs and early ages of the world cannot but appear strange to us; and we know that the record of a fact in the sacred Scriptures does not give it the stamp of divine approbation. Bad actions as well as good are left on record; and not only the bad conduct of wicked men, but the slips and falls of the most eminent saints. Even if we should be obliged to censure the device of Naomi as imprudent and unjustifiable, and as an unwarrantable exposure of the chastity of her daughter-in-law, it will reflect no discredit upon the Bible; it will only be another example of the imperfections of the saints. As has been intimated, however, we are incompetent judges of this transaction, unless we had a more complete knowledge of the customs of the ancient Israelites, relative to such matters.

It was customary at the end of harvest, to celebrate a feast, at which the master associated in a free and friendly manner with his labourers, and ate and drank with them in a cheerful manner.

Something of this kind seems to have been done by Boaz, at the threshing-floor where his servants were winnowing barley. Naomi directed Ruth to wash, anoint, and dress herself, and to go to this place; and told her precisely how she was to act. That “when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, and he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn, that she should go and lay herself down at his feet, and uncover his feet.” The young woman trusted implicitly to the prudence and integrity of her mother-in-law, and acted precisely as she was directed. And doubtless Naomi proceeded upon the full persuasion that Boaz, being a good and honourable man, and a near relative, would not take advantage of the helpless young stranger, who was about to cast herself upon his generosity. Circumstances which would be a powerful temptation to one whose virtue is weak, may be perfectly safe to another who lives habitually in the fear of God.

Boaz knew not that a woman lay at his feet, until about midnight, he observed her, and was afraid; and he said, “Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid, spread, therefore, thy skirt over thy handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.” These words, which had been put into her mouth, imported a claim to be taken as his wife, according to the law of the Lord. This claim, it appears, widows were allowed by custom to make. Indeed it was no more than asserting their right; just as a wife would claim her own husband, to whom she had been legally joined in marriage. But if there was any thing indecorous in making this request, there was certainly no iniquity in it; and whatever of imprudence or forwardness any may judge to have been in this conduct, it must not be charged upon the modest Ruth, who in the whole business followed implicitly the directions of her mother-in-law, who had been her only instructor, in all that related to the law of the Lord. But, that the request of Ruth was not considered unbecoming or improper, appears from the answer of Boaz, who seems to have been highly gratified with the opportunity of declaring his mind to his fair kinswoman. “And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter; for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich.” He considered it a strong evidence of her virtue and kindness to the family of her deceased husband, that she who was not bound by the judicial law of the Israelites, but might have sought a husband among young men of other families, should be disposed to yield a cheerful obedience to the laws of her adopted country, and should be disposed to claim him as her husband’s substitute and successor, who was considerably advanced in years. This appears to be his meaning when he speaks of her not following young men, whether rich or poor. This honourable man now promised to comply with the request of Ruth, as far as it was legally in his power. He said, “My daughter, fear not, I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now, it is true, I am thy near kinsman; howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman’s part; but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth.”

It gives us a favourable opinion of the inhabitants of Beth-lehem at this time, that they were capable of appreciating, as they did, the character of Ruth, in the humble vale of poverty in which she walked; and that their chief citizen was a man of so much integrity and honour: that, although living in the possession of wealth and reputation, he was disposed to perform a sacred duty towards a poor relative, if it should not be performed by another, to whom it first appertained.

When Ruth returned to Naomi, bearing a valuable present of six measures of barley from Boaz, and related to her all that had passed between them, her mother-in-law said, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall, for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." This sagacious and pious mother in Israel saw the leadings of Providence in this whole affair, and she perceived that it would not be long ere the will of Heaven in regard to her daughter-in-law would be satisfactorily developed.

As Naomi correctly judged, Boaz suffered no time to elapse, before he brought this matter, in which he was deeply interested, to a decision. He took the first opportunity of addressing himself to the kinsman referred to above. And that every thing might be transacted in the presence of a competent number of witnesses of suitable weight of character, "he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here, and they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me that I may know, for there is none to redeem it besides thee, and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it." At that time it was a custom in Israel to confirm bargains of this kind by the ceremony of plucking off the shoe and giving it to his neighbour, and this was considered a testimony of the validity of the contract. "Therefore, the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee; so he drew off his shoe." And Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people, ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem. And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

Although Naomi returned home in abject poverty, she still had a title to her husband's land; and it appears from the language of Boaz to his kinsman, that the widow had a right to sell her right. The law requiring a brother, or the nearest male kinsman, to marry the widow of a brother deceased, was intended to preserve the inheritance in the family, and to prevent the extinction of families. The first-fruits of such marriages were legally reckoned to the deceased, and inherited as if they had been his real posterity. When the widow of a deceased Israelite was, at the time of his death, past the age of child-bearing, the law would not apply; and this was doubtless the fact in regard to Naomi; but this did not affect the rights of her son's widows. As these sons had as good a title to their part of the landed inheritance as their father, their widows would have a claim. The nearest kinsman seems at first to have supposed that the inheritance of his deceased relatives would become his, by paying Naomi a reasonable sum for her right; but when he found that there was in the family a young widow whom he must marry, in order to comply with the law, he relinquished

his right to Boaz. The reason which he assigned for declining to redeem the inheritance was, lest he should by this means mar his own. The meaning may be, that to redeem the inheritance of these three persons would require such a sum as would render it necessary for him to alienate a part of his own inheritance. The Jewish commentators, however, are of opinion, that this kinsman had a wife and children already, and did not wish to increase his expenses by enlarging his family, lest by this means he should waste or mar his inheritance.

“So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.” “And the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi, and they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

SECTION XXXVI

birth of samuel

In the town of Ramathaim-Zophim, was a man whose name was Elkanah, an Ephrathite. This man had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah; the latter of whom bare children, the former, none.

Elkanah was a devout man, and “went up yearly to Shiloh to worship, and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts.” This probably should be interpreted as not meaning that he went up merely once in the year, but that he was regular in his attendance at each of the annual feasts, according to the prescription of the law. At this time Eli was the high-priest, a man advanced in age, who had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who officiated at the tabernacle as priests of the Lord. At the solemn feasts which were celebrated at Shiloh, Elkanah dealt out liberal portions to his wife Peninnah and all her children, but to Hannah, who was his chiefly beloved wife, he gave a worthy portion. But as Hannah, though the favourite of her husband, bare no children, her rival took occasion to provoke and fret her; and this she did, not once or twice merely, but continually, especially when the family went up to Shiloh to the annual feasts. On this account Hannah was sore vexed, and wept, and refused to eat. “Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?” But, Hannah, although she arose up, after the feast was over, still continued to indulge her grief; and in the bitterness of her soul she prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. “And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall come no razor upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.” No good man was ever more misled by appearances than Eli, in the present instance. He imputed to intoxication, what was the effect of a spirit deeply troubled, and earnestly

wrestling with God in prayer. But although good men are liable to fall into mistakes of this kind, they are ever ready to renounce their errors, when the truth is clearly made known. Therefore, upon finding that Hannah was a very different kind of person from what he had taken her for, he changed his tone towards her instantly, and addressed her in the most affectionate manner, and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight." From this time Hannah recovered her wonted cheerfulness, and her countenance was no more sad. Believing prayer has a wonderful effect to dispel sorrow, and diffuse cheerfulness through the soul. Let all who are in bitterness of spirit, and suffer under a load of grief, seek relief at a throne of grace. Let them cast their burdens on the Lord and he will sustain them, and will turn their darkness into light, and cause them to exchange their griefs and complaints for joy and rejoicing.

The family of Elkanah having completed their service at the tabernacle in Shiloh, prepared to return home; but before they set out on their journey, as became a pious household, they engaged in a solemn act of worship to Jehovah, at the place where he had recorded his name, and where he had his residence between the cherubim: and they returned to Ramah, where he dwelt.

In due season Hannah received the answer to her earnest prayer, and enjoyed the happiness of embracing a son, whom she called Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the Lord." When Elkanah went up to Shiloh with all his house, Hannah did not at this time accompany him; "for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah, her husband, said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good. Tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word; so the woman abode and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young; and they slew a bullock and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore, also, I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there."

SECTION XXXVII

hannah's divine song

As Hannah manifested the ardour of her piety by the fervency of her prayer, so she was prompt and cordial in her thanksgiving to God for his mercy, when her petition was granted. The pious and elevated song which, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she was enabled to sing on this occasion, is left on record for the edification of the church through all succeeding ages:

"My heart rejoiceth in the Lord.

My horn is exalted in the Lord.

My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies,

Because I rejoice in thy salvation.

There is none holy as the Lord.

For there is none besides thee;
Neither is there any rock like our God.
Talk no more so exceeding proudly,
Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth,
For the Lord is a God of knowledge,
And by him are actions weighed.
The bows of the mighty men are broken;
And they that stumble are girt with strength.
They that were full have hired out themselves for bread;
And they that were hungry ceased:
So that the barren hath borne seven,
And she that hath many children is waxed feeble.
The Lord killeth and maketh alive:
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.
The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich:
He bringeth low and he lifteth up:
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
And lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill,
To set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
And he hath set the world upon them.
He will keep the feet of his saints,
And the wicked shall be silent in darkness;
For by strength shall no man prevail.
The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them.
The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth,
And he shall give strength unto his King,
And exalt the horn of his anointed."

SECTION XXXVIII

samuel is left at shiloh—eli's sons—god's message to eli, by a nameless prophet

Elkanah and his family having accomplished the object of their visit to Shiloh, returned again to Ramah, but the child Samuel was left at the tabernacle by his mother, according to the vow which she had vowed unto the Lord, that he should be lent unto the Lord as long as he lived. Samuel, therefore, ministered unto the Lord, before Eli the priest; and although he was not of the sacerdotal race, and could not officiate in any service which belonged peculiarly to the priests, yet, as a consecrated Nazarite, he might have the privilege of remaining near the tabernacle, and of performing such services as were not appropriated to the family of Levi.

“The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.” They were both rapacious and licentious; and instead of setting an example of piety before the people who frequented the tabernacle at Shiloh, they not only acted corruptly themselves, but caused the people to offend against the Lord. “Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.” Eli, though himself a pious man, had not acted with fidelity towards his sons, but had connived at their irregular proceedings, which neglect was very offensive in the eyes of the Lord.

“But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord.” And this prayer of the high-priest was abundantly fulfilled; for Hannah became the mother of three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel remained at Shiloh, and grew in stature, and conducted himself so wisely and piously, that he greatly pleased the Lord; so that he began early to reveal himself unto him. The sons of Eli, instead of reforming their vicious lives, increased in their wickedness; and their father did indeed speak to them when he heard of their repeated and enormous acts of wickedness, and said, “Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people; nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If a man sin against another, the judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?” This reproof was entirely too mild, and seems to have been given at too late a period, for it is assigned as a reason why it took no effect, that the Lord had determined to slay them. These young men ought to have been removed entirely from the service of the altar and the tabernacle. There were men enough of the sacerdotal order to perform these sacred services: and Eli, as the high-priest, had the authority to commit to whom he would the several parts of divine worship which was daily celebrated at the tabernacle. At any rate, his rebukes should have been more seasonable, more frequent, and more severe, for conduct which was so enormously wicked; and it seems that the young men made no attempt to conceal their transgressions: their sin was so public that all the people were acquainted with it, and, as is commonly the fact, all others knew it sooner than their father; for his knowledge was derived from public report. A pious father cannot be held responsible for the bad conduct of his sons, if he has faithfully performed his duty towards them; but if he has been acquainted with their acts of iniquity, and yet has refrained from reproofing them; or if he has neglected to exercise wholesome discipline, and to remove them from those situations in which they have much power to do evil, he is guilty of a grievous sin, and one for

which God will punish him with chastisements which will cause his own heart to bleed, and the ears of every one that heareth of them to tingle. And perhaps, among good men, no sin is more common than undue lenity towards sons, who are living in open transgression of the commandments of God. If they suffer the evil to run on for a long time, and should at last undertake to administer reproofs, they may come too late, and, as in the case of Eli, may produce no salutary effect. Such parents, however, commonly receive, in the providence of God, and from his word and Spirit, frequent admonitions of their duty. During the whole period of the theocracy, there were inspired men in Israel. It is probable that some of these received communications only at particular times, and were appointed to deliver special messages to individuals. In a number of cases, prophets are introduced as delivering communications from God, of whom we never hear any thing more, and whose names are not even given in the sacred record. We have an example of this sort in the history of Eli. "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation: and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore, the Lord God of Israel saith, I said, indeed, that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thy heart: and all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in one day they shall die, both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart, and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine Anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass that every one that is left in thy house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

This solemn message from an anonymous prophet claims the attention of all parents, and especially of the ministers of the Lord. There is awful severity in the judgments denounced on the house of Eli, which were executed literally, as the sequel of the sacred history clearly demonstrates. The case of Eli's iniquity is pointed out distinctly by this unknown man of God. It was, that he honoured his sons more than he honoured God. Let all parents beware of the sin of preferring the indulgence and gratification of their children to the honour and glory of God. Let them remember that the temptations to this sin are exceedingly strong, on account of the strength of parental affection; and it is an insidious evil, because it does not consist in any positive act, but in the mere neglect of our duty: and it is often connected with a kind and amiable disposition, which feels an insuperable reluctance to inflict pain on the persons beloved. But it is a fair trial of the state of the heart. It serves to show whether we love God or our children with supreme affection.

SECTION XXXIX

jehovah speaks to the child samuel, and reveals his purpose in regard to eli's family—eli's humble submission

About this time the instances of divine communications had become rare; "and there was no open vision." Some time had elapsed since the anonymous prophet had been sent with God's awful message to Eli; and yet no reformation had taken place in his sons; and it does not appear that he had become more faithful and decisive in the treatment of his sons, and probably the deep impression which the prophet's words must have made upon his mind, was nearly obliterated, when it pleased God to send him another message by his young servant Samuel, who ministered unto the Lord before him. "And it came to pass, at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again; and he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord; neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. And the Lord came and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel: then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin I will also make an end, for I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. And, therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord; and Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son, and he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me, of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." As the Lord is very merciful and repenteth him of the evil which he has intended and threatened, it cannot be doubted, that if Eli, upon the first divine warning, had immediately set himself to reform his house and to restrain his sons, or to put them out of the way of doing so much evil, the dreadful judgments denounced against his family would have been averted; for in such threatenings there is commonly an implied condition, that if the parties concerned repent and turn unto God with all their heart, their iniquities shall be forgiven. But when men persevere in transgression, there is a certain point beyond which mercy will not pursue them; when the Lord utterly refuses to hear any intercessions or accept any sacrifices or offerings in behalf of the guilty transgressor. There is a day of grace; and there is a time when, in just judgment, the things which make for peace are hidden from the eyes of men. Eli and his sons might have escaped from these heavy judgments, if they had repented when the man of God was sent with the solemn admonition, which we have recorded above; but now, the day of grace was past. Now the purpose of God is irrevocably fixed, that his house shall not be purged, and that the

threatened punishment shall fall upon him. The submission of Eli to the divine will in this matter is truly remarkable. He was conscious of his own ill-desert, and was convinced that he justly deserved to suffer all that had been threatened. He said not a word, therefore, in extenuation of his sin; nor did he complain of the severity of the divine wrath; nor ask that the awful curse should be averted or mitigated. He bows in submission to the divine will, and meekly says, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." He knew that the Judge of all the earth would do right; and as he had revealed that his sin should not escape punishment, he sees nothing left for him but humble submission. There is a remarkable parallelism between the conduct of Eli and that of Aaron. Indeed, the resemblance between these two saints is very striking, and also between the calamities which befel them. Both were high-priests—both had irreligious sons, who, while they ministered at the altar, by their transgressions provoked Jehovah to cut them off; and it is probable that, in either case, the oldest of these young men, if he had lived, would have been advanced to the office of high-priest. When Nadab and Abihu were struck dead, "Aaron held his peace;" and Eli spoke, but only said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

From the time that the Lord made himself known unto Samuel, when a child, He continued more and more to make communications unto him, until it was well understood from Dan even to Beer-sheba, "that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the Word of the Lord." And the word of Samuel was regarded by all Israel as a revelation from God; and he was respected and venerated as a prophet of the Lord.

SECTION XL

the israelites defeated by the philistines—the two sons of eli slain, and the ark taken—the intelligence overcomes eli, who falls back and breaks his neck—the wife of phinehas also expires

In this period a war occurred between the Israelites and their inveterate foes, the Philistines. The Israelites encamped in a place which afterwards received the name of Ebenezer, on account of a circumstance which shall hereafter be mentioned. The Philistines pitched not far off, in a place called Aphek. The contending armies soon joined battle, and Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. "When the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." This was a very unlawful enterprise. The ark, when deposited in the tabernacle, was not to be removed, but by divine direction; and on this occasion, no prophet was consulted, and no inquiry was made of the Lord by Urim and Thumunim, or by any other means; but a hasty resolution was formed in the camp, under the consternation produced by their recent defeat. Besides, it was a weak and superstitious opinion that the mere presence of the ark could save them from their enemies. If God was not on their side, in vain did they trust to the ark, which was, indeed, a symbol of the divine presence, but possessed no power whatever independent of God. Eli, to whom the care of the ark belonged, ought firmly and strenuously to have resisted this desecration of the ark of the covenant: but it was the weakness of this good man not to be able to oppose the will of others, even when it was evil. And his two wicked sons, who seem to have had the charge of the tabernacle and its sacred

furniture, would be disposed to comply with the wishes of the people and the elders. Accordingly, they sent to Shiloh and brought from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims. Hophni and Phinehas accompanied the impious and mad expedition. "And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp, and they said, Wo unto us, for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Wo unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men, and fight." Battle was now joined, and again Israel was smitten, and the people fled to their tents, and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. The sad tidings of this disastrous defeat was brought to Shiloh by a man of Benjamin, who came the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. Eli, who was in great anxiety, had taken his seat by the wayside, watching; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God." As soon as the tidings were heard, there arose a general cry of distress among the people, which, when Eli heard, he said, "What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim that he could not see." And when he was informed that this man had come immediately from the camp, he said, "What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there has been also a great slaughter among the people: and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from the seat backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man and heavy; and he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings, that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not, for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband." And in her last moments she repeated what may be considered a sad prediction, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."

SECTION XLI

the ark carried to ashdod and placed by dagon—this idol falls on the floor, and is mutilated—the philistines, afflicted with disease and mice, send back the ark

The Philistines having got possession of the ark of God, brought it to Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. Next morning a remarkable thing was discovered by the inhabitants of Ashdod. "Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come in to Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day."

However the lords of the Philistines might have triumphed, in consequence of the capture of the ark of the Lord, yet it now became an embarrassing question how they should dispose of it; for the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, causing them to be afflicted with a painful and troublesome disease; so that they said, "The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our God. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither. And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction." "Therefore they sent the ark of God of Ekron." But the Ekronites, as soon as it arrived, cried out, saying, "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city: the hand of God was very heavy there." And the men who did not die were afflicted with a very disagreeable disease; so that the cry of the city went up heaven. The time of the continuance of the ark in the land of the Philistines was seven months.

In their perplexity, they "called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass-offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What shall be the trespass-offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch-kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: and take the ark of the Lord and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us."

This advice of the priests and diviners was strictly followed; so they "took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: and they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord. And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put

them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.” And the great stone, on which the ark was set down, was called Abel; which stone was for a long time afterwards a noted object in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.

It is a remarkable fact, that all the heathen who inhabited these regions seem to have been well acquainted with the history of the redemption of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. The wonders then wrought had been widely reported, and had left a deep impression on the minds of the nations.

The judgments inflicted on the Philistines in consequence of the capture of the ark, seem to have been of three distinct kinds. First, upon their gods, as in the case of Dagon, who was horribly mutilated by the introduction of the ark of the Lord. This idol is said to have partaken of the form of a man and of a fish. The upper part was the head, body, and arms of a man, proceeding from the mouth of a monstrous fish, which was the inferior portion of the god.

The second judgment was a troublesome and shameful disease, on all classes of men, and by which multitudes were carried off.

The third was an army of mice, who devoured the fruits of the field. Such judgments have been experienced by other nations.

In the advice of the priests and diviners, with much that is superstitious and childish, we find some salutary counsel. They seem to have known that the God of Israel was the true God, and should be honoured; but they were for dividing this honour with their own deities. This is the grand error of Pagans, that they admit into their creed a multitude of gods. They have no objection to increasing the number of their deities, provided the new ones are not intolerant to the old. But the God of Israel is a jealous God, and will not share his glory with dumb idols.

But the men of Beth-shemesh, though they appertained to Israel, acted more irreverently towards the ark of the Lord than did the Philistines; for we do not read that the latter attempted to gratify their curiosity by raising the mystic lid which covered this sacred chest, but these men of Israel had the impious audacity to look into the ark of the Lord; and a large number of them were smitten of the Lord. There is probably some error here in the Hebrew copy, through the mistake of early transcribers. The number slain, as here recorded, is fifty thousand and three-score and ten men; which seems to be too many for a single city, on the very borders of the country. In other copies, instead of fifty, we have five thousand, which is a much more probable number. But as we know not the population of this city, the name of which signifies the house of the sun, we cannot determine that the number in the Hebrew text may not be correct. If there were some hundreds of thousands of inhabitants in the town, as many as fifty thousand may have been smitten on account of their irreverent curiosity.

“And the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and

brought it to the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.”

SECTION XLII

Samuel judges Israel—appoints a day of public prayer at Mizpeh—defeats the Philistines at Ebenezer

Samuel's reputation as a prophet being fully established through all Israel, he took upon himself to judge Israel. But suspecting that many of them were addicted to the worship of the gods of the heathen round about them, he addressed an exhortation to all Israel, saying, “If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroath, and served the Lord only.” This was a glorious reformation which now took place in Israel, by which idolatry was banished from the land; the people all bent to engage in the worship of Jehovah. The preaching of Samuel, so far as we are informed, was the only means employed in accomplishing this reformation.

Samuel finding that the people were now in a favourable state, wished to confirm their good impressions, and therefore appointed a general meeting of all the tribes at Mizpeh, that he might engage in solemn prayer in their behalf. “And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.” From the time that the ark of the Lord was removed from Shiloh, that place, after having been the residence of Him who dwelt between the cherubim, for several hundred years, appears to have been utterly abandoned; and we hear no more of it except when its utter desolation is incidentally mentioned. And as it was expedient to have some central place for the meeting of the tribes, Samuel seems to have selected Mizpeh for this purpose.

When the Philistines heard of this general assembly of the children of Israel at Mizpeh, they seem to have taken it for granted that the meeting had for its object a consultation respecting war, they, therefore, went up against Israel. “And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.” They remembered their recent defeat, and the disastrous circumstances which accompanied it; but they did not now impiously bring the ark into the camp, or trust to this external symbol, as they had before done. But being convened for solemn prayer and fasting, and having Samuel, a man mighty in prayer, in the midst of them, they besought him to intercede for them. “Cease not,” said they, “to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of

the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.” It may be remarked here, that when Israel sought the help of Jehovah, and put their trust in him, they were uniformly successful, whether their foes were many or few; but, on the other hand, when they trusted in an arm of flesh, or in their own devices, they were defeated by their enemies.

The influence of Samuel on this whole nation was great and salutary. Seldom has any individual been able to govern a populous nation so effectually, or to bring a whole people so unanimously to the worship of the true God. But this was accomplished entirely by moral means. Samuel had no other authority over the children of Israel than that which arose from their persuasion that he was a prophet, and that his counsels and exhortation were dictated by the Spirit of God. His example also corresponded with his professions and office; and the power which he had with God by prayer, was signally manifested on the occasion just mentioned, when he had scarcely done speaking, before the Lord thundered against the Philistines and put them to flight.

It may seem to be a departure from the law of Moses, that Samuel, who was not of the Aaronic family, should himself offer sacrifices to God, and that this should be done, as it frequently was, by him, in other places than where the altar of God was stationed. The only satisfactory explanation of this is, that prophets, acting under the immediate inspiration of God, had the privilege of sacrificing independently of the priesthood, and wherever they happened to be; just as men inspired to preach, need not, as others, apply to men for ordination. So Paul received his commission as an apostle, from the hands of no men, but was sent by a commission immediately from God. Just so, Samuel, acting under the influence of a plenary inspiration, had a right to do in God's worship whatever he was directed by the Holy Ghost to do; and also to perform ceremonies which others not inspired have no right to imitate. Thus we find this holy man not only offering a sucking lamb for a burnt-offering, but also pouring out water before the Lord. And in the sequel of the history we find him offering sacrifice at Ramah, when Saul was anointed, and at Beth-lehem when David was anointed.

Samuel continued all his life to judge Israel, and that he might perform his duty more effectually, he annually took a circuit, in which he had several important stations, where he met with the people. The principal of these were Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh; but his place of residence, when not on his circuit, was Ramah, where he had a house, and where also he exercised his office of judge of Israel; and here, we are informed, “he built an altar to the Lord.” His conduct on this subject has already been explained, and it is unnecessary to repeat what was before said.

SECTION XLIII

Samuel in his old age associates his sons as judges with himself—their bad character—the people demand a king—Samuel is displeased—but God directs him to comply, but to explain the nature of kingly government—by insisting on a king they rejected not Samuel but God—the tendency of power to abuse

But when Samuel became old, not being able, as in the days of his vigour, to transact all the judicial business which called for his attention, he associated his sons with him in this important

trust. The names of his two sons were Joel and Abiah; and as he could not conveniently visit, in his judicial circuit, the southern part of Judea, he stationed them at Beer-sheba. But excellent as the example of Samuel was, both privately and officially, his sons did not follow it. Whether he, like Eli, was too indulgent to his children, and connived at their faults, we are not informed, and we cannot infer his negligence, from the fact that they turned out badly; for often the best education and the most faithful warnings are lost on the children of the pious. It is very natural, however, for parents to be blind to the failings of their children; and at least, it may be presumed, that Samuel was mistaken in thinking that these young men were qualified to be judges in Israel. But whether he could have known their character or not, the event proved, that in that very point in which judges should be strong in virtue, they were weak, for "they walked not in the ways of their father, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. This bad conduct was so notorious, "that all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Here was indeed a most important proposal growing out of the mal-administration of these young men. The people had been well satisfied with the administration of Samuel himself, as is implied in the complaint brought against his sons. They did not hurt the old prophet's feelings by exaggerating the misconduct of his sons, but merely said, "thy sons walk not in thy ways." But why should they have desired a king? Undoubtedly, the thing was ill-advised, as appears by the judgment, not only of Samuel, but of God himself; but they were influenced by human policy: they saw no prospect of a righteous administration after the decease of Samuel; and they dreaded, it is probable, that miserable anarchy, by which their nation had so often been afflicted, since their settlement in Canaan; and they wished, therefore, to have a king, invested with absolute authority to keep the multitude in order. But besides these considerations, they were influenced by another motive, not so honourable to them, as the servants of Jehovah; they felt ashamed of the remarkable dissimilarity of their government to those of the surrounding nations. All these, however small, were governed by kings, who assumed great state, and went out with the people to war: but they appeared as a nation without a head, and doubtless this was a matter of reproach to them among the heathen, therefore they said, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

This request seems to have come unexpectedly to Samuel, and he was far from being pleased with it. But he was a man who would judge nothing, and do nothing, without consulting the Lord. Therefore, before he gave any answer, he carried the important subject to a throne of grace by prayer. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now, therefore, hearken to their voice; howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." "And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen: and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and set them to ear his ground, and reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields

and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king, which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city."

Israel, the most highly favoured nation upon earth, was yet the most ungrateful and rebellious towards their God and King. Although they had for centuries been protected and delivered, by a succession of stupendous miracles, yet they distrusted the power and providence of God, and asked for a king, that they might be like the other nations.

We learn from this portion of sacred history, that God often grants those requests which are not pleasing in his sight: in just judgment, he permits people when they are bent on a particular course to pursue it. According to that of the Psalmist, when speaking of this very subject, "And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul."

From God's description of a king, we learn that the tendency of power is to abuse. The principle of selfishness and pride is so strong in human nature, that it is to be expected, that he who is invested with absolute power over others, will exercise it for his own interest and gratification. Kings are commonly among the most corrupt of the human race; not because they are naturally worse than others, but because they are under fewer restraints, and are exposed to stronger temptations. This description of kingly power and injustice is in perfect accordance with the fact as it commonly exists. There may be a state of anarchy so miserable that even a king might be a blessing; or rather, the least of two evils; but any people capable of self-government are mad when they desire a king. The expenses of civil government had been scarcely felt before by the Israelites, but by the erection of a monarchy, they subjected themselves to a heavy burden of taxation.

PART IV("tw://[self]?tid=12&popup=0" \l "History_CONTENTS-")

FROM THE INSTITUTION OF THE REGAL GOVERNMENT TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY

SECTION I

saul's election as king—his victory over nahash and the renewed confirmation of his kingdom—samuel's charge—saul's first offence—jonathan's exploit and defeat of the philistines—saul sent to destroy the amalekites—his second offence, and rejection from the kingdom

We come now to a crisis in the history of the Jewish people. Previous to this time they had existed as separate families, rather than as one nation. Their unity, so far as they were one, arose from a common relation to Jehovah as their king, and not from any allegiance to one earthly king. They

were a religious, rather than a political people. But now they had wickedly rejected God, “who had saved them out of all their adversities and tribulations,” and had made themselves a king, or rather demanded one at the hands of Samuel. In their pride and unbelief they would not have God to reign over them. Henceforth, therefore, we shall find them like the other nations of the earth, united under one earthly prince, and not so immediately under the care and government of God. They are no longer one, simply as the worshippers of Jehovah, but also as the subjects of a king.

The person whom God had chosen, and directed Samuel to invest with the kingly office, was “Saul the son of Kish,” “a Benjamite, and a mighty man of power.” It appears, in the course of the narrative, that this same person was afterwards freely chosen by the people. The appearance of Saul was striking, and likely to find favour with the mass of the people. “He was a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he, from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.” The earlier years of Saul’s life were spent in the management of his father’s estate. At the time of his introduction to the prophet, he was in the discharge of this duty, searching after the lost property of his father. The search was fruitless, and, as a last resort, Saul determined, at the suggestion of his servant, to enter the city and consult the seer or prophet. “So they went unto the city where the man of God was; and when they were come to the city, behold, Samuel came out against them for to go up to the high place.” It was a feast-day, and the people were waiting until the prophet should come and bless the sacrifice before they should eat. “And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of; this same shall reign over my people.” Before any inquiry, Samuel informs Saul that the stray asses which he sought were found, and then announces to him in these words his selection to the kingly office: “And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house?” On the morrow, as he was about to depart, and they were come without the city, “Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?” This was the outward calling of Saul. But as God, when he calls any one to a particular duty, does so ordinarily both by an inward and outward calling, so it was with this lately anointed king. As he turned away from Samuel “God gave him another heart:” and when he met the company of the prophets, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and Saul also prophesied among them.” This was the inward authentication of the outward call: for the prophet assures him that when these things should come unto him, “then he might know that God was with him.”

Although Saul had thus been anointed king, there was another step necessary, before he could enter fully upon the duties of that office. It was necessary that this divine calling should in some way be manifested to the people. Accordingly Samuel calls another assembly of the people at Mizpeh. He tells them of God’s former care over them, and of their sinful rejection of him, and then proceeds in the use of the lot to point out the tribe, family, and person, whom the Lord had chosen. Saul was thus publicly taken; and when brought among the people, “they gave a shout, and said, God save the king.” Samuel, however, was careful to correct any misapprehensions as to the power of the newly made monarch. He expounded to them the royal rights and prerogatives: “Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.” Thus the first Hebrew monarch began his reign as a constitutional king, chosen by God, anointed by the prophet, and accepted freely by the people.

There was soon an occasion for Saul's services. The very danger which had led to the election of a king was now at hand. "Nahash the king of the Ammonites came up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead," a town lying east of Jordan, and not far from the Sea of Galilee. The only condition on which he would spare them at all, was that he might "thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel." Such a demand was unendurable, and as all Israel would share in the reproach, "they sent throughout all their coasts for help." When these messengers came to Gibeah, Saul was at his ordinary labour in the field. But when he heard the "tidings of the men of Jabesh, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent." Saul numbered his forces, and sent his promise to the people of Jabesh-gilead that "To-morrow, by the time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." And on the morrow "Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning-watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day, and scattered them so that two of them were not left together." This sudden and decisive victory, by the courage and energy of Saul, left no doubt in the minds of any as to his fitness for the kingly office. A demand arose for the punishment of those who had opposed his election; but Saul at once repressed it, and said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." Then all the people, with the sanction of Samuel, "went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." We may view this transaction as the solemn public renewal, and final establishment, of the kingdom of Saul.

While the people were thus together, Samuel warns them, and their chosen king, against tyranny and impiety. He appeals to them as to his own example while judge. "Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." He reminds them of the faithfulness of God in raising up for them judges and deliverers in every emergency. He then charges them as to their future conduct: "If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord; then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God. But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers." To impress upon them this charge, and awaken in them a sense of their sin, in rejecting God and choosing a king, Samuel, by a miracle, calls down thunder and rain.* Startled by this sign of the divine displeasure, the people confess their sin, and cry for mercy; and then he proceeds to comfort them with the assurance of God's mercy. "Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn ye not aside: for then should you go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he has done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

"Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah." This marks the beginning of a royal standing army. A step toward that result which they desired, that they might be like all the nations. Saul had now fully taken the reins of government. Samuel appears in the rest of his history, mainly as a prophet. He exercises no longer the functions of a judge.

Those hereditary enemies of Israel, perhaps aware of the change in the Hebrew state, and having lost the remembrance of their overthrow at Mizpeh, began to make new encroachments. Their garrisons already held some of the heights of Israel. And Jonathan, a bold, good man, "smote the Philistines that were in Geba." This was the signal for a general war. Preparations were made on both sides. "Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear, and called the people together to Gilgal." "And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand," or more probably three thousand "chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude: and they came up and pitched in Michmash." So large an army terrified the Hebrews, and some concealed themselves, some went over to the east of Jordan, but the larger part remained trembling with their king. While in this position, awaiting the coming of Samuel, his army gradually diminishing, Saul committed that sacrilege for which he lost the kingdom. "And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt-offering to me, and the peace-offering. And he offered the burnt-offering." At the end of his offering, Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him. "And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, therefore said I, the Philistines will come down upon me, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord, I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering. And Samuel said, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue." "And Samuel arose and went unto Gibeah of Benjamin." Deserted by the prophet, Saul was now abandoned by the people: only six hundred men followed him in his distress. The power of the Philistines was immense, and the Israelites were spoiled of their armour, so that on the day of battle, "there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people, but with Saul and Jonathan his son was there found."

A deep valley ran between Geba and Michmash, between the small band of Saul and the host of the Philistines. On its opposite sides there were two sharp rocks or hills, standing out from the walls of the valley, on which the following bold exploit took place. Now, while lying thus near to each other, "it came to pass that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for use: for there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few." The result will show that this faith was not in vain. The young man consents: "Behold I am with thee, according to thy heart." They both reveal themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and said, "Come up, and we will show you a thing," meaning that they would punish them for their temerity. But this was the very sign which Jonathan had fixed upon as favourable, and he said unto his armour-bearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel." This bold adventure was the beginning of a most astonishing victory. A mysterious influence seems to have deprived the garrison of all

power of resistance and of flight. "They fell before Jonathan to the number of twenty men," on the very ground on which they stood. A sudden terror falls upon the whole army. "And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison and the spoilers they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling. And Saul's watchmen looked, and beheld the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another." Seeing this strange spectacle, and finding Jonathan absent from his band, Saul wished to consult the high-priest, "for the ark of God (or the ephod, as some read) was at that time with the children of Israel." "While Saul talked unto the priest, the noise in the host of the Philistines increased" so rapidly that he could not delay. He stops the priest in the midst of his inquiries, "and all the people that were with him assembled themselves and came to the battle: and behold every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture." The Hebrews that had been with the Philistines in bondage, now turned to fight with their countrymen: and those who had hid themselves in the mount, when they heard that the Philistines fled, "even they also followed hard after them in the battle." "So the Lord saved Israel that day." Throughout their whole history we read of few deliverances more remarkable than this: in which the hand of God was more apparent. There was no restraint to the Lord on that day to save by few.

It was not all well, however, with Israel. Their very success led them into a snare and distress. Elated with his victory, and eager in the pursuit of his foes, Saul had foolishly adjured the people, saying, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people—though the honey dropped from the comb at their side—tasted any food, for they feared the oath." In the long pursuit, they became weary and faint: and Jonathan, who heard not the rash curse of his father, "dipped his rod into the honey and ate." The eagerness of Saul defeated itself. Jonathan alone, who had broken the oath, had strength to follow the enemy, and argues against the imprudence of his father. "If the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of the enemy, had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?" Nor was this the only bad result of the oath. When evening came, when the people might eat, "they flew upon the spoil, slew them upon the ground, and did eat them with the blood," directly contrary to the Mosaic law. And it was told Saul, "Behold the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood." "And he said, Roll a great stone unto me, and bring me hither every man his ox and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat, and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood. And Saul built an altar unto the Lord: the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord." It seems probable that the very stone upon which the beasts were slain, was made into an altar, and sacrifices offered before the people were allowed to go any further.

The impatient monarch now proposes an immediate pursuit of the Philistines, but the priest checks his zeal, and counsels him to inquire of God. "And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day." God was evidently displeased. Sin was lying somewhere. "And Saul said, Draw ye near hither all ye chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But none of the people were base enough to betray their deliverer. He then resorts to the lot. All Israel stood upon one side, Saul and Jonathan upon the other. And "Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to

Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so, and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines.” In the whole of this transaction Saul appears as vindictive, rash, and cruel. He looks upon the Philistines not as the enemies of the people of God, but as personal foes. In his eagerness to crush them he involves his own people in severe distress by a rash oath. And then, as if utterly unconscious where the real guilt lay, he purposes the death of his own son, who had ignorantly broken the oath. That God in his providence should single out Jonathan instead of Saul, does not imply that Jonathan was the guilty one; but simply designates him as the person who had incurred Saul’s foolish curse. The people judged rightly that the guilt was contracted by Saul, and therefore they rescued their deliverer from his hands.

Saul now pushes his wars and conquests on every side. Beyond Jordan, and south and east of the Dead Sea, he is victorious over Moab, Ammon, and Edom. Northward he carries his arms against the kings of Zobah. And whithersoever, in the words of the narrative, “he turned himself, he vexed his foes.”

In the full tide of his success, Saul receives a command from the Lord, through the prophet, to “go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman.” Nothing could justify such a war as this, but an express command from God. This Saul had. Some of the reasons for this command we know. This nation had attacked the Israelites in their coming out of Egypt; and for this, among other reasons, God had purposed their destruction. And he has a right to do what he will with his own; and though we now do not know why he should do as he does, yet this we do know, that the judge of all the earth doeth right. Saul proceeds, partially, to execute the command. He gathered the people together, and marched them to a city of Amalek. He then warned the Kenites—the family of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses—to depart from among the Amalekites, lest they should perish with them. “And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah, until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.” He spared the king, but destroyed the people. “But Saul and the people spared the best of the sheep, oxen, and of all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them.” He spared the king because of his rank, he himself being a king. He spared the spoil to increase his riches. In both he broke the divine command. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.” In the interview between the prophet and king, Saul appears to have no idea of his guilt. He salutes him with a “Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” And when Samuel asked “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears? he replied, The people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God.” Then Samuel uttered the severe rebuke, “Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said unto me this night. When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? and sent thee to utterly destroy the sinners of the Amalekites. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord.” Saul then claimed that he had obeyed,

and throws the blame of a partial disobedience upon the people. "But the people took of the spoil, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." And Samuel uttered that great truth, so often repeated in Scripture, but so seldom learned, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Saul, startled with this denunciation, confessed his sin, and besought Samuel to remain with him in his intended sacrifice. But Samuel said, "I will not return with thee," and as he turned to go away, Saul laid hold upon his mantle and rent it. And Samuel said, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee this day: and the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." Then he said, "I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before all Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God." So Samuel joined him in his sacrifice. The utmost extent of Saul's repentance, was the fear lest he should be publicly abandoned by the prophet, and then by the people. There was no genuine sorrow for his sin. But he did not feel himself yet so secure in the affections of his people that he could safely lose the influence of the aged prophet, much less openly array himself against it. Hence his assumed humility, and his earnest prayer that Samuel would at least publicly honour him. This sacrifice finished, the prophet sent for the Amalekite king and executed the command of God. As a judge he sentences the king to death; who suffers justly for his cruelties. After this second and flagrant offence, Saul was no longer countenanced by the venerable prophet. "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul; and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."

SECTION II

anointing of david—his introduction to saul—his battle with goliath, and victory over the philistines—the friendship of david and jonathan—david's escape from saul's anger, and his marriage—saul threatens his life—david's flight to samuel—his return to jonathan, and final parting

Saul having thus rejected God, having refused to administer the kingdom, under the divine command, and as a king only in a subordinate sense, was now rejected by God. The next step was the choice of his successor—the man who stands pre-eminent among all the Hebrew kings—who walked, as it is testified, "after God's own heart," who received and held the kingdom, as only the vicegerent of Jehovah. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." To guard himself from the anger and violence of Saul, who had become jealous and suspicious of the prophet, Samuel was directed to "go and sacrifice at Bethlehem," "to call Jesse to the sacrifice, and anoint whomsoever the Lord should name." "And Samuel came to Bethlehem, sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice." When they came, he looked upon the eldest, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." The other sons of Jesse passed before the prophet in succession: "but the Lord had not chosen these." And Samuel said unto Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" And he said, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep." And he said, "Send and fetch him;" and he sent and

brought him.” “Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.” It is doubtful whether David or his brethren at this time understood the meaning of this anointing. It was followed by no practical result: and he was devotedly loyal long after this to Saul. At all events he took no means to bring about the real result to which it pointed. Meantime, however, that Spirit which was given to him, was evidently fitting him for the high trust unto which he had been chosen.

The introduction of David to Saul was brought about by his skill as a minstrel. From his break with the prophet, a change had manifestly passed over the character of Saul. His pride and vain-glory had given place to despondency and gloom, and these had now settled down into the deepest melancholy; this melancholy assumed a fiendish cast, and would seem to have been, from its spasmodic and violent form, not merely the natural working of a disappointed spirit, but of a supernatural power, very much like the possessions in the times of our Lord. To relieve these fits, Saul’s servants proposed that he should “seek out a man who is a cunning player upon the harp; and it shall come to pass that when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt be well.” The person chosen was the son of Jesse, who is described again “as cunning in playing, a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.” “And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer. And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

David next comes before us as a champion of the Israelites against their inveterate foe. The armies of the Israelites and the Philistines were again encamped upon the opposite sides of a valley; and again God saves his people by few. “And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.” His armour corresponded with his size. “And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants of Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants, but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day.” At this proud challenge, Saul and all Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid. While the armies were in this position, David, who had returned from Saul to his father, comes again to his elder brethren in the camp. He came just as the host was going forth to the fight, “and shouted for the battle. For they had put the battle in array, army against army.” While David talked with his brethren, there came up the champion of Gath, and repeated his defiance; and David heard it. As usual, all Israel fled from before him. David, indignant at the reproach cast upon his people, inquires, “What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel, for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” And they answered, “The king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father’s house free in Israel.” These words of David were rehearsed before Saul, and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.” To make known the ground of his confidence, and to secure

the favour of Saul, David relates his adventure while tending his father's flocks. "There came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb of the flock, and I went out after him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that delivered me from their power, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul then arms David for the encounter; and he assayed to go, but afterwards turns back and lays aside his arms, "for he had not proved them." "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook or valley, and put them in a shepherd's bag, which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine." "When the Philistine saw his youthful and unarmed opponent, he disdained him, and said, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." Then said David, in the calm courage which faith in God ever gives, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and take thine head from thee: and will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with spear and sword; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." As they drew on near to each other, David took from his bag a stone and slang it, "and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth." But there was no sword in the hand of David. "Then he ran, and took the sword of the Philistine, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel shouted, and pursued after them unto Gath and Ekron, with a great slaughter." The victory was complete.

As David went forth against the Philistine, Saul inquires of Abner the captain of the host, "Whose son is this youth?" "And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is." And as David returned from the battle, Abner brought him before the monarch with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said, "Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite."* David, as we are told, brought the trophy of his victory to Jerusalem; and the sword he left with Ahimelech the priest, as a tribute of thankfulness to Jehovah for the victory.†

On his return, he was welcomed by Saul and received into the most intimate friendship by Jonathan. Saul henceforth wished him constantly in his presence. "And the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." This was the beginning of that well-known and unchanging friendship. A covenant was formed between them. And Jonathan, as the highest visible token of his love, stripped himself of the robe and armour that was upon him and gave them to David. From this time the history of Saul merges into that of David. "Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people." As he came back from his expeditions, or as he marched from city to city with the trophy of that first great victory, he was met and welcomed by the women; and as they played upon their instruments of music, they said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." "Saul was very wroth, and said, What can he have more but the kingdom?" From that day and forward, David was eyed by Saul only as an enemy. His jealousy took complete possession of him, and knew no bounds. In the moments of his phrenzy, and while David played as at other times, Saul threatens his life. "And Saul cast his

javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul." He did not, however, yet publicly break with him; he could not, probably, dispense with his service. He accordingly retains him still, though simply as one of his captains. David was still gaining by his wisdom and courage in the popular favour. Afraid to attack him openly, Saul basely plots his destruction. He promises his daughter in marriage to David, on the condition that he should be valiant for him; with a concealed hope and design that he should fall by the hands of his foes. When the time came to fulfil his promise, he gave his daughter to another. Learning, however, that his younger daughter was attached to David, he renews the promise; when David modestly states his life and lineage, and his unfitness for such a station as the king's son-in-law, Saul obviates all objection, by demanding, as the sole condition to marriage, that he should slay an hundred Philistines to avenge the king of his enemies. In thus appealing to David's known chivalric and patriotic feelings, Saul craftily and meanly sought his ruin. David accepted the condition. "He arose with his men, and went and slew two hundred Philistines," and brought the proofs of the deed and laid them before the king. "And Saul gave him Michal, his daughter, to wife." With his wife, David won Saul's continual enmity. "Then the Philistines came forth again." In the progress of the war David "behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul: so that his name was much set by."

Frustrated in all his previous attempts, the king now changes his policy, and gave positive orders to his son and his servants that David should be slain. But Jonathan told David, saying, "Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee, now therefore take heed to thyself until the morning. And I will go out and stand beside my father, and commune with him of thee, and what I see I will tell thee." Jonathan pleads with his father for David, he recounts his great services, his self-denials, and his blameless life; and remonstrates against the sin of thus shedding innocent blood. "And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan; and Saul sware, as the Lord liveth he shall not be slain." And Jonathan brought David again into the presence of the king. In the war with the Philistines David was again victorious; but with every victory, Saul's anger increased. He attempts a third time to slay David with his own hand. There was no longer any safety for David at court, and he escaped by night to his own home. Saul's messengers were in rapid pursuit, and waited only for the morning to slay him. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain. So David fled and escaped,* and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt at Naioth." When Saul heard it, he sent messengers to take David. No sanctuary, however sacred, could now restrain the vindictive king. When the messengers saw the company of the prophets, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, "the Spirit of God came upon them, and they also prophesied." It happened the same with the second and third band. At last Saul also went to Ramah, and asked for Samuel and David. "And one said, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither, and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth. A whole night and day he lay naked and prostrate before the prophet." His fierce wrath yielded for a time to the stronger influence and restraint of the Spirit of God.

David in the meantime escaped from Ramah and came to Jonathan, who was yet ignorant of Saul's purpose, and said to him, "What have I done? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" Jonathan could not be persuaded that his fears were well grounded, and said,

“God forbid! thou shalt not die; behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.” David then solemnly calls God to witness, and said, “Thy father knoweth that I have found grace in thy eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.” The feast of the new-moon was now at hand, when it was customary for David, as a member of the royal family, to sit with the king at meat. David excuses himself to Jonathan, both from fear of Saul’s anger, and that he might go to Bethlehem, and join his own family in their yearly sacrifice. It was agreed upon between these devoted friends, that if David’s absence were noticed, Jonathan should make his excuse to the king. The answer of the king was to test his disposition towards his son-in-law. If he say thus, “It is well, thy servant shall have peace; but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.” Jonathan then covenants, in the most tender and solemn manner, to show David the purposes of his father, whether good or evil; and David, on his part, enters into an equally solemn covenant, “to show kindness to the house of Jonathan for ever, even when the Lord should have cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.”

When the feast-day came, David’s seat was empty, and although Saul perceived it, he made no inquiries, for he thought some ceremonial uncleanness had kept him from being present. On the second day, the same vacant seat was noticed, and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, “Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day? Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, to sacrifice there with his family and brethren, therefore he cometh not unto the king’s table. Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse, to thine own confusion and the confusion of thy mother’s nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom: wherefore, now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?” But Saul was now beyond argument. The only reply was to cast a javelin at the empty seat of David. “So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.”

In the morning of the third day, Jonathan went out to the field, to the place agreed upon, where David had concealed himself, after his return from Bethlehem, and in the appointed way told David of the evil designs of his father. And there, alone, was that most touching meeting and parting of these faithful friends. “And David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.”

SECTION III

david’s flight and first sojourn with the philistines—he comes to the cave adullam—saul kills the priests—david delivers keilah and is hunted by saul—he spares saul’s life—death of samuel—david’s adventure with nabal—he spares saul’s life a second time—his second flight to the philistines

There was no longer any safety for David, while within the reach of Saul's power. With a few young men he flees hastily to Ahimelech the priest, at Nob, which lay most probably in his course toward the hill country of Judah. The appearance of David, and the small number of his followers, excited the fear of the priest, and he asks the reason of his coming. David feigns that he was sent in haste upon a secret mission by the king. This is the first stain we find upon David's character. In the severity of his trials, his trust in God and the justice of his cause seems to have failed him for a time; and he fell into prevarication and falsehood, which was attended with a most fatal result. Under the pretence of pressing haste to execute the royal commission, he obtains from the priest the shew-bread and the sword of Goliath. The conversation between David and the priest was overheard by a certain man of the servants of Saul, "who was detained before the Lord that day; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsman of Saul."

The pursuit of Saul was so eager that David was compelled to take refuge with his most inveterate foes. "And he fled for fear of Saul, and went to Achish, the king of Gath." But there was no security here. The servants of Achish remind him that it was this David of whom they sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of the king of Gath." Perplexed and harassed, and driven from one thing to another, he had not yet recovered his faith in God's promises and providence; and to avoid the present danger, "changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad." Apparently convinced of his insanity, (though other reasons probably led to the same result,) Achish sends him away.*

Returning from the Philistines, "David came to the cave Adullam," a large cavern not far from Bethlehem. And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, or in debt, or discontented, flocked to him, and he became captain of four hundred men, a band which soon swelled into six hundred. Among these were some of the mighty men who appear so often in the history of David; especially the three mightiest of the thirty, of whom Abishai, the brother of Joab, was chief. It was while David was in this cave, and Bethlehem was garrisoned by the Philistines, that an incident occurred which shows how strong an attachment had already sprung up between David and the chief of his followers. David longed for water from the well of Bethlehem. "And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well, and brought it to David." He was too generous and conscientious, however, to gratify his appetite at so great a risk. He would not drink thereof, "but poured it out unto the Lord, and said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it." It is from such casual events that we learn the peculiar disposition of David, which gave him such popularity and influence among the people. The first care of David was for his parents. "He brought them to the king of Moab, and said to him, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold."

He was not suffered to remain there long. The prophet Gad warned him to depart and flee into the land of Judah. "And he came into the forest of Hareth," somewhere in the south of Judah.

The narrative now returns to Saul and his deeds. He abode still at Gibeah. And when he heard that David was discovered, he makes a mournful appeal to the Benjamites, as his own tribe, for assistance and pity. "Then answered Doeg the Edomite, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to

Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and the sword of Goliath." Saul's anger was now kindled against the priest, "and he sent for Ahimelech, and all the priests at Nob; and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse." Ahimelech was ignorant that Saul viewed David as an enemy. "Who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more." But Saul would not listen to reason. His purpose was formed. He determined to strike terror into all David's friends, by one terrible example. Ahimelech and all the priests must die. He gave orders to his footmen that stood about him "to slay the priests of the Lord." But no native Israelite, much as they feared the king, was ready for such a deed as this. And the king said to Doeg, "Turn thou and fall upon the priests; and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day, fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, besides oxen, and asses, and sheep." So terrible was the insane wrath of Saul. Nor was this all. In a later allusion we learn that he slew the Gibeonites, who were probably servants of the priests, as the tabernacle was at Gibeon: a deed which afterward brought down upon his descendants a fearful retribution.* Only one of the sons of Ahimelech escaped, and fled to David. "And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the priests. And David said, I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh thy life seeketh my life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

While David was in the forest of Hareth, it was told him that the Philistines were fighting against Keilah. Overcoming all sense of his injuries, he immediately goes to their relief. Although having the Divine authority, some of his men feared to venture upon so bold an undertaking. "Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went and fought with the Philistines, and brought away the spoil, and smote them with a great slaughter."

All the patriotism of David produced no effect to relax the savage pursuit of Saul. He leaves him no rest in the place he had delivered; but gathers quickly all the people to go down to Keilah to besiege David. Hearing of the mischief purposed against him, he asks counsel of God, through the priest. "Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? And the Lord said, He will come down. They will deliver thee up." "Then David and his men arose and departed out of Keilah, and went and abode in the strongholds in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day; but God delivered him not into his hand." While hunted through this wilderness by Saul, he received a visit from Jonathan, who strengthened his hand in God, and said, "Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee. And they renewed their covenant before the Lord."

The Ziphites could not be relied on. The power of the monarch was too great, and the fierceness of his wrath in the slaughter of the priests, too recent, for any one with safety to offer protection to David. On every side he met with the basest ingratitude and treachery. The Ziphites went to Saul with the welcome information that David concealed himself with them, and proposed to deliver him into the king's hand. Saul pronounces a blessing upon them, and bids them "return and search out

more thoroughly the lurking places, and then I will go with you.” They return to their land, and Saul and his men followed after them. In the meantime David has escaped and gone farther south, in the wilderness of Maon. Saul pursued after him, and nearly grasped his prey. “For Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men went on the other side of the mountain, and made haste to get away; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.”* Just as the infuriated monarch was about to lay his hand upon his foe, God interposed for his deliverance. “There came messengers unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.” Wherefore he returned from pursuing after David; and they called the place, Sela-hammah-lekoth, that is, rock of divisions; because, says the Targum, the heart of the king was divided to go hither and thither. David now went and dwelt in the strongholds of Engedi, west of the Dead Sea.

As soon as the state of his kingdom permitted it, and the king had returned from following his foreign enemies, he enters again personally in the search for David. “He chose three thousand men out of all Israel, as a force which could crush every thing which looked like rebellion; and went to seek David and his men, “upon the rocks of the wild goats.” It was here that Saul fell into the power of his foe, and had not David been a man of great piety, who feared God, and the powers ordained of him, there would now have been an end of the strife. “The men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as seemeth good unto thee. Then David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul’s robe, privily. And his heart smote him, and he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord’s anointed. So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul.”

Saul soon left the cave, and went on his way without any suspicion that he had fallen into the hands of his foe. David also followed, and bowed himself, saying, “My lord the king, wherefore hearest thou men’s words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt?” As a proof against all these reports, and the suspicions of the king’s own heart, he appeals to the fact that he had thus spared his life: and then calls upon God to judge between them. “The Lord judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand.” The magnanimity of David seems to have touched Saul’s better nature, and, for the time, overcame the malicious purpose of his heart. And he said, “Is this thy voice, my son David? Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil, and thou hast showed me this day how that thou hast dealt well with me. “Wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well that thou shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hands: swear now, therefore, unto me, by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father’s house. And David sware unto Saul;” and Saul, for a time, seems to have ceased from his pursuit.* It is evident from this confession of Saul, that he must already have known that David was the person chosen by God to be his successor; and therefore that he was striving against God. It is equally evident from the Psalm written at this time, that David confidently expected the kingdom. He is not in haste, however. He waits until God’s time. He takes no measures of his own to secure that result, to which he looked forward. He is never driven, even under the stress of a most unrelenting persecution, to an act of disloyalty.

In this brief moment of peace, the whole nation are called to mourn around the grave of Samuel. "And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." A simple notice for the end of so great a man, but one which shows how strong a hold Samuel had upon the heart of the whole nation.

While David was in the wilderness of Paran, he fell in with the shepherds and flocks of Nabal; a man of large wealth, but close and churlish. From the narrative, it appears that David and his men had protected Nabal's flocks while in the wilderness, and expected as their reward a supply of food. He sent, accordingly, his young men, but Nabal meanly denies their request, and adds insult to his denial. Provoked by this refusal, David arms his men, and in the heat and suddenness of his passion, threatens the whole house of Nabal with utter destruction. While on the way to execute his purpose of vengeance, he is met by Abigail the wife of Nabal; who, by a timely present, and a wise answer, disarms his rage, and averts his revenge. David, now sensible of the unreasonableness and sinfulness of his wrath, thanks God that he had been thus kept from carrying it into execution. He was strongly tempted to take vengeance into his own hand, and nothing but the providence of God had prevented him. But though Nabal thus escaped the wrath of man, he was soon visited for his sin, with the judgment of God.

Not long after the death of her husband, David sent "and communed with Abigail to take her to wife." In true oriental style the marriage contract is formed. "And she arose with her maidens and went after the messengers of David, and became his wife." David took also Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they were both his wives. Prior to this, during the flight of David, Saul had taken his daughter, David's wife, and married her to another; and this may be the reason why David felt himself at liberty to form another marriage. Saul's policy was to cut David off from any claim to the succession.

What time had passed since David's first flight from Saul we do not certainly know. Nor can we tell the length of this temporary peace. It does not appear, however, to have lasted long. The destruction of David was the ruling desire of Saul, and we soon find him again in his character as a persecutor. The men of Ziph again attempted to betray David into the hands of the king; and Saul eagerly avails himself of their offer. He marched out into the wilderness where David was concealed, and encamped with his men around him. David adopts the bold expedient of going over to the king's camp with but one attendant. "So David and Abishai came to the people by night." A deep sleep, evidently more than natural, rested upon the whole band, both king and warriors; so that no one knew of their presence. Abishai said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." But though thus strongly tempted, David stays the hand of his companion, and forbids him "to touch the Lord's anointed." Taking the spear and the cruse of water from the head of Saul, they departed, and stood on the top of a hill afar off. And David called again to the king, and appealed to him on the same grounds as before. Then Saul said, "I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will do thee no harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly. Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."

Notwithstanding this assurance of Saul, and his present relentings, there was plainly no safety for David in his land. Even in the wilderness he had met only with treachery. Those whom he had delivered had plotted his destruction. Pressed on every side with the savage pursuit of the king, he, at last, as if in despair, forms the unbelieving and desperate resolution of joining the Philistines—the enemies of his God and people. And David said in his heart, “I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more, in any coast of Israel.” “And he arose and passed over, with the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish, king of Gath.” It is probable that the Gittites had heard of the rupture between David and Saul; and they no doubt hoped that David would now be as useful a friend as he had before been a dangerous enemy. He was therefore well received, although on a previous occasion he had been distrusted and feared. The break was so complete, that, in their view, there could be no reconciliation; and they therefore welcomed him to their land, and gave him Ziklag for a possession. David remained there a year and four months. During this time he received many additions to his followers; “men of might, and helpers in the war: whose faces were like the faces of lions, and men as swift as the roes on the mountains:” whose names are prominent in the subsequent history of David’s reign. “From day to day they fell to him, to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.”

SECTION IV

david's wars at ziklag—saul's interview with the sorceress at endor—his death at gilboa, and the lamentation of david

While David was at Ziklag, he engaged in an exterminating warfare with the wandering bands lying south of Judah. “And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive,” lest they should bring tidings to Gath; took the spoil, and returned to the Philistine king. When asked in what direction his incursions were made, David so answers (without telling an absolute falsehood) as to deceive Achish, and led him to believe that he had plundered his own country. The credulous king believed David, saying, “He hath made his people utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.”*

The Scriptures tell us things as they are, they never cover up the defects or sins of kings, or prophets, or apostles. This whole flight of David has its ground (naturally enough to human nature) in a weak faith, and this particular transaction must be viewed as a blot upon his religious character. The wonder would be, however, (did we not know the power of God’s grace,) that he had not fallen more sadly. On every natural principle we should find him acting far otherwise than he did. It was the grace of God only which kept him from utter despair, and from joining the enemies of his people, in truth as well as in form.

New accessions were constantly made to his power, from almost all the tribes of Israel; so that David now occupied the position of an independent prince.

Achish soon required the aid of his new ally. “And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.” David, without giving a formal consent, replied, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. On the

marshalling of the Philistine forces, David joins in with the men of Achish. We know not what David designed to do: we may judge, however, from his previous conduct, that he would never be found in arms against his own brethren. More probably he waited until God, in the course of his providence, should make known what course he should pursue. He was spared from the trial of taking the decision into his own hands, by the jealousy of the other Philistine princes. They feared lest, in the battle, he should forsake his new friends and join the ranks of his countrymen. They were wroth with Achish, and persuaded him to send David and his men back to the place he had appointed them. No words of the king of Gath could change the purpose of the other lords. Achish, therefore, called David, and sent him back to Ziklag. On his return, David received still further additions to his forces, and he was soon to need their aid.

The absence of David had not been unnoticed by his foes. The Amalekites had seized the opportunity "and invaded the south and Ziklag, and smitten it and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives that were therein, and went their way."

When David and his men reached the city, they found it burned, "and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives; and they lifted up their voice and wept." And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, "because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons, and for his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." "And David called Abiathar the priest, and inquired at the Lord. Shall I pursue this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Obtaining this assurance, he pursued them with the utmost rapidity. Some were too faint to proceed in the chase, and were left behind; while the stronger, amounting to four hundred, still pressed on. At length they fell upon an Egyptian, a servant of the Amalekites, who had been left by his master to die in the wilderness. He engages to bring David to his foes. And when he had brought him down, behold they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of the spoil they had taken. In the midst of their revelry, David fell upon them and smote them, so that there escaped not a man of them, save those who rode upon the camels and fled. David not only recovered all that had been carried away, but a large spoil which this marauding band had collected from others, fell to his hands. The promise which he had received was more than verified.

On the return of the victors with their spoil, they were met and welcomed by the two hundred who were unable to follow David in the pursuit. It was proposed by some of these reckless and unprincipled men, who followed David for the plunder they might get, that those only who had engaged in the battle should share in the spoil. David was just, and said, "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us; but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And he made this an ordinance in Israel from that day and forward."

By the customs of that kind of warfare, a large part of the spoil fell to David; which he sent as a present unto "the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." He remembered especially all the places where he had been wont to haunt, and whose kindness he had experienced in former days. There can be no doubt, but that this policy strengthened his hold upon the affections of his brethren of Judah, and opened the way for his return soon after.

While these events were taking place with David, the Philistines were pitched in Shunem, in the plain of Jezreel. "Saul had gathered all Israel together, and pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. He inquired of the Lord, but received no answer, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." He proceeded therefore to seek a woman with a familiar spirit, and inquire of her. Such a one was found at Endor. In the early part of his reign, Saul had put the Divine law against these necromancers into rigid execution. He therefore now went under a disguise to the woman by night, and asked her to bring him up whom he should name. Saul's religion was mere superstition. He had killed the priests of Jehovah, and sundered himself from his prophets, and was now left to this desperate resort; an aggravation of all his previous sins. The woman objected that her life would be in danger; and Saul swore that no punishment should happen to her. "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up to thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel." "And the woman saw Samuel, and cried with a loud voice: and spake to Saul, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid, what sawest thou? And she said, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself."* He tells the prophet of his sore distress, and of his desertion by God; and that he had come to him in this emergency, for comfort and instruction. "Then said Samuel, Wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" He reminds him that this distress was come upon him solely in consequence of his own sin; and then proceeds with the awful prophecy of what should still befall him. "Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord shall also deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." When the troubled king heard these words, his strength failed him, and he fell straightway all along upon the earth. With this sad message as his only hope, he returns to his army, and not long after, the decisive battle took place. "The men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and his sons, and slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons." Saul, wounded and pressed by his foes, calls upon his armour-bearer "to kill him with the sword, lest the uncircumcised should come and thrust him through and abuse him." When his armour-bearer refused, Saul fell upon his own sword, and died with his sons. The Philistines stripped the fallen king of his armour, "and cut off his head," and sent it to publish their triumph in the house of their idols, and among the people. "And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth, and fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan." The men of Jabesh-gilead, however, grateful for the deliverance which Saul had wrought for them, "went and took the bodies of Saul and his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried them there; and they fasted seven days." "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit. And the Lord turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

On the third day after his return from the pursuit of the Amalekites, David receives intelligence of the sad defeat. A young Amalekite came from the camp of Saul, and told David "that the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan are dead also." And David said, "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan be dead?" Looking upon David as the probable heir to the crown, and hoping for a reward, the man professed that he had, at Saul's request, slain him with his own hand, and produced the crown and bracelet as

sufficient evidence of the king's death. "Then David and his men mourned and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel." And David said unto the young man that told him, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" And he "called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died." And David said, "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed. And David lamented over Saul and Jonathan his son." The generous impulses of his nature found expression in a beautiful and touching lamentation, which has come down to us, as a testimony to his loyalty, to the depth and purity of his friendship for Jonathan, and to his thoroughly Hebrew heart, while living in the midst of their bitterest foes.

SECTION V

David made king at Hebron—the civil war between David and Abner, or Ish-bosheth the son of Saul—Abner's revolt and death—the murder of Ish-bosheth

After this mourning for Saul, David's first care was to inquire of the Lord, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah. And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And he said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron." So David and his men, with their households, went up and dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. On learning that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul, he sent messengers unto them, blessing them for their kindness to the house of Saul, promising to requite this kindness unto them, and calling upon them to strengthen their hands, and be valiant. For though Saul was dead, yet they need not despair, for there was still a king in Judah, who stood ready to protect them.

David, however, did not come to the throne without opposition. A large part of the people, either from policy or from attachment to the house of Saul, arrayed themselves against him. "Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host," was the mainstay of this opposition. He proclaimed "Ish-bosheth the son of Saul king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and Ephraim and Benjamin, and over all Israel. But the house of Judah followed David." A civil war soon began to rage. Abner gathered the servants of his newly-made king, and came from Mahanaim to Gibeon; threatening the territory of Judah. An army from David, with Joab for its general, came out to meet them; and they sat down the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side.

While the armies were in this position, Abner proposed that the question should be decided by twelve men from one army fighting twelve from the other. The challenge was accepted; 'the men went from each side, and caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side: so they fell down together. "This was the beginning of a general fight, "and the battle was very sore, and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the" servants of David." In the course of the flight, Abner was so keenly pursued by the swift Asahel, Joab's younger brother, that he was forced to turn about and slay him in self-defence. The pursuit lasted until the sun went down. "And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves after Abner, and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?"

“And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. So Joab recalled his men with the trumpet.” It seems probable from this reply of Joab, that he was commanded to act only on the defensive: and that the battle would not have taken place, except for the foolish challenge of Abner. Three hundred men perished on the side of the Israelites, while only nineteen, with Asahel, were wanting from the forces of Judah.

With the remnant of his army, Abner recrossed the Jordan, and returned to Mahanaim; and Joab and his men came to Hebron.

“Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.” It was not, however, with any great fury, nor does it appear to have been followed with any very disastrous results.

While the war was thus lingering on, a fierce quarrel arose between Ish-bosheth and Abner, which served to decide it. Abner resolved no longer to uphold the house of Saul. To the just reproof of the king, the proud captain replies that he would translate the kingdom “from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah.” He accordingly sends messengers to David, to make the best terms he could, offering to bring all Israel under his authority. David refused to enter into any treaty with him, unless he should first restore to him Michal his wife, whom Saul had taken from him. “And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband; and her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim;” not far from the territory of Judah. After delivering her to David, Abner conciliates the elders of Israel, assuring them that God had promised, by the hands of David, to deliver his people from the hands of the Philistines, and from all their enemies. He then comes to David, and engages to go and bring all Israel, who should then acknowledge him their king.

Soon after Abner had departed, Joab came to Hebron, from some incursion, with a great spoil, and they told him, saying, “Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away in peace.” Joab went immediately to the king and remonstrated against letting Abner go away in peace. Thou knowest Abner “that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. Why is it that thou hast sent him away?” After this rude rebuke of the king, Joab went out from David, called Abner back, and upon pretence of a private conference, took him aside and assassinated him. When David heard it, he said, “I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever, from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father’s house.” The real cause of this murder was, no doubt, a fear on the part of Joab, lest Abner should supersede him in the king’s favour, and for his great services in bringing over the Israelites, be rewarded with the generalship. The pretended cause was, that Abner had slain his brother Asahel. David not only declared his innocence, but commanded a public mourning to be made for Abner. “And they buried him in Hebron. And the king lifted up his voice and wept, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all Israel understood that it was not of the king to slay Abner. And all the people took notice of the king’s mourning, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.” Although David felt himself at that time unable to punish these murderers, he yet leaves them in the hands of a righteous and Almighty God. “The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.”

The death of Abner did not long retard the course of events. Every day was adding to the power of David. When Saul's son heard that Abner was dead, his hands were feeble, and all Israel was troubled. The spiritless Ish-bosheth could not long sustain his own cause; and it was evident that David must soon be acknowledged king. Two brothers, "Baanah and Rechab, the sons of Rimmon," aiming to secure the favour of David, "came to Ish-bosheth at mid-day, and slew him as he lay on his couch, and beheaded him, and brought his head to David at Hebron." David received the murderers as they deserved. He tells them how he had treated the Amalekite, who professed to have slain Saul, "and how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house, shall he visit them with a like punishment?" Without any delay, he commands them to be slain, "and their hands and feet to be cut off, and hung up over the pool in Hebron. The head of Ish-bosheth, they buried with all honour in the sepulchre of Abner at Hebron."

SECTION VI

david made king over all israel—he captures jerusalem—defeats the philistines—the ark brought to jerusalem—david commanded not to build the temple

David had now reigned seven years and six months over Judah.* "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over all Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel." In the book of Chronicles we are told that those who thus came from all the tribes of Israel, to this election of David, "amounted to three hundred and forty thousand men; men of war, that could keep rank, who came with a perfect heart, to make David king, and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king; and they were with David eating and drinking three days, and there was joy in Israel."

Such was the happy commencement of David's reign. His army had previously been occupied in the war with Abner; but now that he was crowned king of the whole nation, he determined to signalize his new power by a great exploit. Jerusalem was still in the possession of the Jebusites; a strong fortress in the midst of David's kingdom. Of this Jebusite town the king determined to possess himself. So confident were the Jebusites in the strength of their position, that they met the demands of David with a message of defiance. "Except thou take away the lame and the blind thou shalt not come in hither;" as though a lame and blind garrison was able to defend it against every assault. And David said, "Whoever scaleth the wall, and smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain." As usual, Joab was the first to mount the wall, and was accordingly confirmed in his command. "So David took the stronghold of Zion, and called it The city of David." From this time Jerusalem became the royal residence. David fortified and adorned it. "And David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

It was at this time that the alliance between David and Hiram king of Tyre began. The friendly offices so necessary to the prosperity of both kingdoms were long continued. "And Hiram sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons, and they built David an house. And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel." But he was not left long in quiet, to build palaces or fortify his city. Foreign war was impending. So long as there

was civil war in Israel, the Philistines had maintained peace; but when they heard that David was anointed king, they immediately prepared for war. They marched in force “and came and spread themselves in the valley or plain of Rephaim,” southwest from Zion, and separated from it by the valley of Hinnom. David inquired of the Lord, “Whether he should go up to the Philistines.” And the Lord answered, “Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.” “And David came and smote them there, and said, The Lord hath broken in upon mine enemies before me as the breach of waters, and called the name of the place Baal-perazim.” They left their images and gods upon the field of battle, and David took and burned them. This repulse had little effect upon the Philistines. They soon returned, and with an increased force encamped upon the same plain. When David again inquired of the Lord, he was forbidden to go up and attack them. In order to gain a more complete victory, he was commanded “to fetch a compass behind them,” and attack them upon the rear. He was not to make the attack until he should hear the movement “in the tops of the mulberry trees, for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.” And David did as the Lord commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba unto Gazer. And the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.

After this defeat of his enemies, David was at liberty to carry out his intention in regard to Jerusalem. His first care was that the royal city should be honoured with the presence of God. No place had yet been chosen, in which God would fix his dwelling. The ark, with the symbol of the Divine presence, had been carried from place to place, and rested at length for some years at Kirjath-jearim. David now prepared a place for it, in his chosen city; and removed it to its new abode. So important an action was not entered upon without much consideration, and with great solemnity. “And David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand, and consulted with their officers, and said, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere that are left in all the land of Israel, and to the priests and Levites, that they may gather themselves to us, and let us bring the ark of God to us. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So all Israel were gathered, and went up to Kirjath-jearim, to bring up thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.” The ark (contrary to the command that it should be carried only by the sons of Kohath) was placed upon a new cart; and David and all the house of Israel rejoiced before the Lord, as the vast procession moved on. But this joy was turned into mourning. As they came to Nachon’s threshing-floor, the ark was shaken, and Uzzah, who was in charge of it, rashly put forth his hand to hold the ark. “And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error, or rashness, and there he died by the ark of God. “And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me? So he brought not the ark home to himself, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite,” where it remained three months. “And the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all that he had.”

When this signal favour of Providence was made known to the king, he determined again to secure its presence in his capital. But learning wisdom from the previous judgment, he conforms himself, this time, to the method in which alone the ark could be safely moved. Having called the chiefs of the Levites, he exhorts them; “Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us; for that we sought him

not after the due order.” In obedience to the royal command, the priests and Levites sanctified themselves, for the removing of the ark. Some were to bear the ark upon their shoulders, others were to accompany it as singers and musicians,* while the whole procession was led by the priests “with the sound of the trumpet.” As soon as those who bore the ark began to move, “oxen and fatlings were sacrificed.” The king himself, laying aside his royal garments, and clothed with a linen robe, mingled with the Levites in their songs and dances. “So David and the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and joy; and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it;” (the old tabernacle was still at Gibeon;) “and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.” After this he turned and “blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts,” and dismissed them to their homes with royal munificence.

“Then David returned to bless his household.” While the ark was passing into the city, Michal had witnessed David’s public dancing, and despised him in her heart. She looked upon it as degrading to a king, and did not spare her reproaches when she met her husband. David’s reply was just and spirited. “It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord: therefore will I play before the Lord.” It was but the expression of his religious feelings, the manifestation of his gratitude to Jehovah, to whom he owed his kingdom and his prosperity. And if this rendered him contemptible in the eyes of any, he was ready yet to be more humble than this, and base in his own sight. He was ready to submit to any service however low, or unkingly, if thus he might honour God, and confess his subjection to him.

Having thus brought the ark to its resting-place, and secured the Divine presence—the glorious Shechinah—in the royal city, he appointed the priests and levites to their respective offices, and provided for the more regular and splendid public worship; and then delivered to Asaph the chief singer, and his brethren, this beautiful hymn of praise and thanksgiving:

1. “Give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.
2. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.
3. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.
4. Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face continually.
5. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;
6. O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones.
7. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.
8. Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
9. Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;
10. And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,
11. Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;

12. When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.
13. And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people;
14. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes,
15. Saving, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.
16. Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation:
17. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.
18. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.
19. For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.
20. Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.
21. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.
22. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come before him; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
23. Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.
24. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say, Among the nations, the Lord reigneth.
25. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.
26. Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.
27. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
28. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.
29. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And let all the people say Amen, and offer praise to Jehovah."

Henceforth, Jerusalem was not only the royal, but sacred city, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." There the solemn feasts were celebrated. Thither the tribes constantly repaired; and there God dwelt between the cherubim, and shone forth to bless and save his people.

David now formed the design of building the temple. His pious heart gave him no rest while the ark of God dwelt in curtains, and he himself abode in palaces. Moved by the past mercies of God towards him, and finding himself at rest from all his enemies, he said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." Nathan immediately replied, "Go, do all that is in thy heart: for God is with thee." He thought the purpose of the king so just and proper that there could be no doubt of the Divine approval. But God had other purposes. That same night "the word of the Lord came unto Nathan: Go tell David, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in. From the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, I have not

dwelt in any house. Neither spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? Now, therefore, so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I took thee from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name like unto the name of the great men of the earth. Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as aforetime. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son. If he commit iniquity, I will chastise him with the rod of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it away from him that was before thee. And thine house, and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.”

As soon as David heard this gracious message from God, he went to the tabernacle, and poured out his grateful soul in the warmest expressions of true devotion.

“Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought us hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of men, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God; for there is none like unto thee, neither is there any God beside thee. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, which thou redeemest from Egypt from the nations and their gods. For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever, and thou becamest their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken, concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is God over Israel; and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore has thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer before thee. And now, Lord, thou art God, and thy words be true; therefore, now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.”*

The whole of this prayer is a beautiful expression of true piety. The deep humility, the devout confidence in God and his promise, which it everywhere breathes, show clearly the power of his religion in the monarch's heart. It is delightful to see one so great in the eyes of men, thus humbling himself before God, and summing up all his desires in that one simple prayer, which any pious heart will gladly appropriate to itself, “and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.” He who has this, has all things.

SECTION VII

david's wars—the organization of the army—david's kindness to mephibosheth—the war with the ammonites

Soon after this, we find David engaged in wars with the surrounding nations. In the concise summary given us, we are not told distinctly from what cause they originated. The first nation against which he turned his arms, was the Philistines, the inveterate enemies of David and Israel. This attack, were there no other reason, was fully justified by their aggressions when he ascended the throne. His victory was complete. "He smote them, and took Metheg-ammah, or Gath, and its cities;" which would seem to have been the most important posts of that people. So effectually were they subdued, that we hear nothing more of their inroads for twenty years afterwards. From an incidental notice (1 Kings 2:39) it appears that David treated these foes with great kindness, and most probably left one of their native princes as their governor or tributary king.

This was followed quickly by another, more deadly, against the "Moabites. And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; with two lines he measured to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts." This account seems to imply that a part of the land, which had taken the more active part in the war, was put to the sword, and a larger part, or a "full line," subjected to tribute. The unusual severity which characterized this war, probably arose from a conspiracy on the part of these nations to check and destroy the rising power of David.*

This war was in turn almost immediately followed by another, with a far more powerful king. The occasion of this war was an attempt on the part of Hadadezer king of Zobah, to recover his border, at the river Euphrates. David met and totally routed his forces, took "from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen." Hadadezer called to his aid the Syrians of Damascus; but they were unable to resist the victorious monarch, who again defeated them with great slaughter. The Hebrew king did not fail to improve his victory. He pressed on into the heart of the country, and garrisoned the captured cities. "And the Lord," we are told, "preserved David whithersoever he went." When it is remembered that the country which the king of Zobah invaded, was a part of the promised land, and as such a part of David's kingdom, the strict justice of this war cannot be questioned. And besides, we cannot doubt that David, who was accustomed to inquire of Jehovah on all important questions, undertook these wars under the Divine warrant and permission.

From these wars, the king returned with large spoils. "He received gifts also from Toi king of Hamath," whom David by his victories had freed from the oppression of Hadadezer. All these, with the silver and the gold taken from other nations, David dedicated to the Lord; bearing in mind the temple which was to be built.

While David was engaged at the north in the war with the Syrians, another enemy threatened his kingdom from the opposite quarter. Regarding this as a favourable opportunity, the Edomites treacherously invaded the country. From the title to the 60th Psalm, it appears that this invasion was made while the war with Syria was still going on. A part, therefore, of the army was despatched through the length of the land to meet this new foe. The battle took place in the valley of Salt, lying south from the Dead Sea, and David's forces were completely victorious. The enemy suffered great loss; and their cities were compelled to receive Hebrew garrisons. "Joab was left in the land of Edom, subduing the land, and burying the dead. He remained in the country six

months, with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom." The expressions "all Israel" and "every male" in this brief account, explain each other. In both cases we can understand only those who were in arms. Were any other reason necessary to convince us, that this was not the war of utter extermination, which some have wished to make it; we should find one all-sufficient in the fact, that Hebrew garrisons were necessary to keep the land in subjection. What need would there be for garrisons were there none but women and children left in their towns or country?

From the renowned warrior, David passes easily and naturally to the wise and peaceful prince. "He reigned over all Israel and executed judgment and justice, among all his people." During this interval of peace, he, most probably, completed the systematic organization of the standing army. To relieve the country from the expense attending so large a force, and to make the duty as light as possible, for those who composed the army, he divided them into monthly courses of twenty-four thousand men each. Every course was commanded by one of the chief of the fathers, and every subdivision by its own captain and officers. Each of these bodies were in active service for one month in the year, and then returned to their private employments; while the whole were liable to be called into service in any emergency, and constituted a well drilled and effective force, to repel any assault and provide for the national security. Besides this, every tribe had its particular ruler, to whom was committed the administration of civil affairs, and who were responsible to the king alone. Over the crown-lands, and royal treasures he appointed twelve officers: "over the treasury; over the store-houses in the fields; over the till-age; over the vineyards; over the wine cellars; over the olive and sycamore trees; over the herds in Sharon and the valleys; over the camels; over the asses; and over the flocks." Among the king's council, were Jonathan, David's uncle, Ahithophel, Abiathar, Jehoiada, the son of Benaiah, and Hushai the Archite, David's faithful friend and companion. Joab was captain of all the forces. Jehoshaphat, son of Ahilud, was recorder. Zadok, the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, were chief priests; and Seraiah was the scribe. And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was captain of the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of the king were chief rulers.

Another element in David's character now presents itself to our notice. He was not only a brave warrior, a just and able ruler, but a faithful friend. Nothing could make him forgetful of his covenant with Jonathan. In the midst of all his cares, he found time to think and act for the welfare of the descendants of his former friend. "Is there yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" It was no ordinary favour which the king intended to bestow upon the remnant of this broken family. For when Ziba, an old servant of Saul, was brought to him, he repeats his question in the most emphatic form, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God (i. e. the highest favour possible) unto him?" In answer to this inquiry, Ziba told him that Jonathan "had yet a son living, who was lame in his feet." David immediately orders him to be brought to the court; and in the kindest manner addresses him, "Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness, for Jonathan, thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, and thou shalt eat bread continually at my table." Ziba was to farm the heritage, and bring in the fruits for his master's sustenance, or the maintenance of his household. Ziba undertook the charge, while Mephibosheth dwelt at court, "and eat at the king's table as one of the king's sons." This was princely kindness to the only heir of a fallen and rival house; but was such as became the true and unselfish friendship of Jonathan and David—as beautiful as it is rare in the history of our selfish world.

The peace which had now lasted for some years, was suddenly broken by the strangest and most unprovoked insult on the part of the Ammonites. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, a former friend of David, died; upon which David sent an embassy to comfort Hanun, the new king. The intention of David was strangely misinterpreted; his ambassadors were regarded as spies; and sent home with gross insult; contrary to all public faith, hospitality, or law. Instigated by his counsellors, Hanun took the servants of David, "and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle," and, thus disgraced, sent them away. When this was made known to David, he sent to meet his ambassadors, and ordered them to remain at Jericho until their beards were grown, and then return.

When the Ammonites saw that they had made themselves odious to David, they prepared immediately for war, "and hired aid from the Rehobites and Zobahites, twenty thousand footmen, from the king of Maacah one thousand, and from Ishtob twelve thousand men." Aware of this vast preparation, David saw that war was inevitable, and that there could be no delay; Joab and the whole host of mighty men were sent to meet the enemy. The Ammonites drew up their forces under the walls of the city, and the Syrians in the field by themselves. Joab however profited by this division. When he saw the plan of the enemy, he took the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians; and the rest of the army, under Abishai his brother, he arrayed against the Ammonites. And he said, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

The hired Syrians soon broke and fled from the attack of Joab; upon which the Ammonites fled also from before Abishai, and entered into the city. Joab returned with his victorious army to Jerusalem. The war, however, was not to end here. "When the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that were beyond the river Euphrates; and they gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Helam." Affairs were now at such a crisis as to demand the presence of the king himself. Gathering a general levy of all his forces, "he crossed over Jordan, and came to Helam." In the battle which followed, David was again successful; the men of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand footmen, perished in the fight, and Shobach their captain fell with them. The Syrian princes, who were subject to Hadarezer, made peace with David, and the Ammonites were left to carry on the war, which they had provoked, alone.* At the opening of the next campaign, Joab was sent against the Ammonites. "He wasted their country, and came and besieged Rabbah, its capital." After a long, but successful siege, Joab sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters. Now, therefore, come with the rest of the people and encamp against the city and take it; lest I take the city and it be called after my name." "And David gathered the people, and went and took Rabbah; and took the crown of their king, the weight whereof was a talent of gold, with the precious stones; and the spoil of the city in great abundance. And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln.† So did he with all the cities of the Ammonites; and David and all the people returned to Jerusalem."

SECTION VIII

david's sin in the affair of bath-sheba and uriah—his domestic afflictions—absalom's rebellion—david's restoration to the kingdom—insurrection of sheba

While Joab was urging forward the siege of Rabbah, David remained at Jerusalem. Up to this point nothing had occurred to mar the character of David. He could claim with truth, "I have kept the ways of Jehovah, and have not wickedly departed from my God." In all the scenes of his eventful life, in his distress, and in his prosperity, he had been kept from the ruling power of temptation or sin. But, as if to show us that no human character was perfect, we now find him falling into grievous and shameful sins. The sacred historian in no way conceals or excuses this awful fall. While walking upon the roof of his palace, the king was smitten by the beauty of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his bravest warriors. Hurried away by his guilty passion, he passed at once all the restraint of law and religion. Startled at the consequences of his sin, he sends for Uriah, to conceal, if possible, his guilt, and avoid the disgrace and punishment to which he was justly exposed. When Uriah appeared, David inquired "how the people did, and how the war prospered," and then dismissed Uriah to his home. But the brave soldier, inured to the hardships of the camp, refused to go to his house, and spent the night with the guards of the royal palace. When asked the reason of his conduct, he replied, That it was sufficient for him to share with his general and his fellow soldiers; while they were encamped in the field he would rest with them. On the following day, David renewed his attempt in a grosser manner, but without changing the purpose of this true-hearted and gallant soldier.

Foiled in every attempt to conceal his sin from the injured husband, the unhappy king found no resource in his extremity, but in a deeper crime. It was resolved that Uriah must die; but the crime was committed through the hand of another. "And David wrote to Joab, by the hand of Uriah, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die." He found in Joab a fit instrument for his purpose. The command was no sooner received than it was executed. Uriah fell, the monarch was freed from present danger; and Joab succeeded in coiling another strand around the infatuated king. A messenger was despatched to the court with an account of the loss, and the readily satisfied king replied to his officer, "Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city and overthrow it." After the usual time of mourning for her husband, the king publicly espoused Bath-sheba, and she became his wife, and bare him a son.

With the sins of adultery and murder, and constant hypocrisy, upon his conscience, we should not have expected that he could long remain at ease. David was no hardened and habitual sinner. A strong temptation had overtaken him, and buried him beneath its power. One sin had driven him on to another, until he had accumulated this fearful load of guilt. His conscience was quieted and stunned. For a length of time he appears to have felt no remorse. We hear from him no confession, no prayer for mercy. Sin has done, what it ever does, and ever will do. It has not only brought guilt upon his soul, but it has blinded, so that he shall not see its stains.

But there were other eyes that had beheld his conduct. The sleepless eye of God was upon him, "and the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord;" and, though he was unmindful of his guilt, he was soon to feel its heavy weight. And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. By an artful fable, the prophet brought the king to pronounce sentence upon himself, and then made the application. "There were two men in the same city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man

had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him." David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die: and shall restore the lamb fourfold."

And Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel; and delivered thee from the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives, and the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah, and hast taken his wife for thy wife. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them to thy neighbour: for thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel."

This fearful sentence roused the conscience of David from its slumbers. He was at once convicted of his sin; and like every true penitent, confessed without extenuation or excuse. His religious feelings claimed again their supremacy. And David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." The genuine nature of David's repentance may be clearly gathered from the 51st Psalm, which he penned upon this occasion. It has been the memorial of his sin, and of his repentance. It has been the language of every true Christian, in all his returns to God—the language of the church in all her confessions. It could have been breathed forth only from a broken and contrite heart. The terms of his confession tell us, how deep was the sense of guilt; and the earnest longings after God—the seeking of a pure heart—the prayer for the welfare of Zion, all proclaim that this was no feigned repentance, wrung from him by a desire to avert the punishment he feared; but a deep, sincere, and godly sorrow, springing from his sense of the odiousness of sin, and of the wrong which he had done. In no part of his life does the deep religious principle of David appear more conspicuous than in this. Ordinary piety might have resented so sudden and bold a reproof, especially when seated upon a throne. But David, the victorious monarch, bows himself at once, and submits to the just sentence of God. "I have sinned against the Lord." Upon this ingenuous confession, Nathan pronounces his pardon. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die. But since by this deed, thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die."*

However sincere his repentance, it did not stay the results and punishment of his sin. The child was suddenly taken ill. David "humbled himself, fasted, and besought God for the child." His prayer was not granted, and on the seventh day the child died, according to the sentence of the prophet. While the child was ill, the king refused all sustenance, and lay in deep distress; but when he perceived that the child was dead, "he rose from the earth, anointed himself, and went into the house of the Lord and worshipped, and came to his house and took the food offered him." Surprised at this, his servants asked the reason of his conduct. And David said, "while the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall

go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

Soon after this, Solomon was born, of whom it is said, “the Lord loved him.”

The star of David was now sinking to the horizon. The Hebrew kingdom had reached the highest point in strength and real glory. Its first true king was the bravest and the best. His reign hitherto had been successful, almost beyond parallel; but from this time it is sullied by “domestic shame, misery, and confusion.”

The loss of the child was soon followed by a heavier stroke, in the unbridled passion of his eldest son Amnon. He had fallen desperately in love with his half-sister Tamar; and by the advice of Jonadab his cousin, feigned himself sick, and sought from David, that his sister might come and prepare him food in his presence. The unsuspecting king consented, and the plot succeeded according to the wishes of those who had formed it. No entreaties or remonstrances on the part of Tamar could save her; and the innocent and helpless fell a victim to incestuous passion and brutal violence. Having sated his passion, the sensual wretch sent her away to bear her shame. “And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garments, and laid her hand on her head, and went away weeping.” Thus sorrowing, she met Absalom her brother, who took her, desolate, to his home, exhorted her to bear her injury with patience, and concealed his purpose of revenge. Such a crime as this could not long be kept from the king. But great as was his anger, he appears to have spared his guilty son. The remembrance of his own sin may have stayed the sword of justice. For some reason the author of this abominable wickedness escaped for a time.

But though retribution was delayed, it was still preparing. The purpose of revenge lay smouldering in Absalom’s heart, and two years after was carried into execution. The festival of sheep-shearing furnished the occasion for his revenge, “He invited his brothers to the feast, and Amnon” among the rest. It was with some difficulty that he persuaded the king to consent to this arrangement; but his urgency prevailed, and he let Amnon and all his sons go with him. The opportunity did not pass unimproved. Absalom charged his servants, that in the height of the feast, they should assail Amnon and slay him; “fear not, have not I commanded you?” The servants did as they were commanded. Amnon fell in cold-blooded murder. “The king’s sons rose from the feast and fled.” The evil report, however, flew before them; while they were yet in the way, news came that all the king’s sons were slain. “Then the king arose, tore his garments, and lay upon the earth.” But Jonadab saw what the fact was, and urged the king to moderate his grief. “Let not my lord take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king’s sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead, for by the appointment of Absalom the thing hath been settled.” The result proved this conjecture right; he had scarcely done speaking, when the terror-struck sons appeared, and wept over the loss of their brother. Thus one sin became the cause of another; and the latter in turn is the punishment of the former, as often happens under the holy providence of God.

Absalom immediately fled to his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshur, where he was secure from the just anger of his father, and the reach of a broken law. The unhappy king, mourning over Tamar and Amnon, still longed for the return of his exiled son.

Three years passed before he was allowed to return. The subtle Joab perceived that the king’s heart was toward Absalom, and he took steps to secure his return. “He sent to Tekoah, and brought thence a wise woman,” and told her to feign herself a mourner, as one that had long

mourned for the dead; and to come and make known her sorrow to the king. The tale which Joab taught her to relate, was one well calculated to rouse the paternal feelings of David. According to her instructions the woman went, and obtained audience of the king; and in the most earnest manner entreated his aid. "I am a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid had two sons, and they strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one slew the other. And behold the whole family is risen up, and demand him that smote his brother, that they may kill him, for the life of his brother; and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth. And the king said, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee." Lest the king's conscience should scruple to interfere with the course of justice, the woman takes all the consequences to herself. "My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me and on my father's house: and the king and his throne be guiltless." He then gave her a still stronger assurance that her prayer was granted: but as if still fearful, she urged again her petition, and the king then confirmed his promise by an oath: "As the Lord liveth there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth." Having thus gained his attention, and secured from him a solemn promise to spare a living son, though guilty of murder, she brings out the real object of her petition. And she said, "Wherefore, then, hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one that is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home his banished." She bases her argument on the universality of death, and that no punishment of the murderer could restore him to life who had been slain; and further, that God himself, in the law for the avenging of blood, and the cities of refuge, had devised means that his banished be not expelled from him. She then excuses her bold attempt, and throws herself "upon the royal mercy. For as an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern both good and bad."

David at once perceived that this did not originate with the woman, and traced it to its true source. He yielded, however, to the suggestion; and commanded Joab to bring Absalom again to Jerusalem. Joab went to Geshur, and brought the exile home; but David refused to see him for two full years more.

Absalom was noted throughout the kingdom for the beauty of his person; a thing of no small importance in a land where personal appearance went far towards power. The confinement which he was compelled to endure, was a sore trial to this ambitious man; who was already looking forward to the throne. From selfish motives, therefore, he sought a full reconciliation with his offended father, upon whose favour every thing depended. In this extremity he appealed to Joab, but without success. "At length, by setting on fire the barley-field of Joab," he forced an interview. To Joab's complaint he makes no answer, but this, "Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now, therefore, let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me." Joab went to the king and told him; and when he called for Absalom, he "came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom."

The reconciliation, though only feigned on the part of Absalom, was still sufficient for his purpose. Having obtained the favour of the king, this ungrateful son plunged madly into his desperate career. Availing himself of his personal accomplishments and winning manners, he gained the favour of the people. He prepared and maintained the pomp and retinue of a king. To ingratiate himself still more with the people, "he stood beside the way to the palace; and it was so that when any man had a controversy, and came to the king for judgment, Absalom inquired into his cause;

and told him, See thy matters are good and right, but none will hear thee from the king." By these insinuations against his father's government—by an indiscriminate flattery towards all who came to the court, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Having secured numbers to his interest, he thought the people ripe for rebellion. He covers his treason with the mask of piety. Under pretence of paying a vow, which he had made during his exile, he gains permission from the king to go to Hebron, a sacred city, Absalom's birth-place, and a strong fortress. When he left the king, he took with him two hundred men; who went with him to attend the feast, and without any knowledge of his secret designs. At the same time he sent spies to his retainers "throughout all the tribes in Israel," saying, "As soon as ye shall hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron." After his arrival at Hebron, he called to him Ahithophel, David's counsellor, and who was no doubt privy to the conspiracy. Having thus obtained possession of this important place—once the seat of David's government—he was proclaimed king. The people flocked to him in large numbers, "and the conspiracy was strong."

News soon came to David that "the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom." Astounded by the suddenness of the event, and the evident signs of disaffection throughout the kingdom, David resolves upon instant flight, "lest Absalom overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." Most of the king's servants were faithful; and "he went forth, and all the people after him," and tarried in a place that was not far off. The whole body of the king's guards, Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites, passed on before him.* (In the midst of the general apostacy of the Israelites, it is pleasant to see the conduct of Ittai the Gittite, who, though a stranger, still follows David in his flight; and though warned of the danger, adhered to the king with a faithfulness and strength of affection which might well have shamed his rebellious subjects.) No time was to be lost. The impending danger forbade any delay. "And all the country wept with a loud voice, and the people passed over: the king himself also passed over the brook Kidron, toward the way of the wilderness." Zadok and Abiathar, and the whole body of the Levites went with the king, "bearing the ark of the covenant of God." "And he said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." This was bearing affliction with Christian resignation—a hope and trust in God worthy of all imitation.

The ark of God was carried back to Jerusalem, and David remained in the plain until he should receive word from Zadok and Abiathar of what was passing in the city. These men remained true to their king in all his adversity; though forbidden by their office to leave the ark, and go with him in his flight. Their services in the city were of far more avail than they could have been in the camp.

David then went on in the flight, "by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that was with him covered every man his head and went up, weeping as they went." He went as a mourning penitent rather than a king. No Christian can read this account without being reminded of another ascent up the sides of this same mount, by a far greater King than David, and who yet walked under a heavier load of sorrow.

In this journey he heard of the treason of Ahithophel;* and David prayed, "O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness; for the counsel of Ahithophel in these days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God." As he reached the top of the mount, he was met by his faithful

counsellor Hushai, whom he sent to the city, to defeat, if possible, the counsel of Ahithophel, and to advise the priests in their plans to assist the king. Hushai returned to Jerusalem, and found Absalom there.

The incidents in this flight crowd thickly upon each other. Not long after David had passed the summit of the mount, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him with a liberal supply for his necessity. The king asked after his master; and Ziba said, "He abideth at Jerusalem, for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." The ingratitude and perfidy of such conduct, if the report was true, justify fully the sentence of David, in revoking his former grant to Mephibosheth, and bestowing the lands upon his servant.

David found enemies to taunt him in his adversity, as well as friends to comfort. Scarcely had he left Ziba, when he fell in with "Shimei, the son of Gera, of the family of Saul, who came out and cursed still as he came." In his fury and rage "he cast stones at the king, and said, Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial; the Lord hath returned upon thee the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned." It is no wonder that such bitter insults to the king should excite the indignation of his officers. But David restrained their anger, by a reference to the wise and just providence of God, and to his present affliction. "If my son seeketh my life, how much more may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." And the king, and all the people came weary, and refreshed themselves at Bahurim.

While David was thus hastening on in his flight, Absalom had entered the city, and held his council. This success appears to have been more complete than he had anticipated. When Hushai saluted him with a "God save the king," Absalom reproached him with his apparent want of kindness to David his friend. He was now too hardened and bold to feel that his reproach fell with tenfold more force upon a traitorous son. In an artful reply, Hushai concealed his real purpose, "Whom the Lord and all Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. Whom should I serve? should it not be his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence." Flattered with this, Absalom gave him a place among the number of his counsellors.*

In the council, Ahithophel was yet pre-eminent. He saw well that in so desperate an enterprise no half-measures would do, and he did not hesitate to advise the most violent steps. He felt it necessary to show the people that there was no possibility of reconciliation; and to do it, "he urged Absalom to take public possession of his father's concubines." The graceless pupil yielded readily to his wicked teacher; and Nathan's dreadful threatening to David was fulfilled.

"Ahithophel, moreover, said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will pursue after David this night, and will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only, and will bring back the people unto thee in peace." Absalom felt no compunctions at the idea of thus murdering his father; but resolved to hear further the advice of Hushai, whom he now supposed firmly attached to his interests. This was the fatal step in his course. In all human probability, had he followed the advice of Ahithophel, David must have fallen. When Hushai learned the counsel of Ahithophel, he immediately condemned it, and with specious reasons justified his opinion. For, said he, "Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps; and thy father is a man of war, and will

not lodge with the people. Behold he is now hid in some hold!" And if some of those who attack him should fall, the whole party would be struck with terror, "and the hearts of the most valiant melt; for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men. I therefore counsel that all Israel be gathered for the fight—that thou go to battle in thine own person,"—"that thus with the whole host we light upon thy father as dew falleth on the ground, or if he be gotten into a city, that we then bring ropes and draw into the river till there be not a stone found there."

The argument and counsel of Hushai prevailed. The advice of Ahithophel was rejected, by the unanimous consent of the council. "For," says the record, "the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom;" i. e. the wisest advice was overruled by the providence of God, so that this unnatural son might receive the just punishment of his crimes.

Ahithophel now saw that all was lost; and went forthwith "to his house and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

At the same time, Hushai sent to David by Zadok and Abiathar the results of the council, and tidings of his danger. The sons of the priests who were to bear the message, were discovered and pursued; but they avoided their pursuers, and reached the king with the message of his faithful servants in the city, "Arise and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you." "Then David arose, and they that were with him, and they passed over Jordan; by the morning light there lacked not one that had not gone over. And they came to Mahanaim."

While David was at Mahanaim, there came to him, with abundant supplies for himself and his men, Shobi the son of Nahash the Ammonite, Machir, with whom Mephibosheth had long dwelt, and Barzillai the Gileadite. In this fruitful district David had leisure to recruit his wearied followers, and to call around him the brave men who were still loyal to their king. In the mean time, Absalom was urging on his preparations. All the men of Israel had been gathered. Amasa, Joab's nephew, was made captain of the host. And Absalom himself, at the head of his army, passed over Jordan in pursuit of his father. The armies of the father and son were pitched in the land of Gilead. The fate of the kingdom was to turn upon a single battle.

David arranged his forces in three divisions, one under Joab, a second under Abishai, a third under Ittai, the Gittite. He proposed to take the command in person; but the people would not permit it. They thought it more prudent that he should remain in the city, with a reserve force to aid them in case of necessity. The king yielded to their wishes. As the army marched out to battle, David charged his generals, "in the presence of all the people; Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

The engagement took place in the wood of Ephraim, on the east side of Jordan. David's forces were victorious, and the rebel army routed with the loss of twenty thousand men, the larger part of whom fell in the flight. Absalom perished by a most singular fate. In riding through the wood, his head and hair became entangled in the branches of an oak, and he was left hanging in the air, by the escape of his mule. In this situation he was discovered by one of Joab's men, who carried the intelligence to his general. Joab at first reproved the man for sparing the rebel, and then hastened away, in open contempt of the command which he had received, to slay him, while the king could

not interfere. When this was done, he recalled his troops from the pursuit. "And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him." Thus perished this miserable man: the only monument of his ambition was the pillar which he had erected in his lifetime, and which served to perpetuate the remembrance of his crimes.

When Ahimaaz requested to bear tidings of the victory to David, Joab, who knew with what regret David would hear the death of his son, refused to let him go. Another messenger was sent, who was present and witnessed the death of Absalom. Ahimaaz renewed his request, and at last obtained permission to go. In the way to the city he passed Cushi, who had started before him. As they came to the city, "David was sitting by the gates" waiting to hear the event of the battle. Ahimaaz reached the gate first, and cried to the king, "All is well, and fell upon his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hands against my lord the king." David's first inquiry was for the life of his son. "Is the young man Absalom safe." Ahimaaz replied, that when he left the scene of battle "he saw a great tumult, but knew not what it was." Just at this time the official messenger was brought to the king, and said, "Tidings, my lord, the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee." The anxious father repeats the question, "Is the young man, Absalom, safe? and Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he went, thus he said. O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people; for the people heard say that day, how the king was grieved for his son. And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away, when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face and cried, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

When Joab learned the public and immoderate grief of the king for his son, and saw its effect upon the army, he went boldly into the king, and with the most heartless effrontery reproved him for his conduct. Instead of excusing his own disobedience of orders, he reproaches the king for his grief. "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants which this day have saved thy life. For thou hast declared this day that thou regardest neither princes, nor servants; for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all we had died, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants; for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night." This firm, but imperious and unjust remonstrance, had its effect. "David arose and sat in the gate, and all the people came before the king."*

The death of Absalom put an effectual end to the conspiracy. On all sides the loyalty of the people began to regain its ascendancy. The sense of the injustice which they had done to David served to quicken the remembrance of the obligations which they owed to him. "The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and out of the hand of the Philistines; now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" Everywhere the sentiments of affection and duty were bringing the people to their allegiance to David.

Though this was the state of all Israel, the tribe of Judah had not yet publicly moved; and David sent messengers "to the elders of Judah, saying, Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh, why are ye the last then to bring back the king to his home?" To Amasa, Absalom's general,

he sent a special message. "Art not thou of my bone and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab." The message was effectual. "The heart of all the men of Judah was turned to David as the heart of one man, and they sent unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants. So the king returned and came to Jordan."

In his return, the king was accompanied by a large number of those who had sustained him during the rebellion. As he came to the Jordan, he was met by the tribe of Judah, who had come to conduct him home. "With the tribe of Judah came Shimei with a thousand men of Benjamin, and Ziba with his servants. As soon as the king had crossed the river, Shimei cast himself at his feet, made an humble confession of his sin, and sought the king's pardon. Abishai again seeks permission to put him to death, because he had cursed the Lord's anointed. But David reproved his officious zeal: "Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" Therefore the king swore unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die." The same faith which led David to bear patiently his malignant curses, now kept him in his prosperity from taking vengeance into his own hands.

Soon after Shimei, Mephibosheth came to congratulate David upon his return. From the day the king had departed, "Mephibosheth had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes." There was every apparent sign of deep grief. When they reached Jerusalem, David inquired why he had not gone with him. He answered that his servant "had deceived him," and had slandered him to the king; "but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes." David stopped him in his apology. "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said thou and Ziba divide the land." Whatever was meant by this decision, Mephibosheth was completely satisfied. "Yea," he says, "let him take all, since the king is come again in peace unto his own house." It seems probable that David intended to restore the original arrangement between Mephibosheth and his servant, and of course revoke the sentence he had passed when Ziba met him in his flight.

David next proceeded to reward the kindness and faithfulness of the aged Barzillai. "Come thou," said the king, "over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem." Barzillai had sustained him at Mahanaim as his king, but David would take him as a guest into his own dwelling and table. The good old man replied, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? Can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again; that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham, let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee." David granted his request, and as they parted "the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him, and he returned to his own place; but Chimham went on with him."

In the late rebellion, some of the people had become seriously disaffected towards the king. A quarrel arose between the tribe of Judah and the rest of Israel, as to the mode in which David was conducted home. The Israelites found fault with Judah that they had "stolen the king from their brethren." The men of Judah plead their near relation to David. The quarrel became serious, "and the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel." Sheba, the son of

Bichri, a Benjamite, took advantage of the strife, and blew his trumpet and said, "We have no part in Judah nor inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel." Inflamed with their strife, the fickle multitude followed after Sheba.

In the mean time the king reached Jerusalem, rearranged his family, and prepared to suppress the insurrection. Orders were given to Amasa "to assemble the men of Judah," who were faithful, and hold himself in readiness for further orders. Amasa went to obey the command, but from some cause tarried longer than the time appointed him. During this delay, the insurrection of Sheba was growing into a rebellion; and threatening to become more serious even than the revolt of Absalom. David therefore commissioned Abishai to take forces and quell the conspiracy. Under this commission Abishai and Joab (though Joab had received no orders) "took the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the mighty men, and pursued after Sheba." When they reached Gibeon, they fell in with Amasa their cousin, and Joab, without any hesitation, and under the pretence of friendship, murdered him as he had murdered Abner long before. Leaving one of their men to stand by the body, they hastened on in the pursuit. But when the men saw Amasa lying in his blood, they stood shocked at the spectacle, and with reluctance followed Joab in his expedition.

Sheba had gone through the tribes gathering the disaffected, and with a considerable force had taken refuge in Abel-Bethmaachah. Joab and his men pressed the siege with great vigour. As they were about to take the city, a wise woman cried to Joab, and said, "I am one of them that are peaceful and faithful in Israel; thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel; why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?" Joab answered that this was not his purpose, "Far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy. I seek only Sheba, who hath lifted up his hand against the king; deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." To avoid the siege, the people of the city listened to the advice of the woman, cut off Sheba's head, and cast it over the wall to Joab. This was the end of this wicked insurrection. With the death of Sheba all disaffection ceased. Joab withdrew with his army, and returned to Jerusalem. He was yet sufficiently powerful to escape the punishment he deserved. In fact David was now in the hands of his general, and felt himself unable to execute the sentence which his own sense of justice would have led him to pass. The brave, haughty, imperious man, was still over all the host of Israel, and justice slumbered for a time.

SECTION IX

famine of three years—war with the philistines—the pestilence—the preparation for the temple—solomon made king—david's charge to the people and solomon—david's death

Between the threatening of David by the prophet Nathan, and the death of Sheba, nearly thirteen years had passed away. This whole interval was one of heavy cares and civil strife. Between the grief over his own sin—the mortification at the unnatural and sinful conduct of his sons—and the facility with which his subjects were drawn away from their allegiance to the throne—there was little peace to the unhappy king. Nor were his trials all past.

When Saul, in his anger, murdered the priests at Nob, he slew also, as it seems probable, the Gibeonites,* who were servants of the priests, and thus (as well as by special covenant) under the peculiar care of God. This violation of public faith did not pass unnoticed. God was pleased "to make inquisition for the blood which had thus been unrighteously shed;" and sent a famine upon

the land for three successive years. David inquired of the Lord what was the cause of the judgment. And the Lord answered, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." Thus warned, David sent for the remnant of this people, and asked what must be done, that an atonement might be made, and that "ye may bless the inheritance of Israel." They answered that they would have neither silver nor gold, "but that seven men of the sons of Saul who had consumed them, should be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul." The king said, "I will give them;" but sparing the family of Jonathan (and all the male line of Saul, who alone could ever have made any claim to the crown) he chose two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, "and the five sons of Merab, the daughter of Saul." These seven were delivered to the Gibeonites, and hanged. The broken-hearted Rizpah "took sackcloth and spread it upon the rock, and watched there for five long months, until the rain dropped upon it out of heaven." "The bones of these seven, with the bones of Saul and Jonathan, David took and buried in the sepulchre of Kish. And after that, God was entreated for the land."

Thus God, by his sovereign appointment, expressed his abhorrence of the crime of Saul. It is not necessary to suppose that those who perished were implicated in crime; they suffered, indeed, but they suffered in virtue of his appointment, who had the lives of all in his hands, and can rightfully recall them to himself when and how he pleases. In this melancholy transaction, David stands clear from all blame or jealousy of the house of Saul, by the very terms of the narrative, and from the fact that he spared all the male descendants of that house, who were at this time numerous in Israel.

At this point of the narrative, the restless Philistines appear again. Four severe battles were fought between David and the Philistines. In the first of these, David fought in person, and waxing faint was nearly slain by a Philistine giant; but Abishai came to his relief "and smote the Philistine and killed him." Alarmed at this sign of his increasing age, the men of David swore unto him, saying, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." In each of the succeeding battles, a Philistine of gigantic stature fell by the hand of David and his servants. These irreconcilable enemies were thus effectually humbled, and the rest of David's reign was free from foreign war. "And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song—in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul." "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust." He relates his trust in God, in the time of his distresses—the wonderful manner in which God had delivered him—his own integrity in his adherence to God; and then closes with an ascription of all his military success and prosperity to God alone, and a solemn thanksgiving for all the mercies he had received. "He, Jehovah, is the tower of salvation for his king; and showeth mercy to his anointed, unto David and to his seed for evermore. Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, I will sing praises unto thy name."

After these closing wars with the Philistines, the Hebrew kingdom enjoyed an interval of peace and prosperity. They were free from foreign wars, and the people remained happy and contented under their government. But at length an incident took place which marred this scene of peace in which David's long reign seemed about to close. "The anger of the Lord was moved against Israel, and Satan, as the adversary, was permitted to tempt David to number the people." David yielded to the temptation. Pride in his flourishing kingdom, or perhaps a desire after foreign conquest, moved him to this step, so offensive to God, and in direct contempt of that promise, that the seed

of Israel should be innumerable. Joab was commissioned to take the census. At first he remonstrated against the measure. "The Lord make his people an hundred times as many as they be; but why doth my Lord the king delight in this thing, and make himself a cause of trespass to Israel." The king's word, however, prevailed against Joab; and they went forth to number the people. After a census of nine months, they gave their return to the king. The two statements vary as to the number, so far as it was taken; but they may be nearly reconciled by supposing that the military were not enrolled in one case, whereas they were included in the larger number. The census was never fully completed. The duty was odious to Joab, and offensive to God; "and Levi and Benjamin were not counted."

Wrath fell from the Lord while the census was going forward, "and he smote Israel." David's conscience condemned him, and he said unto God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done; but now, I beseech thee, O Lord, do away with the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. And the Lord spake unto Gad, the prophet, Go and tell David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things, choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee; either three years of famine, or three months flight before thine enemies, or three days pestilence from the destroying angel throughout the coasts of Israel. David replied, I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of man." The pestilence came, "and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men." When the angel reached Jerusalem, the command came, "It is enough, stay now thine hand." "And the angel stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite." David then assumed to himself the sin and the guilt. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house, but not on my people that they should be plagued." Upon this humiliation of David, and intercession for his people, the message came by the prophet, "Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah." David went as the Lord commanded; purchased the ground at its full price, "and built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the plague was stayed from Israel." Araunah at first wished to give the ground, the victims, and the fuel, to the king; but David refused. He was unwilling "to offer unto the Lord that which cost him nothing." And besides, it is probable that he had received some communication that the spot thus chosen by God as a place of offering, was to be the place for the temple, and to become the seat of the public worship of all the tribes of Israel.* "Then David said, This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel," thereby consecrating it for that temple which was "to be builded for the Lord, exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries."

With all the strength which yet remained to him, this pious king now set himself to prepare for the temple. Although forbidden to build it himself, he felt called upon to do what was in his power to hasten it forward. The rest of his days were devoted to this work. "An hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, brass and iron without weight, wrought stones, and cedar wood in abundance, were prepared to build the house of God." Solomon and the princes of Israel received the charge to arise and build. While engaged in this peaceful work, so suited to the closing days of a long and troublous reign, his attention was called to the question concerning the succession to the throne. It was no doubt well known to all at the court, that David had selected Solomon for heir. He himself appears to have considered it as decided, and did not anticipate any opposition to the choice. But Adonijah the son of Haggith, the king's eldest son then

living, (Amnon and Absalom, the first and third sons, had been slain, and Chileab the second had probably died,) laid claim to the throne as his inheritance. Like Absalom, he was of goodly person and a favourite with his father. For some time he had maintained a princely state and retinue, and David had not forbidden him. Encouraged by this permission of the king, he conferred with Joab and Abiathar, and with their advice formed the purpose of usurping the kingdom. With Joab as the head of the army, and Abiathar as the head of the priests, he felt certain of success, "and invited the king's sons and the men of Judah" to a banquet, when he was to be crowned king. Those who were known as friends to Solomon were not invited. "Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not." David seems to have been in utter ignorance of Adonijah's design. Nathan first acquaints Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, with this conspiracy; and urges her by her own life and the life of her son, to go to David and claim the fulfilment of his promise, "that Solomon should reign after him and sit upon his throne." Bathsheba went to the king, who was now enfeebled with age, and ministered to by Abishag the Shunamite, and said, "My lord, thou swearest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me; and now Adonijah reigneth, and thou knowest it not. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him." While she was yet speaking, Nathan the prophet came in, and confirmed her intelligence. David at once recalled his wonted energy, and in the most solemn terms renewed the grant to Solomon. "As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day." Bathsheba received the appointment of her son with the deepest reverence and thankfulness, and said, "Let my lord, king David, live for ever." David, however, once fully roused to the danger, did not let the matter rest here. "And the king said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah; and they came before the king. And he said, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon, and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel, for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. And Benaiah said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too." They went down accordingly, with the Cherethites and Pelethites, and anointed Solomon king. "And they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, God save king Solomon; and they rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them."

The joy of the people, at the peaceful succession of Solomon to the throne, disturbed the feast of Adonijah and his friends. They were not left long in doubt, as to the cause of rejoicing, Jonathan the son of Abiathar came and said to Adonijah: Verily, king David hath made Solomon king, and moreover, the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed, and said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it." Upon this intelligence, the feast was broken up, "and every man went his own way." No notice was immediately taken of the actors in this conspiracy. Adonijah fled, "and took hold on the horns of the altar;" but Solomon sent for him, and publicly pardoned him, and dismissed him to his own house. Thus Solomon, by the Divine election, as well as by the choice of his father, was made king over Israel.

Having thus exalted Solomon to the throne, and established the civil government of the kingdom, David “gathered together the princes of Israel, and the priests and Levites,” and regulated the methods and orders of public worship. The Levites, from thirty years old and upward, numbered thirty-eight thousand, of whom twenty-four thousand were to set forward the work of the temple, six thousand were judges and officers, four thousand porters, and four thousand praised the Lord. They were divided according to their courses among the sons of Levi. The priests, the sons of Aaron, were to offer the offerings, to burn incense, and to bless in the name of Jehovah. These also were divided into twenty-four courses, sixteen among the sons of Eleazar, and eight among the sons of Ithamar. The singers under Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, were divided into twenty-four courses of twelve each. To the porters also, David assigned their distinct offices and services. The solemn and gorgeous temple-service was thus provided for. The splendid ritual of the Old Testament economy was completed. The work of David was nearly done. The covenant people were in possession of the promised land; the ark of God, with the visible glorious presence of him who dwelt upon it, had received a resting-place; the chosen spot for the temple had been determined, and the order of its services appointed; nothing remained but that the man of God should deliver his dying charge, and go to rest with his fathers.

“And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet and said, Hear me, my brethren and my people: as for me I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it.”

Then giving Solomon the pattern for the temple and its porches and buildings, an account of the materials he had amassed, and the order of Priests and Levites which he had fixed, he concludes his charge to the young king, “Be strong, and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.”

To strengthen the interest of the people in this work, David exhorts them, by his own example, to consecrate of their substance to its completion. Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, "I have given, of mine own proper good, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver; who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"

The royal munificence of David secured a hearty response to this appeal from the people. "They offered willingly and rejoiced, because with perfect heart they offered unto the Lord. They gave liberally of gold, silver, brass and iron, besides precious stones for the service of the house of God."

David's heart was filled with delight at the willing sacrifice of the people. And David said, "Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all: and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared, to build thee a house for thy holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision."* At the call of David, the whole assembly, with one voice, joined in the joyful public worship.

A second time they professed their allegiance to Solomon as king; who now reigned on the throne of his father, and received the acclamations of a loyal people. "And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel."

As David felt death drawing nigh, he called Solomon and gave him a final charge. "I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, as written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper, and that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me."

He then charged Solomon to remember Joab, and to deal with him as the murderer of Abner and Amasa. "Do according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." It is plain that this command did not spring from any resentment on the part of David. According to every law, human and divine, Joab deserved to die. David was culpable in allowing him to escape justice so long. Doubtless it rested upon his conscience now as death approached; and he felt that he could not depart in peace, unless by some means he could clear his throne and government

from any share in the murder of those innocent men; and therefore he charged Solomon, as the administrator of the law, to see justice enforced.

He lays it upon Solomon as a solemn duty to cherish the remembrance of Barzillai's kindness, "and to deal favourably with his sons: to let them be as those that eat at thy table."

And at the last, he commands the king, his son, to watch the conduct of Shimei, and to treat him not as a guiltless man; but yet, since I have sworn to spare his life, "bring thou his hoar head down to the grave with blood;" or as it may, and probably should be rendered, "bring not his hoar head down to the grave with blood." Solomon evidently understood the command in this latter sense; for while he executed justice upon Joab, he spared the life of Shimei. He ordered him, indeed, as a seditious and evil-disposed person, to build his house in Jerusalem, and to remain under the eye of the court, on the pain of death. Farther than this he did not understand the command of David to reach. Shimei accepted the conditions, which Solomon imposed, with gladness, and dwelt in peace at Jerusalem. It was only when he violated these conditions, and gave ground for suspicion that he was again bent upon his seditious work, that Solomon passed sentence of death upon him. He did not perish in consequence of David's charge, (and this makes it perfectly clear that David never intended his death,) but in consequence of his own restless and lawless spirit. He died no doubt as a traitor, for we are told at the time of his death that the kingdom was then established in the hand of Solomon.

Then followed, in the closing scene of his eventful life, these last words of David: "David the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David." After a reign of forty years, he died, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour. As a warrior, he was brave, prudent, keenly alive to the sufferings of his soldiers, and beloved and trusted by those whom he commanded. His brilliant victories testify to his ability. As a king, he was wise to counsel, and energetic in carrying his plans into execution. He was kind to the suffering, and impartial in the execution of justice. He used his power as one accountable to God. As a man, he was affectionate and generous, noble in all his impulses, forgiving to his enemies and grateful to friends. As an inspired poet, his name and memory have been and will be cherished by every pious heart. As a worshipper of the true God, he was steadfast, sincere, humble, and trustful, a pattern to those who came after him. And though he fell grievously, yet he submitted to reproof, humbled himself before God in the truest repentance, and obtained an abiding sense of his mercy. He may justly be numbered among the greatest and the best, not only of kings, but of men.

SECTION X

solomon king—his sacrifice at gibeon—death of adonijah and joab—solomon prepares to build the temple—the treaty with tyre and egypt

Solomon came to the throne, when the country was in a profound peace; which lasted, with but slight interruption, during his long reign. He began his reign in the spirit of that solemn charge which he received from the lips of a dying father. It is said of him that "he loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father; only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places." It will be remembered, that while the ark was brought to Jerusalem, the tabernacle and the brazen altar remained at Gibeon. Thither the young king, having called his chief men, went, to commence his reign, with a solemn public sacrifice to God; for that was the great high place, and there Solomon "offered a thousand burnt-offerings." On the night following the sacrifice, God appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." And Solomon said, "Thou hast showed unto David thy great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king, in stead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people." The petition of Solomon was peculiarly acceptable to God, and God said, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king; behold, I have done according to thy words: I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." After this answer to his prayer, Solomon awoke from his vision, returned to Jerusalem, and offered burnt-offerings before the ark of the Lord, and made a feast to all his servants.

The gift which Solomon had received, he had immediate occasion to exercise. There were two women dwelling alone, in the same house, each with an infant child. Through the neglect of the mother, the child of the one died. Aware of her loss, she arose at midnight, and went and exchanged her dead son for the living one of her companion. The true mother of the living child brought her complaint before the king, and claimed her son. But the other denied her crime. Each one claimed the living as her own. There appears to have been no evidence of any kind, by which the controversy could be decided. Solomon saw that the only way to determine it was by an appeal to the instinctive affection of a mother for her offspring. And the king said, "Bring a sword, and divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." But the heart of the real mother answered at once to the appeal, "and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; while the other said, Divide it." The wise plan of the king succeeded, and he gave sentence, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment, and feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

While this was taking place, the restless spirit of Adonijah was again at work. In his extreme old age, David, by the advice of his servants, had taken Abishag the Shunamite among the number of his wives. Her beauty attracted the love of Adonijah, and he came to Bathsheba, and urged her to ask from the king Abishag for his wife. The design of this request appears in the way he urges his

suit. "Thou knowest," he said, "that the kingdom was mine, howbeit, it is now turned and become my brother's, for it was his from the Lord." Adonijah knew well that the request was a treasonable one, and thus Solomon understood it. For when his mother urged the request of Adonijah, he replies, "Why dost thou ask Abishag for him? ask also the kingdom." Solomon immediately adopted the most stringent measures, and treats his brother as a condemned traitor. "God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life." And he sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, "and he fell upon him that he died." This was certainly summary justice; if indeed any state policy can make such arbitrary measures fall under the name of justice. But it is difficult for us to enter fully into all that was implied in Adonijah's suit; and it would seem probable, that there were other signs of his treasonable disposition, which led Solomon so instantly to punish. This probability is increased, by the fact that Abiathar and Joab—Adonijah's supporters in his former conspiracy—are here again connected with him. Their punishment immediately follows. Abiathar was banished to his own possessions, at Anathoth, and deprived of his priestly office—a fulfilment of the threatening of God to Eli, "that the priesthood should depart from his house." Abiathar was the last priest of the house of Ithamar, (of which family Eli was,) and the priesthood returned again to the house of Eleazar, in the person of Zadok.

When Joab heard that his partners were punished, he fled unto the "tabernacle of Jehovah, and caught hold on the horns of the altar." Benaiah was sent to bring him from his sanctuary, but Joab refused. He trusted to escape justice, through the protection of the altar. Solomon, however, well understood that the altar could be no sanctuary for the hardened criminal. Benaiah was again despatched to go and slay him, even at the altar; "that thou mayest take away the innocent blood from me, and from the house of my father, which Joab shed, who fell upon two men more righteous than he." So Benaiah went as commanded, and fell upon the "hoary criminal," and slew him, and he was buried in his own house, in the wilderness. Thus fell David's wicked but bravest general. Justice had at length overtaken him, and a broken law was executed.

As Zadok was made priest in the room of Abiathar, so Benaiah was placed in the room of Joab, as captain of the host.

With the crushing of this conspiracy, Solomon's throne was established in peace. Around him were gathered, as chief men and counsellors, the sons of his father's friends. "Over the tribute were twelve general officers, whose charge it was to provide for the royal household; for every day thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty of meal, thirty oxen and an hundred sheep," besides other things in like profusion. The whole nation enjoyed an unparalleled state of happiness and prosperity. His kingdom swelled into vast dimensions—"from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates, and from Dan to Beersheba: Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry; and every man dwelt safely under his vine, and under his fig-tree."

In the midst of this worldly prosperity Solomon remained faithful in his attachment to the true faith, and to the charge which had been laid upon him. "He determined to build the temple for the name of the Lord, and an house for his kingdom." "Of those who were strangers in the land, seventy thousand men were numbered to bear burdens, and eighty thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them." While engaged in these preparations he received an embassy from Hiram, king of Tyre, congratulating him upon his coming to the throne. An alliance

had existed between this king and David. Their territories lay contiguous, and were mutually necessary for each other. Salomon entered readily into the kind designs of Hiram, and a league and treaty of commerce was made between them which lasted throughout their days.

To the embassy of Hiram, Solomon replied, "Thou knowest that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God, for the wars which were about him on every side. But now the Lord my God hath given me rest, and I purpose to build an house to the Lord my God, as the Lord spake unto David my father. And the house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I, then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? Send me now, therefore, a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, that can skill to grave with the men that are with me, whom David my father did provide. Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and almug-trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants, even to prepare me timber in abundance. And behold I will give to thy servants twenty thousand measures of wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and an equal number of baths of oil and of wine." Hiram entered cordially into the plans of Solomon. He seems to have been a worshipper of the true God: at least he recognized fully his gracious providence. "Because the Lord hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them;" and he adds, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding to build an house for Jehovah." At the same time he consented fully to the treaty stipulations which Solomon had proposed. The Tyrians were to cut the timber of cedar and fir, and deliver it at Joppa, the nearest seaport to Jerusalem; and the Hebrews were to deliver, in turn, the grain, and oil, and wine, which had been agreed upon. A man skilful in all the curious works which were to adorn the temple, was found and sent to Jerusalem. He was of mixed descent; his father a Tyrian, and his mother of the daughters of Dan—of the same name with the Tyrian king.

Solomon immediately raised a levy of "thirty thousand men," and sent them to Lebanon, "ten thousand a month by courses, to aid the Tyrians in hewing the timber, and squaring the vast blocks of stone." The work was thus fairly commenced, although as yet the ground had not been broken upon which that splendid structure was so noiselessly to rise.

From the alliance with Tyre, Solomon turned his attention to Egypt, and entered into a treaty with Pharaoh. A matrimonial alliance was formed, and he took the daughter of Pharaoh "to wife, and brought her into the city of David." The result of this alliance, formed in direct violation of the command of God, was by no means happy; indeed, in the progress of his history, we find it producing the most lamentable defection and apostacy.

SECTION XI

the temple, its furniture, the dedication—god appears a second time to solomon

Having thus gathered the materials, "in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Exodus out of Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign, in the second month, the month Zif, Solomon began to build the house of the Lord." The site of the temple is fixed in Chronicles, "Solomon began to build at Jerusalem, in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite." Mount Moriah was situated in

the south-eastern quarter of Jerusalem. It was a steep eminence, whose summit was not at first sufficient for the buildings of the temple. On its precipitous sides walls were built up, and the interval filled in with earth, to increase the level surface. The stones in this foundation were of great magnitude, and some of them remain until the present time. The dimensions and proportions of this renowned structure have been the subject of much dispute. According to the first account, it was "sixty cubits in length, twenty cubits broad, and thirty high." The second account adds, "that the porch was one hundred and twenty cubits high," while the Jewish historian, Josephus, gives its height as sixty cubits. There is no difficulty whatever in the Scripture accounts; the one gives the height of the body of the building, the other that of the porch. The porch stood at the eastern extremity of the building. At the entrance of the porch were the two brazen pillars—"Jachin on the right, and Boaz on the left." These pillars were cast eighteen cubits high, and twelve cubits in circumference. Chapiters, or capitals, live cubits high, were placed upon the pillars. Around these were wreaths of net-work and chain-work. These chapiters were wrought "with lily-work, and pomegranates, two hundred, in rows round about the chapter. Two wreaths encircled each chapter, and two rows of pomegranates were upon each wreath." The pillars were not used for support, but for ornament, and were probably emblematical.

The temple was surrounded by three stories of chambers, "each one of which was five cubits high." The lower chamber was five cubits broad, the middle six, and the upper one seven. As the walls went up they were not so thick, and the increased width of the chambers arose from the rests or offsets in the wall. The entrance of these chambers was probably from without, "for the door for the middle was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle-chamber, and out of the middle into the third."

"Above the chambers were the windows of narrow lights." The temple was built of "stone made ready before it was brought to the place, (so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building.)" The stone, however, were covered with boards of cedar, and the cedar overlaid with pure gold.

The walls within, and the ceiling, were lined with cedar, and the floor was covered with planks of fir. The walls, also, were overlaid with gold, and ornamented with "carvings of palms, and flowers, and cherubims," "and garnished with precious stones." The upper row of chambers were also overlaid with gold. Coming within the temple we find it divided into two apartments—"the holy, and the most holy, or holy of holies." "The holy was forty cubits long," with the width of the temple, "and the most holy twenty cubits square." A wall of cedar separated these, which, like the other walls of the temple, was overlaid with gold, and covered with cherubims and flowers.

The walls and the floors of the most holy were covered with pure fine gold, amounting "to six hundred talents, and the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold." The doors of the outer temple were made of fir and hung upon posts of olive-trees, with hinges of gold; but the doors of the oracle, or most holy, were entirely composed of olive. Both doors were made "with folding leaves, and richly adorned with cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, and covered with pure gold." By the door between the holy and most holy, which was most probably left open, "hung the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, with cherubims wrought thereon."

Within the oracle were "two cherubims, each ten cubits high. Their wings were five cubits each: from the uttermost part of the one wing to the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. Both

cherubims were of one size. They were placed upon their feet, with their faces inward; so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. The cherubims were overlaid with gold." These were distinct from, and much larger than those which over shadowed the mercy-seat. Within the holy of holies stood only the ark of the covenant; and here the priest alone entered once every year, not without, blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. The veil which concealed it from the gaze of the people was not yet rent: the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing.

Without the veil, within the holy place, "stood the golden altar of incense." In place of the single candlestick, which was in the tabernacle, "there were ten candlesticks of gold, with their lamps and flowers, five on the right side of the holy place, and five on the left." There were also ten golden tables, five on the right side, and five on the left. "The hundred bowls, and the lamps, and snuffers, and basons, and censers, and spoons, and all the vessels for the house of God, were of pure gold."

The temple was surrounded "by an inner court, or court of the priests; built with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams." According to Josephus, this court was three cubits high. In this court, on the right side of the temple, eastward, over against the south, was placed the molten sea. This immense brazen laver, "was five cubits high, ten in diameter, and thirty in circumference. It contained two thousand baths."* It was supported by twelve brazen oxen, three looking toward each quarter of the compass. "It was an hand-breadth thick, and the brim of it was wrought with the flowers of lilies: and below the brim it was enriched with varied devices." This sea was for the personal and ceremonial ablutions of the priests. Besides this molten sea, there were ten lavers standing upon ten brazen bases, used for the cleansing of the sacrifices. The bases were regarded as master-pieces of art. They were four cubits square, and three cubits high; surrounded with borders of carved lions, oxen, and cherubim. Beneath the borders were other ornaments, which are not described. Each base was mounted upon brazen rollers, or wheels. The lavers which were placed upon the bases, were four cubits, and contained forty baths. They were arranged five on each side of the court. In this court also stood, most probably, the brazen altar which Solomon made, twenty cubits long, and twenty cubits broad, and ten cubits high.

Besides this inner court, there was still another great court, or outer court, or as it was called in later periods, "the court of the Lord's house." Still beyond this, there were added spacious buildings, or porticos; some built by Solomon, and others at a later period.

"The castings and vessels of the temple, were made by Hiram, the Tyrian, in the plain of Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan." "Solomon was seven years in building the temple."

The sanctuary, or temple itself, was not so celebrated for its size, as for its magnificence. Standing on a lofty summit, easily seen from all directions, covered with gold, and adorned with the most costly materials; it must have been not only a conspicuous, but a splendid object. It was no doubt an object of admiration to every beholder; but glorious as it stood, its true glory was yet wanting. That which made it not only to be admired, but revered by every Israelite, was yet to enter it.

Solomon having thus completed the building, and brought in the consecrated things, assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, out of Zion, the city of David. And all the elders of Israel assembled themselves to king Solomon, at the feast, in the seventh month. The priests and Levites took up the ark, and brought it and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all "the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, did they bring up. And the priests brought the ark into its place, into the oracle of the temple, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. And they drew out the staves, so that the ends of them were seen in the holy place before the oracle. While this was going on, Solomon and all the congregation were sacrificing before the ark; and the Levites which were singers, of Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun, with their brethren, arrayed in their priestly garments, stood at the east end of the (brazen) altar, sounding with trumpets. And it came to pass, as the priests came out from the temple, and all the singers as one, made one sound in praising and thanking God; when they lifted up their voices, with trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that, then, the house was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." He for whom the temple had been built, had come, and taken possession of his dwelling.

"Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. And the king turned his face, and blessed all the congregation of Israel, (for they were all standing.) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it. I am risen up in the room of my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he made with our fathers when he brought them out of the land of Egypt." "Then spreading his hands toward heaven, he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart; who hast kept with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him: thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. Therefore, now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day. That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place: and when thou hearest, forgive. If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him, and the oath come before thine altar, in this house, then hear thou in heaven, and do and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, and justifying the righteous. When thy people Israel be smitten before their enemies, because of their sin, and turn again, and confess thy name, and pray unto thee: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive their sin, and bring back thy people into the land of their fathers. When the heaven is shut up because of

their sin, if they pray toward this place, then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants; that thou may teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon the land of their inheritance. If there be in the land famine, pestilence, or whatsoever plague or sickness, whatsoever prayer shall be made by any man or thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, then hear thou and forgive, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest, (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men,) that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest their fathers. Moreover, concerning a stranger, when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all the people of the earth may know thy name to fear thee. If thy people go out to battle, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and pray toward this house, hear thou their prayer and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them into captivity: if, then, they shall bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication, saying, We have sinned and done perversely; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, and pray toward this house; then hear thou their prayer, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive; for they be thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out of Egypt, for thou didst separate them from all people of the earth, to be thine inheritance. Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.”*

When Solomon had made an end of praying, he rose up from kneeling, “and stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel. Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people; there had not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers, let him not leave us nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments. Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes and keep his commandments, as at this day.”

When this prayer was closed, and the benediction was pronounced, “fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offerings and the sacrifices. And when the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

“Then the king, and all the people, offered sacrifices before the Lord; and Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king, and all the people, dedicated the house of the Lord; and the court which was before the house; for there he offered burnt-offerings, for the brazen altar was too small for the number of the offerings.”

On this joyful occasion, Solomon, and all the congregation, from the entering of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, held a feast of fourteen days: seven for the feast of tabernacles, and seven for the

dedication. "On the eighth day, or the day after the feast, he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and Israel his people."* Thus happily was this great work accomplished. God had visibly, by the fire from heaven, accepted the offering of his people. The ark of the covenant, with the glorious Shechinah, found its last resting-place. Jerusalem was the place where God was known; and where, alone, he could safely be worshipped by sacrifices and offerings. From henceforth, the high-places were sinful and idolatrous.

After this the Lord appeared to Solomon, and said unto him, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and will keep my statutes and judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people: and at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished and hiss; and shall say, Why hath the Lord done this unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them; therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil." A threatening which was soon fulfilled. Here, as always, we find the promises of God conditional—they are given only upon a covenant; and in the history we shall find that as the conditions on the part of the people were not fulfilled, so they failed to receive the promise. The people whom we now behold so joyful and prosperous in their service of Jehovah, we shall soon see (what the prophetic prayer of Solomon seemed to anticipate) bowing down to idols, and the wretched captives of their foes. This holy temple, now standing unrivalled in its beauty and richness, was soon plundered of its wealth, desecrated by the worship of false gods, a hissing and astonishment among the nations. So true is it that all prosperity, outward as well as inward, depends upon a close adherence to the worship and service of God.

SECTION XII

solomon's other buildings—the source of his wealth—solomon's offence, the troubles of his latter days—his death

Solomon's wealth was mostly expended in building. Besides the temple, he built a palace for himself, which occupied thirteen years in its erection. "He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon," which was more extensive than the temple, though far less splendid. "Around both these palaces there were large porches," or colonnades. A peculiarly splendid abode was erected for the queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. All these buildings were of costly stones, of immense size, and covered with cedar. "In the porch of judgment, at the royal palace, was the great throne of ivory, overlaid with pure gold. The ascent to the throne was by six steps, and on each side were stays, and two lions stood beside the stays; and upon the six steps were twelve lions." In the

palace at Lebanon “were two hundred targets of beaten gold, of six hundred shekels each; and three hundred golden shields, of three pounds to each shield. All the vessels of this house, and all Solomon's vessels, were of pure gold, none were of silver, it was nothing thought of in the days of this king.”

Besides these private palaces, Solomon built and fortified the cities of Gezer, which he had received as a dowry with the queen, Pharaoh's daughter; Hamath, which he captured; Tadmor in the wilderness; the cities which had been given to Hiram,* and by treaty receded to Israel; “and all the cities of store, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and all that which Solomon desired to build in the land of his dominion.”

The men who were employed in “these works were the remnant of the Canaanites, whom the children of Israel were unable to destroy. Solomon used these as bondmen in the more laborious and menial parts of his service; while the native Israelites filled the stations of trust and honour. “They were his officers, his men of war, the rulers of his chariots and horsemen, and rulers over those that wrought in the work.”

To carry forward and complete these vast designs, and to maintain the kingdom in all the luxury and splendour in which it was now existing, required a constant influx of wealth. The drain upon the royal treasury must have been immense. No resources within the kingdom itself could have furnished anything like an adequate supply. Accordingly, we find the people of Israel, and the king himself, now, for the first time, engaged in foreign commerce. Here again Solomon had recourse to his friend and ally the king of Tyre. As his own subjects were almost entirely an agricultural people, they were unfitted to build or man the ships necessary for this traffic. But by the aid of Hiram the plan was executed. “Solomon fitted out a fleet in Ezion-geber, beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom.” The fleet was manned with a mixed crew of Hebrews and Tyrians. It sailed to Ophir, and brought thence in gold four hundred and twenty talents to the king. Besides the direct return, in the precious metals, these ships were no doubt laden with the merchandize of the east, which were disposed of all along the shores of the Mediterranean; and thus Palestine became the centre, for a time, of that lucrative trade.*

The king was at the same time engaged in another trade—from Egypt, through his dominions across the Syrian desert, and so on eastward. What were the avails of this trade we are not informed, but it was probably large; as we know from more recent history, that this commerce has always conferred great wealth upon those who were engaged in it. “Linen yarn, horses and chariots, were brought from Egypt, and sold to the Syrians; and Solomon's servants had a complete monopoly of the whole trade.”

In the course of this traffic, Solomon's wealth and wisdom became widely known. The splendour of his court attracted the admiration of other monarchs. “And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart. And they brought every man his present; vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, and garments, and armour, and spices, and harness, and mules, a rate year by year.” Among others who were thus drawn to the king, was the queen of Sheba. Her territories lay in the southern part of Arabia. When the report of Solomon's wisdom reached her, she came, with a large retinue, and a present of gold and spices, and precious stones, to prove Solomon with hard questions. Solomon answered all her questions. The impression made upon the queen, by the wisdom of Solomon, and the splendour of his court, and the temple service, was

almost overwhelming. "There was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not their words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in "thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice."

The whole revenue of the king, from all these sources, was six hundred threescore and six talents* of gold a year, besides that which came from the merchantmen, from the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country. Silver was in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as the sycamore trees for abundance.

This unexampled tide of prosperity began to have its influence. There are few, perhaps, who could have lived in the midst of such luxury, and wealth, and power, without being corrupted by them. Solomon, at least, with all his wisdom, fell, and fell most lamentably. He has given us his own experience, filled with solemn warnings, in the book of Ecclesiastes. He drank the cup of earthly joys, and left upon record for us the satisfaction which they gave, in that short sentence, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. "But Solomon loved many strange women, beside the daughter of Pharaoh"—women of the surrounding nations, with whom God had expressly forbidden all intermarriage. Solomon clave unto these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. These guilty alliances were not long in producing their result. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians; and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which sacrificed unto their gods. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it unto thy servant. Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

We are not informed in the history, what effect this warning had upon the guilty and besotted king. We may gather, however, from the tone of his later writings, that he was brought to true repentance and a happy reformation. It was too late now to avert the calamity which was threatened. The clouds were rapidly gathering around this once happy empire. The scene of peace and prosperity was suddenly overcast. The low mutterings of discontent might be heard. It was beginning to be felt that pomp and outward show did not constitute real happiness. A heavily taxed people were growing restless under their burdens. In these conditions it only needed the sin of Solomon to bring about rebellion and civil war. Nor was this all. Foreign and subject nations were beginning to rouse themselves to resistance. On the south-east, Hadad, of the royal blood of Edom, was troubling the Israelitish king. In the slaughter of the Edomites, by Joab, Hadad, then an infant, had escaped, and flying from one place to another had at last reached Egypt. He grew in

favour with the Egyptian king, and eventually married into the royal family. On learning the death of David, he had returned to his own country, and began "a petty warfare which Solomon did not repress."

On the north, another adversary appeared, in the king of Damascus, Rezon had revolted from Hadadezer king of Zobah, and with a band of followers had made himself master of Damascus, and now reigned there. In the later years of Solomon's reign, his power began to be formidable. Both these enemies, as we are told, were permitted thus to annoy the king of Israel, as a punishment of his sin.

A more serious enemy, however, arose in the midst of his own kingdom. "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite, had distinguished himself as a man of valour." Solomon, seeing his worth, had exalted "him to be a ruler over the house of Joseph." From his energy and valour, he had no doubt acquired great influence among the northern tribes. To this person, God sent the prophet Ahijah. As Jeroboam came from Jerusalem, the prophet met him in the field, alone; "and rending his garment into twelve pieces," delivered his energetic message. "Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. Because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped other gods, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my judgments. Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hands, he shall have one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem; and I will make him prince, all the days of his life. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hands and will give it thee, even the ten tribes; and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my commandments as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will afflict the seed of David, but not for ever." This doing of Ahijah soon came to the ears of the king; "and Jeroboam's life was no longer safe." He therefore fled into Egypt, unto Shishak, and remained there until the death of Solomon.

In the midst of these thickening calamities, Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. It was well for him that he did not live to see the results of his conduct. He had reigned forty years, with scarcely any thing to check the flow of prosperity. He found the kingdom strong, and apparently containing the elements of perpetuity; he left it in actual decay. He came to the throne in a time of peace; he left it shaken by foreign war, and internal strife. A united people welcomed him to the kingdom, with great joy; he so ruled that few probably mourned over his death. With all his great wisdom, a love of display, a voluptuous life, and a sinful departure from the true God; brought misery upon a happy people, and covered his own name with deep disgrace. And yet few, perhaps, would have stood the test to which he was subjected, better than Solomon. It is more difficult to meet the trials of prosperity than of adversity. It is no uncommon thing to see men fail here, who have walked without reproach through the very deepest of afflictions. And the fact that, though he was thus under the power of the world, and his own corruption, he yet, by God's grace, recovered himself, and died in the fear of God, ought to redeem his character, in some measure, from the reproach under which it lies. At all events, in any just estimate of his character, we must take into account his virtues, as well as his vices; his wisdom, his generosity, his zeal at first for the worship of God, as well as his love of the world, and

his shameful idolatry.

SECTION XIII

division of the kingdom—reoboam's reign, and death—jeroboam, the contemporary of reoboam and adijam

Solomon left but one son, "Rehoboam, the son of Naamah, an Ammonitess, who was forty-one years old when his father died," and he prepared to ascend the throne. "All Israel had assembled at Shechem; and thither Rehoboam went to receive the kingdom, and their allegiance. In the mean time, Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, and appeared boldly as a leader among the congregation of the people. Jeroboam, and the congregation through him, demanded a reduction of the taxes, as a condition of their service. "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, make thou the service of thy father, and the yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." Three days were taken for deliberation: during which, Rehoboam consulted with his counsellors. The old men who had stood before his father, and were better acquainted with the true condition of things; advised him to treat the request of the people kindly, "and speak good words unto them." The young men, who had grown up with the king, on the contrary, advised him to return a threatening answer, which should bring the disaffected to submission. When the appointed day came, Rehoboam, following the advice of his young companions, answered the people roughly, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The haughty monarch was left to take his own course. There was no sympathy between him and his people. The cruelty of this answer at once crushed every loyal feeling on the part of his subjects. Through his folly and pride, was wrought out, by the providence of God, the prediction which the Lord had spoken, by Ahijah the Shilonite, to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The words of the king brought things to a crisis. The disaffection, which might have been satisfied by prudent concessions, ripened into rebellion. The people said to the king, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." Rehoboam was not at first aware of the extent of the defection; and sent Adoram to collect the tribute. The excited people "stoned him to death," and the terrified king fled in haste to Jerusalem. "So Israel rebelled against the house of David; but the cities of Judah remained faithful to their king." All the northern and eastern tribes took Jeroboam and made him king: and it seems probable, that the tribe of Benjamin was carried away with them; though it soon returned to its allegiance.

The first thoughts of the king were to recover his dominion by war. For this purpose, he collected from Judah and Benjamin an hundred and eighty thousand chosen men. But as he was about to march, Shemaiah the prophet came with a message from God to this infatuated king: "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren; return every man to his house; for this thing is from me." The civil war was thus, for a time, averted; they obeyed the word of the Lord, and returned home.

Rehoboam had learned prudence from the severity of the lesson which he had received. Although there was no amity between him and Jeroboam, yet we do not learn that he took any active measures towards regaining his kingdom. Aside from the prohibition of the prophet, there were

reasons of state sufficient to keep him from such a hopeless and ruinous undertaking. After his return to Jerusalem, he devoted himself with great energy to fortifying the remnant of the kingdom which remained faithful. He had probably learned the purposes of the king of Egypt; for the towns which he built and garrisoned were chiefly situated in that part of his kingdom lying toward Egypt. Doubtless, also, Hadad the Edomite was becoming more and more formidable.

While Rehoboam was thus preparing himself against any attack from without, he was gradually gaining adherents from the best of the Israelitish kingdom. Grieved at the idolatry of Jeroboam, "the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to Judah and Jerusalem. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and Rehoboam, for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon."

Even Judah, however, did not long resist the example of its kings. Solomon had worshipped the gods of his wives; and Rehoboam, probably, followed in the steps of his father, at least so far as his mother's religion was concerned, and the whole tribe almost immediately lapsed into idolatry and the most abominable sin. "And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoked him to jealousy with their sins; for they built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill and under every green tree." There were also those who practised the most shocking immoralities, for which the Canaanitish nations had been destroyed from the land. "We can hardly believe that those who dwelt almost in sight of the temple, and beneath the protection of Jehovah, should sink so soon into the very lowest depths of sin. But the example of the great was fatally contagious; and there was no strength of principle in the mass of the people to resist it.

A nation so lost to all true religious principle could not expect any longer the protection of God. A rod was prepared for them, which they were soon to feel. "It came to pass, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number, and took the fenced cities of Judah." It is probable that Jeroboam persuaded Shishak to undertake this expedition, in order to cripple and embarrass his rival. As the Egyptian host drew near to Jerusalem, Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam, and the princes of Judah, and said, "Thus saith Jehovah, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak." The message of the prophet brought the king and princes in humility before God. "And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, he sent the prophet, saying, I will not destroy them, but will grant them some deliverance. Nevertheless they shall be the servants of Shishak; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." Accordingly the Egyptian king came to Jerusalem, took away the treasures of the temple and of the king's house, and the golden shields which Solomon had made. For some reason (most probably the submissive reception which Rehoboam had given him) Shishak retired without doing any other serious injury to the kingdom. The real cause of this inexplicable conduct, was the unconscious influence exerted by God upon the mind of the Egyptian king. The time when the kingdom of Judah should be destroyed had not yet come, and Rehoboam was left in the peaceful possession of his throne.

Like his father, Rehoboam had taken a multitude of wives. The favourite queen was Maachah, the daughter or granddaughter of Absalom. Her son Abijam, or Abijah, was made chief amongst his brethren, and educated as the heir to the throne. After the invasion of Shishak, we hear little more

of this king, He replaced the golden shields with others of brass, which were carried before him when he went to and came from the temple. We know not whether the repentance and humiliation was genuine or not. In some cases it was so, for we are told "that in Judah, things went well;" but whether there was a real change in the life of the king is not certain. The last record we have is, "that he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord." He died, after a reign of seventeen years, and was buried in the city of David; and Abijam his son reigned in his stead. Rehoboam received the kingdom, embarrassed with the results of Solomon's luxury and sin. His foolish and haughty answer to the prayer of an oppressed people, brought about the disastrous event which chiefly marks his reign. In his later years he appears as a prudent, but irreligious king; and left his diminished kingdom in a prosperous condition, and under an efficient government, to his son Abijam.

Meanwhile Jeroboam was not at all fulfilling the charge which Ahijah had given him. Immediately after his election to the throne of Israel, he built Shechem, as the capital of his kingdom, and Peniel on the east of Jordan, to secure the allegiance of the eastern tribes. His next care was to provide for the people a religion. He feared that the people, if they were allowed to go and sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem, would return in their affections to Rehoboam. He therefore devised a political religion by which he hoped to retain the hearts of his subjects. "He made two calves of gold, (such doubtless as he had seen worshipped during his exile in Egypt,) and said to the people, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Dan, and the other at Bethel," at the northern and southern extremes of the kingdom. The plan became a sin to Israel. The people fell in readily with the suggestion of Jeroboam. Solomon's idolatry had, no doubt, prepared them for such a step. He appointed likewise priests out of the house of Levi. He ordained feasts like those which God had commanded by Moses, but upon different days. "So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel, in the month which he had devised in his own heart, and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel."

While Jeroboam "stood at the altar burning incense, there came out of Judah a man of God, by the word of the Lord, and cried against the altar, O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee; and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." "And he gave a sign, Behold, the altar shall be rent and the ashes shall be poured out."

Jeroboam ordered him to be arrested, but the arm of the king, which he put forth against him, was withered. And the altar was rent, as had been predicted. The astonished monarch now asks the man of God to pray that his hand might be restored. And he besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored as before. Jeroboam now asked the man who had warned him to come and share his hospitality. "But the man of God said, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee; for so was it charged me by the Lord, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou earnest." It will be remembered that Bethel was the seat of a school of the prophets. The sons of an old prophet, who dwelt there, overheard the conversation between the man of God and the king, and told their father. The old prophet immediately pursued after the man of God, and found him resting under an oak. Under the pretence that he had received a message from God to this effect, he persuades him to return, and eat and drink at his house. While they were yet at the table, the word of the Lord came, denouncing punishment upon the man of God for

his disobedience, in returning and eating in the house of the false prophet. The sentence was almost instantly executed. As he was returning after the meal, a lion met him in the way, and slew him, and there stood sentinel over his carcass, until intelligence was carried into the city; and the old false prophet came and took the body of the man he had seduced, and carried him to the city for burial. And they buried him, and mourned over him, saying, Alas! my brother. After the burial, the old prophet charged his sons that they should bury him in the sepulchre with the man of God: "lay my bones beside his bones; for the saying which he cried, by the word of the Lord, against the altar of Bethel, and against all the high places in Samaria, shall surely come to pass." All these miracles, and even the death of the true prophet for his disobedience, made no lasting impression upon Jeroboam. He still went on in his evil way. "And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, to destroy it from off the face of the earth."

We have no full account of the mode in which Jeroboam administered his government. From his known energy and bravery, we may judge that he did not lose any part of his kingdom without a struggle. The only other incidents recorded in his history, occur in the reign of Abijam, king of Judah.

Abijam succeeded to the throne of Judah without any commotion. His reign was short and without any great interest. The only memorable thing recorded of him, is the battle so disastrous to Jeroboam. It was not to be expected that these rival kingdoms, though bound together by many ties, could yet remain long without war. During the reign of Rehoboam, both kings had other objects which demanded their attention. Neither had the time nor the means to attack the other. They were fully employed in securing their own kingdoms, without molesting others. Still there was no cordial friendship between them. On the first opportunity the smothered enmity breaks out into open war. The contest terminated, for the present, in a single and bloody battle. Abijam led out an army of four hundred thousand chosen men. Jeroboam met him with an army twice as large, all mighty men of valour. The armies met in Zemaraim, in mount Ephraim. In the presence of both armies, Abijam asserts the justice of his cause, and encourages his followers with the assurance that Jehovah would fight for them. "Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel. Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom to David for ever? Yet Jeroboam hath rebelled against his lord, and gathered to himself vain men, the children of Belial. And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hands of the sons of David. Have ye not made golden calves for gods, and cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron. But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him, and the priests, the sons of Aaron, wait upon their service; and burn unto the Lord offerings and incense, and keep the charge of the Lord our God.* And behold God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper." This address, no doubt, had its intended effect. It must have dispirited the forces of Jeroboam. They were not so far lost to their former religion that they could array themselves against God with clear consciences, or stout hearts. They at first surrounded the men of Judah; but at the shout of the battle they fled, and God delivered them into the hand of Judah. "There fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men." As the fruit of the victory Abijam took the cities of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephraim, all bordering towns between Benjamin and Ephraim. "Thus the children of Israel were brought under, for a time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers."

Abijam reigned only three years, “and walked in the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. Yet for David’s sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem.” With this short and melancholy record Abijam’s history terminates. He was buried in the city of David, and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

Jeroboam never recovered from the shock of that disastrous battle. His energy and courage failed him. He doubtless felt that the hand of God was upon him. For just previous to this, or at this time, he had received that startling message from the prophet who had anointed him, threatening the utter destruction of his whole family. The occasion upon which he received it was the following. His favourite son, Abijah, was dangerously ill, and the anxious father sent his wife, disguised, to the aged prophet Ahijah, to learn what should be the fate of the child. As the mother came to the door, the prophet (previously informed by God of her coming) salutes her as the wife of Jeroboam, and delivers his message of woe. “Go, tell Jeroboam, thus saith the Lord, forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast not kept my commandments, and followed me with all thy heart, therefore I will bring evil and utter destruction upon the house of Jeroboam. Him that dieth in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it. And when thy feet enter into the city the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn over him; and he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. Moreover, the Lord shall raise him up a king who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger; because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.” As the stricken mother came to her beautiful palace at Tirzah, the child died; and they buried him, and all Israel mourned, according to the word of the Lord.

Suffering under the loss of his army, and sick at heart with the death of his son, and the woes to come in the future, Jeroboam, after a reign of twenty-two years, died, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead. Jeroboam was a brave man, but not a great one. His sole object was to prevent the re-union of the tribes. In doing this, he committed the grand error and sin of his life. He lacked entirely trust in God. He did not recognize, in any sense, his subordination to God, as the real King of Israel. He attempted, like Saul, to rule the kingdom upon mere worldly principles, and in doing this, he fell into sin, and the sin brought with it swift destruction.

SECTION XIV

the good reign of asa—contemporary kings of israel—nadab, baasha, elah, zimri, (omri and tibni,) omri alone, ahab

Asa came to the throne of Judah at a propitious moment. The victory of Abijam had materially increased the strength of the kingdom. Its consequences were felt during the first ten years of Asa’s reign, in a happy peace. Asa began his reign in a totally different spirit from his two predecessors. “He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. He took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed the idols that his fathers had made.” So thorough was the reformation, that the queen-mother (or grandmother) was removed from her authority, and her idol destroyed. But the high places at which Jehovah was worshipped were not removed. “Nevertheless, his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days; and he brought the things

which his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, into the temple, and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment." The happy consequences of this reformation were everywhere visible. The Lord gave the land rest. The pious king brought around him all the real worshippers of Jehovah in the land. They flocked to his standard with great enthusiasm. His enrolled soldiers were five hundred and eighty thousand, all mighty men of valour. This scene of quiet was soon changed by a threatened invasion from the south. Zerah the Ethiopian (or Cushite) came against him with a numerous host, stated as a million of men, with three hundred chariots. Relying upon Jehovah, Asa went out to meet him, and set the battle in array, in the valley of Zephathah. "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, Lord, it is nothing for thee to help, whether with many or with them who have no power: help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee." This prayer was heard. The multitude of the Cushites were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host, and Asa and the people pursued them even unto Gerar. "And they smote the cities round about Gerar, (for the fear of the Lord came upon them,) and took away very much spoil, and sheep and camels in abundance."

As the victorious host of Judah were returning with their spoil, they were met by the prophet Azariah, the son of Oded, with this encouraging message: "Hear ye me, Asa, and Judah, and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you. For a long season Israel (Judah) hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they, in their trouble, did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. In those times God did vex them with adversity. Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded." Encouraged by this message, Asa addressed himself with new energy to extirpate idolatry. Many strangers from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, fell to him out of Israel. Then these, with all Judah and Benjamin, "in the fifteenth year of Asa, entered into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire: and he was found of them, and the Lord gave them rest round about."

This was a genuine and lasting revival. So far, Asa's reign was one of the happiest of the kings of Judah. But, in his later years, his faith failed him. When Baasha, king of Israel, came and took Ramah, and built and fortified it, "to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to the king of Judah,"* Asa, the conqueror of Zerah, whose faith had taught him that God could help alike with few or many, now employed the wealth of the temple and the royal treasures to induce the king of Syria to come to his aid, by attacking Baasha. Benhadad, the Syrian king, hearkened to his request, and sent an army against the king of Israel. The plan succeeded. Baasha, when he heard of the Syrian invasion, left building of Ramah, and went to protect his own dominions. With the materials which Baasha had accumulated, Asa built Geba and Mizpah. The unhappy king thus removed his enemy, but incurred the reproof of Hanani the seer. Reminding the king of his former faith and consequent victory, he charges him with the present defection: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him. Herein thou hast done foolishly, therefore from henceforth thou shalt have

wars.” Enraged at the bold reproof of the prophet, Asa put him in prison; and, it is added, he oppressed some of the people at the same time, probably those who had disapproved of his conduct. During the last three years of his reign, Asa suffered from disease, but he sought only to the physicians, and not to the Lord for relief. His afflictions seem, for a time at least, to have hardened him more than to correct his faults. He found it easier to relax his hold upon God than to regain it. After three years of suffering, and in the forty-first year of his reign, Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried in his own sepulchre, in the city of David, with a costly and magnificent funeral.

Asa was one of the few kings who obtained the praise that he walked in the steps of David, his father. His sincere and prudent zeal against the idolatry of his fathers, and the thoroughness with which he carried out the reformation, entitle him to a place among the best of the kings. He kept steadily in view his true position, as the vicegerent of God, who was the real King of his people. He acted generally from conscience, and not from policy. And though his latter years are stained with unbelief and cruelty, yet we cannot but hope that he lived to repent of his errors, and died in the spirit and blessings of that covenant: “to seek the Lord God of his fathers with all his heart.”

We return to the kingdom of Israel. In the second year of Asa, Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father. Early in his reign, he marched with a large army into the country of the Philistines, and laid siege to Gibbethon. The siege was cut short by the assassination of the king. Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the tribe of Issachar, rose up against him and slew him, and all his house, until the word of the Lord concerning Jeroboam was fulfilled. Nadab reigned but one year and part of the second; a part of the year being counted as a whole. The dynasty of Jeroboam perished with Nadab.

There does not appear to have been any serious opposition to the designs of Baasha. He succeeded immediately to the honour and power of the king he had murdered. His reign began during the third year of Asa; and he also did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way and sin of Jeroboam. We know little of his reign, except the war with Asa, which ended with the affair at Ramah. We may gather from the account of this event, however, that he had formed an alliance with Benhadad the king of Syria (Damascus). This was probably formed in the early part of his reign. His kingdom thus secure on the north, he turned his arms against Judah, but was called back by the faithless conduct of Benhadad, who, taking the bribe of Asa, had invaded the kingdom of Israel. In the latter part of his life, he also received a warning from God, by the mouth of Jehu the son of Hanani, in like terms with that sent to Jeroboam, and threatening the destruction of his whole house as a punishment for his sin; for he also made Israel to sin. It is worthy of notice that these men, and the other wicked kings were not punished alone for their own sin; but for their influence in drawing away the people of God from his service. It would be well if this lesson were borne in mind by those placed in stations of trust and honour. After a reign of twenty-four years, Baasha died, and was buried in Tirzah, (now a royal city,) and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

Elah gave himself up to drunkenness and revelling. His army, under Omri, were sent against Gibbethon, from which the Israelites had retired when his father Baasha murdered Nadab. In the second year of his reign, Zimri, captain of half his chariots, while Elah was drinking himself drunk in the house of the steward, at Tirzah, slew him, and usurped his authority. As soon as Zimri was seated on the throne, he slew the whole house of Baasha, and “left it utterly desolate.” Thus

expired another of the Israelitish dynasties.

Zimri did not long enjoy the reward of his crimes. So soon as the army at Gibbethon learned that Elah was slain, and the throne usurped by the traitor, they made their general, Omri, king. The siege of Gibbethon was again raised. Omri, with the army, marched to Tirzah, and took the city, after a short siege. Zimri fled to the royal palace, “and burnt the king’s house over him with fire,” and died, for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord. The murder of Elah, the election of Omri by the army, the march to Tirzah, and the suicide of the murderer, occupied only seven days. Omri did not come to the throne without opposition. The nation were divided into two equal parts, “half of the people followed Tibni son of Ginath, and half followed Omri.” After a long conflict, Tibni was conquered. He was unable to cope with the superior generalship and disciplined forces of his rival, and Omri became sole occupant of the throne. There was no principle involved in all these strifes. And though God in his providence used one of these men to punish another, and thus wrought out his holy purpose; yet they were actuated only by the most selfish and cruel lust of power. No one of them appears to have had a thought of any religious reformation. All were alike firmly wed to their idolatry.

Omri came to the throne without any great crime. He reigned in all twelve years, from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-eighth year of Asa. Five of these years were spent in the war with Tibni. The only thing recorded* of Omri, aside from his religious character—which was worse than any of the kings before him—is the selection of a new capital. Tirzah was incapable of sustaining any siege. Omri himself had taken it almost by storm. He accordingly purchased a hill from Shemer, from whom the city took its name, Samaria. This important city was finely situated, both for strength and beauty. The hill upon which it was placed, rose from the centre of a large plain. The surrounding country was fertile and highly cultivated: and the strength of the place may be best learned from the siege it sustained in the subsequent history of this kingdom. After completing this work, Omri died, and was buried in Samaria. Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

Ahab was both a weak and wicked king. It is recorded of him, “that he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings that went before him.” The sin of the previous monarchs of Israel consisted in the worshipping of the true God by images. In addition to this, Ahab, having married Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-baal, king of the Zidonians, went and worshipped false gods—Baal and Ashtoreth (Astarti.) He built a temple and altar to these gods in his capital. The abominable and obscene rites which accompanied the worship of these idol gods, could not but outrage the feelings of every true Israelite. The prophets were unsparing in their rebukes, and consequently incurred the deadly hatred of Jezebel. She took it upon herself to defend the worship and priests of Baal; and Ahab, who was the slave of this haughty woman, gave her the weight of his authority. Now began the martyr age of the prophets. There were large numbers of them at this time in Israel. One man (Obadiah, the governor of the king’s house) concealed and sustained an hundred. Many were murdered. More probably fled into the neighbouring kingdom. Everything went as Jezebel wished. The weak king publicly worshipped her idols; and the whole nation, apparently, bowed the knee to Baal.

SECTION XV

ahab’s reign continued—history of elijah the prophet—ahab’s war with benhadad—the sin of ahad—the reign of jehoshaphat, king of judah—the defeat at rameth—jehoshaphat’s civil

government—his commerce—his war with moab and ammon

In this sad state of the kingdom, the prophet Elijah appears before us. This great and bold reformer breaks in upon us, as he probably did upon the idolatrous king, without any warning, and with that startling message.* “And Elijah the Tishbite said to Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these three years, but according to my word.” With this message ringing in his ears, he left the guilty king. He knew what was to be expected from the merciless disposition of Jezebel. “And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.” Elijah did as commanded, and was fed as was promised. From the want of rain the brook failed, and God, taking care for his faithful servant, “commanded him to go to Zarephath, which belonged to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went, and found the woman at the gate of the city gathering sticks, and called to her to bring him a little water to drink. As she was going for the water, he asked her to bring him a morsel of bread in her hand.” At this request the generous woman was brought to confess her situation. “As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse: and behold I am gathering sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.” She also, in a strong faith, went and did as directed, and to her the promise was abundantly fulfilled.

This was all evidently miraculous. The whole history here contains more miracles than any other part of the sacred history, if we except the period of the exodus, and the life of our Lord.

While Elijah abode at Zarephath, the only son of the widow fell sick and died. In her anguish the mother came to the prophet, “and said, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?” Moved at the sight of her grief, “Elijah took her son and laid him upon his own bed, And cried unto the Lord, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord: O Lord my God, I pray thee let the child’s soul come to him again.” The Lord heard the voice of Elijah; the child was restored to life, and the astonished mother professes her faith, “by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.” Thus was this woman rewarded for her faith and her kindness to the exiled prophet.

After three years, Elijah, by the command of God, goes to meet Ahab, and declare to him the return of rain. The king had not been quiet in the mean time. Finding the word of the prophet true, and his land suffering from thirst, he had sought for Elijah, and had sent to every kingdom, taking an oath from them that they knew not where he was. It was with no kind intention that Ahab sought Elijah. He had been only hardened by his reproof, and sought his life.

The land was now groaning with a famine. As Elijah went to Ahab, he met Obadiah, a good man, one who feared God in the midst of the general apostacy, and had showed kindness to the persecuted prophets. Obadiah was in office at the court, and was now going in one direction, while

the king went in another, in search of water. When Obadiah met the prophet, he fell on his face, and said, "Art thou that my lord Elijah?" He answered, "I am; go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here." Obadiah objected that while he was gone Elijah would disappear, and the disappointed king would slay him in his anger. He pleads his former kindness to the prophets, in the persecutions of Jezebel, as a reason why he should not thus be exposed to the cruel tyranny of Ahab. "Then Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day." Obadiah went and called the king. When Ahab saw Elijah, "he said, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel: but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Then follows the scene between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. At the command of Elijah, Ahab, who was now awed by the miraculous powers of Elijah, gathered all Israel and the false prophets at Carmel. Elijah then appealed unto the people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. The people answered not a word." Elijah then proposed that Baal's prophets should build an altar, and slay the sacrifice: and that he, as the only prophet of the God of Israel, should do the same; and that the God who answered by fire from heaven should alone be worshipped as the true God. The besotted idolatrous priests accepted the proposition. They first built their altar, prepared their sacrifice, and called upon Baal from morning until noon. Elijah then taunted them: "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or peradventure he is sleeping, and must be awaked." Provoked by this irony, they lacerated themselves with knives, but to no purpose. When this farce had gone so far that all were satisfied, Elijah called all the people unto him, and repaired the broken altar of the Lord. And took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, and built an altar, surrounded with a deep trench. Upon the altar were laid the pieces of the victim; and then four barrels of water were poured upon the sacrifice and the altar. To show that there was no fraud, this was done a second and a third time, until the trench was full. Then, at the time of the evening sacrifice, in the calmness and majesty of a simple faith, with no outcries or cuttings, he utters his prayer: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water in the trench. When the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, The Lord he is the God: the Lord he is the God." While the people were yet under the influence of this astonishing miracle, Elijah commanded them to take these false prophets and slay them at the brook Kishon, which ran at the foot of the mountain. Ahab, no doubt, gave his consent to the sentence of the prophet, which was in accordance with the express command of God's law. (Deuteronomy 13:5.)

He then promised the king that there should be abundance of rain, and went again to the top of Carmel to pray that the promise might be fulfilled. After waiting long, and sending his servant seven times to look for its approach, his prayer was answered. A little cloud arises out of the Mediterranean, gradually covers the heavens with blackness, and pours its waters upon the thirsty earth. And Elijah went with Ahab to Jezreel. We should think that such a series of miracles would have convinced the wicked Jezebel, or at least have awed her into submission to the service of Jehovah. But the moment she learned the execution of her prophets, she avows her purpose to take the life of Elijah, in revenge. To escape her wrath, the prophet fled into Judah, from thence to

Beersheba, and from thence a day's journey into the desert, toward Sinai. He who had been so bold, and reproved Ahab to his face, was now fearful before the passion of this haughty woman. In despair, at the want of the success he had probably anticipated, he requests that he may die. "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." While in the desert, "an angel touched him, and said, Arise, eat. And he looked, and behold, a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head: and he did eat and drink, and laid down again." This was repeated a second time, and in the strength of this the prophet went forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God.

In Horeb the Lord appeared to him, with the question, "What dost thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." To the despairing prophet, God revealed himself, in a strong wind, in the earthquake, and in the fire; and after these displays of his power, he came in the still small voice; "and when Elijah heard it he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the mouth of the cave." The same question was asked as before, and the same answer returned. And the Lord said, "Go to the wilderness of Damascus, and anoint Hazael king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat prophet in thy room. He that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and he that escapeth Jehu shall Elisha slay." God having thus appointed the instruments by whom he would vindicate his justice, encourages the sinking faith of Elijah, by this unexpected assurance: "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, which have not bowed the knee unto Baal." So he departed thence and found Elisha ploughing in the field; and he cast his mantle over him; and immediately Elisha left all and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him. He could not mistake or resist the divine impression, which followed the act of Elijah. Like the apostles, at the calling of our Lord, there was no delay or questioning. Elijah now disappears from the history for a time. Doubtless he and his scholar were earnestly engaged in the private duties of their office; building up the schools of the prophets, and strengthening the faith of the true Israel of God.

During the general apostacy, and probably led on by the distress of the people in the famine, Benhadad, the king of Syria, invaded the dominions of Ahab. He came with a large number of tributary princes; and advanced, without serious opposition, to the capital itself. Exulting in his success, he sent messengers to Ahab; "thy silver and thy gold is mine: thy wives also, and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine." The terrified Ahab consented at once to his insulting demands: "I am thine, and all that I have." Upon this submission Benhadad sends again the former message, with this addition, that his servants should search the palace and houses of Samaria, and take away whatever was desirable to its owner. This outrageous demand gave Ahab the courage of despair. He called a counsel of his officers, and they advised him not to consent. To Benhadad's demand, he replied, that he would do as at first proposed, but further he could not go. The Syrian king boasts that he would utterly destroy Samaria. "The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. And the king of Israel answered, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Benhadad now prepared to execute his threat, and pressed the siege with vigour.

In this emergency, the prophets, who were always in the true sense patriotic, appeared to encourage the king, whom they knew mainly as a persecutor, but now as the defender of God's

chosen people. One of them assured him, in the name of Jehovah, "Behold, I will deliver the great multitude of thine enemies into thy hand, this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." And Ahab said, By whom? The prophet answered, By the young men of the provinces, and that the king himself should lead in the battle. Ahab then numbered two hundred princes, and seven thousand men. With this small force he marched out, and attacked the Syrian host, while engaged in drinking and feasting. Benhadad gave his orders without leaving his cups, that the company of the Israelites should be captured and brought into the camp. But a sudden panic seized his men. A supernatural fear fell upon them, and they were powerless before the Israelites. Benhadad and his host fled, and the king of Israel smote the horses, and chariots, and Syrians, with a great slaughter.

The prophet warned the victorious king to strengthen himself for another attack. The Syrians were not discouraged at their defeat. The battle which they had lost had been fought with chariots, and upon rough ground. The counsellors of Benhadad advised him to number an army like the previous one, and to meet the Israelites in the plain; where (as they termed them) the gods of the hills would not assist them. At the return of the year, accordingly, Benhadad came with his host, and encamped in Aphek, probably in the great battle-plain of Esdraelon. The children of Israel, who went out to meet them, were like little flocks of kids, while the Syrians filled the land. At this juncture Ahab was again assured of success. "A man of God came to him, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because they said, The Lord is God of the hills and not God of the valleys, I will deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." After seven days the Syrians were again defeated, with numerous loss. An hundred thousand men perished in the battle, and twenty-seven thousand by the fall of a wall in Aphek. By the advice of his servants, the boastful Syrian now casts himself upon the mercy of Ahab. Instead of using his victory to break the power of his enemy, and the enemy of God and the true religion, this infatuated king salutes him by the name of brother, and sends him away in peace, with the condition that the cities which his father had taken should be restored, and Ahab should have the right of building streets in Damascus.

Upon this, a prophet, getting another man to wound him, presents himself, covered with ashes and disguised, to the king, with this parable: "Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold a man turned aside and brought a man unto me: and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." The king replied, that the judgment should be according to the agreement. And the prophet, taking the ashes from his face, applied the parable to the king. "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." The victorious king, in the midst of his triumphs, returned to Samaria, displeased and sorrowing.

We now get a glimpse of the private life of this wicked king, and Elijah breaks upon us again with his bold and stern rebukes. Near by the palace of Ahab was the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. Ahab wished to secure it as an addition to his gardens, and offered to purchase it at its value. But it was the inheritance of Naboth, and, by the law of God, could not be alienated. He therefore declined the offers of the king. Vexed at his failure, Ahab went to his palace, and refused to see his friends, or even to eat bread. Jezebel, learning the cause of his grief, and knowing no conscience at any steps which might reach her ends, regardless of all law, both of God and of humanity, sent

her commands to have Naboth slain, under pretence of blasphemy. The rulers were ready to obey her commands. A religious fast was proclaimed, false witnesses were brought to prove the guilt of Naboth; he was condemned and executed, though innocent; and Jezebel went with the welcome intelligence to her childish and pettish husband. And Ahab went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth.

But he was not to enjoy the possession thus wickedly acquired. At the command of God, Elijah went down and found Ahab in his new possession, and said to him, "Hast thou killed and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. And Jezebel also shall the dogs eat by the wall of Jezreel." Upon this rebuke of the prophet, Ahab humbled himself, and apparently repented, though after-events proved it insincere. Yet even this assumed temporary repentance led to a modification of the sentence. Elijah was informed that the evil which was denounced upon Ahab himself, should not come until the days of his son. The remainder of Ahab's life is inwoven with the history of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, to which we now return.

Jehoshaphat ascended the throne at the age of thirty-five, after the long and prosperous reign of Asa, his father. "He walked in the first ways of David, and sought the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." He was still more zealous against the idolatry and sinfulness of the land than Asa. "Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand: and he had riches and honour in abundance." In the third year of his reign, he established an itinerant ministry of princes and Levites, who went throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people out of the book of the law of the Lord. Thus faithful to God, the kingdom of Judah was united and happy, while their brethren of Israel were rent and distracted with civil wars. The fear of the Lord fell upon the neighbouring kingdoms, so that they made no war with Jehoshaphat. The Arabians and Philistine brought large presents and trinkets. With a united people at home, and at peace with foreign nations, Jehoshaphat "waxed great exceedingly, and built castles and store cities." His army was divided into five parts, under five generals, and amounted to one million one hundred and sixty thousand men, men of valour. There were, besides, the forces in actual service as guards of the cities. Under this king, Judah rose to a power and wealth which it had not known since the separation. For more than half his reign, Jehoshaphat was thus contented and prosperous. At length, however, he committed the great mistake of joining himself in affinity with the impious Ahab. He united his son Jehoram in marriage with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

While at the court of the Israelitish king, Ahab proposes that they should unite their forces, to wrest Ramoth-gilead from the hands of the king of Syria.* This was an important place in the country of the eastern tribes. Jehoshaphat accedes to the proposition at once. He was not, however, willing to commence the war without consulting God by the prophets. Ahab gathered his false prophets, and they, of course, gave him the highest assurance of success. Still Jehoshaphat was not satisfied, and, at his request, Ahab sent and called for Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord, at the same time stating that he hated him on account of his faithful reproofs. As the two kings, in royal apparel, were sitting in the gate of Samaria, and the false prophets were vociferously urging them to go to

the battle, Micaiah came into their presence. To the question of Ahab, he answered in the words of the false prophets, but in an ironical tone, "Go and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Ahab adjured him to tell nothing but the truth, and the prophet answered, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep without a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace." Ahab understood this as a discouraging answer, and as an implied reflection upon his weakness, and blamed Micaiah. The prophet then relates a vision which had been made known to him: that God had permitted the false prophets to persuade Ahab to go to Ramoth to die there. To the injuries and insults of the false prophets, this bold man answers only by referring them to the time when his predictions should be fulfilled. The enraged king commands him to be imprisoned until he should come in peace. "And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you." The fearful words of the prophet did not change the purpose of the kings. They marched against Ramoth. In the battle, Ahab, fearing the truth of the prophet's words, disguised himself, while Jehoshaphat fought as king. Benhadad ordered his officers to direct all their efforts against the king of Israel. They accordingly pursued after Jehoshaphat, but, discovering their mistake, turned back to seek Ahab. Ahab's scheme did not save him. "A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness, or armour." (God accomplished his purposes and fulfilled the word of the prophet, even by what we term a random shot.) The battle was obstinately contested till night, when the order was given for every man to seek his city, and every man his country. Ahab died at evening, and was buried in Samaria. The blood from his chariot was given to the dogs, according to the word of Elijah. His son Ahaziah reigned in his stead. Ahab was of a weak, yielding character, and, under the influence of Jezebel, sold himself to work wickedness. His reign is only remarkable as it includes so large a part of the miracles and teachings of Elijah; which, however they failed of producing any permanent effect upon the mind of the king, must yet have been a great blessing to the seven thousand pious of Israel.

When Jehoshaphat returned from Ramoth, Jehu the son of Hanani met him, and reproved him for his unwise expedition. "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God." He then went through his kingdom, reclaiming those who had wandered from the faith. He established judges in the cities, and charged them "to judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment. Wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts."* A supreme council, composed of priests, Levites, and chief of the fathers, was established at Jerusalem. To these the more important causes were referred for adjudication: and they were charged to deal faithfully and courageously in the fear of Jehovah. Amariah the chief priest was to preside in all religious questions, and Zebadiah, ruler of the house of Judah, in civil matters.

Having thus provided for the administration of justice, Jehoshaphat turned his attention to commerce. He built ships at Ezion-geber, to go to Ophir for gold. That port, and the intervening country, were still under the power of Judah. At first he allowed the king of Israel to take part in the enterprise. For this the ships were broken. Taught by the prophet Eliezer as to the cause of the misfortune, Jehoshaphat declined any further offers from Ahaziah, and prosecuted the enterprise

alone. The trade does not appear to have been very successful, and was not long continued.

Soon after this, we find Jehoshaphat in alliance with the kings of Israel, and engaged in carrying on a war with Moab. Moab had fallen to the kingdom of Israel in the separation. Until the death of Ahab it remained in subjection, but then rebelled. Jehoshaphat lent his aid to the king of Israel in reclaiming it to his subjection. Exasperated at the part he had taken in this war, the children of Moab turned their wrath against him. They enlisted the Ammonites and Edomites in their cause, and secured aid from the Syrians. From all these sources a large army was gathered, and marched against Jehoshaphat. They entered the land of Judah, and pitched their camp at Engedi. Alarmed at this array, "Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." The whole congregation were assembled, and the king stood in the court of the temple, and prayed, acknowledging the sovereign power of God in all things, and in planting Judah as a nation; pleading his promises to hear the cries of his people in their emergency; urging their present danger and distress as a ground and motive for his present interference, closing with these memorable words of humility and faith, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." In the silence that pervaded that vast assembly, a single voice was heard, pronouncing deliverance. Jahaziel, a Levite, moved by the Spirit of the Lord, encouraged them to go without fear and meet the enemy, "and then to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, for the battle is not yours, but God's." Upon this assurance, the king, and all the congregation, bowed their faces, and offered praise unto God. In the morning they went as directed to meet their threatening foe; but not so much in the strength of arms, as in the strength of faith. As they went, the singers went before them, praising God, "whose mercy endureth for ever." When they began to sing, the allied forces, from a supernatural influence, quarrelled among themselves, and destroyed one another; so that when the army of Jehoshaphat reached the scene of strife, their enemies were fallen, "and nothing was left for them but to take the spoils of the slain." After four days they returned with great joy, and songs of thanksgiving. "And the fear of God was on all those countries when they heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about." Thus ended the days of this pious king. "He reigned twenty-five years, and departed not from that which was right in the sight of the Lord." He was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

Jehoshaphat was among the best of the kings of Judah. The kingdom was never more happy or prosperous than under his reign. He sought the Lord with all his heart; and proved the power of a strict adherence to his faith, to make a people both great and good. He was loved by his people, respected by foreign nations, and feared by his foes. He did more to settle the kingdom upon its right principles than all who had preceded him, from David onward. He was never elated by success. He was humble and relying upon the guidance and arm of God in all events. He strictly adhered to his principles to the last; and in the final public act of his life, his humility and his faith shine the clearest. He stands before us as a model of a wise, benevolent, and pious king.

SECTION XVI

ahaziah's reign—history of elisha, and the reign of jehoram—naaman the leper—the siege of samaria and its miraculous deliverance—the anointing of jehu and hazael—the reign of jehoram

and ahaziah king of judah

The remaining acts of Jehoshaphat's reign follow those of the king of Israel. He could not well extricate himself from the alliance he had made. We resume, therefore, the thread of the Israelitish history, at the time of the death of Ahab. Ahaziah his son came to the throne at a most unfortunate juncture of affairs. His kingdom weakened by the disaster at Ramoth, and the hearts of his best subjects alienated by the shameless idolatry of Ahab, he did nothing to reclaim their affections, "but walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and did evil in the sight of the Lord; and served Baal, and worshipped him."

After a short reign of between one and two years, he met with an accident which was fatal in its result: "He fell through a lattice in his upper chamber, in Samaria, and was sick." True to the idolatrous faith of his parents, Ahaziah sent to consult Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. On their way thither, the messengers were met by Elijah, sent from the Lord with this message to the king: "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now, therefore, saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up." Thus warned, the messengers suddenly return to their master, and deliver the message which they had received. From the description of his person, as well as from the tenor of his words, the king knew that the man who had thus boldly arrested his servants, was Elijah. Determined to secure him, he sent a captain and fifty men to bring him into his presence. The officer went up to the prophet, and said, "Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down and consume thee and thy fifty;" and fire came down and consumed them. This was repeated a second time, with a like result. Still persisting in his purpose, and unaffected by the judgments his men had experienced, a third captain was sent to arrest the prophet. This captain, wiser than his master, came and besought Elijah, "O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight." His prayer was granted. Warned of God, the prophet arose at once, and went down to the king; and repeats the message in person which he had previously sent by the king's messengers. "Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord, which Elijah had spoken; and Jehoram, or Joram, (his brother,) reigned in his stead."*

Elijah had now finished his public labours; and the time of his departure was at hand. Conscious of this, he determines upon a circuit among the schools of the prophets, giving them his final instructions and benediction. Elisha, who had been forewarned of his master's coming departure, steadfastly adhered to his purpose of accompanying him in this last journey. At Gilgal, at Bethel, and at Jericho, Elijah urges him to remain, but the only answer of this faithful follower is, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." As these two went on, they came to the Jordan, and Elijah, as if to make a last display of the miraculous power so long intrusted to him, "took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither so that they two went over on dry ground." Before he was taken from him, Elijah asked Elisha what he should do for him; and Elisha, conscious of the difficult duties before him, answers, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." "And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." "As they still went on and talked, behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." "Elisha saw it, and said, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." But though

bereaved, he was not without support; he had fulfilled the condition, and he received the promise. The mantle of Elijah remained with him, (that mantle with which he had been called, that mantle with which the last miracle of Elijah had been wrought,) as a pledge and token of the spirit and power of Elijah.

Having thus followed his master to the last, he turned back, and smiting the waters of Jordan, said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he had also smitten the waters they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over." Witnessing both miracles, the sons of the prophets at Jericho "went out to meet Elisha, and bowed themselves to the ground before him, and said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." Wanting the faith or knowledge of their master, as to the ascension of Elijah, they seek leave to go and search for him. Elisha gave a reluctant consent; and the search was vain.

Elisha wrought another miracle at Jericho. The waters of that city, like most of the springs near the Dead Sea, were brackish. The men of the city came to the prophet for help, and as if to confirm their faith in the fulness of his Divine mission, he took salt and cast it into the waters, "and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land; and the waters were healed."

He now passes on from Jericho to Bethel, another school of the prophets. On his way thither, there came out little children (or perhaps young men,) instigated by their idolatrous parents, "and mocked him, saying, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head." There was an evident allusion to the ascent of Elijah in these words, and an impious assertion of their unbelief. God was insulted by the insults heaped upon his prophets: Elisha, inspired to pronounce their sentence, turned back, and pronounced a curse upon them, "in the name of the Lord." The judgment was speedily executed; "there came forth two she-bears from the wood, and tore forty and two children of them." The prophet then went on to Carmel and Samaria.

The history of Elisha now falls in with the civil history of the kingdom. Joram was better than his father Ahab. Either from the influence of the prophet, or from the influence of Jehoshaphat, with whom he was in alliance, he took away the statue of Baal. The reformation, however, went no further than this. There was no attempt made to correct the sin of Jeroboam. After the death of Ahab and the defeat at Ramoth, the king of Moab, who had been tributary to Israel, revolted. Joram persuaded Jehoshaphat to join him in an expedition to bring this king back to his allegiance. It was probably impossible for him now to reach or subdue Moab in any other way. The ways on the east of the Dead Sea were shut in by the victorious Syrians under Benhadad. The joint armies of Judah and Israel, with the army of the king of Edom,* were therefore led through the wilderness of Edom. After a seven days march, they were distressed for the want of water. Joram was in despair at the calamity, but Jehoshaphat inquires for a prophet. One of Joram's servants told him that Elisha was present in the camp; upon learning this, the three kings went down to his tent. "And Elisha said to the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father and mother." The king urges the danger and straits of the army, and impliedly confesses the inability of his father's gods to help. Still, however, the prophet, unsatisfied with this insincere profession, continues, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee." Then calling for a minstrel to sooth his agitated spirit, he commands them in the name of the Lord, "Make this

valley full of ditches; for thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord; he will deliver the Moabites also unto your hand, and ye shall smite their cities, and mar their land.” According to the prediction, in the morning the water came, and that in great abundance.

The same water proved a snare to the Moabites. Learning the approach of the kings, they had marshalled their forces, and were now in sight of their enemies. Looking upon the water, as it lay under the light of the morning sun, they supposed it to be blood, and that the allied forces had smitten each other. They then rushed on, confident of victory. Instead, however, of a deserted camp, they met the Israelitish army ready for battle. They fled at once in the greatest panic, and were pursued to their own land; their cities were beaten down, their trees felled, their land marred with stones, and the king himself besieged in his capital. In despair at his misfortunes, the king of Moab attempts to cut his way through the forces of his enemies and escape. Failing in this, he then sacrificed his eldest son, as a burnt-offering, on the wall of his capital city. Struck with horror at this dreadful act, the kings of Judah and Israel withdrew their armies and returned into their own land.

The narrative turns at once from this last extremity of war to the mission and deeds of Elisha as a messenger of good. The widow of a prophet tells him that her husband, having died in debt, the creditor was come to take her sons as bondmen, and pleads for his assistance. Elisha asks what she had wherewith she could aid herself. She replied, there was nothing left save one pot of oil. He then commanded her to borrow empty vessels from her neighbours, and fill them from the single vessel until they were full. The widow did as she was directed, and selling the oil, thus miraculously multiplied, paid her debt, and saved her children from bondage.

In the course of his journeyings Elisha came to Shunem, where lived a “great woman.” She often entertained the prophet hospitably. Perceiving him to be “a holy man of God,” and longing to enjoy his converse, she at length proposed to her husband that they should build a chamber for the prophet, where he might rest in his journeys. The chamber was built and furnished, and eventually the prophet became its occupant. Grateful for this constant kindness, he commanded Gehazi, his servant, to call the woman, and said, “Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care: what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of his host?” She chose, however, to decline the prophet’s offer, “and to dwell among her own people.” Still she lacked, as Gehazi had learned, one thing to complete her happiness. “She had no child.” Upon learning this, Elisha had her recalled, and promised her a son. The child grew up until he was able to accompany his father into his harvest-field, and then the hopes of his friends were crushed by his sudden death. The godly mother immediately turns herself to him from whom she had received her son by promise. She had faith that he who had given her the child could now restore him to her. She accordingly goes with all haste to the man of God. To the remonstrance of her husband, she simply answers, “It shall be well.” “So she came to the man of God, at Carmel;” and to the questions of Gehazi, who had been sent to meet her, “Is it well with thee, and thy husband, and thy child?” she answers with a wonderful faith and resignation, “It is well.” When she came where the prophet was, with all the depth and tenderness of a mother’s sorrow, she informs him of her loss. “Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?” Elisha immediately sent Gehazi to lay his staff upon the child. But the mother, conscious that her son was dead, was not thus

easily satisfied. “As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee,” was her steadfast purpose. Gehazi’s errand, as the mother had conjectured, was in vain. “The child had not awaked.” When Elisha reached the house, he found indeed that it was no swoon, but natural death. “He went in, therefore, and shut the door, and prayed unto the Lord.” Then using the natural means, which Elijah had used in a like case before him, his prayer was answered, and the child, raised to life, was restored again to its mother.

The next event recorded in the history of Elisha was healing of the poisoned pottage. “There was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were seething their pottage.” One of their number, by mistake, had gathered a poisonous fruit, and mingled it with their food. As they were about to eat, they discovered the mistake, and, appealing to Elisha, he cast meal into the pot, and miraculously neutralized the poison, so that they eat with safety.

He then feeds and sustains, with twenty small loaves, an hundred of his brother prophets—a miracle which reminds us, very strongly, of those which were wrought by our Saviour, in his day.

Some time in the course of the previous events, occurs the history of Naaman, the Syrian general. This man was of great importance to his king; by his hand, indeed, had God given deliverance to Syria. But, with all his greatness, he was an incurable leper. Among the servants of his wife there was a captive Israelitish maid, who had heard of Elisha, and gave utterance to her faith, “Would God my lord were with the prophet in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.” This saying was told to Naaman, and by him to the king. Naaman went to the king of Israel, with letters from the king of Syria, and a large present in silver and gold. The king saw in it only a plan to provoke a war; but Elisha sent to him to let Naaman “come to him, and he should know that there is a prophet in Israel.” Naaman went accordingly, with all his train, and stood at the door of Elisha. As a leper he could not enter the house, and Elisha went not out to meet him, as he had expected, but sent and told him to “Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean.” Enraged at this, because he was not healed in the way he expected to be, Naaman was about to return home; but, yielding to the wise entreaties of his servants, he at length went to the Jordan and washed, “and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” Gratitude soon led him back to the door of the prophet, which he had just left in pride and anger. He professes his faith in the God of Israel as the only true God, and urged the prophet to take a reward. But Elisha refused. He then asks for earth enough to build an altar unto the Lord, “for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offerings nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord.” He sought, however, the indulgence to attend the king of Syria into his idol temple of Rimmon. Elisha, without answering directly his request, dismissed him in peace. Scarcely had he departed, when he was overtaken by Gehazi, who, less scrupulous than his master, had followed the lordly Syrian, and with a lie in his mouth sought from him a gift in the name of his master. Naaman, in the flow of his gratitude, urged upon him double what he asked. Gehazi returned with his ill-gotten spoil, and having laid it away, “went in and stood before his master.” The prophet asked him where he had been; and on his answering, No whither, Elisha, clothing himself in the attributes of a judge, rebuked sternly his avarice, and pronounces upon him the terrible doom, “The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence, a leper as white as snow.”

Whatever may have been the morals of the people, the prophets maintained their integrity. An instance of this occurs in the narrative. In the increase of their number they went out to build beside the Jordan, and Elisha went with them. In the course of their labours, while cutting a beam, the axe head of one of them fell into the river. The loss was small, but the axe was borrowed, and this added greatly to the loser's distress. Elisha, however, relieved his anxiety, by miraculously causing the iron to swim.

In the course of the history, Elisha appears again as connected with the interests of the state. The kingdoms of Israel and Syria were again at war. All the plans which Benhadad laid were revealed unto Elisha, and by him made known to the king of Israel. The king of Syria, thus frustrated in every attempt, suspected some traitor in his camp, but on inquiry his servants told him that it was Elisha "who tellest the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Upon this Benhadad sent an armed band, "a great host, to compass Dothan, and bring the prophet to his camp." He does not seem to have thought that this plan could be foreseen and frustrated, as well as the others which he had laid. When they rose in the morning "the host compassed the city with horses and chariots." The servant of Elisha was alarmed; but Elisha calmed his fears, and in answer to his prayer, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The prophet now went forth to meet the enemy, and in answer to his prayer again, "the Lord smote the Syrians with blindness." Elisha then led them to Samaria, where their blindness was removed, and the astonished Syrians saw the prophet in the midst of the city. Jehoram, who saw his enemy thus within his power, would have put them to death, but the prophet prevented him, and sent them back to their master. This put an end to the present campaign. The king of Syria saw that it was vain to contend against supernatural power, and abandoned the contest for the present.

Soon after this, however, Benhadad again led his armies into Israel, and laid siege to Samaria. So strict was the siege, that all communication was cut off, and Samaria suffered the horrors of a famine. The famine was so severe that the very vilest substances were sold at an enormous price. Nor was this all. Parents, mothers were found feeding upon their deceased children. In his distress, at such scenes at this, the king plunges deeper and deeper into sin, and at last, by a solemn oath, swears to take the life of Elisha. But God forewarns the prophet of his danger; and to the messengers who were come to take him, he predicts by the word of the Lord, "to-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." This promise was incredible to the faithless Israelites, notwithstanding all the miraculous deliverances which they had witnessed. A lord who heard the assurance, openly expressed his unbelief, and the prophet rebuked him with the sentence, "thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not eat thereof." On the following night "the Lord caused the Syrians to hear the noise of a great host," as of the Hittites and the Egyptians, and they arose and fled, and left their tents filled with gold and food. Four lepers, who were hanging around the gate, had resolved, in despair, to cast themselves upon the mercy of the Syrians. When they reached their camp, they found that they had fled. Loading themselves thrice with the spoil, from the Syrian camp, they at length brought the "good tidings to the city." The news was communicated rapidly to the king. Joram at first suspected a snare; that the Syrians had feigned a retreat to lure them from the city, and then turn upon them and take them before they could find a refuge within its walls. Sending out spies, however, he found that the flight was real. As far as

Jordan “the way was strewn with garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste.” “And the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians,” so that the prediction of Elisha was literally fulfilled. Another prophecy also was fulfilled. The lord who had expressed his unbelief of the prophet so boldly and tauntingly, was made keeper of the gate, and in the press of the people, to secure the food, “he was trodden and died;” he saw the abundance, but did not eat thereof.

At some interval after the siege and deliverance, though directly following it in the narrative, we have given to us God’s gracious care of the pious Shumanite. As a seven years’ famine was about to come, Elisha warned her “to go with her household and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn.” She did as Elisha advised, “and went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines.” At the end of seven years she returned, but found her land in the possession of others. She went immediately to the king with her cause; who was just then, providentially, listening to Gehazi’s account of Elisha’s miracles. Gehazi told the king that this was the woman whose son Elisha had raised to life. Impressed with this coincidence, the king ordered an officer “to restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land until now.”

We find Elisha next in Damascus. He went, probably, to fulfil the command given long before to Elijah his master. Hearing of his presence, Benhadad sent Hazael with a present “to the man of God, to inquire whether he should recover from the disease” under which he was then suffering. Elisha answered, “Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.” The prophet “then settled his countenance and wept.” Upon being asked the cause of this, by Hazael, he replied, “I know the evil thou wilt do in Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, their young men, women, and children, wilt thou slay.” “Hazael said, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.” Hazael went from the prophet, and commenced his career of crime by murdering his master. Soon after this, Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel. Having thus fulfilled the command given to Elisha, we hear no more of him till the reign of Joash. His efforts to reform the people were comparatively fruitless. At length, in a good old age, he was called to follow his master. Among those who gathered around the dying prophet was Joash king of Israel. The king wept over him as the stay and hope of Israel. The prophet once more feeling the inspiration of God upon him, directed the weeping king to take a bow and arrows, and “shoot from the window, eastward.” The arrows were symbolical of the Lord’s deliverance, and the deliverance from Syria. He then told him “to smite with the arrows upon the ground, and he smote thrice and stayed.” Elisha reproofed him for not smiting oftener, “for then hadst thou smitten Syria until thou hadst consumed it, but now thou shalt smite it but three times.” “Then Elisha died and was buried:” and as if to honour him after death, his bones were gifted by God with the power of restoring a dead body to life. Elisha was little less eminent than Elijah. Though less stern, he was still severe in his reproof of the apostate kings. His miracles were numerous and stupendous; but they failed in accomplishing that for which many of them were wrought. He died as he lived, in the midst of a general apostacy, and with the sad conviction that the chosen people were still to suffer as a consequence of their sins. Men were more willing to weep over his death, as a public calamity, than to yield to his instructions while living.

Having thus followed out the life of Elisha, we turn back to bring up the history of Judah and Israel to the rebellion of Jehu, which exerted so important an influence on both kingdoms. Upon the death of Jehoshaphat, his son Jehoram, who had reigned for some years jointly with his father, succeeded “to the kingdom of his father.” Fenced cities were given to the other members of the royal family. Jehoram did not follow the example of his pious father; “but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab.” This departure from the faith was due to the influence of his wife, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, a woman, who, like her mother, knew no restraints in crime. The deplorable results of Jehoshaphat’s alliance with Ahab were already manifest. “Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant he had made with him, and promised him and his children a light for ever.”

During his reign the Edomites revolted from the dominion of Judah, “and made themselves a king.” Jehoram marched with a large army to recover his dominion, but though successful in a single battle, he was not able to subdue the rebels so as to bring them under tribute. At the same time Libnah revolted, “because he had forsaken the Lord.” The specific act which gave rise to this revolt, was probably the inhuman murder of his brothers by the wicked king; such an act might very naturally excite discontent in the fenced cities over which these brothers were placed. Aside from the loss of the Edomites, his kingdom was invaded by the Philistines and Arabians, who ravaged the land, plundered the royal palace, and carried captive the wives and sons of the king, except the youngest son Jehoahaz.

In the midst of his wretchedness and idolatry, he received a warning from Elijah, (who though now dead had been inspired to write this warning, and delivered to one of the prophets to give to the king,) denouncing heavy calamities and personal afflictions, as a punishment for his apostacy and crimes. The sickness which the prophet threatened came upon him in his latter days. After a short reign of eight years, and suffering two years under sore diseases, he died, and public opinion denied him the customary honors of a royal funeral, and refused him burial in the sepulchres of his fathers.

Ahaziah, (Jehoahaz,) his youngest son reigned in his stead. Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned but one year; “like his father he walked in the ways of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord.” Jehoram’s advisers, and the queen-mother Athaliah, were his only counsellors, “to his destruction.”

He immediately joined himself with Joram king of Israel, in a war against Hazael at Ramoth-gilead. In the battle Joram was severely wounded, “and returned to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds.” While lying in his palace he received a visit from the king of Judah, and then occurred the rebellion of Jehu, which was so fatal to both.

SECTION XVII

jehu’s conspiracy—and reign—athaliah usurps the throne of judah—joash the king of judah—joash king of israel—the history of amaziah and jeroboam (ii.)—the reigns of uziah and jotham—the conspiracy against zechariah king of israel—the civil war under menahem, and the invasion from assyria

Jehu was anointed king in the camp at Ramoth-gilead. At the command of Elisha, one of the prophets came to the camp, and calling Jehu “from among the captains of the host,” “poured oil on

his head,” and said, Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, and thou shalt smite the house of Ahab, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel.” Jehu returned to the council of his fellow captains, and informed them of the commission he had received. They were prepared for the intelligence, and without dissent hastened “to the top of the stairs,” and spread their garments beneath his feet, “and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.” This was done in presence of the army, and without any opposition. Jehu lost no time and took no half measures. He immediately entered his chariot and drove for Jezreel, to be the first to tell of his own conspiracy. Joram and Ahaziah were both at Jezreel. Jehu’s coming was seen by the watchmen of Jezreel, and two messengers, one after another, were sent by the king to meet him, and were commanded by Jehu to fall in with his own company in the rear. By this time the watchmen recognised the driving as that of Jehu. The king himself now went forth to meet him, and Ahaziah went with him. They met in the field of Naboth. Joram saluted his general with, “Is it peace, Jehu?” “And he answered, What peace, so long as the idolatries of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many.” Joram turned to flee, but Jehu, who knew no warning, drew a bow with his full strength, and shot the king through the heart. He then ordered the body to be cast into the field of Naboth, that the word of the Lord by Elijah might be fulfilled: “The blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons will I requite thee in this field.” (Ahaziah escaped, but he was pursued and wounded so that he died at Megiddo, a town west of Jezreel, and not far from the mountains of Carmel. “His servants carried him to Jerusalem and buried him in the sepulchres of his fathers.”)*

Jehu went on and entered the city. The news of his conspiracy, however, went before him. Jezebel in the mean time attiring herself in her queenly dress, stood at the window and saluted Jehu as he passed, “Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?” Jehu, unmoved at her question, commanded the eunuchs to throw her down. They did not hesitate to obey his command, and this proud and guilty woman was trodden under foot by Jehu’s horses. After he had obtained possession of the palace, and had dined, Jehu sent his servants to bury Jezebel. They found only a few remnants of her body, and as they came to tell their fierce master, he quotes the prophecy of Elijah, “In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.”

Samaria, the capital, was still in the hands of Ahab’s sons. Jehu therefore wrote letters to the elders of the city, telling them to choose one of Ahab’s seventy descendants and make him king; but upon receiving a submissive answer, he commands them to show their submission, by beheading their master’s sons. The command was executed, and the heads of the slain were brought to him at Jezreel. As he came forth the next morning, he found them lying at the entering of the gate. In the sight of these heads, Jehu explains his conduct as the executioner of the Divine purpose: “and of the word which the Lord had spoken by his servant Elijah.” After this he “slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, his kinsfolks and his priests.” He then proceeded to Samaria. On the way thither he fell in with the brethren, (relatives, probably nephews,) of Ahaziah, who had heard nothing of the conspiracy, and were on their way to salute the king and queen. These also were taken by this blood-thirsty man, and slain, to the number of forty-two. Further on, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab, and took him into his chariot, that he might “show him his zeal for the Lord,” which was now plainly only a cover for his own fierce ambition. When he reached Samaria, he repeated the same exterminating process which he had carried on at Jezreel. With these fell the house and family of Ahab, and the third dynasty of Israel.

Still, however, a large part of his commission remained unexecuted. The adherents and priests of Baal were yet living, and these were strictly within the scope of his commission. To reach his end, Jehu feigns himself a zealous worshipper of Baal, and “proclaimed a solemn assembly” for the idol god. All the worshippers of Baal were brought to this feast. The temple at Samaria was thronged with worshippers, who were clothed with priestly vestments. Those who were suspected of any attachment to the Lord God of Israel, were, by the command of Jehu, carefully excluded. When the temple was thus full, soldiers were posted at every door, who, at a signal from the king, rushed in and put every worshipper to the sword. The images were then brought out and burned, and the temple broken down and defiled.

Although Jehu was thus zealous against the service of Baal, he failed utterly of entering into the true spirit of his calling. He fell readily into the policy of Jeroboam, and maintained the worship of the calves at Bethel and Dan. For this partial obedience he received the assurance “that his children, to the fourth generation, should sit on the throne of Israel.” For his disobedience in following the sin of Jeroboam, his dynasty was limited to four generations, and his own reign was troubled with the inroads of the Syrians under Hazael. All the east of Jordan was wrested from his dominion. We hear no more of him than that he reigned twenty-eight years, and was buried in Samaria. Jehu was remarkable for the energy and decision of his character. He was fierce, but his passion never mastered his reason. His plans were adopted, and never flinched from, whatever their execution might cost. His zeal was selfish; it reached no farther than the interests of religion squared with his own ambition. He was raised up by God for special ends, but the methods by which he reached those ends were only his own; and he only is accountable for them. His motives were bad; and we cannot but feel horror-struck at the cruelties and barbarous deeds which everywhere mark his course. Jehoahaz, his son, reigned in his stead.

While the worship of Baal was thus exterminated in Samaria, it fled and established itself in the holy city. Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, was yet in power at Jerusalem. When she heard of the murder or execution of her mother, and her son, she determined to grasp the sceptre herself. Seizing the opportunity, she put all her grandchildren to death except Joash, an infant son of Ahaziah, who was rescued by her daughter, the wife of Jehoiada, the priest, and kept secretly “in the house of the Lord for six years.” In the seventh year of Athaliah, Jehoiada revealed the secret to the officers of the guard, “the chief of the fathers, and to the Levites.” Finding them loyal to the true heir to the throne, he “brought them into the temple and showed them the king’s son.” The whole assembly swore allegiance to Joash. Every thing was secretly arranged by Jehoiada, and the Levites and officers, for the crowning of the young king. The courses of the Levites were not dismissed, so that a large number were congregated in and about the temple. The spears and shields, which had been dedicated and placed in the temple, were given to the captains of the guard. On the day appointed, the young king was brought out into the court of the temple, the crown was placed upon his head, the testimony was given to him, “and they anointed him king.” They then clapped “their hands, and shouted, God save the king.”

When Athaliah heard the joyful shouts of the people, and the music of the instruments, she came to the temple, and, seeing the newly crowned king surrounded by the people, rent her clothes, and cried, “Treason!” Jehoiada ordered her to be removed from the courts of the temple, and slain.

“Jehoiada then made a covenant between the Lord, and the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord’s people.” Having thus solemnly covenanted with God, we naturally expect to find them jealous for his honour. From the place of covenanting they rose up and “went to the house of Baal (which Athaliah had built) and brake it down;” its altars and images were broken to pieces, and its priest slain before the altar. The orders and courses of the temple service were restored, and the kingdom settled upon a firm foundation. This revolution was so discreetly planned and executed, that but two persons perished; the usurper and the idolatrous priest.

Joash began to reign in his seventh year. His mother’s name was Zibiah of Beersheba. During the minority of the king, Jehoiada was regent, and the government was well administered: “but the high-places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high-places.” Even Jehoiada found it impossible to break up this custom to which the people were wedded. The attention of Joash was soon turned to the dilapidated condition of the temple, and orders were “given to the priests that the money and dedicated things should be brought into the house of the Lord;” and with the avails of these they were directed to repair the breaches of the house. The priests, however, were not so earnest as the king. In the twenty-third year of his reign nothing had been done. The priests were now called to an account, and another expedient adopted to secure the end. A proclamation was made through Judah, to bring to the Lord the collection that Moses laid upon Israel in the wilderness. “Jehoiada took a chest, and made a hole in the lid of it,” and in this all the money-gifts for the temple were deposited. The people offered willingly. After a time the high-priest, and the king’s scribe, took the money and counted it, “and gave it to those that did the work, that had the oversight of the temple.” “So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.” They made no vessels of gold and silver until the temple was thoroughly repaired, and then, from the money left, these vessels were made. In all this work, the officers “dealt faithfully,” though held to no strict account for the money they received.

Jehoiada died at the advanced age of an hundred and thirty years. “And they buried him among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, (Judah,) both toward God and toward his house.” After his death, Joash, seduced by the princes of Judah, who had never heartily consented to Jehoiada’s religious government, “left the God of his fathers, and served groves and idols.” The prophets were sent with their warnings, but were not heard. The infatuated king, galled by the bold reproof of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, notwithstanding all the kindness he had received from Jehoiada, “stoned his son with stones,” till he died. And when Zechariah “died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it.” For this apostacy from the faith, and this ingratitude to the family of Jehoiada, Joash was visited with the Divine displeasure. The Syrians came into his land, with a small hand defeated his army, devastated the country, and besieged the king in Jerusalem. He was able to bribe Hazael to depart, with the treasures of the temple and the crown, and thus preserve himself from entire destruction. Beside these outward calamities, he was visited with a painful disease, and at last died by the hands of his own subjects, who conspired against him “for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest.” He was buried in the city of David, but not in the sepulchre of the kings. “Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.”

During the long reign of Joash king of Judah, the kingdom of Israel had been undergoing serious changes. Jehoahaz the son of Jehu came to the throne when its power was shut in on every side by the victorious Syrians. The whole land east of Jordan, which constituted two-fifths of the

kingdom, was in the possession of Hazael. He did nothing to recover his dominion; but was hemmed in more and more by the armies of Hazael, until at length "all his forces amounted to only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen." Reduced to this extremity, "Jehoahaz besought the Lord; and the Lord hearkened unto him, and gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from the hand of the Syrians, and dwelt in their tents as beforetime." This saviour was Joash his son, who reigned for two years with his father, and then succeeded him in the throne. He bears a fairer character than the most of the Israelitish kings, though he also followed the steps of Jeroboam. It was this king who came and wept at the death-bed of Elisha, and was assured by the prophet that he should be victorious over the Syrians. The prediction of Elisha was soon fulfilled. In three successive battles the Syrians were defeated, and the cities which they had taken restored to the kingdom of Israel; "for the Lord was gracious unto his people, and had compassion on them; and would not destroy them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Meanwhile Amaziah had also been strengthening himself against his foreign enemies. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not as David his father." As soon as he ascended the throne he "slew the servants which had murdered his father." "But the children of the murderers he slew not, according to the law of Moses"—"that the children should not die for the sin of their fathers." He immediately prepared to check the inroads of the Edomites. For this purpose he gathered the thousands of Judah and Benjamin, from twenty years old and upward. To this immense army he added, as hired forces, "an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel." As he was about to march, a prophet directed him to dismiss his hired forces. Amaziah obeyed, (and thus manifested that he knew his true position as subordinate to Jehovah, the real king,) though it cost him the loss of their aid, and the sacrifice of the reward he had given them. The Israelites were, however, exasperated at their treatment, and on their homeward march "fell upon the cities of Judah, smote three thousand of their inhabitants, and took much spoil. Amaziah led his army "into the Valley of Salt," (the old battle-ground of David's army and the Edomites,) smote ten thousand of the Edomites, captured Selah, their capital city, and cruelly murdered ten thousand of the captives by hurling them from the tops of their native rocks.

After this complete victory, the king strangely adopted the gods of the nation he had conquered, and worshipped them as his gods. For this the anger of the Lord was kindled against him. A prophet was sent to remonstrate against this sin and folly, but his counsel was rejected. The king was hardened to his own destruction.

Puffed up with his victory over the Edomites, Amaziah sent a challenge to Joash, inviting him to battle. Joash, at first, tauntingly declined the challenge; but Amaziah pressed it upon him, and, at last, he marched out and met the king of Judah at Beth-shemesh. The men of Judah were routed; and Joash, capturing the boastful king, entered Jerusalem without resistance. He then "brake down the wall for four hundred cubits," "took the gold and silver, and the vessels that were found in the temple, and the king's treasures, and returned to Samaria." This disastrous fortune came upon Judah "because they sought after the gods of Edom." Amaziah, however, still reigned upon the throne of David. He never regained the confidence of his subjects, and, like his father, fell a victim to conspiracy. He was slain at Lachish, but brought to Jerusalem and buried in the royal sepulchre. Azariah (Uzziah) his son, who was only sixteen years of age, came to the throne.

After his victory over Judah, Joash returned to Samaria. He did not long survive his conquest. His reign, on the whole, was prosperous. Under his dominion Israel was partially restored to its former glory. He died in peace, at Samaria, and Jeroboam, his son, reigned in his stead. Jeroboam followed in the steps of his father. His reign was long and flourishing. He prosecuted successfully the war with Syria, restored the ancient border, retook Damascus and Hamath, and, so far as the short account reaches, was universally victorious. From the prophet Amos (who wrote during this reign) it appears that this outward success was not followed by any religious reformation. The prophet, accordingly, threatens the Divine displeasure. Nation after nation is called into judgment, and at last the guilty Israelites are cited, and the sentence of God's justice pronounced. Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, and left the kingdom to Zachariah his son.

After this short history of Jeroboam, the narrative brings us back to the kingdom of Judah. Uzziah was made king by the popular will. During the first part of his reign, (while Zechariah, a man of eminent piety, lived,) "he sought God," and prospered. He was successful in his wars against the Philistines, Arabians, and Ammonites. He built the walls and towers of Jerusalem. He dug wells and erected towers in the desert, for his flocks. "He loved husbandry," and fostered it. He organized the army anew, into bands, under twenty-six hundred chiefs, who were sent to war by rotation. For all this host he provided armour, "spears, and helmets, and bows, and slings." He had engines "for shooting arrows and great stones," invented, and placed upon the towers and bulwarks of Jerusalem. "And his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped until he was strong."

At length, however, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; "he went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense, and transgressed against the Lord his God." Azariah, the priest, reproved him for his daring presumption, and prevented him from the sacrilege he designed. In the midst of his strife with the bold and conscientious priest, and in the very act of burning incense, he was smitten with the leprosy, and thrust out by the priests. "And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and he dwelt in a several house: and Jotham was over the house, judging the people of the land."

This took place some time before the close of his reign, and Jotham therefore was associated with his father in the government. Upon the death of Uzziah, Jotham began his reign alone, and reigned sixteen years. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, avoiding the sin of his father. He ruled in the fear of God, and he was prospered accordingly. The Ammonites were constrained to pay a heavy tribute: "The high gate of the temple was built"—new fortifications were constructed in Jerusalem, "castles and towers" were erected "in the mountains of Judah, and in the wilderness." "So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." Jotham died, lamented by his people, and was buried in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.*

While the kingdom of Judah was enjoying these long and prosperous reigns, the neighbouring kingdom was in the midst of civil war. Jeroboam had scarcely died when we find the restless spirit of this people manifesting itself. There appears to have been no strong attachment to any reigning family. Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, had scarcely seated himself on the throne, when Shallum "conspired against him, and slew him before the people, and reigned in his stead." With this king the dynasty of Jehu ceased, according to the word of the Lord to him, "Thy sons shall sit on the

throne of Israel until the fourth generation.”

Shallum reigned but one month, when he, in turn, was slain by Menahem, the son of Gadi. Menahem spared no cruelties to establish himself upon the throne; every one who opposed his usurpation was put to the sword. Like the other kings of Israel, he followed in the steps of Jeroboam, “and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.” The most memorable event in his reign was the invasion of Pul, the king of Assyria. This is the first that we hear of that kingdom or empire, which was to exert such an influence upon these kingdoms, and which occupies so large a space in the world’s history. Menahem at once purchased a peace, and exacted the money, by an arbitrary and oppressive tax, from his people. The ambitious monarch of Assyria was satisfied for the present; but the extortion of Menahem left him little to hope from the loyalty of his people. While he lived, all insurrections were suppressed; but when, after a reign of eleven years, he left the throne to Pekahiah, a conspiracy broke out immediately. One of his captains, Pekah, son of Remaliah, rose up against him, and slew him in the royal palace, “and reigned in his room.” Pekah’s reign was not a peaceful one. He had scarcely obtained the kingdom when another invasion from Assyria threatened the land. This time the king was not to be satisfied with a bribe—he came for spoil. All the northern part of the kingdom fell a prey to his power, and its inhabitants were carried captive to people his capital. Thus began the fulfilment of that threatening which God had uttered by Moses, against his apostate people. So general was this devastation, that Ephraim alone henceforth expresses the whole kingdom. This terrible calamity drew forth the prophet Isaiah. We hear him lamenting over Ephraim, and yet adding, as the end of all, the mournful conviction: “for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.” Indeed, none of God’s judgments, terrible as they were, made any salutary impression on the people.

SECTION XVIII

the reign of ahaz—the fall of samaria, and destruction of the kingdom of israel—the good reign of hezekiah—manasseh reigns wickedly—the reign of amon

Having thus lost a large part of his kingdom, and finding himself unable to reclaim it, Pekah allies himself with Rezin king of Damascus, in an attack against the quiet land of Judah. To this kingdom we must now return. From the prophet Isaiah, we learn that the war was cruel as it was unexpected. It began in the latter days of Jotham. The fortresses which he had constructed were now of great service. But just at this juncture, when his experience was most needed, he was removed from the throne, and the kingdom left to the young and inexperienced Ahaz. To add to their calamity, Ahaz proved one of the most corrupt of the kings of Judah. “He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, made molten images for Baalim, caused his sons to pass through the fire, and sacrificed and burnt incense in every high place.” As we might expect, the armies of such a king could not stand against their foes. They were given into the hands of Rezin and Pekah. A large number of the people were carried captive to Damascus. In the battle with Pekah, one hundred and twenty thousand fell, and a greater number still were taken captive. But as the king of Ephraim returned to Samaria* “with his captives and his spoils,” the prophet Obed met him and forbade the enslavement of their brethren. The nobles of Ephraim generously seconded the message of the prophet, and said unto them that came from the war: “Ye shall not bring in the captives hither; for whereas we have offended against the Lord, ye intend to add more to our sins

and our trespass." Upon this double remonstrance, the captives were fed and clothed, and carried back to their brethren at Jericho.

While Ahaz was thus suffering from the allied powers of Syria and Ephraim, he was also attacked by the Philistines on the south, who took possession "of six towns, with their villages." At the same time the Edomites threw off the yoke of Ahaz, marched into Judah, "and carried away captives."* "For the Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz, who made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord."

The distress of Ahaz wrought no reformation. Though warned by Isaiah (Isaiah 7:10) not to fear, and assured of deliverance from his foes, he yet "sent messengers to Tiglath—pileser, king of Assyria," "to save him from the hand of Syria and Israel." With the ambassadors he sent all the treasures, royal and sacred, and even became tributary to the monarch of Assyria. The Assyrian king accepted the conditions, marched immediately against Rezin, slew him in battle, and captured Damascus. Upon this, Ahaz went to Damascus to meet his new ally. While there, he sacrificed to the gods of Syria. Nor was this all; he determined to carry the nation with him in his idolatry. He found Urijah the priest a fit instrument for his purpose. Against the king's return, Urijah had constructed an altar after the pattern which had been sent from Damascus. Upon this altar the king himself, with his more guilty priest, offered offerings and sacrifices continually. The brazen altar was removed from its place, the lavers were taken from their bases, the brazen sea taken down from the oxen "that were under it, the doors of the house of the Lord were shut up," "and altars built in every corner of Jerusalem." Thus, having abolished the public worship of God, and made high places unto other gods in every city, this miserable king passes from our notice. The only record which remains is, "that he was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings." He had lived to see his country wasted, his subjects made captive, and his kingdom pass into a more tributary power. The ally which he sought in his distress proved a troublesome protection, whose temporary favour could be bought only with the wealth of the kingdom. Hezekiah, his son, reigned in his stead.

In the meantime, the kingdom of Israel was rapidly tending to its fall. Pekah did not long enjoy his victory over Ahaz. He was slain in a conspiracy by Hoshea, the son of Elah. "Hoshea did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel before him." Fearing the Assyrian power, Hoshea entered into an alliance with So, king of Egypt, and failed in his tribute to Assyria. This caused Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, to march an army into the land of Israel and besiege Samaria. After a three years' siege Samaria was taken, "and the people of Israel carried away into Assyria." Hoshea had reigned nine years,* and with him the kingdom of Israel came to its end. "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and had feared other gods." For this they were punished. Although warned by the prophets, and besought to turn from their evil ways, yet they had rejected his statutes and his covenant, and gone after the heathen and their vanities. They had left the commandments of the Lord, and worshipped Baal. "They had caused their sons to pass through the fire, and used enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil." "Therefore, the Lord was very angry, and removed them out of his sight: as he had said by all his servants, the prophets." They had not fallen from any political necessity, but solely from their apostacy and sin. From the days of Jeroboam, onward, every king had failed utterly to recognize his true relation to God, and therefore they were rejected.

While the Israelites were thus removed to other parts of the Assyrian empire, men from Babylon, Ava, Sepharvaim, and Hamath, were brought in to supply their place. These inhabitants brought their idolatry with them, and, being infested with lions, sent to the king of Assyria. A priest accordingly was sent to them, "who should teach them the way (as they termed it) of the God of the land." Thus originated the mixed religious worship of the Samaritans; "they feared Jehovah and served their own gods." This sad end of Israel did not fail to attract the notice of the prophets of Judah. Their calamity is made the ground of warning to the nobles of Jerusalem. A warning, alas! not heeded, though faithfully and repeatedly pressed upon their attention.

Still, however, the kingdom of Judah was yet to experience the favour of God. The prophecy of Isaiah received its first fulfilment in the coming of a better earthly king. Hezekiah came to the throne at the age of twenty-five, and immediately began to restore the true religion. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done." The temple was again opened and repaired; the priests and Levites were restored to their offices; all the high-places, and images, and groves, with "the brazen serpent that Moses had made," were destroyed. The pious king, confessing the sin of his fathers, acknowledging the justice of God in his punishments, calls upon the priests to sanctify themselves, and join him "in a covenant with the Lord God of their fathers, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us."

The priests and Levites seem to have entered cordially into the plans of the king. In large numbers they sanctified themselves, and then "cleansed the house of the Lord." They began their work on the first day of the month, and finished upon the sixteenth. Hezekiah, having thus kindled the zeal of the priests, and purified the temple from all its abominations which Ahaz had brought into it, "gathered the rulers of the city," "and went up to the temple" to sacrifice sin-offerings "for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah." In the most solemn manner they confessed their sin, "laying their hands upon the head of the victims," "and sprinkling the altar with their blood," "and thus made an atonement for all (Israel) Judah." While the sacrifices were going on, the services of the public temple-worship were re-instituted. The king and all the congregation bowed and worshipped, and the Levites, with their instruments, "sang praises unto the Lord in the words of David, and of Asaph the seer." Then followed a multitude of thank-offerings, "from all the free-hearted of the congregation." So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order. "And Hezekiah rejoiced and all the people, that God had prepared the people, for the thing was done suddenly."

This revival of genuine religion was evidently a work of the Spirit of God, and brought with it a renewal of the great annual feasts. It was resolved to keep the passover on the second month, one month after the ordinary time, "for the priests were not sanctified, and the people were not gathered" at the usual time. Accordingly posts were despatched to the remnant of Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to "turn unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel," and join in this service. "Be not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but turn again unto the Lord, and enter his sanctuary. For if ye turn again, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, and shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him." Some of the Israelites laughed the couriers to scorn. Some received the message gladly, and came to Jerusalem. All Judah came as with one heart, "moved by the hand of God."

The multitude having assembled, they first took the altars of incense in the city, "and cast them into the brook Kidron." Then they killed the passover, and the priests sanctified themselves, "and presented the offerings according to the law of Moses." Many of the people, gathered in such haste, were not ceremonially clean, but Hezekiah prayed, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." The prayer was heard, and the people were healed. So profound was the impression of this service, that the whole multitude resolved to keep "other seven days: and they kept them with gladness." During these days the Levites were employed in teaching the people. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests blessed the people; and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, even unto heaven."

From this feast, the people, full of pious enthusiasm, went throughout the land, breaking the images in pieces, cutting down the groves, and throwing down the high-places and altars, till they had destroyed every vestige of idolatry, when every man returned to his own abode.

The courses of the priests and Levites were next set in order, the set feasts established, and the tithes secured. From every quarter the willing people brought in abundance, "from the third to the seventh month." Store-rooms were prepared for that which was left, after the abundant supply of the priests. Over these free-will-offerings and dedicated things men were appointed, whose office it was to distribute to the priests according to their genealogy. "Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah; and in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, he did it with all his heart and prospered." "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him."

Having thus accomplished this great work of reformation, he marched his armies against the Philistines, "and smote them unto Gaza." Encouraged by this success, he threw off the yoke of Assyria. Sennacherib the king of Assyria came at once with an army to bring him to subjection. Unable to cope with so formidable a power in battle, Hezekiah prepared himself and Jerusalem for a protracted siege. The fountains were closed, the walls were repaired, and a second wall built around the city; weapons were made, and captains set over the men. In this emergency the king encourages his men, "Be strong, and not dismayed, for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles."*

At length, however, when the Assyrians had reached Lachish, Hezekiah's courage and faith failed, and he sent to Sennacherib, saying, "I have offended; return from me: that which thou putteth on me will I bear." Sennacherib consented to withdraw his army on payment of "three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold." Hezekiah gave him the gold and silver of the royal treasures, and of the temple, and the gold which was upon the pillars of the temple.

The Assyrian king broke faith with Hezekiah, and still carried on the war. While he continued at Lachish he sent forward his servant, Rabshakeh. Coming to Jerusalem, Rabshakeh delivered his message in the most insulting manner to the king, and to Jehovah, whom they worshipped. He charges them with relying upon Egypt; he blasphemes the God in whom they trusted; he taunts them with their weakness; and at last pleads that he was obeying a divine commission in thus seeking to destroy Jerusalem. Turning from the king's messengers, he addresses himself to the people; urges them to renounce their trust in Jehovah, to rebel against their king, to pay a tribute

to Sennacherib, to wait until he should come and remove them from their land, and closes his oration with a blasphemous assertion that the God whom they trusted was in no way different or more powerful than the gods of Hamath or Arpad. To this insulting speech no answer was given. When the report came to Hezekiah, he went at once to the temple. His only refuge now was in God. To Isaiah the prophet, the king sent a report of this speech; with an expression of his hope and confidence that God would hear the words of the king of Assyria, and vindicate his own name and honour. For this result he asks the prophet to pray. To this message Isaiah was directed by God to reply, "Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Meanwhile Rabshakeh had returned to his master, who was now besieging Libnah. He heard the rumour that the king of Ethiopia was coming to meet him. Enraged at his disappointment, he sent again to Hezekiah other messengers, with a threatening letter containing much the same boasting and insult as before.

With this letter Hezekiah went in before the Lord and prayed: "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear; open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent to reproach the living God." "Now therefore. O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only."

Isaiah was sent with an answer to this prayer, strengthening the faith of the king. He charges Sennacherib with his blasphemy: shows him the true position in which he stands, as the instrument of God, and not, as he supposes, doing what he did for his own aggrandizement: tells him that his work was accomplished, and that it was the purpose of God that he should go no further. He then promises blessings to the remnant of Judah, and the escaped of Zion; and closes with a most positive prediction, that the king of Assyria should not so much as come near the city, "for, saith the Lord, I will defend this city, to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." "On that very night the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and eighty-five thousand." "Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, and as he was worshipping in the house of his god, his own sons smote him with the sword." Thus Jehovah interfered for his own honour, and saved his people who trusted in him.

But Hezekiah was to experience another salvation at the hand of God. At the same time that he was delivered from the Assyrians, "he fell sick unto death." Isaiah came to him with a message from the Lord confirming his worst fears. "Thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." The love of life, and the state of his kingdom, led him to pray that the sentence might be changed; "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." The prayer was heard. Before the prophet had left the palace, the word of the Lord came to him, "Tell Hezekiah, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years. At Isaiah's command a lump of figs was laid upon the boil, and he recovered. In the meantime, however, while the cure was going on, Hezekiah demanded a sign to confirm his faith. At his request the

sign was given him, the shadow of the sun went back upon the dial of Ahaz, “ten degrees, which it had gone down.”*

The miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army, and cure of Hezekiah, drew the attention of foreign powers. Among others, the king of Babylon sent presents, “for he had heard of Hezekiah’s sickness.” “Hezekiah’s heart was lifted up” at his importance, and made a display of all his treasures to the Babylonish ambassadors. For this he was reproved by the prophet, with this startling announcement, that all that was in his house, and his own descendants, should be carried captive by this very kingdom of Babylon. With his usual submission to the providence of God, Hezekiah replied, “Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken, is it not good if peace and truth be in my days.” The rest of his reign was prosperous. He increased in wealth, beautified Jerusalem, increased the number of store cities, and after the fifteen years were passed, he was gathered to his fathers, and slept in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David. His character and memory were held in the highest respect, and he was sincerely mourned by a whole people, the best tribute to the life of a wise and good king. He is the most spotless of the kings of Judah.

His son Manasseh came to the throne at the early age of twelve years. The enemies of Hezekiah’s reform appear to have had the control of his early years. Either from this cause, or from his own disposition, he took directly the opposite course from his father: “He did evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen.” The altars which Hezekiah had broken down, were again rebuilt; altars for Baal were placed again in the temple, even in its very courts; his sons were made to pass through the fire; familiar spirits were sought for, and a graven image that he had made, placed in the house of God, where Jehovah had placed his name. Under the influence of this king, the people were seduced to do more evil than did the nations which God had cast out before them.

Prophets were sent to reprove him, but in vain. The judgments which had fallen upon Samaria were shown to be impending over Jerusalem, but they excited no alarm: instead of a reformation, they hardened the infatuated king, and he added to his iniquities “by shedding innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.” At length the threatenings of God’s just displeasure were executed. The Assyrian generals came with an irresistible host. Manasseh attempted flight, “but was overtaken among the thorns, bound with fetters, and carried away to Babylon.” In this affliction, he came to himself, “and besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.” As if to show that sincere prayer was never vain, this miserable king was heard and restored to his kingdom in Jerusalem. On his return he built the wall without the city of David, fortified the city, “took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in Jerusalem, and repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon. He could not, however, remedy the effects of his own early bad example. “The people sacrificed still in the high-places, but unto the Lord only.” After a long but disastrous reign of fifty-five years, “he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house.” The happy scene of his father’s reign was thus quickly overcast with heavy clouds; and though his repentance seems sincere, yet we may see how little a late repentance can atone for an early crime, and how little in itself it stays the progress of God’s justice. He did much evil, though we may hope that he died a good man.

Amon succeeded his father at the age of twenty-two. “He also did that which was evil, as his father Manasseh did, and served and worshipped the idols that his father served, and forsook the Lord God of his fathers.” He did not, however, follow his father in his good days. “He did not humble himself as his father did.” After a reign of two years, of which we hear nothing, “he was slain by his servants in his own house.” The people, however, revenged the murder of the king, and slew those “who had conspired against Amon,” “and made Josiah his son king in his stead.”

SECTION XIX

josiah’s reign—the finding of the copy of the law—josiah’s reformation—jehoahaz and jehoiakim—the first removal of the people to babylon—jehoiakim—the second removal to babylon—zedekiah, the last king of judah—the capture of jerusalem

Josiah was only eight years of age when he was placed upon the throne. But the change was a happy one for the kingdom. From the first he was well inclined. “He did that which was right,” followed the steps of David, “and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.” In his sixteenth year he began to show more clearly his disposition, and in the twentieth he commenced the work which characterized his reign. Judah and Jerusalem were again purged of the high-places, the altars of Baalim were broken down, and the images and groves cut down, and the molten images ground to “dust and sown upon the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.” The bones of the priests were burnt upon the altars. Not content with cleansing Judah and Jerusalem, he went also and did the same in the cities which had belonged to Israel.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, and twenty-sixth of his age, he began to repair the house of the Lord his God. According to the king’s commandment, the officers over the treasury went to Hilkiah the priest, and took the sum of the money which the people had offered, “and gave it to the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the Lord.” The men did the work faithfully and honestly.

In the course of this pious work, Hilkiah the high-priest found “a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses,” which seems to imply that it was the original copy as written by Moses himself. When this was read to the king, it produced the greatest consternation. Whether he was entirely ignorant of the law previously, which is scarcely probable, or whether the denunciations against the sins of the land, coming from that venerable and authoritative copy, may have produced convictions of sin which other copies had failed to produce; in whatever way we may account for it, the reading of this book alarmed even this pious king with the sense of his sin, and the fearful sins and dangers of the kingdom.

In his alarm, Josiah sent his servants with Hilkiah, “to inquire of the Lord for them that are left in Israel and Judah.” They went “to Huldah the prophetess,” with the message of the king. Her answer assured him that the wrath which he feared should surely come. “Thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book” of the law: “Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense unto other gods, therefore my wrath shall be poured upon this place, and shall not be quenched.” The piety of Josiah was not, however, left unrewarded. His repentance, and humility, and prayers, gained for him the sentence that he should “be gathered to the grave in peace, and his eye should not see all the evil” that was to come upon Jerusalem.

Upon receiving this answer from the prophetess, the king immediately “gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, and went up to the temple, with the priests and prophets, and all the people, both small and great,” and read the book of the law in their hearing. “And he stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.”

Having thus in their hearts returned to God, they at once carried out a thorough reformation throughout the land. The temple was cleansed of its remaining pollutions; the images and altars of Baal were everywhere destroyed; all the idolatrous priests were put down; the high-places, where they had burned incense, were defiled. Moreover, the king, in person, went to Bethel, brake down the altar and grove, took the bones of the idolatrous priests “and burned them upon the altar, according to the word of the Lord,” which he spake by the man of God to Jeroboam. As he had done in Bethel, so he did throughout Samaria—breaking down the altars, slaying the idolatrous priests, and polluting their places of worship with the bones of men. All the workers with familiar spirits were banished.

When this was done, and the king had returned to Jerusalem, he prepared to celebrate the passover. Placing the priests in their charges, and the Levites in their courses, according to the writing of David, he commanded to kill the passover, and sanctify themselves “according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.” Josiah, and the princes and the priests, gave willingly to the people victims for the passover and offerings. Every thing was done carefully, and strictly in accordance with the institution given by Moses. The singers, also, were present. In its conformity with the Mosaic institution, and perhaps in its magnificence, “there was not holden such a passover from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept.”

But all this availed not to avert the calamities which were now threatening them. The hour of God’s mercy had passed, for “the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him.”

The time for that removal which had been promised Josiah was now at hand. His kingdom was probably tributary to Assyria or Chaldea; and when Pharaoh-nechoh went up against Assyria, Josiah came out to meet him. Pharaoh sent ambassadors to persuade the king of Judah not to fight; urging that he was in haste to execute the commands of God. “But Josiah would not turn his face from him.” The battle was fought in the valley of Megiddo, and the king of Judah was wounded in the fight. His servants took him from his war-chariot, and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died, after a reign of thirty-one years. No king so “followed the Lord with all his heart” as Josiah. No king was more sincerely lamented by his people. By the good, he was universally mourned. The prophet Jeremiah composed an elegiac ode to his memory, which was long preserved among the people.* He did what he could to stay the progress of the destruction fast coming upon his kingdom; and though his efforts were vain, he was yet kindly taken away from the evil which was approaching.

Josiah fell in battle, and did not appoint his successor. The people therefore took (Shallum) Jehoahaz his son, and anointed him king. He did that which was evil, (notwithstanding his father’s example) and reigned but three months. It seems strange, that in this short time he could so have

corrupted himself, as to deserve this bad character. But there are no limits to the evil heart, aside from the grace of God. At the end of three months Pharaoh returned from a successful expedition, took Jehoahaz captive, placed his elder brother (Eliakim) Jehoiakim on the throne, and laid the land under a heavy tribute.

Jehoiakim was compelled to tax the people, in order to raise the tribute money for Pharaoh. He also, like his brother, did evil in the sight of the Lord. It is plain now that many of the royal household could not have partaken in the revival of pure religion under Josiah. The hearts of these sons remained untouched. We hear little of the first year of his reign, but from hints in the prophecy of Jeremiah, we may gather that he was oppressive to the people, and the determined enemy of the prophets. In the third year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against him and took him captive, with the design of removing him to Babylon; but afterwards restored him to the throne. Some of the vessels of the temple, and a number of the people, among whom was Daniel, were at this time carried to Babylon. In the following year the Egyptians were defeated on the banks of the Euphrates. (Jeremiah 46:2.) In the same year Jeremiah caused a collection of his prophecies to be made, and to be publicly read in the temple. Jehoiakim sent for it, to hear what it contained. Displeased with its bold reproofs, he took the leaves as they were read and cast them into the fire. Upon this a new roll was made, to which were added heavier denunciations still. But all this had no effect upon the king.

After three years he threw off the yoke of the Chaldeans, in the face of the earnest remonstrances of Jeremiah. For this he lost his throne. The armies of the Chaldeans soon came, and took possession of Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was slain, and his body left without burial, as Jeremiah had foretold. He reigned eleven years. The king of Babylon placed his son Jehoiachin on the throne; but soon afterwards returned and besieged Jerusalem. When Nebuchadnezzar appeared before the city, Jehoiachin immediately went out and surrendered, with all his family and the whole court. He was carried to Babylon, with all his household, princes, artificers, craftsmen, and smiths, to the number of ten, or perhaps eighteen thousand men. With these there were taken also the royal treasures, the treasures of the temple, and the vessels of the temple, which Solomon had made. Little was left now but the mere form of nationality. Still it was not now Nebuchadnezzar's purpose to destroy Jerusalem. Accordingly he placed (Mattaniah) Zedekiah, the youngest son of Josiah, upon the throne. Jehoiachin, as we afterwards learn, was held as a captive until Nebuchadnezzar's death, when he was taken from prison, and made to sit at the king's table, "and his throne was placed above the thrones of all the captive kings at Babylon."

Zedekiah was but twenty-one when he began to reign. He followed in the footsteps of his father, and, as a consequence, was left of God without support in his afflictions. He followed the advice of his nobles, rather than that of Jeremiah. In the fourth year of his reign (Jeremiah 51:59) he went to Babylon, and returned. In the face of the most solemn oath, he rebelled against the king of Babylon, (probably about the ninth year of his reign,) and made alliance with Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar soon came to punish his faithless vassal. In the ninth year and the tenth month, he laid siege to Jerusalem. For a year and a half it resisted the whole force of the Chaldeans. While the siege was going forward, the king of Egypt came and interrupted the progress of the Chaldean arms. In these moments of respite, Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah to inquire what would be the fate of the war, and to ask his prayers for success. Jeremiah replied that the Chaldeans should return and capture the city. When the prophet attempted to pass from the city, to the land of his

inheritance, he was arrested, under the pretence that he was about deserting to the enemy, and cast into prison. For a time he was cruelly treated; afterwards he was placed in the court of the prison, but at last, at the instigation of the nobles, cast into a loathsome dungeon, from which he was taken at the request of Ebed-melech, one of the king's servants.*

As Jeremiah foretold, the Chaldeans returned; and in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, and the fourth month, the city was broken up, and the men of war fled. It was only by the closest blockade that this result was secured. Zedekiah was pursued and overtaken at Jericho, and brought to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah. By the command of the Babylonian king, his sons were inhumanly slain before his eyes, and his eyes then put out, and the miserable king, loaded with irons, was borne to Babylon.

In the following month, Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, came to Jerusalem, burnt the temple, the royal palace, all the houses of the nobles, and brake down the walls. The brazen pillars, and all the vessels of the temple which remained, were now carried to Babylon. The officers of Zedekiah were taken to Riblah and slain. The common people were scattered over the land for the purpose of tillage; and a number still were carried to Babylon. The kingdom of Judah had thus existed about three hundred and eighty-seven years after the separation. It fell solely from the transgressions of the people and their rulers. God dealt with them in great forbearance, "sending to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." Therefore they were carried as servants unto Babylon; "until the land should enjoy her sabbaths." The history of these nations of Judah and Israel, would be worth studying (if for no other reason) for the lessons of political wisdom which might here be learned; for God deals with nations now as then. The principles of his administration are always the same. The causes of national prosperity or adversity lie in the moral condition of the people. The decay of national strength must go on at equal steps with the progress of national corruption. We mistake greatly, and deprive ourselves of the benefit of this part of history, if we suppose that the Israelites are, or were, the only nation who suffer for their sins. They are not the exception, but the example; whose history has been written in its true light, and stands out as a warning and a lesson to those who are engaged in the work of governing the nations.

SECTION XX

some account of the jews in their captivity

Jeremiah was found among the captives at Riblah, and left free to go into Babylon or remain in the land. He chose to return to Judah, and placed himself with Gedaliah, who had been made ruler over the people in Judah. Gedaliah was successful in recalling around him a number of the men of Judah, who took the oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews also, from Moab, and Edom, and Ammon, returned and placed themselves under Gedaliah. His course, however, was soon ended. A part of those who had escaped the Babylonians, regarded him as in some way the cause of their misfortune. Among these was Ishmael, "one of the seed royal," who, with ten others, conspired against Gedaliah, and slew him at Mizpah. All the Jews who were with the governor were slain also. These conspirators, in turn, were conquered by Johanan, one of Gedaliah's officers, and driven to take refuge among the Ammonites. Johanan, fearing the vengeance of the

Chaldeans, in spite of Jeremiah's remonstrances, took the remnant of Judah, and the king Zedekiah's daughters, and Jeremiah the prophet, and fled into Egypt.

Five years afterwards, Nebuzar-adan again visited Jerusalem, and made a final deportation of the inhabitants to Babylon. The remnant which was left attract no more attention. They seem to have been without any government, or perhaps to have fallen under the mixed population and religion of Samaria. The land was utterly desolate, and enjoyed its Sabbaths.

The Jews in captivity were gradually gaining in favour with their conquerors, though oftentimes insulted and reproached for their faith—(see 137th Psalm.) Yet, as Daniel came into power, and the throne of Babylon became vacant by the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar, the reign of their bondage was materially alleviated.

We learn also from Ezekiel, as well as from the circumstances attending their return, that they were acquiring wealth and importance.

In the meantime they saw the power which had subdued them gradually going to decay. Rent with intestine quarrels, and threatened with the growing power of the Persians, it could not long endure. At last the Persian army came to Babylon itself. The Chaldee forces were no match for these new foes. After a single battle the Babylonian king fled, and took refuge in his capital. After a siege of one year, Babylon itself, unexpectedly, while the king was revelling in his sensual pleasures, (and had sacrilegiously turned the vessels from the temple into drinking cups for himself and his princes,) fell into the hands of Cyrus. With his accession began the Jews' release.

PART V("tw://[self]?tid=12&popup=0" \l "History_CONTENTS-")

FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY TO THE CONQUEST OF JUDEA BY THE ROMANS*

SECTION I

from the edict of cyrus, permitting their return to their own land, to the finishing of the second temple

Cyrus, king of Persia, having taken Babylon, and become the sole sovereign by the death of his uncle, who in Scripture is called Darius the Mede, made a decree, that as many of the children of Israel as chose should return to Judea, and rebuild their city and temple. To aid them in this pious and patriotic work, he directed that supplies should be granted them from his own revenues; and, also, that they should be at liberty to receive donations from their brethren who chose to remain in Chaldea. It is said, that Cyrus was induced to resolve on this measure, by having the remarkable prophecies which related to himself shown to him by Daniel the prophet, who was still alive at Babylon, though very old.

The decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued about five hundred and thirty-six years before the birth of Christ. On this occasion, Cyrus brought out all the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple at Jerusalem, and gave them into the hands of the leaders of the Jews, who were about to return to their own land. The chief leaders were Zerubbabel, who was of the royal seed, and Joshua, who was by regular descent the high-priest of the nation.

The number of vessels of gold and silver, delivered by Cyrus into the hands of Zerubbabel and Joshua, was five thousand four hundred. They who returned to Judea, at this time, were not all from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; but some of the other tribes, carried away by Tiglath-pilezer, Shalmanezzer, and Esarhaddon, also returned with their brethren. The whole number of this first company was fifty-two thousand three hundred and sixty; whereas they who are numbered in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, as belonging to Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, amounted to no more than thirty thousand. Of the twenty-four courses of priests instituted by David, no more than four returned, making up the number of four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine persons. The rest either remained, or had become extinct. But to keep up the ancient number of courses, each of these four divided itself into six, and took the names of those which had become extinct.

The first work to which they addressed themselves, after their return, was the erection of an altar of burnt-offerings; so that the daily service of God, according to the law of Moses, might immediately be resumed.

Next, they proceeded to lay the foundation of the temple. This they erected exactly on the site of the old edifice, and made it of the same length and breadth, and according to the same plan; but as they were poor and few in number, the building fell very far short of the glory and riches of the first temple, built by Solomon. So that when it was finished, many of the old men, who had seen the former edifice, wept aloud, on account of the meanness of this second temple, when compared with the glory of the first.

The Jews are accustomed to say, that five things were wanting in the second temple, which existed in the first. These were, 1. Urim and Thummim. 2. The ark of the covenant with its sacred contents. 3. The holy fire on the altar, enkindled from heaven. 4. The Shechina, or visible symbol of the Divine presence, over the mercy-seat. 5. The spirit of prophecy. To which might be added as a 6th, The holy anointing oil, made by Moses for the consecration of the priests, and of the kings.

It is a tradition among the Jews, that all the copies of the Holy Scriptures were lost; and that Ezra, by inspiration, restored the whole. But this is manifestly incorrect; for Daniel had the books of the Prophets, and "Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of his God;" and as soon as the people returned, we find, that they had copies of the law. The autographs of these books, preserved in the temple, were doubtless lost, and many new copies were probably now made under the direction of Ezra; and from these circumstances, probably, the tradition just mentioned took its rise.

When the ten tribes were carried away from the land of Israel, the king of Assyria brought inhabitants from other countries to occupy their place. These were heathen, and worshipped various false gods, but knew nothing of the worship of Jehovah. Being greatly infested with beasts, they attributed this judgment to their not knowing "the manner of the God of the land." Whereupon the king of Assyria ordered, that one of the priests who had been carried away from that land, should return and teach the people how to serve the God of the country. This priest took up his residence in Bethel, and having brought with him a copy of the law of Moses, instructed the people how Jehovah should be worshipped: nevertheless, they did not abandon, at first, their former deities, but united the worship of them with that of the true God. In process of time, these foreigners became incorporated with the poorer people of Israel, who were left in the country; and

the mongrel race received the name of Samaritans, which name the few who remain there to this day still retain. The Samaritans were more despised by the Jews than the heathen themselves. They were also called Cutheans, and no greater reproach could be east on any one by a Jew, than to call him a Samaritan or a Cuthean. After some time, they seem to have abandoned their gross idolatry, and pretended that mount Gerizim was the place originally appointed by God for his worship. They preserved among them the law received from the Israelitish priest, copies of which, in their peculiar character, have come down to our times; but the other books of the Jewish Scriptures they did not receive.

Upon the return of the Jews to rebuild their temple, the Samaritans came to them, and expressed a great desire to unite with them in the work, and in the worship of God; pretending, that ever since the days of Esarhaddon, they had been worshippers of Jehovah. But Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the elders of Israel, utterly refused to have any connection with them, and informed them that the decree of Cyrus related only to the Jews. This refusal to admit the Samaritans to their communion, was because they suspected them of insidious designs, and knew, that whatever they might now profess, their religion was corrupt. The Samaritans were greatly offended at this repulse, and set themselves, by every means, to obstruct the building of the house: and, although, they could not alter the decree of Cyrus, yet by bribes and other underhand dealings, they had influence with his ministers, to cause many hinderances to be thrown in the way of the Jews. By this means the animosity between the two nations was enkindled to a flame; so that, ever afterwards, no people ever hated each other with a more bitter hatred; which is sufficiently evident in the gospel history.

Daniel, although living when the Jews returned to build Jerusalem, was too old to revisit his native country. He must at this time have been eighty or ninety years of age: for he was carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and was then a young man; since which time, seventy years had elapsed. He was a man greatly honoured by God, and had great influence and authority, both during the reign of the Chaldean and Persian kings. Josephus informs us, that he built a famous palace at Susa, which, he says, was remaining in his time; and finished it with wonderful art; in which it became the custom to bury the Persian and Parthian kings; and in honour to the founder, it was always committed to the custody of members of the Jewish nation. Here, according to tradition, Daniel died and was buried, where they pretend to show his sepulchre to this day. The place is now called Tuster. The year of his death is uncertain, but he did not long survive the restoration of his countrymen: and the loss of such a wise and influential friend at the court of Persia, must have been great indeed to all the Jews; but especially to those engaged in the arduous enterprise of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.

But about seven years after this work commenced, the Jews met with a still heavier loss, by the death of Cyrus himself. Concerning the place and circumstances of the death of this extraordinary man, we have no record in the sacred writings, and other historians are so entirely disagreed, that we cannot speak with certainty. Xenophon makes him die in his bed in Persia, when a little above seventy years of age; but Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Justin, relate, that he made an unsuccessful attack upon Scythia, where being defeated and slain by the queen of that country, his head was cut off, and placed in a barrel of blood.

Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who is thought by some to be the Ahasuerus of Scripture, the husband of Esther. This man was exceedingly different in character from his father;

and, indeed, during his whole reign, acted more like a madman than a person in his senses. Having taken offence at Amasis, king of Egypt, he marched a powerful army into that country, which he subdued. Amasis, however, was dead before his arrival, but he prosecuted the war with great violence, and having got possession of Memphis, the capital, put the young king, the son of Amasis, to death, by causing him to drink bullock's blood. The body of Amasis he dug up, and treated with the greatest indignity. The stratagem which he used to take Pelusium, was, to place cows, cats, dogs, &c., before his army, and thus march up to the walls; these being objects of worship with the Egyptians, they chose rather to be conquered, than to run the risk of killing any of the venerated animals. He made a second expedition to Ethiopia, which was unsuccessful. At this time he sent forty thousand men to destroy the temple of Jupiter Hammon, all of whom were overwhelmed in a storm of sand. Finding the people of Memphis rejoicing on account of the discovery of the bull Apis, he commanded that he should be brought to him, and on seeing the animal which the superstitious people adored, he ran his sword into the thigh of the bull, of which wound he died. The priests, he ordered to be whipped, and in every way manifested his contempt and detestation for the superstitions of the people; for the Persians worshipped no idols, but only the sun and fire.

It is related, that the king of Ethiopia sent Cambyses his bow, with a message, that when the Persians could bend such a bow, they might think of invading Ethiopia. Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and brother of the king, being the only man in the army who could with ease bend the bow, Cambyses became jealous of him, and sent him off to Persia, where, in consequence of a dream, he had him put to death. He had one beautiful sister, the daughter of Cyrus, whose name was Meroe; her he married, contrary to all law and usage. From her is derived the name of an island in the Nile, between Egypt and Ethiopia. This woman he was accustomed to take with him in all his expeditions. But on a certain occasion, in a fit of passion, he struck her a blow, which, she being pregnant, caused her death.

Cambyses, having reigned nearly eight years, and being on his return from Egypt, a herald from Shushan, the palace of the kings of Persia, met the army, and proclaimed Smerdis the son of Cyrus, king. Now Smerdis had already been put to death, secretly, by the order of Cambyses, as stated above; but the case was this, the prince whom Cambyses had left to govern Persia in his absence, had a brother who bore a remarkable resemblance to Smerdis. This young man the crafty Magian set upon the throne, having learned the secret of the death of the true Smerdis. Cambyses seized the herald, and after a careful examination having ascertained that his own brother was really dead, and that this pretended Smerdis was the brother of the governor, set forward with his army to dethrone the impostor, and punish the governor; but as he mounted his horse, his sword slipping from its scabbard, gave him a wound in the thigh, of which he died in a few days. The Egyptians considered this as a special judgment on the king for his impiety, in killing Apis; for they remarked, that the part of his thigh into which the sword entered, was the same which he had wounded in the bull.

During the reign of Cambyses, the work of rebuilding the temple, we have reason to believe, advanced very slowly. The Samaritans, we know, sent a petition to obtain an order to have the building arrested; but how it was received, or whether it produced any effect, we are not informed.

The pretended Smerdis reigned only seven months. By profane historians he is called by several other names; but in Scripture he is named Artaxerxes. As soon as he was settled on the throne, after the death of Cambyses, the Samaritans wrote a letter to him, setting forth that the Jews were rebuilding their city and temple at Jerusalem; and that, as they had always been a rebellious people, there was much reason to suspect, that as soon as the work was accomplished, they would withdraw their allegiance from the king. For proof of what they alleged, they referred to the ancient records of the kingdom; requesting, that search might be made, whether the facts stated by them were not true. Upon which, Artaxerxes having ascertained that the Jews had carried on obstinate wars with his predecessors, and that their city had been taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, gave order, that the building should cease; whereupon, the Samaritans came immediately to Jerusalem, and by force caused them to desist from the further prosecution of the work.

Smerdis, or Artaxerxes, endeavoured by every method to ingratiate himself with the people; and, with this view, remitted all the taxes due to the government. And to secure himself on the throne, he took to wife Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, who had before been the wife of Cambyses her brother.

At length, however, it began to be suspected among the nobles of Persia, that this was not the true Smerdis. One of them whose name was Otanes, undertook to make a discovery, by means of one of the wives of the king. He had ascertained, that the Magian who resembled Smerdis, had on some occasion lost his cars; wherefore this woman was to find out whether her husband had cars or not. It being found that he had none, it became certain that he was an impostor. Otanes, then, associated six others of the nobles of Persia with him, who entering into the palace slew the king, and his brother Patizethes, who had been the contriver of the whole plot; and bringing out their heads, showed them to the people, and laid open the whole imposture. Such was the indignation of the multitude against these men, that they slew all the Magians whom they could find.

The idolatry of the world, at this time, was divided between the worshippers of images, who were called Sabeans, and the worshippers of fire, who were called Magians. The Magian sect, who were followers of Zoroaster, prevailed greatly in Persia, and a few of their successors are still found in the mountains of that country, under the name of Gauri or fire-worshippers.

Smerdis being now out of the way, a consultation was held by the nobles of Persia respecting the form of government which should be adopted. Otanes was in favour of democracy, Megabyzus of aristocracy, and Darius Hystaspes of monarchy. The last mentioned opinion prevailed, and Darius himself was advanced to the throne. He was the son of Hystaspes, a noble Persian, who had followed Cyrus in all his wars. The other nobles concerned in this revolution, stipulated that they should enjoy peculiar privileges, one of which was, that they should always have free access to the royal presence, without ceremony, except when the king was in his harem.

The building of the temple having been arrested by an edict of Smerdis, the work was not immediately resumed upon the accession of Darius. The remissness of the Jews in prosecuting this sacred object, occasioned severe judgments on the land; and to awake them from their apathy, Haggai the prophet was sent to them with a message from Jehovah, which is recorded in the book which bears his name. This solemn exhortation, had the effect of stirring up the leaders and the people to return to the work of rebuilding the temple. Towards the close of the same year, another message was sent to the Jews, by the same prophet, announcing that the glory of the

second house should be greater than the glory of the first; and that the desire of all nations should come, and that this temple should be filled with the glory of Jehovah. Zechariah the prophet was also commissioned to preach to the people at the close of the same year.

At the beginning of the second year of Darius, the work was recommenced; but the Samaritans betook themselves to their old malicious practices; and to obstruct the work, applied to Tatnai, who had been appointed governor, on this side the river. They alleged that the Jews were acting wholly without authority in this business. Tatnai, to satisfy himself, came to Jerusalem, and upon being shown a copy of the edict of Cyrus, did not forbid the work, but wrote an account of the whole matter to the king. Whereupon, search being made, the decree of Cyrus was found among the rolls, in the royal palace at Ecbatana, in Media. Darius, upon this, ordered that the decree of Cyrus should be carried into complete effect, and threatened severe punishments against any who should dare to obstruct the work.

The seventy years captivity, predicted by Jeremiah, may be considered as commencing either in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when the first Jews were carried captive to Babylon, and then the end of this period will be in the first year of Cyrus: or, eighteen years afterwards, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, and then the close of the seventy years will be on the second year of Darius, when the decree of Cyrus was renewed and republished, and all obstructions to the carrying on the work taken out of the way.

The kings of Persia having removed their residence from Babylon to Shushan, the inhabitants of the former city began to think of a revolt from the dominion of the Persians. For several years they were employed in collecting and treasuring up provisions, within the walls of the city. In the fifth year of Darius, the revolt took place; the Babylonians openly renouncing their allegiance. Darius now collected a mighty army and besieged the city; but the walls were so thick and high, and the gates so strong, that all attempts to reduce it by force must have been ineffectual: and there was so much vacant ground within the city and so large a store of provisions had been accumulated, that there seemed no prospect of reducing it by famine. The desperate determination of the besieged was also manifested in a very extraordinary way. In order to lessen the number of consumers of their stock of provisions, they resolved to put to death all persons who could not be useful in the defence of the city; especially, all the females were slain, except one for each family. And the probability was strong that they would have been able to defend themselves successfully against the Persian army, had it not been for the device of a nobleman, by the name of Zopyrus, who having cut off his own ears and nose, fled to the Babylonians, pretending that he had been thus cruelly treated by Darius. They received him confidently, for there seemed to be no room to suspect treachery, in such a case; and, by degrees, he so insinuated himself into their favour, that they gave him the command of the city; upon which he immediately opened the gates to the Persians. Darius took signal vengeance on the leaders of this rebellion, by crucifying no less than three thousand of the nobles. And to prevent the danger of a second revolt, he almost levelled the walls of the city, reducing them from two hundred, to fifty cubits; and took away the hundred brazen gates, by which the entrance had been guarded. The reign of Darius was long, but turbulent. He invaded Scythia with an army of seven hundred thousand men, but the expedition was not prosperous. He succeeded, however, in subduing Macedonia, and in bringing under his authority some of the western provinces of India. Towards the latter part of his reign he was involved in wars with the Ionians, who had revolted, and with the states of Greece; which disputes

led on to the great war between the Greeks and Persians, which was so signal in the reign of his successor.

In the sixth year of Darius, according to the Jewish computation, the temple of Jerusalem was finished, and was dedicated with great joy and solemnity, in the month Adar.

Twenty years had elapsed from the second of Cyrus to the seventh of Darius; so long was the second temple in building. At this dedication, it seems, that Psalms 146:1-10, Psalms 147:1-20, and Psalms 148:1-14 were sung; for in the Septuagint version, they are called the Psalms of Haggai and Zechariah, by whom they were probably composed for this solemn occasion.

The decree of Darius for finishing the temple having been granted at Shushan, the eastern gate, in memory of that event, received the name Shushan; on which was engraved a picture of that city, which remained until the final destruction of the temple by the Romans.

On the 14th of Nisan, the next month after the dedication of the temple, the passover was celebrated at Jerusalem. This was a season of great rejoicing to the Jews who had returned to Judea.

SECTION II

from the completion of the building of the temple, to the mission of nehemiah

The Samaritans, when the temple was finished, refused to pay the tribute for carrying on the building which had been first assigned for this purpose by Cyrus, and afterwards by Darius. The Jews, therefore, sent Zerubbabel the governor, with Mordecai and Ananias, two principal men among them, to make a complaint to Darius, of the injury which they sustained, in being deprived of the king's bounty, contrary to the edict which he had made in their favour. The king, upon hearing this complaint, issued an order to his officers in Samaria, requiring them to see to it that the Samaritans obeyed his edict, in paying their tribute to Jerusalem, as formerly, and give the Jews no further cause to complain of them.

The Tyrians, after the taking of their city by Nebuchadnezzar, having been reduced to a state of servitude, continued under the yoke for seventy years, agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah 23:15-17. But when this time was expired, Darius permitted them again to have a king of their own, which favour seems to have been granted, because of the service rendered to him in his naval expeditions. After this restoration, they arose speedily to a state of prosperity and power.

Darius lived to be an old man, and was a prince distinguished for wisdom, clemency, and justice. Before his death, being desirous of fixing the succession to the throne, he appointed Xerxes the son of Atossa (the daughter of Cyrus) to be his successor; for, although he had other sons who were older than Xerxes, yet they having been born before Darius ascended the throne, he judged that it was most proper to grant the kingdom to him who was first born after his accession to royal authority; and, no doubt, the influence which Atossa had over Darius was the principal reason of this determination. But it deserves to be remarked, as an uncommon fact, and much to the honour of the parties concerned, that while this matter was under consideration, it created no alienation of the affections of the competitors for the crown, from each other. And, when Xerxes was raised to the throne, Artabazanes, the eldest son, gave no indications of envy or dissatisfaction, but treated his brother with all affection, served him with fidelity in his wars, and at last died in his service,

being slain in battle.

Darius did not long survive the settlement of the succession to the throne upon his son Xerxes. He died in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, and four hundred and eighty-six years before the birth of Christ.

The tradition of the Jews is, that in the last year of Darius, died the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, from which time the spirit of prophecy ceased from among the children of Israel.

Xerxes, having ascended the throne, confirmed to the Jews all the privileges granted by his father; especially, the right to the tribute from Samaria, for furnishing the temple with sacrifices for the service of God, according to the law of Moses. The Egyptians having revolted before the death of Darius, Xerxes went against them with an army; and, in a short time, the rebels were reduced again, and their yoke made heavier than before.

Xerxes, being much elated by his success against the Egyptians, listened the more readily to the counsel of his son-in-law Mardonius and others, who persuaded him to undertake an expedition against Greece. Three years were spent in making preparations for this war, and troops were collected from every part of the Persian empire. In the fifth year of his reign, which was the four hundred and eighty-first before the Christian era, he led his enormous army towards Asia Minor, and took up his winter quarters at Sardis.

To distract the attention of the Greeks, Xerxes entered into a league with the Carthaginians, who it was agreed should fall upon the Greeks who dwelt in Sicily and Italy.

The army with which Xerxes marched into Greece was much the most numerous recorded in history. The infantry alone are said to have been one million seven hundred thousand men, and the cavalry eighty thousand; which, with the necessary drivers of the chariots and camels, must raise the number of his land-army to one million eight hundred thousand men. His fleet consisted of twelve hundred and seven ships, besides galleys, transports, &c., which were three thousand more, manned by five hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred men. It was moreover, reckoned, that the nations who submitted to him on the way, and after he crossed the Hellespont, increased his army by the addition of three hundred thousand men, besides those on board of the two hundred and twenty ships added to his fleet, who were calculated to be at least twenty-four thousand more. Herodotus says, the whole number of fighting men were two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand six hundred and ten; who, with the servants, sutlers, mariners, women and children, make the whole number of persons not less than five millions. Other historians make the number smaller; but no one makes it less than two millions. Xerxes occupied a whole week, day and night, in crossing the Hellespont, by two bridges of boats; the army passing upon one, and the carriages and beasts of burden on the other. At the straits of Thermopylæ, he was met by Leonidas, king of Sparta, who, with a band of six thousand men, had the desperate resolution to oppose the progress of this mighty host; and for three days, this devoted band of patriots actually hindered the Persian army from proceeding, and killed twenty thousand of their men. But at length a passage was effected over the dead bodies of the devoted Spartans, who determined to perish, rather than see their country laid waste by a hostile army. The Persian monarch had the pusillanimity to treat the dead body of the brave Leonidas with dishonour, by cutting off the head, and suspending the trunk upon a gallows.

Xerxes would not have succeeded so soon in forcing his way through the straits of Thermopylæ, had not a secret path been pointed out by a treacherous Greek, by means of which the Persians were enabled to attack the Greeks in the rear. Upon this, all fled except Leonidas and three hundred of his followers, who had resolved to devote themselves for their country. Besides the twenty thousand Persians slain on this occasion, Xerxes lost two of his own brothers.

The fleets of the belligerents soon met in conflict, and naval battles occurred, in which much blood was spilt, and much execution done; but nothing decisive took place until the battle of Salamis, in which the Grecian fleet, under the command of Themistocles, gained a great decisive victory. To witness this action. Xerxes had ascended an eminence on the neighbouring promontory, where, seated on a splendid throne, he had the mortification to see the utter ruin of his great fleet; and fearing lest his retreat should be cut off, he hastened to recross the Hellespont; but upon his arrival found that the bridges which he had erected with so much labour and expense, had been broken by a storm; so that he was forced to cross in a common fishing boat, and betake himself immediately to Sardis.

On the same day, according to Herodotus, on which the victory of Salamis took place, the Carthaginians, the confederates of Xerxes, met with a dreadful overthrow at Panormus in Sicily; where their fleet was burnt, their general, Hamilcar, slain, and one hundred and fifty thousand fell in the field of battle. Others, however, maintain, with more probability, that this defeat occurred on the day in which Leonidas arrested the progress of the Persian army at Thermopylæ.

Mardonius, the general of Xerxes, being left in Greece with three hundred thousand men, (the rest of the army having followed the king to Sardis,) endeavoured to make peace with the Grecians, but they, elated with victory, and confident in their own strength, declined all negotiation, and collected an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, on the isthmus of Corinth. Mardonius, however, although his army was now not less than three hundred and fifty thousand, withdrew from their neighbourhood. The Grecian army under the command of Pausanias the Lacedemonian, and Aristides the Athenian, pursued him; and, at the city of Platea, a decisive engagement took place, in which Mardonius was slain, and the Persian army cut to pieces. Artabazus, one of the Persian generals, foreseeing the event of the battle, made his escape with forty thousand men: all the rest were destroyed, except about four thousand. On the same day a naval action took place, at Mycale, in which the Persian fleet was burnt.

Thus was this vast armament, the greatest which the world ever saw, almost annihilated by a mere handful of men. Xerxes returned home chagrined and mortified; and taking Babylon on his way to Shushan, plundered the temple of Belus, and carried away the dedicated treasures; and, especially a golden table, which Darius had not ventured to remove.

Sealiger is of opinion that Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, in which he is followed by many, especially by Jahn in his history of the Hebrew Commonwealth. One principal reason alleged in favour of this opinion, is derived from the name of one of Xerxes' queens, which was Hamestris, between which and Esther there is a strong resemblance; but Prideaux objects, that Xerxes had a son by Hamestris, who was of marriageable age, according to Herodotus, in the seventh year of his reign: whereas, Esther was not married to Ahasuerus until the seventh year of his reign; and the putting away of Vashti occurred in the fourth year of his reign, when Esther was first selected, among other virgins, for the king's purposes. It seems, therefore, impossible, that Hamestris the

wife of Xerxes, and Esther the wife of Ahasuerus, were the same person. Moreover, Hamestris was a woman of licentious character, of which many instances are given by the Greek historian; but no such thing can be said of Esther. But Jahn considers Xerxes to be not only Ahasuerus of the book of Esther, but also the Artaxerxes of the book of Ezra, as he is mentioned next after Darius Hystaspes; and observes, that the names Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, were given to many kings; and that Daniel, (ch. 9:1.) calls Astyages of the Median line, Ahasuerus. The opinion of Usher is, that Darius Hystaspes was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, and that Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, was Vashti, and Artysona the Esther of the Scriptures; but according to Herodotus, this queen was also the daughter of Cyrus, but Esther we know was a Jewess. Moreover, he informs us that Atossa, before she was divorced, had four sons and one daughter, all born after Darius was king, which is altogether inconsistent with what we read in the book of Esther—that Vashti was put away in the fourth year of the reign of Ahasuerus.

Josephus mentions that there were many Jews in the great army of Xerxes which marched into Greece, and the same may be inferred from the description of the various nations and languages, composing this immense army, by Herodotus; and, as a great multitude of Jews were still resident in Babylonia and Media, it would be strange if this had not been the fact.

The restored Hebrews do not appear, during all this time, to have been in a prosperous condition. They seem to have had no stable and regular government, and the administration of justice was exceedingly defective.

Xerxes, after many unsuccessful efforts to subdue the Greeks, relinquished all further attention to this war, and gave himself entirely to a life of voluptuous ease; in consequence of which he fell into contempt with the people. Artabanus, the captain of his guards, formed a conspiracy against him, and having slain him in his bed, went to Artaxerxes his third son, and charged the murder on his elder brother, Darius; which the young man believing, went immediately to the chamber of Darius, and by the assistance of Artabanus slew him also. The second son, Hystaspes, was absent; Artabanus, therefore, had no difficulty in placing Artaxerxes on the throne; but his real object, in this plot, was to secure the kingdom for himself and his sons, of whom he had seven, all occupying stations of importance. The young king, however, discovered his design, and prevented its execution by cutting him off with his adherents. Artaxerxes is said to have been the handsomest man of the age in which he lived; but was surnamed Longimanus, or long-handed; because, when he stood upright, his hands reached as low as his knees. He is said to have been a prince of mildness and clemency. Notwithstanding all that has been said in favour of other hypotheses, it is much more probable that Artaxerxes Longimanus was the husband of Esther; and this is expressly asserted by Josephus. The Septuagint version, also, uniformly renders Ahasuerus by Artaxerxes; and the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther call him by the same name. This opinion has many advocates among both the ancients and the moderns, is more free from difficulties than any of those already mentioned, and accords entirely with the extraordinary kindness towards the Jews, manifested in his sending, first Ezra, and then Nehemiah, to their assistance. Jahn, however, seems to think that Ezra was sent to Jerusalem in the reign of Xerxes, who he supposes is called Artaxerxes, as well as Ahasuerus; but this is improbable.

Artaxerxes Longimanus, having put Artabanus out of the way, was still exposed to danger from two quarters. First, the seven sons of Artabanus still lived, and had great power; and secondly, his

brother Hystaspes, whose birth-right the throne was, had an army in Bactria, and would doubtless claim his right. He soon, however, mastered the first difficulty, by taking signal vengeance upon all who had any connection with the murderers of his father. To subdue his brother, he sent an army into Bactria; which, though at first repulsed, succeeded the next year in subduing him.

It seems to have been in consequence of having conquered all his enemies, that he made the festival mentioned in Esther, which was prolonged for one hundred and eighty days. This feast was celebrated in Shushan; on which occasion, his queen Vashti refusing to exhibit herself, was divorced; and, soon afterwards, Esther was selected to become queen in her place. Her uncle Mordecai was of the number of those carried captive from Jerusalem, in the reign of Jeconiah; and having no children of his own, had undertaken the education of Hadassah or Esther, the daughter of his deceased brother. This young woman being exceedingly beautiful, was among the virgins selected by Hegai, the king's chamberlain; and after undergoing a year's purification, was introduced to the king; and being by him preferred to all the rest, was advanced to the dignity of queen. By her interposition, the Jews, scattered throughout the Persian empire, were preserved from total destruction, which had been prepared for them by Haman, the favourite of the king.

In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and the 458th B. C., Ezra received an ample commission to return to Jerusalem, and to take with him as many of his nation as were willing to accompany him; with full authority to regulate and reform the Jewish commonwealth, according to their own laws. This great favour was probably granted in consequence of the request of Esther, who before this had been introduced into the king's harem. Ezra was a descendant of Seraiah the high-priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar at the time Jerusalem was taken. He is indeed called in sacred Scripture the son of Seraiah; but it was scarcely probable that he was a son of the first generation, and we know that the Hebrews call all descendants sons. He was a holy man, and profoundly skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures. In the king's commission, Ezra is called "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." Ezra 7:6. He left Babylon, for Jerusalem, on the first day of the month Nisan, and stopping at the river Ahava, until all his company should come, he there proclaimed a day of solemn prayer and fasting, to implore the blessing of God on their journey. On the first of the fifth month he arrived at Jerusalem, and presented the various gifts with which he was intrusted for the service of the temple.

The Egyptians, ever impatient of a foreign yoke, revolted again in the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes, and called in the Athenians to their assistance; who, having at that time a fleet of two hundred sail at Cyprus, gladly laid hold of the opportunity of crushing the Persian power in Egypt. Artaxerxes intended to go himself at the head of the expedition against Egypt; but being dissuaded from exposing his own person, he sent one of his sons; or, as some say, one of his brothers, Achæmenides, who marched with an army of three hundred thousand men, and encamped on the banks of the Nile. But in the meantime the Athenians had beaten the Persian fleet at sea, sailed up the Nile, and joined Inarus, whom the Egyptians had set up for their king; and falling on the Persian army, defeated them in a great battle, killing one hundred thousand men, and among the rest Achæmenides the general; whereupon the remainder of the Persian army fled to Memphis, but were immediately pursued by the Egyptians and Athenians, who took two parts of the city. The Persians, however, kept possession of the other part, which was the largest and strongest, when they suffered a siege of nearly three years; during which time they valiantly defended themselves against their assailants, until at length they were succoured by the arrival of a reinforcement from

Persia.

Themistocles, the famous Athenian general, who had gained so glorious a naval victory at Salamis, being banished from his own country by the ostracism, sought refuge in the Persian court, where he was received with great kindness, and treated with much attention. Artaxerxes being now resolved to send an army into Attica, that he might divert the Athenians from Egypt, selected Themistocles to be the general of this expedition against his own country. The Athenian general, not willing to disoblige the king from whom he had received so many favours, and at the same time, abhorring the idea of making war on his native country, determined to put an end to his own life: therefore, inviting all his friends together, and having sacrificed a bull, he drank its blood, and died.

An army of three hundred thousand men was sent against Greece, under the command of Megabyzus. This general, when Inarus the king of Egypt submitted, had promised a general amnesty, which was confirmed by Artaxerxes; but the latter, at the instigation of his mother, was at length induced to put Inarus, and fifty other leading Egyptians, to the death of the cross. Megabyzus was so much displeased at this want of good faith in the king, that he revolted with the troops under his command, and twice defeated the royal forces sent against him; but was afterwards received again into favour.

The Peloponnesian war, so famous in Grecian history, between the Lacedemonians and Athenians, commenced in the thirty-fourth year of Artaxerxes. This war, so destructive to the power of Greece, lasted for twenty-seven years; but although application was made to Artaxerxes for aid by the Lacedemonians, he prudently declined all interference in the contest. The miseries brought upon Greece by this war, were greatly increased by the desolating plague, which prevailed, especially, at Athens.

Ezra exerted himself greatly at Jerusalem to have the worship of God completely restored; but the work for which he has been most celebrated, both by Jews and Christians, was the collection and revision of the sacred books. In this work, it is said, he was assisted by the Great Synagogue of one hundred and twenty men, among whom the Jews reckon Daniel and his three friends, the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, and Simon the Just; but between the first and last of these there was an interval of two hundred and fifty years. It seems, therefore, more reasonable to suppose that the Great Synagogue were not at all contemporaries, but a succession of learned men, who devoted their attention to the preparation of correct copies of the Scriptures.

There is a story (already referred to) in the second apocryphal book of Esdras, and believed by most of the Christian fathers, that all the sacred books were lost, during the captivity; but this is directly contradicted by Scripture. No doubt, the autographs preserved in the temple, were destroyed with the ark; but that all copies were destroyed, is a groundless opinion. It is probable, however, that correct copies were, at the restoration, few in number; and therefore, Ezra, who was a "ready scribe," and an inspired man, took pains to prepare authentic copies of all the sacred books, and collected them into one volume, that the people might have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the whole of that revelation, which God, from time to time, had caused to be penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But as many of the people who returned from captivity had lost the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, by so long a residence in a foreign country, Ezra appointed certain persons who were skilled in both the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, to

give a version or paraphrase of the lessons which were publicly read from the Scriptures. These paraphrases, at first, were not written, but the sacred text was explained to the people by the interpreter, sentence by sentence, as the reader proceeded; but in process of time, several persons undertook to commit them to writing; a number of which have come down to our times under the name of Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases; which are nothing else than a free translation of the Hebrew into the Chaldee, with explanatory remarks. The oldest and best of the Targums, are those of Onkelos on the Law, and Jonathan on the Prophets; the language of which is purely Chaldaic, and approaches near to the style of Chaldee found in the book of Daniel and Esther. The language of the later Targums is impure, being much mixed with foreign words and idioms.

No authentic history of the origin of these Paraphrases has reached us. They seem to have been altogether unknown to Origen and Jerome, the only persons among the fathers who understood Hebrew. From this, some learned men have argued, that they were written after the fourth century: but considering the style of the oldest of them, this opinion is destitute of all probability. It seems most reasonable to believe, that the Targums, at least those of Onkelos and Jonathan, were written in Babylonia, where a large number of Jews resided from the time of the captivity, until long after the Christian era. This supposition best accords with the style of these paraphrases, and accounts for the ignorance of the fathers, above mentioned, in relation to them. As to the age in which they were written, nothing can be said with certainty. They are commonly referred to the first century, or a period somewhat earlier; but this is matter of mere conjecture. They may have been written long before the Christian era; but however this may be, they probably contain the old hereditary comment of the Jews who lived before the time of Christ, and are therefore of great importance in controversies with the modern Jews.

About this time also, it is probable, commenced the synagogues of the Jews, of which we read so much in the New Testament, and which to this day, form so considerable a part of the religious institutions of the Jews. As the custom of reading a portion of the Law every Sabbath now take place, it would soon be found convenient to have houses set apart, every where, for this purpose. In the public reading of the Law it was the custom to go over the whole of the books of Moses, in the course of the year, which led to a division of the Pentateuch into sections or lessons; which division is still found in all Hebrew Bibles. The reading of the prophets in the synagogue was not customary until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the Jews being forbidden any longer to read the Law, introduced the reading of certain select portions from the prophets, which was continued after the reading of the Law was resumed.

In the latter part of the administration of Ezra, great distress and confusion arose from the transgression of the people, in taking strange wives who were not of Jewish extraction. Many of the priests and leaders of the people were involved in this great guilt. Ezra was deeply afflicted on this account, and wept bitterly for the sins of the people, casting himself prostrate on the ground. He also assembled around him all who trembled at the word of the Lord; and with them he prayed, and lamented, and fasted, "because of the transgression of them that had been carried away." At length proclamation was made by authority, that all who would not, within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, come and put away their strange wives, should be punished with the forfeiture of their substance, and should moreover, be themselves separated from the congregation of the Lord. This severity had the desired effect, for the people being

generally assembled at Jerusalem, and being solemnly and tenderly warned by Ezra, made public confession of their sin, and agreed to put away their strange wives. And for a warning to future ages, the principal persons who were guilty in this affair, were recorded by name. (See Ezra 10:1-44)

SECTION III

from the arrival of nehemiah to the invasion of asia by alexander the great

In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Nehemiah, the cup-bearer of the king, obtained permission to visit Jerusalem, and bringing a commission from the king, to act with plenary authority as governor, he of course superseded Ezra, and took the supreme direction of all affairs into his own hands. Nehemiah was a man of uncommon piety; and immediately on his arrival, devoted himself to the business of repairing, or rather rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and setting up the gates, for which work he had obtained an express commission from the king. That which stirred up the heart of this good man was, the reports brought to him of the desolate condition of the holy city, and the deep affliction of the people there.

It is altogether probable that his petition to the king, was rendered successful, in a great measure, by queen Esther; for it is particularly mentioned, that the queen was sitting by the king. (Nehemiah 2:6.)

A royal decree was issued for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem; and the king, to give honour as well as safety to the mission of his favorite courtier, sent with him a guard of horse. Still, however, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Samaritans, continued to cast obstructions in the way of the execution of this work. Not only were they influenced by their old hatred of the Jews, but during the captivity they had seized on their vacant lands, which they were now required to relinquish. But Nehemiah, in spite of all opposition, pushed on the work, distributing to particular persons and companies, the several parts of the wall; so that in fifty-two days after the commencement of the work, the wall was finished.

Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, were the men who continually endeavoured to obstruct the work in which Nehemiah was engaged. They laid many snares for his life, which by his courage and wisdom he was enabled to escape. During part of the time, however, the people were obliged to work on the wall with their weapons in their hands; and as they were far separated from each other, on different parts of the wall, the Tirshatha or governor, gave orders that in case of attack, the trumpet should sound, and all hands should immediately resort to him. After the walls were finished and the gates set up, a public dedication was celebrated with great solemnity, by the priests, Levites, and all the people.

The people having much public work to perform, and many of them being poor, were under the necessity of borrowing money, of which necessity avaricious usurers took advantage, by lending out their money at exorbitant interest; by which means multitudes were ruined in their circumstances, and were forced to mortgage their lands, and sell their children for bondmen, to obtain bread for their subsistence. Nehemiah was much displeased upon hearing of this iniquity, so contrary to the Jewish law. He therefore set himself with energy to correct the abuse. After expostulating with the transgressors, he had a decree enacted in a full assembly of the people, that all money exacted for usury should be returned, and that all mortgaged lands should be

restored, and thus the yoke of oppression was broken off from the necks of the poor.

Nehemiah having spent twelve years at Jerusalem, prepared to return to the Persian court, for he had received permission to be absent only for a limited time. Having arranged affairs as well as he could, and appointed Hanani and Hananiah to be governors of Jerusalem, he returned to Persia. This fact is not stated in the sacred text, but it may be inferred from the appointment of the aforementioned persons as governors, which could not have been necessary, had he continued there.

His object in returning to Persia was not to remain there, but to obtain a new commission from the king, to carry on the reformation of the Jewish church and state. It seems probable, that he was not absent much more than one year, after which he came back to Jerusalem, and continued his pious and useful labours, by establishing a strict and regular police in the city. But observing that the number of inhabitants was still too small to occupy the place, he invited the rulers and great men of the nation to build houses in Jerusalem, and dwell there: and also caused every tenth man of the tribes to be taken by lot, whom he compelled to make this the place of their residence. Every thing being now well regulated, and the city well supplied with inhabitants, it arose rapidly to a state of prosperity; so that Herodotus, the historian, who visited it not long after this time, compares it to Sardis, the metropolis of Asia Minor.

Nehemiah now addressed himself to the work of having the genealogies of the people, and especially of the priests, correctly made out; which was necessary, not only for the regulation of the landed property of the nation, but also for the service of the temple; so that no person not of the sacerdotal race might be permitted to officiate there. He, therefore, searched for the genealogies of those who first returned from captivity, under Joshua and Zerubbabel, and from these he formed new tables, by striking out such families as had become extinct, and inserting the names of those who had returned since that time. This will account for the discrepancy between the genealogies recorded in the book of Ezra, and in that of Nehemiah.

Although after the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem, the government devolved upon him, yet Ezra continued his biblical labours; and by the time that Nehemiah made his second visit, he had copies of the Scriptures corrected and prepared, and began the public reading of them at the feast of trumpets. This occurred on the first day of Tisri, which had always been reckoned the first month of the year, until the time when the Israelites left Egypt, after which they were directed to commence their year with the month Nisan. Still, however, for all merely civil matters, Tisri was reckoned the beginning of the year. At this festival, the people being assembled from all parts at Jerusalem, Ezra was requested to bring out the law and read it. A pulpit, or scaffold of wood, was erected, that he might be elevated above the people, and that there might be room, this pulpit was set up in the widest street in the city. And so intent were the people on hearing, that they assembled for the same purpose the next day, and although there fell a hard rain during the time, they remained in their place.

When Ezra had read as far as to the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, it was found that the law of God required the people to make booths of the branches of trees, and for seven days to celebrate a feast. Upon the hearing of which they determined, that when the appointed day arrived, (the fifteenth of Tisri,) they would literally comply with the requisitions of the law; which accordingly they did, and celebrated this feast with a solemnity exceeding any thing that had been witnessed since

the days of Joshua. At this festival, also, Ezra took advantage of the collection of all the people, and went on with the reading and expounding of the law, which had been commenced at the feast of trumpets: and, during the whole seven days, he read to the people out of the law. The people, on hearing the precepts and commandments of the Lord, were greatly troubled on account of their transgressions, which they now found were very numerous.

Ezra and Nehemiah, to improve the present convictions and penitent feelings of the people, proclaimed a fast immediately after the feast was over. At this time they engaged the people to enter into solemn covenant with God, obliging themselves, 1st. Not to intermarry with the heathen. 2. To observe the Sabbath, and the Sabbatical years. 3. To pay their annual tribute for the support of the temple.

The conviction that the people now felt, that their transgressions were very much owing to their ignorance of the law, was the occasion of that frequent reading of it, which eventually led to the building of synagogues, wherever a sufficient number of Jews were settled to bear the expense, and conduct the worship.

Artaxerxes died 424 B. C., after a reign of forty-one years and a few months, and was succeeded by Xerxes, the only son that he had by his queen. By his concubines he had seventeen sons, among whom were Sogdianus, Ochus, and Arsites. Xerxes, having made himself drunk at a public feast, and having retired to his chamber, Sogdianus, taking advantage of it, went in and slew him, when he had sat but forty-five days on the throne. The mother of Xerxes died on the same day.

Sogdianus having rendered himself odious to the people, by the murder of his brother, and also by that of one of his father's most faithful eunuchs, found himself very unsafe on the throne, which he had obtained so unrighteously; whereupon, he grew very jealous of his brothers, and especially of Ochus, whom he sent for, to come to him. But Ochus, apprehending some mischief, drew together a large army and marched against him, professing that it was his purpose to avenge the death of his brother. Upon which many of the nobility revolted from Sogdianus, and went over to Ochus, and having put the royal diadem on his head, declared him king. Sogdianus finding himself abandoned, entered into negotiation with Ochus, who having got him into his hands, put him to death by throwing him into a furnace of ashes.

As soon as Ochus had possession of the throne, he changed his name to Darius. Among the Greek historians he is known by the name of Darius Nothus. He for a while yielded himself up to the direction of his eunuchs and his wife. He ascended the throne 423 B. C. His brother Arsites revolted against him, but was unsuccessful, and being taken, was, like Sogdianus, thrown into a furnace of ashes—a cruel death in use among the Persians, in which the person died of suffocation, very gradually. Another insurgent, named Pysuthnes, was executed in the same manner. About the year 410 B. C., the Egyptians threw off the Persian yoke, and made one Amyrtaeus king. With the aid of the Arabians, they expelled the Persians from Egypt, pursued them as far as Phenicia, and maintained their independence sixty-four years. Ochus or Darius sent another army into Egypt, which, marching through Judea, inflicted many evils on the Jews.

Eliashib, who was high-priest when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, died, 413 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Joiada. He had continued in the office of high-priest for no less than forty years.

About this time, Diagoras the Melian, who had settled himself at Athens, was condemned for teaching atheism; and though he made his escape, the sentence was pronounced on him, while absent, and a talent offered to whomsoever should kill him, wherever he might be found. About twenty years before this time, the Athenians had proceeded against another philosopher, called Protagoras, for only expressing a doubt concerning the existence of God.

According to Dr. Prideaux, the first of the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel ended with the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus; for then the restoration of the Jewish state, and the worship of the temple was completed. The last act of Nehemiah, which is recorded, (Nehemiah 13:23-31,) was just forty-nine years after the work had been begun by Ezra, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. This last act was the separation of those from their heathen wives, who had transgressed the law in regard to marriage, and the prohibition of all such alliances for ever after. But it seems to have been impossible to prevent the continual repetition of this evil, and that by men in the highest stations; for Manasseh, as he is called by Josephus, the son of Joiada, married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, and when Nehemiah was using his utmost power to enforce the law, and cause the people to put away their strange wives, Manasseh rather than comply, left the nation; and relinquishing all his prospects of distinction, took up his abode with his father-in-law, the governor of Samaria.

This event gave rise to an important transaction, which perpetuated the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Sanballat obtained leave from Darius Nothus, to build on mount Gerizim, at Samaria, a temple, in imitation of the temple at Jerusalem, of which he made his son-in-law Manasseh the high-priest. Josephus places this event much lower down in another reign, but he has probably fallen into a chronological mistake. Samaria having now a rival house of worship, became the asylum of all renegado Jews. This ready reception of rebellious and excommunicated persons, produced a bitterness of hatred in the Jews against the Samaritans, which induced them to denounce against them an awful curse, and reject them from every sort of friendly intercourse; and even prevented their exercising towards them the common rites of humanity, of which there is sufficient evidence in the Gospels, as has been said before. The Jews went so far in their anathemas against the Samaritans, that they excluded them from all part in the resurrection, and would on no account receive them as proselytes.

After their temple was built, the Samaritans pretended that this was the mountain which God had chosen for his place of worship. They asserted that here Abraham and Jacob offered sacrifices and built altars; and that Joshua, when he brought the people into Canaan, caused the blessings to be pronounced from this mountain, and on it built an altar of the twelve stones taken out of Jordan; and that very altar, they averred, was the one on which they sacrificed. But in regard to this they were guilty of a sacrilegious impiety in changing the sacred text in their copies; for, in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is said that Ebal was the mount on which the altar was built, for which the Samaritans substituted Gerizim. This corruption the Jews loudly charge upon them; but they with equal violence retort it upon the Jews, insisting that they are the corrupters of the Sacred Text; and bringing for argument, that Gerizim being the mount appointed for the pronouncement of the blessings, was a fit place for the altar, but not Ebal, from which the curses were pronounced. But all other copies of the Pentateuch, and all versions are against them. They have also added, in Exodus 20:1-26, after the tenth commandment, a command to erect an altar in Gerizim.

These two mountains are in the tribe of Ephraim. In the valley between them is Shechem, now called Naplous. This place the Jews by way of reproach called Sichar, which means, drunken. Near this was the field which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and Jacob's well, where our Saviour asked water of the Samaritan woman.

The opinion is entertained by some, that Nehemiah did not return to Jerusalem until towards the close of the reign of Darius Nothus, when he was growing old. Josephus relates that he lived to a very advanced age; and this opinion, which brings down the second administration of Nehemiah to a much later period than the date commonly assigned, will accord with the facts recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah: for it can scarcely be conceived that so great abuses could have crept in during one year: such as the profanation of the temple; the violation of the Sabbath; the neglect of sending in the tithes and prescribed offerings, and various abuses in the official duties of the priests. All that the Scriptures say in regard to the absence of Nehemiah, is, "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem; for in the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king; and I came to Jerusalem," &c. The expression "after certain days," literally is, at the end of days; a phrase which, according to the idiom of Scripture, may signify a longer or shorter time. Jahn, who adopts the above opinion, supposes that the second administration of Nehemiah was contemporaneous with the events referred to in the book of Malachi, where the desolations of Edom or Idumea are spoken of, which he thinks were occasioned by the perpetual wars carried on during this period between the Persians and Egyptians, whose armies often marched through this land, and laid it waste. It is expressly asserted that Joiada was high-priest during the last administration of Nehemiah, (Nehemiah 13:1-31 and the Alexandrian chronicon places the death of Eliashib, the father of Joiada, in the eleventh year of Darius Nothus, which answers to the 412 B. C. The second arrival of Nehemiah must, therefore, be placed much later, and is by Dr. Prideaux referred to the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus, but even this date is probably too early.

We have now arrived at a period where we can derive no further aid from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for Nehemiah 13:1-131, contains the latest history found in the sacred record; and the prophecy of Malachi closes the canon of the Old Testament, which, as was observed, refers to the same state of things as is referred to in the closing chapter of Nehemiah. There is, it is true, in the twelfth chapter of Nehemiah, an extension of the genealogy of the high-priests, for a long time after this, even to Jaddua, who was in office when Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem; but, undoubtedly, the high-priests who came after Joiada, were added by some one, after the canon was closed; most probably by Simon the Just.

How long Nehemiah lived, is nowhere said, but he must have been about seventy years of age at the time when the facts occurred, which are last recorded in his book. After him, the king of Persia appointed no one to be governor of Judea, but seems to have annexed this country to the province of Syria.

Darius Nothus continued to have wars with the Egyptians, until they were subdued; and also with Medes, who had revolted, and whom he brought under a heavier yoke than before. His policy towards the Lacedemonians and Athenians, in the Peloponnesian war was, to leave them to waste and destroy each other; occasionally directing his generals to assist the weaker party, so that the war might be the more prolonged. The general who was intrusted with the management of this

delicate and difficult business, was Tissaphernes, a man of great talents.

In the seventeenth year of his reign, (407 B. C.,) the king sent his younger son Cyrus, to be commander-in-chief of all the provinces of Asia Minor. Cyrus must have been, at this time, a very young man, scarcely above sixteen years of age. On receiving his commission, he was directed by his father, contrary to the policy pursued by Tissaphernes, to help the Lacedemonians. The impolicy of this course was soon manifest, for the Lacedemonians, by the aid of the Persians, soon became completely victorious over the Athenians; and being thenceforward released from this troublesome war, they turned their forces against the Persians themselves, and actually sent several armies to invade the country; one of which was commanded by the famous Agesilaus.

Cyrus gave great offence to his father, while he resided at Sardis, by putting to death two of his own cousins, sons of a sister of Darius, for no other reason, than because they, upon meeting him, did not wrap up their hands in their sleeves, as was customary on meeting with the king. An order was therefore sent for the recall of Cyrus, by his father, but assigning as the reason, that he was sick. Cyrus, before he set out on his return, had sent to Lysander the Lacedemonian general, subsidies, which enabled him to put his fleet into such a condition as to gain over the Athenians that decisive victory at the Goats' River, on the Hellespont, which put an end to the Peloponnesian war.

Soon after the return of Cyrus, Darius Nothus died, after a reign of nineteen years. By the interposition of his mother, Cyrus was reconciled to his father; and, not contented with this, she entreated to have her favourite made king, on the same principle as Xerxes was, because he was the first born after the accession of his father. Darius, however, would not yield this point, but gave the crown to Arsaces, the eldest son of Parysatis the queen, who, on ascending the throne, took the name of Artaxerxes, and to whom the Greeks gave the name of Mnemon, on account of his extraordinary memory.

It is said, that when the father was near his end, this son, appointed his successor, asked him to inform him by what art he had been able to manage the government so prosperously. To which he is reported to have made the following memorable reply: "By doing, in all things, that which was just toward God and man."

Cyrus, being disappointed in his ambitious views, of ascending the throne quietly, began, as soon as his father was out of the way, to plot against the life of his brother; which, being discovered, he was taken into custody, and condemned to die; but his mother again interposing in his behalf, prevailed on the king to send him back to the government of Asia Minor, which had been left to him by his father's will. But no sooner did this ambitious young man find himself at liberty, and invested with authority again, than he began, on various pretences, to raise an army; and the cities under the government of Tissaphernes revolting from him, joined themselves to Cyrus, which occasioned a war between them. This served as a pretext for what Cyrus now did, in collecting forces. As Artaxerxes supposed, that the only object was to oppose Tissaphernes; and to blind the king yet more, he wrote letters to him, complaining bitterly of the conduct of Tissaphernes, and entreating him to grant him aid against him. He now applied to the Lacedemonians, who were under great obligations to him, for the subsidies afforded them for the aid of their fleet, which they readily granted. All this time, Artaxerxes seems to have had no suspicion of the true designs of Cyrus. When he had raised and mustered his forces, he threw off the mask, and marched his army

directly against his brother. It consisted of thirteen thousand Greeks, who were the flower of his army, and about a hundred thousand besides, drawn together from all parts, under the command of Clearchus. With this force, Cyrus marched forward without meeting much opposition, until he came to the plains of Cunaxa, in the province of Babylon, where Artaxerxes met him with an army of nine hundred thousand men, and a decisive battle was fought, in which Cyrus was slain at the very moment when his auxiliary Greeks were on the point of gaining a great victory. These Grecian troops, of whom about ten thousand remained, were now left in a most embarrassing situation, in the midst of the Persian empire, in the presence of a vast hostile army, and with a long distance between them and home; the inhabitants of the intervening countries being all inimical to the Greeks. But by valour and consummate generalship, they succeeded in reaching one of the Grecian cities on the Euxine sea, after a march of two thousand three hundred and twenty-five miles. This is the most famous retreat of which we have any account in history, and of which Xenophon, who was their leader, has given us so lively and interesting a description, in his work entitled *Anabasis*.

The death of Cyrus, and the retreat of the ten thousand, occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, (401 B. C.) being the very year in which Socrates was put to death at Athens.

The reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon was long, extending to forty-six years; that is, from the year 404 to 358 B. C. He carried on wars with the Lacedemonians, Egyptians, Cadusians, &c., but no great success attended his arms. Shortly before his decease he appointed his son Darius his successor, but on discovering that he was engaged in a plot against his life, he had him executed. The second son by the queen, destroyed himself by poison. The succession to the crown then fell to Ochus, in the year 358 B. C. He assumed also the name Artaxerxes, which seems to have been among the Persian kings what Pharaoh was among the Egyptians; but in history, this monarch is known by his own proper name of Ochus.

During the greater part of the long reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon the Jews enjoyed peace; except when the Persian armies marched along the coast of the Mediterranean into Egypt. On one occasion there were assembled on their borders no less than two hundred thousand barbarian soldiers, and twenty thousand Greeks, together with a vast fleet, which rendezvoused at Acre.

The high-priest Joiada died in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and was succeeded by his son Jonathan, or Johanan, or Ptolemais, or John, who held the office for thirty-two years, and was the occasion of much trouble to his country.

The brother of the high-priest Johanan, whose name was Joshua, having ingratiated himself into the favour of Bagoses governor of Syria, through his agency and influence obtained a royal order that he should be made high-priest instead of his brother. Johanan not yielding to this, a contest took place between the two brothers, within the temple, when Joshua was rashly murdered by Johanan. Bagoses, on hearing of this outrage, came to Jerusalem to examine into the affair, and demanded to be admitted into the temple where the murder was committed; and when this was refused, on account of the sanctity of the place, he answered with indignation, "What! am not I as pure as the dead carcass which lies in your temple," and immediately forced his way into the interior, where Joshua had been slain. As a punishment for the murder of Joshua, he inflicted a fine of fifty drachms on every lamb which should be offered up in the temple. Some say the mulct

was five hundred drachms, but this has arisen from a manifest mistake in the text of Josephus. This tax continued no longer than during the government of Bagoses, a space of about seven years.

Ochus, upon ascending the throne, was guilty of shocking cruelties towards his own relations. As soon as the death of Artaxerxes and the accession of Ochus were known in Asia Minor, all the provinces in that quarter revolted.

In the third year of his reign, (356 B. C.—100th Olympiad, and 385 after the building of Rome.) Alexander, surnamed the Great, was born at Pella, in Macedonia, on the same day that Erostratus attempted to immortalize himself by setting fire to the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

About the fifth year of Ochus, died Mausolus king of Caria, an event rendered famous in history by the extraordinary grief of his wife Artemisia, who was also his sister. For having gathered together his ashes, and powdered his bones, she took a portion of them every day in her drink till she had, in this manner, drank them all; thus making her own body the sepulchre of her deceased husband, and in two years pined away with grief. But before her death she erected for him that famous monument at Halicarnassus, which was reckoned among the seven wonders of the world, and from which all monuments of unusual splendour are called Mausoleums.

In the eighth year of the reign of Ochus, the Sidonians and Phenicians revolted and entered into a confederacy with Nectanebis, king of Egypt. He sent to their aid a large body of Grecian mercenaries, by whose assistance the Persians were driven entirely out of Phenicia. The Jews also seem to have taken part in this revolt of the Phenicians. The Cyprians, too, encouraged by the success of the Phenicians, threw off the Persian yoke and joined the confederacy.

Ochus perceiving that his wars with the Egyptians had been badly managed by his generals, determined to go in person at the head of his army; and having collected three hundred thousand foot, and twenty thousand horse, marched into Phenicia. Mentor, who commanded the Grecian mercenaries, being terrified at the approach of so great an army, sent privately to Ochus, offering to deliver up the city of Sidon to him, and engaged Tennes, the king of Sidon, in the same treachery. Ochus was rejoiced at this proposal, and promised them their own terms. The Sidonians, to cut off all hope of escape from the inhabitants, that they might make a more desperate resistance, had purposely burned all their ships. When they found that they were betrayed, and that the enemy was within their walls, retired to their houses, and setting fire to them, perished in the flames, to the number of forty thousand, and among the rest, Tennes, their king, whose treason did not save him. This was the commencement of the destruction of that ancient and famous city, predicted by the prophets in such glowing language. The Phenicians, terrified with the overthrow of the Sidonians, submitted to the conqueror without a struggle.

Ochus having subdued the Sidonians and Phenicians, marched into Judea, besieged and took Jericho, and carried many of the Jews into captivity, taking some with him into Egypt, and sending many others into Hyrcania. The latter were planted near the borders of the Caspian Sea, where some modern travellers think they have discovered their posterity, at this day. (See Morier's Travels.) Not wishing to be diverted from Egypt, on which his attention was fixed, Ochus made peace with the Cyprians, by relieving them from some of the burdens of which they complained.

Ochus, arriving with his army in Egypt, besieged Pelusium, while a part of his fleet sailing up the river, encamped in an advantageous spot, and being attacked by the Grecian mercenaries in the service of the Egyptians, defended themselves, and slew a large number of the enemy. Upon which Pelusium capitulated, and Nectanebis fled to Memphis, his capital; but on the approach of Ochus, he retired from Egypt into Ethiopia, thus abandoning his country, to which he never afterwards returned. He was the last native king who reigned in Egypt, for ever since that devoted country has been in the hands of foreigners. By this a remarkable prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled.* (Ezekiel 29:13-16.) Mentor the Rhodian, having been of great service in this war, Ochus rewarded him with a hundred talents, and made him governor of the provinces in Asia Minor, where he acted with great fidelity to the king, and brought over to him his two brothers, Memnon and Artabazus, who were also men of extraordinary talents, who had been engaged in the war against Ochus. These brothers were of the greatest service to the king's interest, by bringing back to their allegiance many revolted provinces.

In the eleventh year of Ochus, (348 B. C.,) which answers to the 108th Olympiad, died the celebrated Athenian philosopher, Plato. Among his scholars, Aristotle was by far the most eminent, the founder of the Peripatetic sect. This man was born at a small town on the river Strymon, called Stagira; on which account he is often called the Stagirite. But the successor of Plato in the school was Speusippus. Aristotle, after the death of his master, went into Asia, and lived with the king of Atarna, a city of Mysia, whose niece he married; but after the death of this person, he went to Mytilene, and from thence to Macedonia, and became preceptor to Alexander the Great, with whom he remained eight years. After this he returned to Athens, and taught the Peripatetic philosophy for twelve years in the Lyceum. But being accused of teaching something contrary to the established religion of the State, and being unwilling to expose himself to the fate of Socrates, he retired to Chalcis, a town in Eubæ, where he died, two years afterwards, in the sixty-third year of his age. Josephus informs us that Aristotle, while he resided with Hermias, in Mysia, became acquainted with a learned Jew, from the upper parts of Asia, who had come there on business. This fact, he says, he learned from a book written by Clearchus, one of Aristotle's principal scholars.

After Ochus had brought Egypt and all his other revolted provinces into subjection, he gave himself up entirely to ease and luxury, and took no more concern about the government of the empire, which he committed to Bagoas, his favourite eunuch, and Mentor the Rhodian. In the eighteenth year of this reign, (341 B. C.,) died Johanan or John, the high-priest of the Jews, after holding the office for thirty-two years. He was succeeded by his son Jaddua, who held it twenty years. Ochus came to his end by means of poison, administered by his favourite eunuch Bagoas, (338 years B. C.,) after a reign of twenty-one years.

Bagoas, after the death of Ochus, having the whole power in his hands, raised Arses, the youngest of the king's sons, to the throne, and then murdered all the rest; thinking to free himself from all control by placing one upon the throne who was a king merely in name. About this time, Philip king of Macedon, having made himself master of all Greece, determined to carry on war against the Persians, by an invasion of their country. With this view he called a general assembly of the States of Greece, at Corinth, where he caused himself to be chosen captain-general of the Grecian forces, and required every city to furnish a certain number of men. But while he was making these preparations, intending shortly to put himself at the head of his troops, he was slain,

at the nuptials of his daughter Cleopatra with Alexander king of Epirus. The assassin was Pausanias, a young Macedonian, who having received great injury from one of the king's favourites, and obtaining no satisfaction from Philip, he watched his opportunity, and slew the king as he was passing in great pomp to the theatre. He was succeeded by his son Alexander, then only twenty years of age.

Bagoas, finding that Arses, whom he had placed on the Persian throne, began to suspect his villainy, resolved to be before-hand with him, and accordingly destroyed him. After producing a vacancy in this iniquitous manner, he elevated to the throne Codomanus, who assumed the name of Darius, after he was made king. He was descended from Darius Nothus. As Ochus, on his accession to the throne, had killed nearly all the descendants of Darius Nothus, it is not certainly known how Codomanus escaped. The first appearance which he makes in history is, in the character of courier, in the early part of the reign of Ochus. When this king was engaged in a war with the Cadusians, a champion of that nation challenged the whole Persian army to send out a man to fight him, in single combat. When all declined this challenge, Codomanus accepted it, and killed his antagonist; as a reward for which, he was made governor of Armenia.

Bagoas, however, finding that Darius was not a man to suit his purpose, determined to put him out of the way, as he had done his predecessors; but the king being informed of his purpose to poison him with a certain potion, when it was brought, forced Bagoas to drink it himself; and thus the traitor fell by his own artifice. In regard to personal appearance, courage, and bodily strength, Darius had no superior in all his empire. He was also, it is said, of a mild and generous disposition; but it was his misfortune to have to contend with that irresistible conqueror, Alexander the Great.

SECTION IV

reign of alexander the great—invasion of asia by alexander—conquest of the persian empire—siege and capture of tyre—alexander's visit to jerusalem—is met by jaddua and the other priests—his strange behaviour—his kind treatment of the jews—conduct towards the samaritans—death of darius—invasion of india—voyage of nearchus—capricious and violent character of alexander—his death

Alexander, having been appointed successor to his father as generalissimo of all the forces of Greece destined to go against Persia, after subduing all his enemies at home, set off for Persia, with no more than thirty thousand infantry and five thousand horse. Encountering the Persian army at the river Granicus, he totally defeated it, though five times more numerous than his own. His victory put him in possession, not only of all the treasures of Darius, in Sardis, but all the provinces of Asia Minor came over to him, or were subdued by force. Before he went into winter quarters, he gave permission to all his newly married soldiers to return home, and spend the winter with their wives; which custom being found among no other but the Jews, it is probable that it was borrowed from them.

Darius finding his empire so seriously menaced, exerted himself to prepare for the approaching contest, and mustered six hundred thousand men, near Babylon. He also had recourse to policy, for knowing that the Grecian States were not friendly to Alexander, he sent Memnon, the wisest of his generals, with a fleet to the Grecian seas, where the Athenians and Lacedemonians would have been ready to join him; but after taking possession of a few islands, he died, and the scheme

was not prosecuted.

Darius, contrary to the advice of some of the most experienced and skilful of his generals, who advised him to wait for Alexander in the champaign country, marched to get possession of the straits which led from Cilicia into Syria. In consequence of the unfavourableness of the ground, Darius was unable to bring but a small part of his immense host into the field at once; and the Macedonians soon broke the first lines of the Persian army, and drove them back on the second, and then on the third; and thus the whole was soon thrown into perfect confusion. Such was the press of the crowd, in the narrow defiles of the mountains by which they were enclosed, that more perished that day, by being trodden to death by their own men, than were slain by the enemy. It was with the greatest difficulty that Darius made his escape; but his camp and baggage, with his mother, wife, and children, fell into the hands of the enemy. This battle was fought at Issus, in Cilicia, towards the close of the year. The result of this victory was the conquest of all Syria, and its capital, Damascus, whither Darius had sent his most precious treasures, with his concubines, and most of the ladies of his court. The governor of this town, as soon as he heard of the flight of Darius, delivered it up to Alexander, who sent Parmenio to take possession.

Alexander now pursued his march through Phenicia, where all submitted to his arms, except the Tyrians; who refused him admittance into their city, depending on its insular and inaccessible situation. Alexander, naturally impetuous, and now flushed with victory; resolved, that cost what it might, he would take the place. The first thing he attempted, was to raise a bank between the main land and the island on which Tyre was now built; and by this means, after some delay he took the city. In making this causeway, he employed the rubbish of the old town, which had stood on the continent, before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Since the time of Alexander, the island has disappeared, or rather forms a part of the main land. Among the captives taken at Damascus, there was one, who, by her extraordinary beauty, captivated the conqueror of the world. This was Barsena, the widow of Memnon, a famous Persian general, of whom mention has already been made. Her, Alexander married, and by her had a son whom he named Hercules.

Tyre, being altogether devoted to commerce, was dependant on other countries for her supplies of grain; which were commonly obtained from Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Alexander, therefore, during the seige, was obliged to look to the same quarter for supplies for his army, and ordered the inhabitants to furnish him with all necessaries. The Jews pleaded, that they were bound by an oath to Darius, and refused to obey Alexander's commands. This answer greatly provoked him, who, as soon as he had finished the siege of Tyre, marched his army directly towards Jerusalem, with the intention of punishing the Jews as severely as he had done the Tyrians, for not obeying his orders. In this exigence, Jaddua the high-priest, and others who had now the chief authority in Jerusalem, being in great perplexity, and all Jerusalem with them, had no other resource, but to throw themselves on the merciful protection of God. Accordingly, they earnestly sought his favour, by prayers, sacrifices, and oblations. In answer to which, it is reported by Josephus, that God appeared to Jaddua by night, in a dream, directing him to go forth to meet Alexander, dressed in his pontifical robes, accompanied by all the priests in their sacerdotal habits, and all the people of Jerusalem, clothed in white garments. This divine admonition they obeyed, and marched in procession to an elevated spot, not far from Jerusalem, called Sapha, where they arranged themselves in solemn order, and waited for the coming of Alexander; who, when he saw them, was struck with a solemn awe, and bending down, saluted Jaddua, with profound and religious

reverence. All his attendants were astonished at this conduct, and the enemies of the Jews in his train were greatly disappointed, for they expected nothing else but to see the Jews devoted to destruction.

Parmenio could not refrain from asking him the reason, why he, whom all adored, should pay such reverence to the Jewish high-priest. He answered, that he did not worship the priest, but that God whom he served. For he said, that when he was at Dio in Macedonia, and was hesitating about undertaking this expedition, this very person had appeared to him in a dream, in the very same robes in which he now appeared, and had encouraged him to pass boldly into Asia; promising him, that God would guide him during the whole expedition, and would make him master of the Persian empire. Alexander then kindly embraced Jaddua, and entered Jerusalem with him in a friendly manner. Here Jaddua showed him the prophecies of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian prince; (see Daniel 8:1-27) This, it is said, inspired him with the utmost confidence of success; not doubting but that he was the person intended in the prophecy. All which disposed him to treat the Jews with great kindness, so that when they petitioned for the freedom of their country, laws, and religion, and exemption from tribute every seventh year, he readily granted them all their requests. No sooner had he left Jerusalem, than the Samaritans met him with great pomp and parade, and begged that he would also visit their city and temple. Now the Samaritans had a strong ground for their plea, because when the Jews refused to send supplies to the army of Alexander, the Samaritans readily complied with his orders; and moreover, sent eight thousand men to assist him in the siege. Alexander answered them kindly, and told them that he was then hastening to Egypt, but on his return, would consider their petition, and grant to them what they desired, as far as was consistent. They then requested freedom from tribute, every seventh year. Upon which he asked them whether they were Jews, to which they answered they were Hebrews, who observed the same laws as the Jews; and neither sowed nor reaped, in the seventh year; and that as this immunity had been granted to the Jews, they hoped it would not be withheld from them. Alexander not being at leisure to make the necessary inquiries, deferred a decision, on this point also, till his return.

On coming to Gaza, he found it strongly garrisoned, under one of Darius's eunuchs, named Betis, a valiant and faithful man, who defended the city for his master as long as he could: as it was at the very entrance into the country claimed by Egypt, he could not pass until he had taken it. But notwithstanding all the force and art by which it was assailed, it detained Alexander two whole months. This delay, together with two dangerous wounds received during the siege, led him to treat the commander and inhabitants with inexcusable cruelty. He put to death ten thousand of them, and sent all the rest into slavery. Alexander now marched immediately to Egypt. When he arrived at Pelusium, the Egyptians flocked to meet him as a deliverer; for such was their hatred to the Persians that they were ready to welcome any other master. He was, therefore, received with open arms, and Egypt was possessed without a struggle. Even the Persian governor at Memphis, seeing that it was in vain to resist such a torrent, submitted to Alexander.

From Memphis, he projected a journey through the desert to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, situated in the sands of Lybia, at the distance of two hundred miles from Egypt. The famous temple erected here was probably in honour of Ham, the first settler of Egypt after the deluge. Alexander's errand to this place was very foolish and vainglorious. It was no other than to get himself acknowledged as the son of the god called Jupiter Hammon. In order to effect his purpose,

he had sent before him messengers to bribe the priests, so that when he came, the oracle might declare what he vaingloriously and impiously wished. On his way, his sagacious eye observed a spot near the coast, over against the island of Pharos, very suitable for a city. He immediately resolved that one should be built, which he intended to make the capital of his empire, and called it Alexandria, after his own name. According to the course of trade, in those days, no situation could be more eligible; for it has before it the Mediterranean, and behind it the Nile, with a short and easy communication with the Red Sea. But the state of the world as to commerce is now entirely changed, and at present Alexandria is famous for nothing but its ruins, the remains of its former grandeur. Having laid out the city, he left the work in the hands of the famous architect, Democrates, the builder of the celebrated temple of Diana, at Ephesus, while he went on his projected journey to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, where he received from the oracle the answer which he wished, that he was the son of the god worshipped in that temple. Upon which he returned in great triumph. In making this journey, his army ran great hazards in passing through the sands, for two hundred miles; where Cambyses, as we have before mentioned, lost an army of forty or fifty thousand men. In one instance, he was preserved from death by a seasonable, but almost miraculous shower of rain.

On his return, he collected inhabitants from all quarters to people his new city, and among the rest, invited many Jews to settle there, offering them the free exercise of their own laws and religion; and even granting them the same privileges as were conferred on the Macedonians themselves. Varro relates that about the time of building Alexandria, the use of the papyrus, as a material for writing on, was discovered.

While Alexander was gone to Egypt, he left as governor of Syria and Palestine, a special favourite, whose name was Andromachus, who had his residence at Samaria. The Samaritans, it would seem, chagrined at not receiving equal privileges with the Jews, or on some other ground, set fire to the house of the governor, who was consumed in the flames. At this, Alexander was exceedingly exasperated, and on his return, put to death all who had taken any part in this affair; drove the rest out of the city, replaced them with Macedonians, and gave their land to the Jews. Those who escaped, went and settled at Sichem, under mount Gerizim, which has been ever since the principal residence of the Samaritans.

Darius, having several times in vain solicited peace from Alexander, at last determined to make a mighty effort, and collecting a vast army, marched towards Nineveh, where he was pursued by Alexander, and overtaken at an inconsiderable village called Guagimola, where a great battle was fought, and Darius' army entirely defeated, though it was twenty times as numerous as that of Alexander; and where he had all the advantage of an extensive plain to bring his whole force into active operation. This battle is usually named, not from the obscure village where it was fought, but from the city of Arbela, which was at no great distance. Any one may see in these events, how remarkably the prophecies of Daniel were fulfilled, which relate to "the ram and the he-goat," and which were interpreted to mean the kings of Persia and of Grecia. (See Daniel 7:6; Daniel 8:5-7, Daniel 8:20-21) Darius now fled to Media. Alexander pursued him as far as Arbela, where he took all his treasure and royal equipage, which was of very great value. Alexander then turned his course to Babylon, which city was given up to him at once by the governor.

Alexander now gave himself up to feasting and every species of dissipation. When inflamed with wine, he often acted like a perfect madman, as an example of which we may mention, that, one night to gratify the caprice of a famous Athenian courtesan, he, and all his companions, seizing torches, set fire to Persepolis, and burned it to the ground. Hearing that Darius was collecting another army in Media, Alexander pursued after him; and on his arrival, finding that he had fled to Parthia, he continued his pursuit. This unfortunate monarch, being thus driven from country to country, and subjected to great privations and sufferings, grew desperate, and refused to proceed further. Upon which his attendants inflicted several mortal wounds on him, and left him; in which situation he was found by one of Alexander's generals; but breathed his last before Alexander himself arrived. When he saw the dead body of so great a prince, thus forsaken and mangled, the conqueror wept, and throwing his cloak over it, commanded that it should be conveyed to Susa, and be honoured by a royal burial. Thus ended the Persian empire, after it had endured, from the first year of Cyrus, two hundred and nine years.

The enterprise of conquering India was another example of the excessive vainglory of this prince. Having read in the fabulous histories of Greece, of the heroic exploits of Hercules and Bacchus, in the invasion of this remote country, he was ambitious of equalling them, as he now gave himself out to be the son of Jupiter, and began to require divine honours to be paid to him. One of his worst actions was the putting Callisthenes the philosopher to death, because he remonstrated against this foolish expedition. About the same time, also, he put Clitus to death with his own hand.

When Alexander crossed the river Indus, he gave orders to build ships, with the view of sending them down the river, and along the coast, until they should reach Persia. This fleet was committed to Nearchus, who coasted along the southern shores of Asia, until he reached the gulph of Ormus, in Persia, much about the same time that Alexander arrived in those parts, in his dreary march by land, through the barren sands of the southern parts of Persia. In this march, which was also in imitation of Hercules and Bacchus, he lost more than half his men. After his return, he married the eldest daughter of Darius, and gave the youngest to Hephestion his chief favourite; and most of his leading generals were married at the same time, to noble Persian ladies.

The mind of Alexander was capable of the most enlarged and comprehensive views, and he was full of grand projects, which few others would have conceived. One of these was the circumnavigation of Africa; another, the restoration of Babylon, which had suffered greatly, from the time that Cyrus removed the mounds which restrained the waters of the Euphrates in their channel. A third was a survey of the Caspian sea. But when unoccupied with his wars, he gave himself up to luxury, especially to hard drinking, in which he would often spend whole days and nights; until, at length he brought on a fever by his excesses, which in a few days put an end to his life, at Babylon. The death of Alexander occurred in the first year of the 146th Olympiad, (323 B. C.) As is very common, in regard to the end of great princes, his death was attributed to poison, and this report was not only current, but fully believed among the Macedonians: and to give plausibility to the story, a great many particular circumstances, as to the manner in which the poison was concealed and administered, were circulated.

After the death of Alexander, great confusion ensued about the succession. But eventually the supreme authority was divided among his four principal generals, Cassander, Lysimachus,

Ptolemy, and Seleucus. Cassander had for his allotment, Macedonia and Greece. Lysimachus, Thrace and those parts of Asia which lay along the Hellespont and Bosphorus; Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, and Syria; and Seleucus all the rest.

Thus the prophecy of Daniel (Daniel 8:8) respecting the breaking of the horn of "the he-goat," was most exactly and wonderfully verified. The words of the prophet are, "Therefore the he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones," taken in connection with the interpretation, given to Daniel by the angel: "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn between his eyes, is the first king. Now, that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power." The same events are predicted in Daniel 7:5-6, under a different prophetic emblem. "After this I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it."

SECTION V

from the time of the immediate successors of alexander the great, to the death of onias the high-priest

Incessant wars were carried on between these generals, to give an account of which, is not consistent with our plan, except so far as they are connected with the fortunes of the Jewish people.

Perdiceas, who was left in Babylon, and to whom was committed the guardianship of the young kings, the half brother, and the infant son of Alexander, was a man of great ambition, and very soon began to meditate important conquests. He first invaded Egypt, and then waged war against Ptolemy; but Ptolemy, having governed in Egypt with great wisdom and moderation, was beloved by the people, and even the Grecian soldiers in the army of Perdiccas were so unwilling to fight against him, that they revolted from their leader and put him to death, after which event all the Macedonians who invaded Egypt came over to the side of Ptolemy. This prince, now observing how convenient it would be for him to regain the possession of Phenicia and India, resolved to make himself master of these provinces, which having been assigned to Laomedon the Mitylenian, one of Alexander's captains, in the original division, and confirmed to him in the second partition made by Antipater, had remained in his undisturbed possession from the death of Alexander until this time. Ptolemy at first attempted to purchase them, and offered large sums for this purpose; but failing in these measures, he had recourse to war, and sent Nicanor with a fleet into Syria, while he invaded Phenicia. But while all the country beside yielded to her power, the Jews alone refused to submit, and, for some time, stood out against him; upon which Ptolemy marched against Judea, and besieged Jerusalem. The reason of their opposition was, a conscientious regard to the oath which they had taken to Laomedon. Jerusalem being by nature strong, and being also well fortified, might have resisted long, had not Ptolemy taken advantage of their too strict observance of their Sabbath, and chosen that day for a general assault. The place fell into his hands, because none of the Jews would, on the Sabbath, defend their walls against him. Josephus, indeed, gives a different account of this transaction, but he was probably induced to conceal the truth, for fear of the ridicule of the Greeks. And we know that until the time of Matthias, the Jews did consider it wrong to fight on the Sabbath.

When Ptolemy got possession of Jerusalem and Judea, he carried away one hundred thousand of the Jews to Egypt; but observing how faithful they were to those whom they served, he chose out thirty thousand of them, to govern those towns which it was most important to preserve. And having recently added Lybia and Cyrene to his dominions, he sent many of them to occupy that country. This was the origin of the Jewish colony, who long resided there, and who were numerous in the time of our Saviour, and long afterwards. Although the real power of the empire had been usurped by Alexander's generals, yet there was an agreement among them that Aridæus his half brother, should have the title of king, and Alexander, the son of the conqueror by his wife Roxana, who was born after his father's death, was also joined with the former in the title of king, and many wars carried on by those in actual power, were professedly in the name of these kings; the first of whom was an idiot, and the other an infant. About this time Aridæus the king, having been carried into Macedonia, was there seized by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, and put to death. After this, the infant Alexander only had the title of king; but almost all the time that he bore it, he was a prisoner, and it was not long before he also was put to death.

In the year 312 B. C., Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, having seized on Babylon, speedily and unexpectedly arose to great power; for, by his clemency, justice, and wisdom, he so conciliated the affections of those under his authority, that from being the most obscure, he became the greatest of Alexander's immediate successors. His name is introduced here, on account of a famous chronological era, called Seleueidæ, or the era of contracts, which was made use of all over the East, by Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. The Jews gave it the name of the era of contracts, because while under the Syro-Macedonian kings, they were found to use it in all their contracts; and it grew so much into use, that for a thousand years after Christ, they knew no other method of computing their time. In the eleventh century they were driven from the East, and settled in Spain and in other countries in the West of Europe. The commencement of this era corresponds with 953 of the Julian period. The Arabs call it Tarikh Dhilkarnain, the era of the two-horned, by which they mean Alexander; whose coins were often impressed with a figure of two horns. In the books of the Maccabees, this era is called the era of the kingdom of the Greeks. It corresponds with the year 312 B. C.

During the incessant struggles which agitated the empire, Judea had passed out of the hands of Ptolemy into those of Antigonus, whose power in the East had become enormous. Ptolemy, however, again made himself master of the country, and sent his general to seize upon Upper Syria; but the sons of Antigonus defeated him. Upon which Antigonus joined his sons, and they marched against Ptolemy, who not being able to stand his ground, withdrew to Egypt, and all these countries fell again under the power of Antigonus. But many of the inhabitants of these regions were so much better pleased with his government than that of Antigonus, that they followed him into Egypt; and among the rest a great many Jews; which still increased the number of this people there. In Alexandria, which Ptolemy wished to make the capital of all Egypt, they had a particular quarter of the city assigned to them when it was first built, the inhabitants of which now increased to many thousand families.

Among those who went with Ptolemy to Egypt, on this occasion, was a man eminent for his wisdom and virtues, by the name of Hezekias, of the sacerdotal race. Hecatæus the historian, who accompanied Ptolemy on this expedition, makes particular mention of him, as a man not only of great prudence, but of great eloquence. He, moreover, says, that from him he learned the religion,

policy, and manners of the Jews, which, he observed, Hezekias had with him, written in a book. This, doubtless, was no other than the Law of Moses. And from his acquaintance with this person, no doubt, it was, that he entertained so favourable an opinion of the Jews and their religion.

This Hecataëus composed a history of the Jews, from Abraham down to his own time; the materials for which, he probably derived from Hezekias. This led a heathen writer, in the time of Trajan, as Origen informs us, to doubt whether Hecataëus ever wrote the history; for he supposed, either that it was written by some Jew, under the name of Hecataëus, or that if he was the true author, he must have been converted to the Jewish religion. Hecataëus was a native of Abdera, a Grecian city of Thrace, memorable as the birth-place of several other great men. He was brought up with Alexander, followed him in all his wars, and lived with him in Egypt, where he became acquainted with the history, religion, and customs of the Jews. The book is no longer extant, but Josephus gives several extracts from it, in his first book against Apion. This man must not be confounded with another historian, by the same name, who lived in the time of Darius Hystaspes. Josephus informs us of another Jew, who, about this time, followed Ptolemy, and enlisted in his cavalry. His name was Mosollam. And from Hecataëus he gives us the following anecdote of him. "As I was travelling towards the Red Sea, there was a certain man in company, called Mosollom, who excelled all the Greeks and barbarians of his time in archery. While several of us were travelling on together, a certain soothsayer undertook to foretell the fortunes of our journey. He bade us all stand still; on which the Jew asked why we stood. 'Look ye,' answered he, throwing him a bird. 'If that bird stands, ye are to stand. If he rises and flies, ye must go forward; but if he flies the contrary way, ye must all go back. Upon which the Jew without speaking a word lets fly an arrow and kills the bird: at which the diviner and some others expressed great indignation. 'Are ye not all mad, said the Jew, to make so much ado about a foolish bird? How could that poor creature show us our fortune, who knows so little of his own?' "

The Arabs of the desert were, in those times, of the same character as now. They had their stations in the recesses of the wilderness, but their occupation was that of robbers. The Nabathean tribe had Petra for their chief residence. The Hebrews called it Selah, the Arabs Hagar, all which names signify, a rock. Antigonus sent an army against them under Athenæus, who came upon Petra, when the men were all out on a predatory expedition, and carried away the women and children; but the Arabs soon returning, pursued after him, and came upon him in the dead of night, and slew all of them, except about fifty horsemen, and recovered all that had been taken from them.

Antigonus, next, sent Demetrius to take signal vengeance on these robbers; but they had early intelligence of it, and leaving a strong garrison in Petra, the rest of them took their wives, children, and friends, and buried themselves in the recesses of the wilderness. Demetrius finding it in vain to contend with such a people, offered them favourable terms of peace, and returned. In his return, it is mentioned, that after travelling thirty-six miles from Petra, he came to the lake Asphaltites, called also, the Sea of Sodom, because Sodom once stood there; and, the Dead Sea, because of the heavy, stagnant nature of its waters; and in the Scriptures, the Salt Sea, on account of its great saltiness. Demetrius, observing the vast quantities of bitumen formed here, suggested to Antigonus the advantage which might result to his revenue, if he would send proper persons to gather it up. With this hint, Antigonus was pleased, and accordingly sent workmen to collect the bitumen; but when they had succeeded in getting it together, the Arabs, to the number of six

thousand, fell upon them, and either slew or drove them away.

Antigonus, hearing of the rising power of Seleucus at Babylon, sent his son Demetrius to subdue that place; but although successful at first, he was ultimately baffled in his design, and Seleucus retained his power undiminished.

In this year, (318 B. C.) a treaty of peace took place, between the contending powers; according to which, it was agreed, that Lysimachus should have Thrace; Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, and Arabia; Antigonus, all Asia. But this compact was of short duration. The increasing power of Antigonus filled the others with continual alarm, and they set about measures to curtail it, which brought on new wars.

The philosopher, Epicurus, began this year (312 B. C.) to disseminate his pestiferous doctrine. He first taught at Mytilene, in the island of Lesbos, and afterwards, at Lampsacus, and the Hellespont; and finally, at Athens, of which city he was a native. Here he kept his school, in a garden, from the thirty-seventh to the sixty-third year of his age, when he died. The sum and substance of his doctrine was, that all things exist and take place by chance. He did not deny the being of God, but held that he lived at his ease, having nothing to do either with the creation or government of the world. He taught that this world was man's all; and, therefore he was wisest who sought and attained the greatest share of earthly pleasure; but, at the same time, he taught, that this end was most certainly attained by a life of temperance and virtue.

While the power of Antigonus was rising so high in the west of Asia, that of Seleucus was extending itself still more rapidly beyond the Euphrates; so that it now reached the Indus on the East, and he began to invade the territories of Antigonus, to the West. This brought on war again between these great powers. And while Antigonus was called to the defence of his dominions against Seleucus, Ptolemy thought it a good opportunity for recovering Syria and Palestine. This he soon accomplished, with the exception of Tyre and Sidon, which being well garrisoned, were able to hold out against him. This return of Judea under the dominion of Ptolemy, occurred in the year 301 B. C. In this same year, the armies of Antigonus and Seleucus came to a battle, in Phrygia in which Antigonus, then above fourscore, was slain, and his army entirely defeated. This was the period at which that fourfold dominion of Alexander's empire, mentioned before, took place. The other competitors were now out of the way, the nominal kings, as well as almost all Alexander's kindred, being dead. Ptolemy now took undisputed possession of Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. Lysimachus took Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces along the Hellespont; Cassander, Macedon and Greece; and Seleucus all the rest of Asia.

This division of the empire, into four great kingdoms, did not take place until about twenty-two years after the death of Alexander. These were the four horns of "the he-goat" which came up in the place of "the great horn;" the four heads of the leopard; and the four kingdoms, into which the kingdom of the mighty should be broken and divided towards the four winds of heaven, who should not be of his posterity.

SECTION VI

the accession of simon the just—megasthenes, historian of india—building of seleucia—destruction and desolation of babylon—death of simon

In the year 300 B. C. died Onias the high-priest of the Jews. He was succeeded by his son Simon, surnamed the Just, on account of the holiness of his life, and the strict justice which marked all his actions. He was the first of that name who was invested with this office, and continued in it nine years. He is the last, according to the Jewish tradition, of the Great Synagogue, who, they say, assisted Ezra in preparing the sacred books, and settling the canon. After the battle in which Antigonius was slain and his army defeated, Seleucus took possession of the greater part of Asia Minor, and gave himself up very much to the building of cities. Sixteen he called by the name of Antioch, in honour of his father and son, both of whom were named Antiochus. The principal of these was on the river Orontes, about seventy miles from its mouth, which became the most famous city in all the western part of Asia. There Christianity early took root, and flourished under the ministry of Paul, Barnabas and others. Here the disciples were first called Christians. In the early ages of Christianity it was a metropolitan city, and its bishop held rank with the first four in the world. This city continued to be famous in the East for sixteen hundred years.

In A. D. 1265, Antioch was taken from the Christians by the Sultan of Egypt, soon after which it fell into decline, and since that time Aleppo has become the chief city in those regions; which, however, has itself been overthrown by an earthquake. Another town by the name of Antioch, in Pisidia, is mentioned in the Acts of Apostles. About this time flourished Megasthenes, who wrote a history of India, some fragments of which are preserved by Josephus, and Eusebius. He is often quoted by Strabo, Athenæus, Arrian, Pliny, Cicero and Solinus. In this work, mention was made of Nebuchadnezzar and the greatness of his power. But the book is not now extant.

In the year 293 B. C., Seleucus built Seleucia, on the Tigris, about forty miles from Babylon. It was situated on the west side of the river, opposite to the place where Bagdad now stands, and soon grew to be a very great city. Pliny tells us it had six hundred thousand inhabitants. One reason of its rapid growth was, that Babylon becoming every year less habitable, on account of the inundation of the river, which turned its level grounds into a fen, the inhabitants were glad to seek a more commodious habitation. The Babylonians, therefore, flocked in great numbers to the new city. And, moreover, Seleucus having called it after his own name, gave it many privileges above the other cities of the East.

The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah respecting the utter desolation of this great city, have been most remarkably fulfilled, even to this day. Three hundred years before Christ, it began to be forsaken. Pliny says, that in his time it was exhausted of its inhabitants, and brought to desolation. Strabo says the same. Pausanias tells us that Babylon, once the greatest city in the world, had, in his time, (second century,) nothing left but the walls. These remained long, for they served as a park for the Parthian kings, for the keeping of wild beasts for their hunting. And in this state it was in Jerome's time, in the fourth century, for he tells us, that "except the walls, which were repaired for enclosing wild beasts, all within was desolation." And in another place, "that Babylon was nothing else but a chase of wild beasts, kept within its ancient walls, for the hunting of the king." For in Jerome's time, a race of Persian kings had possession of this country, who continued until they were dispossessed by the Saracens.

From the time of Jerome, no writer speaks of Babylon for several centuries. How the walls were demolished we know not. Benjamin the Jew, tells us, in his Itinerary, that he was on the place where the old city formerly stood, and found it then wholly desolate. "Only," says he, "some ruins

of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were then still remaining; but the men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and scorpions that were then in the place."

Texeira, a Portuguese traveller, tells us, "that there was nothing then remaining of this old and famous city, but only some faint vestiges; and that there was no place in all the country less frequented than that tract of ground, whereon it formerly stood."

Rawolf, a German traveller, who passed that way A. D. 1574, says, "the village of Elugo lieth on the place, where old Babylon the metropolis of Chaldea did stand. The harbour lieth a quarter of a league off, where those are to go who intend to travel to the famous city of Bagdad, which is situated further to the east on the river Tigris, at the distance of a journey of a day and a half. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I should have doubted very much, whether this powerful city (which was once the most famous in the world) did stand there, if I should not have known it by its situation and antiquities, that are still standing hereabout in great desolation. First, by the old bridge over the Euphrates, of which some piers and arches are still remaining, built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable. Just before Elugo is the hill on which the castle did stand, in a plain, where some ruins are still visible. Behind it, and near it, did stand the town of Babylon. This we see still, and it is half a league in diameter; but so completely ruined and low, and so full of venomous reptiles, that have bored holes through it, that we cannot come near it within half a mile but only in two months in the winter, when they come not out of their holes. Among these reptiles, there is a species, in the Persian language called Eglo, that are very poisonous. They are bigger than any lizards."

Of the ruins of Babylon on the western side of the river, none of these travellers make the least mention, for they speak of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, which we know was on the eastern side. One reason for introducing here, a description of the situation of Babylon is, that the reader may compare it with the prophecy of Isaiah, (Isaiah 13:19-22) "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there; but wild beasts of the desert shall live there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

Whenever we read of Babylon, as inhabited, after the time of her desolation mentioned above, we must understand Seleucia; for that city is often called by the name of Babylon. At first it was called Babylonia Seleucia, then Babylonia, and finally Babylon. Simon the Just, high-priest of the Jews, died in the year 292 B. C., leaving only an infant son named Onias. Eleazar, the brother of Simon, therefore succeeded to that high office.

Simon, of whom mention has already been made, was certainly a very extraordinary person, as may be gathered from the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, where his pious and beneficent acts are set forth. But his chief work was the completion of the canon of the Old Testament. It is evident that the canon could not have been completed by Ezra, for the books of Nehemiah and Malachi were pretty certainly written after his time: and Chronicles, Ezra, and Esther, were probably written by himself. All these, it is probable, were added to the canon by Simon the Just, who, on account

of his attention to this business, is mentioned as the last of the men of the Great Synagogue, concerning which the Jewish writers have so much to say.

The main reason, however, for ascribing this work to Simon, is, that the genealogies contained in Nehemiah and Chronicles, seem to reach down near to his time, but none of them go farther. Thus in Nehemiah 12:1-47 we have mention of Jaddua, who was high-priest when Alexander visited Jerusalem; and in 1 Chronicles 3:1-24 we have so many generations of the descendants of Zerubbabel mentioned, that they must in all probability reach to the time of Simon.

SECTION VII

retrospect of the succession of kings and high-priests who had authority over judea, until the death of simon the just—simon succeeded by eleazar in the priesthood—by antigonus as president of the sanhedrim—mishnical doctors—sanhedrim—how conducted—changes in the jewish worship

Having brought the history down to the close of the canon of the Old Testament, it may not be amiss to take a brief retrospect of the several kings and high-priests, who were in authority during this period.

As our history commences with Cyrus, he will of course stand first on the list.

B. C.|536—Cyrus.|

|529—Cambyses.|

|522—Smerdis.|

|521—Darius Hystaspes.|

|465—Xerxes I.|

|464—Artaxerxes Longimanus.|

|424—Xerxes II.|

|424—Sogdianus.|

|423—Darius Nothus.|

|404—Artaxerxes Mnemon.|

|358—Darius Ochus.|

|337—Arses.|

|335—Darius Codomanus.|

This last was the Darius who was conquered by Alexander the Great.

The nominal kings, after the death of Alexander, were Aridæus, his half-brother, and Alexander Egus his son by Roxana; the first of whom was put to death about 313 B. C. The latter lived to be only fourteen years of age, and was put to death by Cassander, about 310 B. C. After the death of Alexander, numerous competitors arose from among his officers, who laid claim to whatever countries they were able to seize. Hence arose a confusion of historical facts, which it is almost

impossible to reduce to any order. But after a series of revolutions, and incessant wars, about the year 313 B. C., the whole empire was divided between four principal successors of the conqueror.

This division of the empire, however, did not continue long.

Cassander had Macedon and Greece.

Lysimachus, Thrace, Bithynia, &c.

Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia.

Seleucus, the other Asiatic provinces.

The Jewish nation, though they changed masters several times, remained for the most part in connexion with Egypt, and under the government of Ptolemy, by whom, as well as by Alexander before him, multitudes of them were transported to Egypt, especially to Alexandria, and also to Lybia, in the region of Cyrene.

The high-priests, who, in succession, filled that high and sacred office, from the return of the Jews from captivity, on the accession of Cyrus, until the time of Simon the Just, were as follows; though some have doubted whether there might not have been others between those here named, of whom we have no account.

B. C. 536—Joshua, who continued in office 49 years. |

|483—Joakim, |"|"30 "||

|453—Eliashib, |"|"60 "||

|413—Joiada, |"|"40 "||

|373—Johanan or John, |"|"32 "||

|351—Jaddua, |"|"20 "||

|321—Onias, |"|"21 "||

|300—Simon the Just, |"|"9 "||

Simon the Just was succeeded by his brother Eleazar, his own son being too young to be invested with the office. Eleazar, the brother of Simon, executed this high office for fifteen years.

Simon the Just was also president of the Sanhedrim, or grand council of the Jews, in which office he was not succeeded by Eleazar, but by Antigonus of Socho, who was advanced to it on account of his great learning; for he was an eminent scribe in the law of God, and a great teacher of righteousness among the people.

The death of Simon, and accession of Eleazar, are placed in the year 241, B. C., and in the fourteenth of Ptolemy Soter. At this time commences the succession of those called Doctors of the Mishna. The first was Antigonus above mentioned, and the last Judah Hakkadosh, who committed the Mishna to writing, in the middle of the second century. They were sometimes called scribes, sometimes lawyers, or such as sat in Moses' seat. All these titles mean the same thing, viz: that they who were honoured with them had been brought up in the knowledge of the law of God, and

the tradition of the elders concerning it, as taught in the Jewish schools and synagogues; by which the judgment of the Sanhedrim was regulated. Out of this profession were always chosen the members of the Sanhedrim, and of the court of twenty-three, which existed in every considerable town. Such were Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, mentioned in the New Testament. They were also called elders, councillors, and rulers, for to them the judgment and execution of the law belonged.

The Jews tell us of great changes which occurred in their worship after the death of Simon the Just; as that before his time the scape-goat was always broken to pieces when cast down from the precipice, but afterwards he escaped and was eaten by the Saracens; and that before the death of this high-priest, the lot on the day of expiation always came out on the right hand, but afterwards on the left. In his days the western lamp in the golden candlestick, always continued burning, but after his death sometimes it did not. So, likewise, as long as he lived, the fire on the altar burned bright and clear, and when they had laid on two sticks of wood, they needed no more all the day. Before this event the blessings of God so attended the distribution of the two loaves waved at the feast of Pentecost, that when they were distributed, every priest after being satisfied had something left; whereas, afterwards, the quantity was so small that the modest priests would not take any part, and the greedy were not satisfied. Here we may see at what period the age of superstition commenced among the Jews.

SECTION VIII

the reign of ptolemy philadelphus—tower of pharos—septuagint version—library of alexandria

Ptolemy Soter, having reigned twenty years in Egypt, from the time of his assuming the title of king, and thirty-nine from the death of Alexander, placed his son Philadelphus, as a partner, on the throne. This event occurred in the year 285 B. C.

In the first year of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the famous lighthouse on the island of Pharos was finished. It has been reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. It was built entirely of white marble, and was furnished with lights on the top for the direction of seamen. It is said to have cost eight hundred talents; which, if estimated by the value of the attic talent, will amount to more than seven hundred thousand dollars, and if according to the Alexandrian, to double that sum. The architect, Sostratus, practised an ingenious fraud to perpetuate his own fame; for being directed to inscribe the name of the king, at whose expense it was erected, deeply in the marble, accompanied with a suitable device, he first inscribed his own name, which he plastered over with white mortar, and on this he placed the inscription directed by the king, so that for a while nothing else was seen; but when the mortar wore away, there appeared the indelible name of the artist. But as an evidence of the transitory nature of all human glory, the building itself is not to be found.

Here it may be mentioned, that what was formerly the island of Pharos is now connected with the main land, of which it forms a peninsula.

Ptolemy Soter died in the second year after his son Philadelphus ascended the throne, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He was the wisest and best of his race, and left behind him an example of prudence, decency, and justice, which none of his successors were emulous to imitate. During his long reign of forty years, Egypt, notwithstanding the continual wars in which she was engaged, was brought into a very prosperous condition.

This first Ptolemy was a great patron of learning, to promote which, he instituted a society of learned men at Alexandria, and laid the foundation of that famous library, which was afterwards greatly augmented by his successors. Ptolemy Philadelphus, at his death, left in it no less than a hundred thousand volumes; and his successors went on adding to it, until at length, it amounted to the number of seven hundred thousand volumes.

One method of obtaining books for this library was not very honourable. They seized the MSS. of every learned stranger, who came into the country, and had a fair transcript made, which they presented to the owner, while the original was placed in the library.

When Julius Cæsar besieged Alexandria, one part of this immense library was burned, containing four hundred thousand volumes. But Cleopatra afterwards augmented it by the addition of two hundred thousand volumes, brought from Pergamus; and others, until it was fully as large as it ever had been before the disaster above mentioned.

This library continued to be famous until the year 642. It is said to have been burnt by order of the Caliph Omar, whose memorable reason for this barbarous act is often repeated: "If those works," said he, "contain nothing but what is in the Koran, they are useless; but if they contain something different from what is read there, they are impious:" and accordingly the order was given to commit the whole of them to the flames. They were distributed for the purpose of heating the baths, which end they answered, during a period of six months. By some, however, all this is denied.

The person principally depended on by Ptolemy Soter, in the collection and general superintendence of this library, was Demetrius Phalereus. Indeed, according to Plutarch, he was properly the projector of the whole scheme, by whose persuasion Ptolemy was induced to engage in the enterprise. After the death of Ptolemy, only two of the captains of Alexander remained, Seleucus and Lysimachus, both of them above eighty years of age. But old as they were, and wide as the world was over which they ruled, they again engaged in war with each other; the result of which was the overthrow and death of Lysimachus, which left Seleucus master of all that had belonged to him. This, however, he did not live long to enjoy, for on his way to Macedonia, he was assassinated by Ptolemy Ceraunus, whom he had most kindly received and entertained in his family. A more base act of ingratitude is hardly to be found in the annals of any age.

Upon the death of Seleucus, which occurred in the year 280 B. C., his son Antiochus succeeded him in the empire of Asia, over which he ruled for nineteen years.

According to Usher, the version of the Old Testament into Greek, commonly called the Septuagint, was executed in the year 277 B. C., and if we give any credit to the history of Aristæas, it must have occurred about this time; for he tells us that this translation was made while Eleazar was high-priest of the Jews, who died about the beginning of the following year. And it cannot be placed at an earlier period, because Eleazar addressed an epistle to Ptolemy, in which, according to the aforesaid author, he speaks of his queen, Arsinoe to whom he was not married before this year.

The account given by Aristæas, and implicitly followed by Josephus, is briefly this. Demetrius Phalereus, while collecting the royal library, of which some account has been given, had heard of the book of the Jewish law, and told the king that it would be desirable to obtain a correct copy of it, and also a version in the Greek tongue.

On this occasion, certain persons, of whom Aristæas himself was one, petitioned the king for the release of the Jewish captives, who were held in bondage, alleging that unless they were released, it would be in vain to expect from the Jews a correct copy of their law, or a faithful translation of it. Upon which the king made a decree for the release of all Jewish captives, whose number amounted to more than a hundred thousand, and ordered that an equivalent for their redemption should be paid to their owners, which was computed at four hundred talents; but to this must be added the sum requisite for the redemption of the children of the captives, which raised the whole amount to the enormous sum of six hundred and sixty talents. An epistle was then addressed to Eleazar the priest, by the king, requesting a correct copy of the Law of Moses, and six elders out of each tribe, to translate it into Greek. The messengers sent on this embassy were Aristæas, the author of the narrative, and Andreas, who carried as a present for the use of the temple, one hundred talents, from the king.

On their arrival at Jerusalem, they were received with great respect by Eleazar the high-priest, and by all the people of the Jews, and their requests were finally granted. A copy of the Law, written in letters of gold, was sent, and six men out of each tribe, well skilled in both languages, to turn it into Greek.

When these men arrived at Alexandria, they were received with much honour by the king, and the island of Pharos was selected as a suitable place for their residence, while occupied with the translation. Demetrius attended them all the time, and when by mutual conference, the interpreters had agreed on the version of any portion of the Law, he immediately wrote it down. Thus, in seventy-two days, the work was completed. The king having heard and approved the version, and presented to each of them three suits of garments and two talents of gold, with a cup of gold of the weight of a talent, sent them back to their own country.

The next author who makes mention of this version, is Aristobulus, an Alexandrian Jew, who flourished about 125 B. C. He is said to have written a commentary on the five books of Moses, and to have spoken of the Greek version, made under the superintendence of Demetrius Phalereus, by the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus. This book is not now extant; all that remains are a few fragments, preserved by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius, who cite this author to prove that the Holy Scriptures were partly translated into Greek before the time of Alexander, but that a more perfect translation was made of the whole, by the care of Demetrius Phalereus.

The next who speaks of this version, is Philo, also an Alexandrian Jew, who was contemporary with our Saviour. His account agrees with that of Aristæas, as to Ptolemy's sending to Judea for elders to make this version; and their returning to the island of Pharos, all which he undoubtedly took from Aristæas; but he adds this remarkable circumstance, that in their interpretation they all agreed, to a word, whence he concludes they were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. He also states, that the Jews of Alexandria celebrated the event by a solemn anniversary, when they went to Pharos, and praised God for his divine assistance in making this version.

Josephus, who wrote his antiquities towards the close of the first century of the Christian era, closely follows Aristæas.

The first Christian writer who speaks of the origin of this version, is Justin Martyr, who flourished in the middle of the second century. He had been to Alexandria, and informs us that the account of

the wonderful agreement of all the interpreters, as related by Philo, was the common belief of the Jews then residing in Alexandria; and adds, that each interpreter had a separate cell, the ruins of which were shown to him.

All the Christian fathers who come after Justin, and make mention of this subject, agree as to the foregoing facts. But by the time when Epiphanius wrote, the story of Aristæas had gathered new circumstances to render it more marvellous. He says, that the interpreters were shut up in cells by pairs; and that to each pair one book was given, and that the whole of the books of the Old Testament were by them rendered into Greek: that when one pair had finished a book, another was given to them; and so every pair made a separate version of each book; that is, each of the twenty-seven books was translated thirty-six times. By modern critics, the whole story is believed to be fictitious, and to have been written, not by Aristæas, but by some Jew, to give celebrity to the version. And it is probable, that some fabulous circumstances are connected with the history, which were increased from time to time. But in a matter of historical fact, it seems dangerous to set aside such an array of testimony, Jewish and Christian, on the ground of probable arguments. Leaving out the wonderful facts of this story, there is nothing incredible in the substance of the narrative ascribed to Aristæas. If that history had been entirely fabulous, would it have been so implicitly adopted by Josephus and Philo, and by all the Christian fathers? It seems safest to receive ancient facts on the uncontradicted testimony of the ancients, rather than reject them upon the critical conjectures of the moderns. It should be admitted then, that this version (or at least that of the Law) was made by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and by seventy-two men obtained from Judea, for the purpose.

But whatever may be thought of the origin of the Septuagint version, there is no doubt entertained by any, that it was made at Alexandria, and by learned men of the Jewish nation, in the days of the Ptolemies. The only doubt is, whether the whole Bible was translated at once, and by the same interpreters. None of the authors quoted above, say this, except Epiphanius, whose testimony in such a case is of little value. Aristæas, Josephus, &c., speak only of the Law of Moses; and there is internal evidence sufficiently strong to convince us that all the books were not translated by the same interpreters; for there is a marked difference in the style as well as in the words used to express particular things. The faithfulness and skill too, with which the version of the several parts is executed, proves conclusively that the whole is not the work of one man, nor of one set of translators. The probability is, that the five books of Moses were first turned into Greek, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 277 B. C., and that the other books were added after no long interval, by different interpreters, until all the books of the Old Testament were finished.

There is no reason, however, to believe that any of these translators were divinely inspired. It has every mark of being a human production; yet its value is great. And this version for a long time was held in the highest veneration by the Jews, not only in Egypt, but also in Judea, where it came into common use in those towns, in which the Greek language was spoken, and was even read in some of their Synagogues. But after the introduction of Christianity, when disputes became common and violent between Jews and Christians, the former thinking that the latter had the advantage from this version, disowned it, and betook themselves to the Hebrew original. But, as many Jews did not understand Hebrew, several persons in the second century undertook new versions of the Old Testament into Greek. The principal of these translators were, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. The version of Aquila is servilely literal, and therefore pleased the

Jews; that of Symmachus was paraphractical; and Theodotion's a medium between the two, and more like the Septuagint. In our present copies of the latter, the book of Daniel is from Theodotion's version; for the fathers, finding this very faulty in the Alexandrian translation, substituted the other in its place: the original however is still preserved. But it does not come within the compass of our work to give any history of these versions.

The most important fact, in regard to the Septuagint, with which we are concerned is, that the writers of the New Testament, in their citations of the Old Testament, commonly quote in the words of this version. This fact proves, not only that it was in common use when the books of the New Testament were written, but also that it was considered as sufficiently faithful and accurate to be generally referred to, for the conveyance of inspired truth. It cannot, however, be hence inferred, that the whole of it is sanctioned by these quotations, for sometimes the inspired penmen give a more correct version of what they quote, and in many instances do not exactly follow the Septuagint.

Between this version and the Hebrew original, there are some important discrepancies, not commonly affecting doctrines and facts, but names and dates. In chronology, the difference is great, and learned men are still divided in opinion as to this subject some greatly preferring the Septuagint chronology, while most Christians prefer the Hebrew. But this is not the place for discussing such a subject.

The pretence, however, that the Septuagint must be more correct than the present Hebrew copies, because taken from a copy made probably when the autograph of Ezra was extant, has no weight; because, waiving all doubts which might be started respecting the accuracy of the copy from which the seventy translated, the copies of this version have been subject to as great, and indeed much greater injuries from the carelessness of transcribers, than the Hebrew copies. We know that as early as the time of Origen it had become very much corrupted. Still, the value of this version is great, as furnishing proof of the early existence of the prophecies of the Old Testament; as helping us, in some cases, to detect errors which have crept into the Hebrew text; and, above all, as furnishing us with the source whence the writers of the New Testament borrowed their peculiar dialect and use of the Greek language.

SECTION IX

origin of the sadducees—berosus, the chaldean historian—riches and commerce of tyre—alexandria—arsinoe, her death and monument—character of ptolemy

Antigonus of Socho, already mentioned as the successor of Simon the Just, in the presidency of the Sanhedrim, died about the year 263 B. C. He was also the great master and teacher of the principal theological school in Jerusalem; and also the first of the doctors who gave regular instructions concerning the traditions of the fathers, which were added to the written law, for the explanation of the ceremonies. These were afterwards called Mishnical Doctors. His successors in the school were Joseph the son of Joazar, and Joseph the son of John; the first of whom was also president of the Sanhedrim, and the other vice-president.

In the days of Antigonus, the sect of the Sadducees took its rise, of which he was the occasion, although not the founder. For he having inculcated the doctrine that men ought not to serve God from mercenary, but disinterested motives; not from the hope of future reward, but from love to

God himself, two of his disciples, Sadoc and Baithus, inferred that there were no rewards after this life; and separating themselves from the school of their master, they taught that there was no resurrection nor future state. Many persons being seduced by this false doctrine, a sect arose, which received the name of Sadducees, from Sadoc, one of its founders. This, therefore, is the oldest sect which we read of among the Jews. Its commencement must have been more than 263 years before Christ; for in that year Antigonus of Socho died. About this time flourished Berosus, the famous Babylonish historian. He must have written in the reign of Antiochus Theus, for his history is dedicated to this prince. He was, according to Tatian, a priest of Belus at Babylon; and lived in the time of Alexander, but dedicated his work to the third in succession from him, which was Antiochus Theus; Seleucus Nicator being the first, and Antiochus Soter the second. If this account of Tatian be correct, Berosus must have been of a great age when he published his history for if he was only twenty years of age when Alexander died, he must have been fourscore in the first year of Antiochus. Only some fragments of his history are extant, preserved by Josephus and Eusebius; but these are very important, as without them the series of the Babylonian kings could not be made out, and they cast much light on some passages of the Old Testament.

The greatness and wealth of Tyre were owing to her extensive trade, especially her commerce with the East. But now Ptolemy Philadelphus laid his plans to give a new direction to the precious commodities of India, and bring them to Alexandria, which he in a great degree accomplished, by establishing a depot on the western side of the Red Sea, considerably south of its northern termination, where there was a good depth of water. This place he called Berenice, after his mother. And as the road between the Nile and Red Sea lay through deserts where there was no water, Ptolemy, to remedy this inconvenience, formed a canal from Coptus on the Nile, all along the road, to supply the caravans which carried their goods with water, and at convenient distances he established inns. To protect the trade, he formed large fleets, both in the Mediterranean and Red Seas. By these wise arrangements, Alexandria became the emporium of most of the commerce between the East and the West. In consequence of which, Tyre began thenceforward to languish, until at length the prophecies respecting her utter desolation were completely fulfilled.

About the year 249 B. C., a war broke out between Ptolemy and Antiochus, the events of which it is not necessary that we should here relate.

Onias, the son of Simon the Just, being an infant at the time of his father's death, could not be invested with the office of high-priest, which was therefore bestowed upon Eleazar, Simon's brother. Eleazar also dying before Onias was of legal age, the priesthood was given to Manasseh the son of Jaddua, who executed it for six-and-twenty years, and died in the year 276 B. C. Onias now succeeded to the office.

A great revolt having taken place against Antiochus in the eastern part of his empire, he became weary of the war with Ptolemy, and a peace was made between them, 249 B. C. The condition of this treaty was, that Antiochus should divorce Laodice, his former wife, and marry Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy. Accordingly, Antiochus put away his wife, who was also his half-sister, by whom he had two sons; and Ptolemy having taken his daughter to Seleucia, near the mouth of the Orontes, and delivered her to Antiochus, the marriage was solemnized with great pomp. Thus was the prophecy of Daniel literally fulfilled. (Daniel 11:5-6) "For the king's daughter of the South shall

come to the king of the North, to make an agreement.” By South and North in this passage, must be understood Egypt, which lay south of Judea, and Syria which was situated to the north.

In the year 248 B. C., Arsinoe the wife of Ptolemy died, which caused him great grief; for although she was much older than himself, he doted on her. To commemorate her, he formed an extravagant project, which was, to erect a monument having a vault lined with load-stone, which should, by its attraction, cause an image of her to remain suspended in the air. This design was conceived by Dinocrates, a famous architect of that time; and so pleased Ptolemy that he commanded the work to be immediately commenced; but neither the king nor the artist lived to have it completed. This probably gave rise to the fable so long current respecting the coffin of Mohammed.

Ptolemy did not long survive his beloved wife. He was naturally of a weak constitution, which was greatly debilitated by luxurious indulgence; so that when grief for the loss of his wife was added, he sunk under the burden, and expired in his grand climacteric, after having reigned over Egypt thirty-eight years.

Ptolemy was the greatest patron of learning and the fine arts among all the kings of antiquity. Seven celebrated poets of that age are said to have resided in his court. The works of four of these, (Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron and Aratus,) are still extant. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, dedicated his work to him. Zoilus, the snarling critic, who distinguished himself by abusing Homer, also frequented the Egyptian court, but received no countenance from Ptolemy.

Ptolemy had also a passion for building. He rebuilt Acco in Palestine, on the Mediterranean, which he called Ptolemais, after his own name. This place has been famous in the history of all ages, especially in the wars of the crusades. It is now called Acre, and in our own times has been famous for the unsuccessful siege which it sustained from Bonaparte.

The city formerly famous under the name of Rabbah, he rebuilt, and called it Philadelphia after his own surname. It has long been desolate. Such was his taste for fine buildings, that it became proverbial to call an edifice of more than usual magnificence, Philadelphian. Notwithstanding the great expenses necessarily attendant on his favourite pursuits, he died exceedingly rich, leaving no less than seven hundred and forty thousand Egyptian talents in the treasury. He left also large and well furnished fleets, both in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

SECTION X

ptolemy euergetes—berenice—prophecies fulfilled—the arundelian marbles

As soon as Antiochus heard of the death of Ptolemy, he put away Berenice, and invited his former wife, Laodice, to return; but she knowing his fickleness, caused him to be poisoned by his servants, and placing a man who greatly resembled him in his bed, to personate him as being confined by sickness, she concealed his death until by orders, forged under her hand, she placed her own son Seleucus on the throne, which he occupied for twenty years. She also pursued Berenice and her son, with unrelenting vengeance, until she had them both put to death by the treachery of some who were about them. And here again we see the fulfilment of the sequel of the prophecy of Daniel before cited. After predicting the marriage of the king of the North to the daughter of the king of the South, as the band of agreement, he goes on to say: “But she”—that is

Berenice—“shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he”—that is Antiochus—“stand, nor his arm: but she”—that is Berenice—“shall be given up, and they that brought her”—that is, her Egyptian friends—“and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her.” (Daniel 11:6.)

While Berenice was besieged by Laodice in Daphne, where she had fled for refuge, with her son, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes, who had succeeded his father on the throne of Egypt, marched with a powerful army to her relief; but before he arrived at Daphne, both she and her son were killed. He avenged himself, however, by putting Laodice to death, and making himself master of all Syria and Cilicia. He even extended his conquests, beyond the Euphrates, as far as the Tigris, and was in a fair way to reduce under his dominion all the Eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, when he was suddenly recalled to Egypt, by a sedition that had arisen there. He greatly endeared himself to the Egyptian people, on his return from this expedition, by bringing back from Persia their gods, which Cambyses had carried away; and on this account, he received the name, Euergetes, or Benefactor. All these events were in exact fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, who tells us, that after the queen of the South, with her son and attendants, should be cut off, and her father, who was her chief support, should be dead, “there should one arise out of a branch of her roots, in his estate”—that is, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes—and that “he should come with an army and enter into the fortress of the king of the North, and prevail against him, and carry captive into Egypt, their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and gold; and then come into his kingdom, and return into his own land.” Now, how exactly all this was fulfilled, the history of Ptolemy Euergetes most manifestly shows. Again, it is said, in the same prophecy, that “the king of the South should continue more years than the king of the North,” and such was the event, for Ptolemy Euergetes survived Seleucus Callinicus, whom Laodice had placed on the throne of Syria, four years.

The wife of Ptolemy Euergetes, also named Berenice, being very apprehensive of danger to her husband in his northern expedition, made a vow, that she would consecrate her hair, of which she was vain, as being very beautiful, if he should return safe. Accordingly it was cut off and sent to the temple which Ptolemy Philadelphus had built in Cyprus, but, by some accident, was lost, an occurrence by which Ptolemy was much disturbed. It happened that Conon of Samos, a distinguished mathematician, was then at Alexandria, who, to relieve the king’s mind, and also to ingratiate himself into his favour, pretended that this hair was caught up into heaven; and showed seven stars, near the tail of the Lion, not before connected with any constellation, which he said was the consecrated hair of the queen; which conceit being countenanced by subsequent astronomers, a new constellation was added, called Coma Berenices, the hair of Berenice. Callimachus, the poet, wrote a hymn to celebrate the hair of Berenice.

Ptolemy Euergetes, who seems to have been of a devout turn of mind, on his return from his Syrian expedition, took Jerusalem in his way, and there caused many sacrifices to be offered up to the God of Israel, as an acknowledgment for the great success which he had experienced in his contest with the king of Syria. And it is not improbable, that the prophecies of Daniel, relative to these events, might have been shown to him.

Seleucus, in the years 245 and 244 B. C., entered into new wars with Ptolemy, for the recovery of his lost dominions, but the issue was as unfortunate as before; for being overcome in battle, he was obliged to flee to Antioch, accompanied only by a few of his followers. In consequence of the

broken and disastrous state of his affairs, he invited his brother Antiochus, who was then at the head of an army, to join with him. Antiochus although he was only fourteen years of age, yet being of an ambitious turn, readily accepted the proposal, not so much to aid his brother, as to gain the empire for himself. At this time, the cities of Smyrna and Magnesia, as a testimony of their affection for Seleucus, entered into a combination to assist him with their might, and erected a column of marble, on which their mutual agreement was engraved. And it is a remarkable fact, that this identical marble is now standing in the courtyard of the theatre at Oxford, with the inscription still distinctly legible, in Greek capital letters. It was brought from Asia, by Thomas, earl of Arundel, in the reign of Charles the First, and was given, with other marbles, to the University of Oxford, by Henry, duke of Norfolk, his grandson, in the reign of Charles the Second. These are commonly spoken of under the name of the Arundelian marbles.

The union of the two brothers against Ptolemy was attended with no great issue; for the latter made a peace with Seleucus, while Antiochus went on with his preparations for war. These, his brother soon suspected, were intended against himself. He, therefore, marched an army over mount Taurus, to surprise him. A battle was fought between them near Ancyra in Asia Minor, in which Seleucus was overthrown, and scarcely escaped with his life. It fared little better with Antiochus, for the Galatians, or Gauls of Asia, whom he had taken into his service, upon a rumour that Seleucus was slain, immediately plotted the death of the other brother, thinking, that if he were out of the way, the whole empire would fall into their hands. Antiochus having no other method of saving his life, gave all his treasure as a ransom for it.

Eumenes, king of Pergamus, taking advantage of the distracted state of the Syrian empire, made an attack on the Gauls and on Antiochus, and gained a victory over them. About the same time, Theodotus and Arsaces, revolting against Seleucus in the East, seized Parthia and Hyrcania. But notwithstanding all these disasters, the war continued. Fraternal discord is the most difficult to be reconciled.

The seat of war was now transferred to Mesopotamia; and about this time probably occurred the battle mentioned (2Ma_8:20) by Judas Maccabæus, in which he says that eight thousand Jews, with four thousand Macedonians, vanquished the Galatians, and slew one hundred and seventy thousand men. About this time, it was customary for the Jews to hire themselves as soldiers, to all parties, in the wars which were then carried on by the kings of the East; and their services in these wars were held in the highest estimation.

SECTION XI

ptolemy euergetes an encourager of learning—seleucus defeated and taken prisoner—origin of the kingdom of the parthians—remarkable history of joseph—great earthquake in the east

Ptolemy Euergetes being now relieved from war, devoted his attention to the arts of peace; especially to the promotion of learning, and the increase of the vast library which his father had founded in Alexandria. Of this he made Erastosthenes, a learned Athenian, the keeper, after the death of Zenodotus, who was appointed librarian by Ptolemy Philadelphus. The person now advanced to this office was one of the most learned men of his age, as appears from the manner in which he is frequently referred to by Pliny, Strabo, and others. He was the author of many works, none of which are now extant. The only writing of his, which still remains, is an important

document, preserved by Syncellus, containing a catalogue of all the kings who reigned at Thebes in Egypt, from Menes or Misraim, down to the time of the Trojan war. It contains a series of thirty-eight kings, and has been of great service in writing the Egyptian chronology. It is one of the most authentic and important documents of remote antiquity extant in profane history. It was extracted from the most ancient records of the country, by order of Ptolemy Euergetes, and was probably intended to supply the defects of Manetho's catalogue, which commences exactly where that of Erastosthenes' ends.

In the year 230 B. C., Seleucus marched against Arsaces, who had seized Parthia and other districts in the East; but the event of this expedition was most disastrous to him, for he was not only defeated, but taken prisoner. This was the origin of the kingdom of the Parthians, which became so terrible in after times, even to the Romans, who were a terror to all others. The day on which Arsaces obtained this victory was long celebrated as an anniversary in Parthia. From this time, the conqueror styled himself king, and all his successors assumed his name, just as the kings of Egypt, for a long period, took the name of Ptolemy.

Onias, the high-priest of the Jews, who was a weak and rash man, having neglected to pay the customary tribute to Ptolemy Euergetes, and the arrears continually increasing, the king sent Athenion, one of his courtiers, to demand full payment. The arrival of this minister created a great sensation at Jerusalem; for it did not appear what course could be taken to appease the king's displeasure, as the sum requisite to satisfy the demand could by no means be raised. In this emergency, a young man by the name of Joseph, a near relation of Onias, who was in great reputation among the Jews, for prudence, justice, and sanctity, came to Jerusalem from his residence in the country, and going immediately to his uncle, the high-priest, expostulated with him freely on the course which he had pursued in relation to the tribute; and exhorted him to go immediately to Egypt and endeavour to satisfy the king. But this was a business for which Onias was by no means qualified; besides, he was now old and feeble. Upon his declining the journey, Joseph offered his own services on the occasion, which were joyfully accepted by his uncle and the people. Joseph went immediately to find Athenion, whom he took to his own house, and entertained sumptuously while he remained; and so gained the esteem of the Egyptian minister, that he returned to the king with kind feelings toward the Jewish people, and the most favourable impressions of the character of Joseph. He also conveyed to the king the intelligence that this excellent young man would shortly attend upon him, to explain every thing which related to the tribute, so long due.

Joseph, as soon as the ambassador was gone, began to prepare for his journey, and having prepared himself with proper equipage, set off for the court of Ptolemy. On the way he happened to fall in company with some noblemen of Phenicia and Cœlo-Syria, who were going to Egypt for the purpose of farming the revenues of their respective provinces. During the journey, he learned much from these persons of the value of the revenues, which knowledge he afterwards turned to good account. Finding, when he arrived at Alexandria, that the king was at Memphis, he hastened thither, and fortunately met him returning in a chariot with his queen and Athenion. The latter no sooner espied Joseph, than he pointed him out to the king as his young Jewish friend, concerning whom he had before so often spoken to him. Upon which the king invited him into his chariot, and conversed freely with him. He complained of the ill conduct of Onias in withholding the tribute for so many years. Joseph excused his uncle on the ground of his age and weakness, in so

handsome a manner, that he not only pacified the king, but gained for himself his particular favour. When they arrived in Alexandria, the king ordered that he should be lodged in the palace and maintained at his own table.

On the arrival of the day for farming the revenues of the provinces, which were set up to the highest bidder, Joseph observed that the highest sum bid for Judea, Samaria, Coelo-Syria, and Phenicia, by his companions in travel, was no more than eight thousand talents, and being assured, from their conversation on the way, that they were worth, at least, double that sum, he bade sixteen thousand talents, exclusive of the forfeitures.

Ptolemy was pleased with the prospect of such an augmentation of his revenues, but was doubtful of the young man's ability to give adequate security. When Joseph was asked what surety he would give, he facetiously answered, that they should be persons beyond all exception, and immediately named the king and queen. The king was so delighted with the pleasantness and confidence manifested by this answer, that he trusted him on his own word, dispensing with all other pledges. Receiving now the appointment of receiver-general of the king's revenues, in the provinces above named, he set off on his way home, accompanied with a guard of two thousand men, for his support in the execution of his office. On his arrival at Askelon, the people not only refused to pay the tribute to him, but used opprobrious language towards him; whereupon he commanded his soldiers to seize twenty of the ringleaders, on whom he executed exemplary punishment, and sent their forfeited estates to the king's treasury. The same process was repeated at Scythopolis, by which all the other places in the provinces were so intimidated, that he had no further trouble in collecting the king's revenues.

The conduct of Joseph in this high office was so marked with justice and energy, that he was continued in it, not only while Ptolemy Euergetes lived, but during the reign of his successor, Ptolemy Philopater, and also of Ptolemy Epiphanes, until these provinces were wrested from him by Antiochus the Great. Seleucus, who, it has been seen, was taken prisoner in Parthia, remained there in custody, but royally entertained by Arsaces, until the year 326 B. C., when he was killed by a fall from his horse. He left two sons, Seleucus and Antiochus, and a daughter, who was given in marriage to Mithridates, king of Pontus, with Phrygia for her dower. Seleucus being the oldest of his two sons, succeeded him in the throne, and took the name of Ceraunus. He was a weak prince, and his reign was very short.

Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, was sent to Babylonia for his education, and was there at the time of his brother's death; on which event he was sent for to Antioch, and ascended the throne, which he occupied for thirty-six years. On account of his many great actions, he received the surname of Great.

In the year before Christ two hundred and twenty-two, there happened a very violent earthquake in the East, which made great devastations in many places, especially in Caria, and the island of Rhodes. It threw down not only the walls of the city of Rhodes and the houses, but also the great colossus, which be-strided the harbour, and was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. It was a prodigious statue of brass, erected to the sun; one hundred and five feet in height, and everything else in proportion. Chares was twelve years employed in its erection, and sixty years afterwards it was thrown down. The Rhodians sent ambassadors to all the neighbouring countries to beg money for the purpose of raising this colossus again; but after collecting vast sums, they

pocketed the money, pretending that an oracle had forbidden the erection of the colossus. There it lay for eight hundred and ninety-four years, when Moawiah, the sixth caliph of Damascus, having taken Rhodes, sold the brass to a Jewish merchant, who loaded with it nine hundred camels; so that it would seem that its original weight could not have fallen greatly short of a million of pounds. Towards the close of the year 222 B. C. died Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt, after having reigned over that country for five and twenty years. He was succeeded by his son Ptolemy Philopater, a very profligate and vicious prince. He was suspected of putting an end to his father's life by poison; and soon after he was seated on his throne, he added the murder of his mother, and of his brother Magas; and also of Cleomenes, king of Sparta, who had taken refuge in the court of Ptolemy Euergetes, and was a person of great wisdom and sagacity.

SECTION XII

accession of ptolemy philopater to the throne of egypt—his contest with antiochus—his cruelty—visits jerusalem and attempts to enter the sanctuary—resolves to exterminate the jews—their providential deliverance—he dies and leaves the kingdom to his son ptolemy epiphanes, only five years of age. antiochus endeavours to conquer egypt—engages in war with the romans—marches an army to the east, to collect tribute—robs the temple of belus of its treasures but is slain by the enraged populace—remarkable story of joseph and his son hyrcanus

As soon as Ptolemy Philopater ascended the throne, Antiochus formed the design of recovering Syria, which he prosecuted with various success for several years, until about the year 219 B. C., he took Damascus, and reduced all Phenicia, Galilee, and Gilead beyond Jordan, under his dominion.

In the year 217 B. C., Antiochus marched for Egypt with a large army, and a great battle was fought between Gaza and Rhinocrura, with the two kings at the head of their respective forces; on which occasion, the presence of mind and masculine courage of Arsinoe, queen of Egypt, was strikingly exhibited, in her encouraging the soldiers, and remaining by the side of her husband through the whole battle. The result was, that although the right wing of the Syrian army, commanded by Antiochus in person, drove the Egyptians before them, the contrary occurred on the left wing, where the Syrians gave way and fled, and the Egyptians turning on the flank and rear of the other part of the Syrian forces, gained a complete victory; for Antiochus had, in his ardour, pursued so far, that he did not return in time to give any aid to his routed troops. This battle was fought on the same day that Hannibal defeated Flaminius the Roman general, at the lake Thrasimenus.

On the retreat of Antiochus, the cities of Coelo-Syria and Palestine were forward to make their submission to Ptolemy; for they had been long accustomed to the Egyptian yoke, and were better pleased with it than with the government of Antiochus. Many ambassadors presented themselves before Ptolemy, with the submission of their respective cities, and with presents, all of whom he received kindly. Among these, the Jews were not last. Ptolemy now made a progress through the provinces which he had regained, and among the cities visited, Jerusalem was not forgotten. Here he took a view of the temple, and offered many gifts and sacrifices to the God of Israel. But not contented with an exterior view of this sacred edifice, he resolved to enter into the sanctuary, and even into the most holy place. On this occasion all Jerusalem was in an uproar. The priests and Levites were convened to hinder it, and the people to deprecate the impious act. Great

lamentations were every made, and many supplications offered to God, to preserve his sacred house from profanation. But entreaties availed nothing with Ptolemy; the more he was opposed, the more he seemed resolved to execute his impious purpose. Accordingly, he pressed into the inner court; but here he was struck with such a terror and confusion of mind, that he could proceed no farther, and was carried out, in a manner half dead. On this, he left the city, filled with great wrath against the Jews, and uttering many menaces against the nation.

The high-priest now in office, who had the courage to withstand Ptolemy, was Simon, the son of Onias the second; for his father having deceased towards the close of the former year, the son had been consecrated in his room. This, therefore, was among the first acts of his pontificate: and it was well that a man of firmness and wisdom was now in authority; for affairs had been negligently managed during the whole of the administration of Onias, who was not only a weak man, but extremely covetous.

During the incessant wars between the great Northern and Southern powers, Judea, as lying exactly between the belligerents, suffered exceedingly by the passage of hostile and friendly armies. The old hatred of the Samaritans also, was not dormant during this period; but often when they observed the Jews to be unable to make resistance, they ravaged the country lying near them: carrying off many of the inhabitants, and selling them into slavery.

Antiochus, on his return, finding his own subjects in an unsettled state, thought it best to make peace with Ptolemy, which he effected by resigning all title to Cœlo-Syria, Palestine, and Phenicia.

When Ptolemy returned to Alexandria, his anger against the Jewish nation was undiminished, and he determined to revenge himself on all those who inhabited that city. He made a decree, and had it engraven on a pillar at the gates of his palace, forbidding all to enter, who did not sacrifice to the gods he worshipped.

Alexander the Great had, in the division of the people into ranks, placed the Jews in the first, on a level with his own Macedonians; but Ptolemy now degraded them to the third rank, among the common people of Egypt. But this was not the worst which these devoted people had to suffer. He enacted a law that they should all be branded with the badge of his god Bacchus, or be reduced to slavery. However, he provided that those who were willing to be initiated into the heathen religion should retain their privileges. Of the whole number in Alexandria, only three hundred took advantage of this immunity. All the rest stood firm to their religion, rather choosing to suffer the greatest extremities than depart in the least from it. And those who for worldly considerations had apostatized, were held in the utmost abhorrence, and excommunicated from all intercourse with their brethren.

The king, considering their measures as indicative of hostility to him, now determined that he would destroy the whole nation, wherever found. He accordingly sent out orders, that all Jews who resided in Egypt should be brought in chains to Alexandria. This being executed, he directed that all of them should be assembled in the Hippodrome, a large open space prepared for horse-races, where his purpose was to destroy them by his elephants, and then march to Judea and treat the Jews there in the same manner. But on the day appointed, when all were ready, the king did not make his appearance; for having been up late at a carousal he overslept himself, until the hour for the intended spectacle was over. It was, therefore, deferred until the next day; but another

disappointment occurred from the same cause.

During all this time the Jews were kept shut up in the Hippodrome; but they ceased not day and night, with uplifted hands and loud voices, to pray to God for deliverance, which he in mercy was pleased to vouchsafe. For, on the next day, when the king being present, the elephants were brought forth drunk with wine and frankincense, that they might with more rage destroy the devoted Jews, they became ungovernable, and instead of rushing upon the Jews, turned upon the spectators, and killed many of them. It is also said, that appearances were seen in the air, which terrified the king and all the spectators. This remarkable interposition of Providence had such an effect on Ptolemy, that he relinquished his bloody purpose, and not only set the Jews at liberty, but fearing the vengeance of Heaven, restored them to all their former privileges, and gave them leave to put to death all those Jews who had apostatized from their religion.

It must be confessed, however, that the evidence of the truth of this history is not as satisfactory as could be wished. Josephus, in his Antiquities, does not mention it, though he does in his book against Apion; but this we have only in the Latin translation of Ruffin. He also places it in another reign. The narrative here given is from the third book of Maccabees, which whole book relates to the persecutions endured by the Jews. It became common, after the name Maccabees was given to Judas and his brethren, of whom we shall speak hereafter, for all who suffered for their religion among the Jews, to be called Maccabees, for which reason the third book of the Maccabees received this title, although it treats of matters which occurred long before their time. This book is found in all the ancient copies of the Septuagint, and also in the Syriac version; but is extant in no copy of the Latin Vulgate. The first authentic mention of it is in the Alexandrian Chronicon. It is also named in the eighty-fifth of the apostolical canons, but their date is altogether uncertain.

Antiochus spent seven years on an expedition against Parthia, Baetria, Hyrcania, and other eastern provinces, which had revolted from the empire, and declared themselves independent. In this expedition he discovered great skill and generalship, but finding that there was no prospect of bringing these countries permanently under subjection, he made peace with Arsaces and the other leaders, and returned to Antioch, in the year 205 B. C.

The next year, 204 B. C., died Ptolemy Philopater king of Egypt, after having sat on the throne for seventeen years. He was a most flagitious and cruel man, and brought himself to a premature end by his debaucheries.

He was succeeded by Ptolemy Epiphanes, his son, a child of five years of age. The people finding that the vile associates of Philopater's guilty pleasures, were plotting against the young king and those who would be likely to oppose their measures, brought them to the Hippodrome, and slew them.

The young king was now committed to the care of Sosibius, an old, crafty politician, who had contrived by his cunning, to retain his power in the court for more than sixty years: and who had kept in favour with the late king, by consulting and anticipating all his voluptuous inclinations.

Antiochus, king of Syria, and Philip, king of Macedonia, on the death of Ptolemy Philopater, entered into a league to conquer Egypt, and divide the kingdom between them; but the rulers of Egypt, to defend themselves against this formidable coalition, sent an embassy to the Romans whose power had now risen to greatness, and who were ever disposed to extend it more and

more. Just about this time, Scipio had defeated Hannibal in Africa, so that the Romans being delivered from a dangerous enemy, were now at liberty to turn their attention to the east. Accordingly, they did not hesitate to take the young king under their protection.

The Jewish writers—the worst historians that ever lived—inform us, that in the year 203 B. C., Joshua the son of Perachia, was made president of the Sanhedrim, and Nathan the Arbelite, the vice-president. Of the latter they have given us no information, but of the former they tell a story the most absurd and inconsistent with chronology. The sum of it is, that for reproving Alexander, the Asmonean king, who had slain the doctors at Jerusalem, he was obliged to flee to Egypt; and that Jesus Christ being his scholar, accompanied him thither; whereas, the time which they assigned for this man's entering on his presidency was many years before the reign of Alexander the Asmonean, and two hundred years before the birth of Christ!

The war between Antiochus and the Egyptians went on, notwithstanding the Romans had sent a formal embassy to the former, announcing that they had undertaken the guardianship of the young king; and Antiochus having defeated Scopas the Egyptian general, in a great battle at Paneas, near the sources of the Jordan, soon got possession of all Palestine and Cœlo-Syria.

At this time the Jews were much disaffected towards the Egyptian government; and when Antiochus came with his army to Jerusalem, they received him with gladness, and entertained his whole army and elephants bountifully, as long as he remained. Antiochus, in return, granted them many privileges, and particularly ordained, that no stranger, of whatever quality, should pass over the sept, into the sacred inclosure of the temple.

But Antiochus was no stranger to the Jews, before this visit to Jerusalem. Many of them resided in Babylonia, who were very serviceable to him in his eastern expedition, and of whose fidelity he entertained the highest opinion. And a sedition having once arisen in Phrygia and Lydia, he transplanted two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia into those regions, with a view to keep the people quiet, by stationing them in the strongest fortresses. The descendants of these Jews were found in great numbers in Asia Minor, when the gospel was first propagated in those regions, by the labours of the apostles.

In the year 19 B. C., Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, who had lived quietly at Carthage, being suspected of inimical designs by the Romans, fled to the court of Antiochus. When he arrived, the latter had been debating with himself about engaging in a war with the Romans; which point, however, was soon decided after the arrival of Hannibal, who had in many battles vanquished the Romans, and who induced Antiochus to believe that with his aid they could be easily overcome.

In the same year, 195 B. C., Simon the high-priest of the Jews died, and was succeeded by his oldest son, Onias the third, who held that office twenty-four years. He had the character of being a worthy good man, but happened on evil times, and perished in them, as shall be related in its place. About this time died Erastosthenes, the second keeper of the famous library of Alexandria, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, and was succeeded by Apollonius Rhodius, the author of the Argonautics, who had been a scholar of Callimachus. He was called Rhodius, not because he was born at Rhodes, for he was a native of Alexandria; but he had long resided in that island, from which he was recalled to take charge of the library.

Antiochus, having determined on war with the Romans, used a wise policy in strengthening himself, by forming alliances and matrimonial connexions with the kings who might have it in their power to aid or injure him. And if he had listened to the counsel of Hannibal, who would have had him land an army immediately in Italy, agreeably to the plan pursued so successfully by himself, there is no knowing what the event might have been. But by some means, the old African general had fallen into suspicion with Antiochus, and his counsels were not followed. On the contrary, it was determined to commence hostilities in Greece. But in all his designs against the Romans, he was unsuccessful, and at last was forced to retire from all the countries of Europe, and quit all Asia west of mount Taurus, and pay the whole expenses of the war, which were estimated at fifteen thousand talents.

Antiochus, finding it very difficult to raise so large a sum of money, marched into the eastern provinces to collect the arrears of tribute which were then due. When he had come into the province of Elymais, hearing that a vast treasure lay concealed in the temple of Belus, he seized the temple by night, and rifled it of its treasures. On account of this act of sacrilege, the inhabitants actuated by the fury of religious zeal, rose against him, and slew him and all that were with him. In this statement, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Strabo, and Jerome, agree; but Aurelius Victor says, he was slain by some of his own followers.

Antiochus was a prince of clemency, justice, and beneficence; and until the fiftieth year of his age, administered his affairs with much discretion; so that his enterprises were attended with almost uniform success, which obtained for him the name of Great. But in the latter part of his life, declining in wisdom as well as vigour, his course became disastrous, and his bright prospects were greatly clouded over; for being vanquished by the Romans, he was driven out of the best part of his dominions, and was forced to accept very hard and disgraceful terms of peace. And at last lost his life while engaged in an impious enterprise; so that the close of his career formed a perfect contrast to the glory of his early exploits.

The prophecies of Daniel, recorded in Daniel 11:10-19, had their exact fulfilment in the actions of Antiochus.

In the year that Antiochus died, Cleopatra his daughter, and queen of Egypt, the wife of Ptolemy Epiphanes, having given birth to a son, who afterwards succeeded his father, by the name of Ptolemy Philometor, all the great men and nobility of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine hastened to Alexandria to present their congratulations to the king. Joseph, the king's receiver general, of whom we have spoken before, and who had continued in office all this time, being now too old to take such a journey, sent his son Hyrcanus to make his compliments to the Egyptian court.

Josephus gives a very curious account of the circumstances connected with the birth of Hyrcanus; a brief outline of which I shall now lay before the reader.

Joseph, having often occasion to visit Alexandria, in the execution of his office, on one occasion took with him a brother by the name of Solymius, who having a very beautiful daughter of marriageable age, took her along, probably with the view of obtaining for her a respectable connexion in marriage with some wealthy Jew of Alexandria. While they were at court, Joseph was desperately smitten with the beauty of a young Egyptian girl, whom he had seen in one of the dances which took place in the palace. Being unable to suppress the violence of his passion, he

solicited his brother to endeavour to obtain this beautiful dancing girl as a concubine for him. Solymius, while he seemed to assent to his brother's proposal, yet resolved to prevent his forming such a connexion with a heathen woman; and the method which he took, according to our ideas of propriety, were very unbecoming in the father of a young virgin. For, as Josephus tells the story, instead of introducing to his brother's bed the Egyptian girl, he substituted his own daughter, and the affair was so managed that for some days the cheat was not discovered. But Joseph becoming more and more attached to his Egyptian concubine, as he supposed she was, expressed his devoted attachment to his brother, who then confessed to him what he had done, and avowed as his motive, the desire of keeping him from violating the law of God, by taking a strange wife, against which the displeasure of the Lord had been so strongly manifested in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Joseph was so far from expressing any displeasure, that he thanked his brother for his friendship in thus taking measures to preserve him from a disgraceful transgression of the law of God. Joseph now received his brother's daughter as his lawful wife; for the Jews hold that for a man to marry his niece is no violation of the law of Moses, nor of the law of nature; but for a man to marry his aunt is forbidden, and is contrary to the law of nature; because it reverses the order of reverence and obedience which younger persons naturally owe to their near relatives of superior age and relative standing. This story should not have been introduced here, but for the important figure which Hyrcanus, the fruit of this marriage, makes in the subsequent history of the Jews.

Joseph had seven other sons by another wife, all older than Hyrcanus, to each of whom he offered the commission to go as his deputy to the court of Ptolemy; but they all refusing, Hyrcanus, then a very young man, undertook it. And as he had a very large sum of the collected tribute to pay into the king's treasury, he persuaded his father not to send presents from Judea, but to permit him to purchase in Alexandria such articles as would be suitable for the occasion. Accordingly, an order was given by Joseph to Arion his agent, to let his son have as much money as he should need. But Hyrcanus, on his arrival, instead of demanding ten talents, or any moderate sum, required a thousand talents to be paid to him; equal to a hundred thousand pounds sterling. With this money he purchased one hundred beautiful boys, as a present for the king, and as many beautiful maidens for the queen. Each of these, when presented, carried a talent in their hands. By this means he so ingratiated himself into the favour of the king and queen, that he came away with a commission to collect the king's revenues in all the country beyond Jordan. Having thus overreached his father, and having obtained for himself most of that authority and influence which his father had so long possessed, his brothers were so enraged against him, that they laid a plot to assassinate him; but being well attended, he got the better of them in the affray, and left two of them dead on the spot; on which account, his father being greatly exasperated, as well as for his unfair dealing in Egypt, refused any longer to own him. Hyrcanus now passed over Jordan, to execute his office; but his father dying soon afterwards, a violent dissension arose between him and his remaining brothers, about the possession of his estate, which was carried on with such violence on both sides, that for some time the peace of Jerusalem was disturbed by their quarrels.

The high-priest and people of Jerusalem, generally, took part with the brothers; and Hyrcanus was obliged to retreat again beyond Jordan, where he built a strong fortress which he called Tyre, and from which he carried on a predatory war with the neighbouring Arabs. These events occurred while Seleucus Philopator, the son of Antiochus the Great, reigned in Persia; but when Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded to the throne, and had regained these provinces, Hyrcanus attracted his

attention, and he threatened to execute vengeance upon him for his lawless conduct. On hearing of this, Hyrcanus fell on his sword, and killed himself. Before his death, however, he had contrived to gain over Onias, the high-priest, who undertook the safe-keeping of his treasure, and laid it up for him in the temple, which was probably the first occasion of the quarrel between Onias and Simon the governor of the temple, who is believed to have been the brother of Hyrcanus.

It seems that Joseph had been appointed governor of the temple. He was, perhaps, the first who held that office; for before this time, the high-priest seems to have had the sole authority in Jerusalem. But the kings who ruled over Palestine, no doubt found it convenient to have an officer of their own selection stationed in that important city; and Joseph being greatly in favour of the Ptolemies, as he was ever faithful to their interests, was probably clothed with authority to act for them in Jerusalem. However this may be, we find Simon a Benjamite, holding this office in the year 176 B. C., who is believed to have been the son of Joseph, as before hinted. Between this man and Onias the high-priest, a difference arose; and when Simon could not prevail, he and his associates, who are called the sons of Tobias, fled from Jerusalem, and went to Apollonius, governor of Coëlo-Syria, informing him that great treasures were concealed in the temple of Jerusalem; in consequence of which intelligence, the king sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to bring them away.

An account of what befell Heliodorus in consequence of this sacrilegious attempt to rifle the temple of Jehovah, is related at large in 2Ma_3:1-40.

The substance of this account is, that Heliodorus, on coming to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the determined opposition of Onias the high-priest, the solemn and importunate entreaties of the other priests and Levites, and the mournings and supplications of all ranks and sexes, would not be diverted from his purpose. But when, with his guard, he had penetrated to the treasury, he was met with a fearful apparition; for “there appeared unto him a horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering; and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his fore-feet; and it seems that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on the other side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly upon the ground, and was compassed with great darkness; but they that were about him took him up and put him upon a litter.” And he was restored only through the prayers of the high-priest. (See the account in full, 2Ma_2:3.)

SECTION XIII

judea falls under the power of antiochus—predictions respecting seleucus—good character of onias the high priest—jason’s wicked conduct—and the more wicked of menelaus—death of onias—robbery of the temple by lysimachus—strange sights seen at jerusalem—temple desecrated by antiochus—wretched end of menelaus—antiochus invades egypt, but is met by an embassy from rome—dreadful persecution of the jews by antiochus epiphanes

After the battle of Paneas, before mentioned, Judea and all the neighbouring provinces came under the power of Antiochus the Great. But when he made peace with Ptolemy, and gave his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to him, these provinces it was agreed should go with her, as a part of her dowry. There is, however, reason to believe, that this treaty was never executed, so far as

relates to these intermediate countries: for in the reign of Seleucus, the successor of Antiochus, we find them still under the Syrian government; yet if the story of Josephus, related above, respecting Hyrcanus, is worthy of credit, they must have belonged to Egypt at the birth of Ptolemy Philometor. There seems to be, therefore, a chasm in the history of Judea, about this period. It is certain, however, from the testimony both of Josephus and the author of the second book of Maccabees, that they were in the possession of Seleucus king of Syria, at the time of his decease.

The prophet Daniel, who was so particular in predicting the fortunes of Antiochus the Great, has not passed over his successor Seleucus, without notice. He is spoken of as his successor, in the words following: "There should stand upon his estate a raiser of taxes." And it is a fact, that Seleucus was occupied during his whole reign in collecting money from all quarters to pay what had been laid upon his father, by the Romans. The whole sum was fifteen thousand Eubæan talents, which they agreed should be paid by instalments of a thousand talents annually, and the last of the years of this tribute, was the last of his life; so he did little else than gather taxes. But the prophecy goes on to say, that, "Within a few years he should be destroyed, and that neither in anger, nor in battle." And so it turned out, for he was neither slain in foreign war, nor sedition at home, but fell by the treachery of one of his own friends.

Seleucus died in the year 175 B. C., and Heliodorus, who was the treacherous author of his death, used every effort to place himself on the throne. Antiochus the brother of Seleucus, hearing of his death at Athens, and of the treasonable designs of Heliodorus, who had secured a powerful party in his favour, applied to Eumenes the king of Pergamus, and to Attalus his brother, to assist him in getting possession of the throne, to which he was the legitimate heir; which, through policy, they did. Fearing a war with the Romans, they knew that the friendship of the king of Syria would be important. Antiochus, when seated on his throne, took the name of Epiphanes, which signifies illustrious, the very opposite of his true character. The unerring pen of the prophet gives an exact description of this prince, when he is called "a vile person." (Daniel 11:21.) The original, however, would be more correctly rendered, a despicable person. But the truth of this character is also confirmed by the most unexceptionable testimony of profane writers. Polybins, Philarchus, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus, the two first of whom were contemporary with him, all concur in describing him as a king of corrupt manners, of which they give many pertinent examples. Indeed his conduct was so extravagant and so unbecoming his royal station, that he appeared to many to be a fool or insane; and for shameless impudence, and beastly lust and intemperance, no one could be more debased.

Onias, who was now high-priest, was held in great esteem by all the people for his piety and justice; but he had a brother named Jason, of a very opposite character. The ambition of this man led him to the impious attempt to supplant his brother. And knowing the high esteem in which Onias was held, he prevailed upon Antiochus to call him to Antioch, that he might be out of his way. To induce Antiochus, who was in great need of money, to comply with his wishes, he offered him a large sum. In addition to what Jason gave the king for the priesthood, he offered a hundred and fifty talents more for the liberty of erecting a gymnasium and an ephibæum, according to the manner of the Greeks, in the city of Jerusalem. He also bargained with the king to have as many of the Jews, as he wished, made freemen of Antioch. This introduction of Grecian customs and Grecian amusements, had a powerful tendency to corrupt the young people of the Jewish nation, who appear by their long captivity to have been entirely weaned from their propensity to idolatry.

But now, through the dissolute principles of Jason, a great corruption of manners took place. The services of the altar were often neglected, and many of the Jews apostatized from their religion.

Upon the death of Ptolemy Philometor, Cleopatra his queen, the sister of Antiochus Epiphanes, administered the affairs of the kingdom with much prudence. But on her decease, Ptolemy Philometor being still an infant, the administration fell into the hands of some of the nobility; who speedily involved the country in a war with Antiochus Epiphanes, by a demand of the provinces of Coelo-Syria, Palestine, and Phenicia, which had always belonged to Egypt, until the times of Antiochus the Great.

Ptolemy Philometor, having reached his fourteenth year, was crowned king, and inaugurated with great pomp. Jason, now high-priest, sent his brother Menelaus to the king at Antioch, to carry the tribute due from the province of Judea. This man, being even more unprincipled than his brother, availed himself of the favourable opportunity which this embassy afforded, to supplant Jason, as Jason had Onias. The king, regardless of the Jewish law and of the wishes of the people, for the sake of a higher price, agreed to advance Menelaus to the priesthood; but on his arrival, the party of Jason proved too powerful for him, so that he was obliged to return to Antioch. Here he showed how little he cared for the priesthood or the religion of his fathers, by offering, with his adherents, to embrace the religion of the king. His only object in aspiring to the office of high-priest, was to obtain the civil power which had been connected with it since the days of Nehemiah; for during this long period, the high-priests were invested with the principal authority in all civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs. Antiochus being much gratified with the offer of Menelaus to conform to his religion, sent now along with him to Jerusalem a sufficient force to place him in the office. Jason was therefore obliged to flee to the land of the Ammonites.

Menelaus, being now advanced to the high-priesthood, was little careful to pay the money which he had promised for the office: on which the king summoned both him and the captain of the temple to appear before him at Antioch. When they arrived at that city, the king was gone to suppress an insurrection in Asia Minor. This gave Menelaus time to make an exertion to raise the money, which he effected by purloining some of the golden vessels which belonged to the temple, and causing them to be sold at Tyre. By this means, he not only raised the sum due to the king, but was able to bribe Andronicus, and some other of the courtiers, to use their influence in his favour.

Onias still resided at Antioch, and by his piety and virtue had greatly won the affections of the people. When he was informed of the sacrilege of his brother Menelaus, he sharply reproved him; by which he was so deeply offended, that he got Andronicus to agree to murder Onias. Onias obtaining information of this plot, fled to the famous asylum at Daphne; but Andronicus, by various flattering and false pretences, having enticed him from the sanctuary, immediately destroyed him. With this act of cruelty towards so good a man, the inhabitants of Antioch were so much displeased, that when the king returned, they made complaint of Andronicus. Antiochus as soon as he had satisfied himself of the truth of the charge, ordered Andronicus to be taken and killed on the very spot where he had slain Onias. The time of the priesthood of Onias until his death, was twenty-four years.

In the meantime a great mutiny arose at Jerusalem, respecting the vessels which had been taken from the temple by order of Menelaus. He having gone to Antioch, had left Lysimachus, another

brother no better than himself, to manage his affairs during his absence. He used his instrumentality to procure the vessels above mentioned, which he sold at Tyre. The report of this sacrilegious action having got wind among the people, produced a wonderful tumult. Lysimachus, to defend himself against the multitude, collected around him about three thousand men; but the multitude becoming outrageous, fell upon them, and having slain many of them, found their way to the presence of Lysimachus, whom they put to death.

The war having commenced (170 years before Christ) between Antiochus and the king of Egypt, while he was at Tyre with his army, the Jews sent an embassy of three respectable citizens to complain of the conduct of Menelaus. These ambassadors were commissioned by the Sanhedrim, and on being admitted to an audience, made good their accusation. Menelaus, to avoid the sentence which he deserved, bribed with a great sum, one of the king's chief favourites, by whose influence it was brought about, that Antiochus, instead of punishing the sacrilegious priest, put to death the three envoys from Jerusalem.

At Jerusalem, about this time, there were seen strange sights in the air, for forty days together; horseman and footmen armed with shields, spears and swords, and in great companies fighting with each other, as in battle array; which are supposed to have been ominous of the calamities which speedily fell on that city. Similar appearances were beheld before its utter destruction by the Romans.

Antiochus met with but small resistance from the young king of Egypt, who seems voluntarily to have put himself into the power of his enemy. While he was in Egypt, the report reached him of a revolt among the Jews. Jason, thinking this a good opportunity for recovering his lost power, marched to Jerusalem with more than a thousand men and took the city, forcing Menelaus to take refuge in the castle, and exercising the utmost cruelty on the citizens—putting to death without mercy as many of his adversaries as he could lay hands on. Antiochus marched with all his forces into Judea; and on being told that the people of Jerusalem had greatly rejoiced at a report which had been circulated of his death, he was exceedingly exasperated; and in great rage laying siege to Jerusalem, and taking the city by force, slew of the inhabitants, in three days, forty thousand persons, and sold as many more for slaves to the neighbouring nations. But the impious king not contented with these cruelties, found his way into the temple, under the guidance of Menelaus; and entering into its inmost recesses, polluted by his presence not only the holy place, but also the holy of holies. To complete the climax of his impieties, he sacrificed a sow upon the altar of burnt-offerings; and having ordered broth to be made of part of the flesh, he had it sprinkled all over the temple, that its defilement might be carried to the very uttermost. After this, he proceeded to plunder it, by taking away the golden altar, the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, and other vessels, to the value of eighteen hundred talents of gold. Having completed the desecration and robbery of the temple, the wicked wretch marched home to Antioch, laden with the spoils of both Egypt and Judea. To increase the vexation of the Jews, he appointed one Philip, a Phrygian, of ferocious temper, to be ruler of Samaria; and, what was to them the worst of all, left Menelaus in the office of high-priest. As soon as Antiochus approached Jerusalem, Jason fled again to the Ammonites; but being there accused by Aretas king of the Arabians, of some injury done to his dominions in that vicinity, he fled to Egypt, and thence to Greece, hated and despised of all men, and receiving countenance from none, until at last he died miserably in exile, without even a decent burial.

When the Egyptians found that through the imbecility of Ptolemy Philometor, their country was fallen under a kind of vassalage to Antiochus, they made his brother king in his room, whose name was at first Ptolemy Euergetes; but on account of his corpulency through luxury, he was afterwards known by the name of Ptolemy Physcon, i. e. The Fat. This led Antiochus to make another expedition to Egypt, where, upon his arrival, he laid siege to Alexandria; but being unable to take the city, he went to Memphis, and pretended to put the whole country into the hands of the elder brother, but reserved in his own hands Pelusium, the key of the country. After his departure, the brothers were reconciled, through the influence of Cleopatra their sister, by which means peace was restored to Egypt; the youngest brother having yielded the throne to Philometor. As soon as Antiochus heard of this revolution, he was filled with rage; for he had laid his plans to set them at war with each other, by which means he hoped the country would fall an easy prey to himself. He, therefore, sent a large fleet to Cyprus, from which island he designed to invade Egypt. This he soon after did, and having reduced it as far as Memphis, laid siege to Alexandria, which he would have taken, had he not been met by a Roman embassy, which put an end to all his fond hopes of subduing Egypt. As Popilius, the chief of this embassy, had been an intimate friend of Antiochus, when he resided, in his younger days, at Rome, he offered to embrace him in a friendly manner; but Popilius drew back, and told him that private friendship must yield to the public interest; and when he observed that Antiochus wished to gain time and not to give an immediate answer, he took his staff, and making a circle round him in the sand, peremptorily told him, that he should not move out of that circle, until he had given his reply. This interposition of the Romans was brought about by an embassy to Rome from Cleopatra and Ptolemy Physcon, during the former siege of Alexandria. The ambassadors, on that occasion, represented the dangerous height of power to which Antiochus was likely to arise, if Egypt should be added to the other countries under his dominion.

Antiochus, enraged at the failure of his design upon Egypt, but not daring to resist the Roman power which was now growing formidable in Greece, where Paulus Emilius had just obtained a great victory over the Macedonians, turned his wrath against Judea. On his march homeward from Egypt, he detached from his army two and seventy thousand men, and sent them, under the command of Apollonius, to destroy Jerusalem.

The arrival of Apollonius at the holy city was just two years after Antiochus had been there himself, as related above. At first he behaved peaceably, until the Sabbath arrived, when, the people being all collected in their synagogues, he let loose his soldiers among them; giving them orders to kill all the men, and seize the women and children, that they might be sold as slaves. This order was executed with the most horrid cruelty. The streets of Jerusalem were made to swim with the blood of its innocent inhabitants. None were spared on whom the soldiers could lay hands. Having completed this work of destruction, Apollonius spoiled the city of all its riches, pulled down the walls, and set fire to it in several places. Out of the ruins of the walls he built a strong fortress over against the temple, so as completely to command that edifice. In this fortress he placed a strong garrison, and there deposited great quantities of arms and munitions of war, together with the spoils which he had taken from the city. From this fortress, the garrison attacked all who came up to the temple with their sacrifices, or to worship, and shed their blood around the courts and the altar; so that in a little time, the service of the temple fell into neglect; for no one durst come up thither to make his offerings according to the law; and in this condition did affairs remain for three

years and a half. At this time many of the pious Jews fled into the wilderness, where they concealed themselves in caves and among the rocks, living upon herbs and such scanty provisions as the wilderness afforded.

Antiochus, after his return to Antioch, issued a decree that all the nations within his dominions should worship the same gods which he did. This was particularly intended for the destruction of the Jews, not only those in Palestine, but also those who were scattered through the surrounding countries. The heathen conformed without scruple to the king's edict, as one form of idolatry was as good, in their view, as another. The Samaritans, also, who were forward, when the Jews were in prosperity, to claim kindred with them, now pretended that they were of Sidonian origin, and manifested no opposition to conforming to the king's edict. The whole weight of this decree, therefore, fell on the afflicted Jews. The Samaritans, moreover, petitioned that their temple on mount Gerizim, might henceforth be dedicated to the Grecian Jupiter; which being favourably received by Antiochus, he sent Nicanor to Samaria to see that it was done according to their wish. It is also a melancholy truth, that under this grievous persecution, many of the Jews also fell away into heathen idolatry, and became bitter enemies to the religion of their fathers; joining with the king in all his cruel persecutions of their brethren.

Antiochus showed that he was in good earnest in executing this decree; for he sent one Athenæus, an old man, well skilled in all the rites of the Gentiles, to carry it into full effect in Judea and Samaria. All sacrifices to the God of Israel were now prohibited, and all the observances of the Jewish religion were suppressed: their children were forbidden to be circumcised, and their law, wherever a copy could be found, was seized and destroyed. The temple itself was consecrated to Jupiter Olympus, whose image was set up over the altar of burnt-offerings, just before which they built a smaller altar, on which sacrifices were offered to Jupiter. The same change was made in the public worship at Samaria, but with the full consent of the people. Their temple was dedicated to Jupiter, under the name of Protector of Strangers.

The severity with which this cruel and impious decree was executed, will appear by the following narrative: Two women were discovered in Jerusalem to have circumcised their newborn sons. The officers suspended the children around the necks of their mothers, and then led them through the streets of Jerusalem, until coming to a high part of the wall, they precipitated them from the top, and slew all who had given any assistance in the performance of the sacred rite. With the same cruelty they persecuted all who were found practising any part of their old religion. And to propagate paganism more effectually, chapels for idols were erected in every city, and sacrifices offered to their false deities. The feast of Bacchus was especially celebrated, in which the Jews were forced to join the procession, carrying in their hands branches of ivy.

SECTION XIV

asmonean family of modin—constancy of mattathias—he and his friends take refuge in the mountains—martyrdom of eleazar—of the mother and her seven sons—assideans—antiochus aims to destroy all copies of the law—death of mattathias—judas maccabæus—books of the maccabees—victories of judas—antiochus resolves to destroy the whole jewish nation—wonderful success of judas—occupies jerusalem—cleanses and dedicates anew the temple—prophecies respecting antiochus epiphanes

While these efforts were making utterly to suppress the Jewish religion, and to introduce the impure rites of heathenism, Apelles, one of the officers who had charge of this matter, came to the town of Modin, where Mattathias, a priest of the course of Joarib, had his residence. He was the son of John, the son of Simon, the son of Asmonæus; from whom the family had the name of Asmoneans. This man was truly zealous for the law of his God; and had five sons, all valiant men, and equally zealous for the law as himself. The names of these young men were, John, surnamed Kaddis, Simon, called Thassi, Judas, surnamed Maccabæus, Eleazar, named Avaran, and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus.

Apelles having called together the inhabitants of Modin, informed them of the purpose of his visit, and persuaded them to comply with the king's mandate; and especially he addressed himself to Mattathias, as being the principal man of the place; promising, that if by his example he would induce the other inhabitants to obey, he should be advanced to great power and wealth. To which the venerable Mattathias answered with a loud voice, so as to be heard by all the people, that no consideration should induce him or any of his family to forsake the law of their God; but that they would still adhere to the covenant which he had made with their forefathers. When he had made this public declaration of his steadfastness, he saw one of the Jews coming up to offer sacrifice on the heathen altar; at the sight of which, being transported with zeal, like Phinehas of old, he fell upon the apostate and slew him at the altar. After this, he and his sons put Apelles and all his attendants to the sword, and inviting all who were zealous for the law to follow him, retired to the mountains. Many others, in various places, followed this example; so that the wilderness was filled with the refugees who had escaped from the cruel persecution which raged throughout Judea. Against them Philip the Phrygian, governor of Samaria and Jerusalem, went out with an army. At first he persuaded them quietly to submit to the king's authority; promising a complete amnesty for all that was past. To this they all answered, that they would rather die than forsake the law of their God. On which Philip then laid siege to the cave where they were collected, and knowing their sacred regard to the Sabbath, he waited till the arrival of that day of rest, when he fell upon them, not a hand being raised in their defence, and all the men, women, and children, who were collected in that cave, were butchered.

Mattathias and his friends, who were in another part of the mountain, when they heard of this disaster, and the reason of it, held a solemn consultation; whether, in such circumstances they were bound by the laws of the Sabbath, foreseeing, that on these principles, they must all inevitably perish. The result of their deliberation was, that in such a case the law of God did not bind them to refrain from self-defence. Accordingly, it was resolved, that after this time, when assaulted by their enemies upon the Sabbath, they would fight for their lives. Having ratified this decree by the consent of all the priests and elders who were with them, they sent it to those throughout the land who stood up for the observance of the law; by whom it was received with the like consent; and ever afterwards it was made the rule, in all the wars which the Jews waged against their enemies.

The next year, 167 B. C., Antiochus hearing that his edict met with opposition from the Jews in many places, came himself to see its execution; and to strike terror into the other Jews who adhered to their law, he exercised the greatest cruelties on such as fell into his hands. It was on this occasion, as we read in the second book of Maccabees, that Eleazar suffered martyrdom; and a mother and her seven sons, who bravely encountered death, "not accepting deliverance;"

(Hebrews 11:35,) of which transactions Josephus has also given a very particular account.

In the meantime, Mattathias and his company lay concealed in the fastnesses of the mountains, where they were scarcely accessible; and as soon as Antiochus had returned home, great numbers of the Jews who were zealous for their religion, resorted to Mattathias, to fight for the law of their God, and for their liberties. Among these, there was a company called Assideans, men mighty in valour, and of great zeal for the law, who had voluntarily devoted themselves to a more rigid observance of it than others; whence they obtained the name of Chasidim, or Assideans, that is, the pious. For after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, there were two sets of religious men among them. The first were called Zadikim, the righteous; who were contented with an exact observance of the written law; the others, Chasidim, the pious; who, to the written law, added many observances, which they had received from the tradition of the elders.

The company of Mattathias increased so much, that they began to assume the appearance of a little army, He no longer, therefore, confined himself to his fastnesses, but came boldly forth into the inhabited country, and going from village to village, pulled down the heathen altars, caused the male children to be circumcised, and cut off all apostates and persecutors, wherever he came. He, moreover, re-established the worship of the true God; and having recovered several copies of the law, restored the worship of the synagogue.

One object at which Antiochus aimed in his persecution, was to destroy all copies of the law. A proclamation was therefore made by him, that every person, who was in possession of a copy, should, upon pain of death, deliver it up to his officers. By this means, all the copies of the law fell into the hands of the persecutors, except such as were carried away by those who fled into the wilderness. And when they did obtain them, they either destroyed them, or polluted them by painting on their margins the images of their gods; so that the Jews could make no further use of them. This work of destruction, however, had relation only to the books of Moses; for these only, had before this time been read in the synagogues. Those Jews, therefore, who still persisted in attending to the worship of God, being destitute of copies of the law, began now to read select portions of the prophets; and this practice has been continued in the synagogues ever since. The law and the prophets are both read every Sabbath day, wherever there is a synagogue of the Jews.

Mattathias, being advanced in years, was soon worn out with this state of perpetual warfare, and died the very next year after he had commenced his resistance to the impious edict of the king, 166 B. C. Before his death, the old man called his five sons together and exhorted them to stand up manfully for the law of their God, and with a steady courage and constancy to fight the battles of Israel, against their present persecutors. That there might be no contention among them about pre-eminence, he, knowing the character of each, appointed Judas to be their captain, and Simon to be their counsellor. Mattathias was then buried by his sons in Modin, in the sepulchres of his forefathers, and great lamentation was made for him by all the faithful in Israel. But the place of this good patriarch was more than supplied by his son Judas Maccabæus; for as soon as his father's funeral was over, he took on him the chief command of the forces collected, according to his father's will; and his army being continually increased by those resorting to him from all parts, who were zealous for the law, he erected his standard and marched forth to meet the enemies of his God. The inscription on his standard consisted of the initial letters of the words, mi camo-ka

baalim Jehovah; the meaning of which motto is, “who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?” Hence, Judas was called Maccabæus, and all who followed his standard were denominated Maccabees or Maccabæans. Such abbreviations, and names formed from them, are so common among the Jews, that it will be unnecessary to give particular instances. Because Ruffin has called the eldest of the seven brothers who suffered martyrdom, Maccabæus, some have supposed that the name was derived from him; but there can be little doubt that Ruffin called him by that name, because, in this war the chief defenders of the law were so denominated.

The books which have received the title, Maccabees, are four in number. “The first and second are contained in the Apocrypha of our Bibles, and are reckoned to be canonical by the Romanists. The third is a book, already mentioned, which contains the history of Ptolemy Philometor’s attempt to destroy all the Jews in Egypt by his elephants. The fourth is a history of the martyrdom of Eleazar and the mother and her seven sons, by Josephus the Jewish historian.

Antiochus, the king, having heard that Paulus Emilius, after his victory over Perseus king of Macedon, had celebrated games at Amphipolis, on the river Strymon, proposed to do the same in imitation of him, at Daphne, near Antioch. These games were celebrated with much pomp and at great expense, for several days, during which time, the king gave himself up to his usual impudent folly and vileness, to such a degree, that many decent people left the games in utter disgust, at the indecency of his behaviour. But while Antiochus was thus playing the fool at Daphne, Judas was playing another sort of game in Judea. He went round the cities, as his father had done before, destroying the whole apparatus of idolatry, and slaying all apostates from the true religion; and not only delivered the faithful worshippers of God from their oppressors, but fortified the towns, and rebuilt the fortresses, in which he placed strong garrisons, that henceforward they might be in a state of security.

Apollonius, who was left governor of those regions, now thought it high time to arrest the alarming progress of a force, which, in the beginning, appeared too despicable to create any apprehensions. But Judas, on the first meeting with this impious foe, who had spilled so much innocent blood in Jerusalem, fell upon his army with such vehemence and determined courage, that they could not stand before him. Apollonius himself was slain in the battle, and a great slaughter was made among his soldiers. Among the spoils taken, was the sword of Apollonius the general, which Judas took to himself, and used ever afterwards, in all his battles.

Seron, deputy governor of some part of Cœlo-Syria under Macron, on hearing of the overthrow of Apollonius, collected all the forces that were at his command, and marched into Judea, calculating on reaping a rich harvest of renown, by speedily conquering Judas, whose name now began to be terrible. But on meeting with this valiant captain, with his little army, the event was very different from the expectation of the haughty Syrian: for he met with the same fate as Apollonius, being vanquished and slain in battle by Judas, and a great slaughter made among his men.

When Antiochus heard of these two defeats, his indignation and fury were enkindled to the highest pitch, and he immediately gave orders, that all his forces should be collected, intending to march in person at their head into Judea, and inflict tremendous vengeance on Judas and his associates. Upon examination of his treasury, however, it was found that there was not money sufficient to pay his troops, which rendered it necessary to suspend his design of utterly extirpating the Jews, on which he had resolved.

Antiochus was a king of great profusion and magnificence, dealing out to his followers munificent gifts, so that he obtained the name of the magnanimous and munificent. And thus also his character exactly answered to the description of the prophet, that "he should scatter among his followers the prey, and the spoil and riches." Another prophecy of Daniel was also fulfilled at this time. "Tidings came to him out of the East, and out of the North, that troubled him;" (Daniel 11:24-44.) For he now received intelligence, that Artaxias, king of Armenia, had revolted against him; this was from the North; and from Persia, in the East, he learned that his taxes, of which he now stood in so much need, were no longer duly paid. This failure was the effect of his laws requiring uniformity in religion, by which the minds of the Persians were disturbed and alienated. In this difficult state of his affairs, he resolved to divide his army, and to send the one half of his forces against Judea, under Lysias; and with the other half, to march himself into Armenia and Persia. Accordingly, having invested Lysias, who was of the royal family, with authority over all the countries on this side the Euphrates, and having committed to his tutelage his infant son, then seven years of age, he set out on his march to the East, taking the route over mount Taurus into Armenia; where, having vanquished Artaxias, and made him prisoner, he marched directly into Persia.

Lysias, intent on executing the king's orders, which required him utterly to destroy and extirpate the whole nation of the Jews, and to settle the country with people brought from among other nations, among whom the lands of the Jews were to be divided, made haste to send an army into Judea; which seemed to become more necessary every day, as intelligence was constantly received of the progress made by Judas, in bringing all places under his authority. The conduct of this army was committed to Ptolemy Macron, governor of Coelo-Syria, who appointed Nicanor his lieutenant, and sent him before him with twenty thousand men. Gorgias, an old and experienced soldier, was associated with him in command. But Ptolemy was not long in following with the rest of the forces, which, when joined together, amounted to an army of forty thousand infantry and seven thousand horse. They met with no obstacle to their march until they came near to Jerusalem, where they encamped at a village called Emmaus. To this place also resorted merchants to the number of one thousand, who came to purchase slaves. For, Nicanor having it in view to raise two thousand talents to pay the tribute due to the Romans, had made proclamation in all the neighbouring countries, that ninety Jews would be sold for a single talent. The plan was to kill all the full grown people and sell the rest for slaves.

Judas, finding his country threatened with utter destruction, for the orders of the king in relation to the extirpation of the Jewish nation were known, resolved, with his associates, to stand on their defence, and bravely fight for their laws, their lives, and their liberties. Having about six thousand men, he divided them into four bands of fifteen hundred each. Of one of these Judas himself took the command, and committed the others to three of his brothers; he then led his little army to Mizpah, there to supplicate God for his divine aid, in this time of imminent danger. This place was chosen for this solemn purpose, because it had formerly been one of the places chosen of God for his worship, and Jerusalem was now in the hands of the enemy. When they arrived at Mizpah, a day was spent in prayer and fasting before the Lord, immediately after which they marched to meet the Syrian host.

Judas, who was fighting for the law of his God, was very careful to observe all the precepts of that law himself. He, therefore, made proclamation, that all who had recently married wives, built

houses, or planted vineyards, were at liberty to return home: for he knew that the battle was not to the strong, and that God could save by few as well as by many. In consequence of this permission, his army was reduced from six to three thousand, with which diminished force he valiantly resolved to encounter an enemy of fifty thousand veterans. He, therefore, went and pitched his camp very near to the Syrian host, informing his men that it was his purpose early the next morning to attack the enemy; for which they prepared accordingly. During the night he received intelligence that Gorgias, by the guidance of certain apostate Jews acquainted with the country, was leading five thousand selected men by unfrequented paths, to attack him by surprise. He immediately determined on a counter-march, and on an enterprise of the boldest kind. For instead of waiting for the attack of Gorgias, he marched his force directly on the camp of the enemy, now weakened by having its best soldiers detached on this secret expedition. This bold and well-planned manœuvre was attended with complete success, for the Syrians left in the camp were taken by surprise, and were thrown into confusion, so that they made scarcely any resistance, but fled in all directions, leaving three thousand of their men dead on the ground.

Judas, finding himself master of the Syrian camp, would not permit his men to lay their hands on the spoil, because the corps of Gorgias, superior in numbers to his force, and chosen men, were untouched; but as soon as his soldiers heard of the total defeat of their main army, they threw down their arms and fled also. Judas, on being informed of this fact, engaged in the pursuit of the fugitives, nine thousand of whom he slew, and wounded many more. When he and his men returned to the Syrian camp, they found it full of riches, and there got possession of the large sums of money which had been brought to purchase their wives and children as slaves. Judas and his associates, flushed with this great victory, and their number being increased by the addition of many who now were encouraged by their success, to join them, resolved to march over Jordan, and attack Timotheus and Bacchides, who were collecting forces in that country. Accordingly, they met the army of the enemy and overthrew them in a great battle, killing twenty thousand of their men, and enriching themselves with abundance of spoil. On this occasion the vengeance of Heaven overtook two men who had distinguished themselves by acts of impiety and cruelty. The one was Philarches, the author of many evils to the Jews, who was slain in battle; the other, Callisthenes, the man who set fire to the gates of the temple and burnt them down; he was pursued into a small house, which being set on fire, he perished in the flames.

Nicanor, the Syrian general, escaped home with his life, but was ever after held in the utmost contempt, on account of his total failure in this expedition. To excuse himself, he was constrained to acknowledge the great power of the God of Israel, who, he said, fought for his people. As to Ptolemy Macron, he seems not to have been present, for although he came to Emmaus, it is probable that he returned before the battle. When Lysias heard of the total defeat of all his armies by Judas with his small band of associates, he was utterly confounded: but knowing how much the king had the execution of his orders at heart in relation to the Jews, he set himself about collecting another army. Having mustered sixty-four thousand men, and five thousand horse, he put himself at their head, and marched into Judea, aiming at nothing less than the utter destruction of the country. On entering Judea, he pitched his camp at a place called Bethsura, not far to the south of Jerusalem. Here Judas met him with ten thousand men, and having unshaken confidence in God, he did not hesitate to engage with the whole Syrian army of seventy thousand chosen men. And God, in whom he trusted, did not disappoint his expectations; for he completely defeated the army

of the Syrians, slaying five thousand men, and putting the rest to flight. Lysias, being greatly dismayed, returned home to Antioch with the scattered remains of his forces, intending to return with a more numerous army the next year. This extraordinary success of Judas took place in the year 165 B. C.

By the retreat of Lysias, the whole country being left under the power of Judas, he proposed to his brethren, that they should march to Jerusalem, and after cleansing the place, restore the worship of Jehovah. When they arrived, and beheld the destruction of the city, which was a heap of rubbish, and the defilement of the sanctuary of the Lord, they were all affected with the deepest grief, and were urgent, that the work of cleaning and rebuilding the place should immediately commence. But as Antiochus had carried away the altar of incense, the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, Judas caused to be made out of the gold taken from the Syrians, other holy furniture for the sanctuary, exactly according to the pattern of those which they had lost. By his care, too, all other vessels and utensils, necessary for the service of God, were provided. The ensigns of idolatry being thus removed, and the house of God cleansed, it was determined to dedicate it anew, in a solemn manner. For this celebration, the twenty-fifth of the month Cisleu was appointed, which was about the time of the winter solstice, and the very day on which, three years and a half before, the temple had been profaned and desolated by Apollonius.

This feast of dedication was celebrated for eight days together, with great joy and thanksgiving, for the deliverance which God had wrought for his people. They commenced the solemnities by offering sacrifices according to the law, upon the new altar which they had erected. The fire was obtained by striking two flints together; and from the same fire they lighted the seven lamps of the golden candlestick, which stood in the holy place. All other parts of the divine service were now restored, according to the prescriptions of the law, and the usage of former times. This feast continued to be observed by the Jews on the same day of the year, the twenty-fifth of Cisleu, as long as the temple stood. It is once mentioned in the New Testament, and our Saviour was at Jerusalem at the time of its celebration. (John 10:22.) That it was the anniversary of this dedication, and not of that of Solomon, or of Zerubbabel, is manifest, from the season of the year in which it occurred, which is expressly stated to have been the winter; whereas, both the other dedications occurred at other seasons. This was sometimes denominated the feast of lights, because, during its celebration the Jews were accustomed to set up candles at every door. Although the temple was now recovered and purified, and the worship of God restored, the fortress or castle, which overlooked and commanded the temple, remained in the hands of the enemy, and was strongly garrisoned by them, partly with heathen soldiers, and partly with apostate Jews. The people who came up to the temple to worship, were, therefore, greatly annoyed by the soldiers of the garrison; who often sallied out upon them, and sometimes slew those who were bringing their sacrifices to the temple. This castle stood on a mount which received the name of Acra, on account of the fortress on the top. Judas, at first, stationed some of his men, so as to prevent these sallies from the garrison; but that plan not succeeding, he built high walls around the mountain of the temple, and so fortified the place, as to secure those who were coming to the temple to worship. As a barrier against the Idumeans, who were now troublesome to the Jews, Judas fortified Bethsura which was on their borders. But it should be remarked, that what is here called Idumea, is not the same country as the land of Edom, so often mentioned in the Old Testament. This lay between the Dead Sea and Red Sea, and was

afterwards known by the name of Arabia-Petrea: but while the Jews were in captivity, the Edomites took possession of the south part of the land which had been assigned to the tribe of Judah, in the original distribution; and also, that part of the land of Simeon which was included in the general survey of the lot of Judah. There they dwelt ever afterwards, and in process of time, all went over to the Jewish religion.

Antiochus, while in Persia, heard the news of the repeated defeats of the Syrians in Judea, at which he was so much enraged, that he immediately turned his face towards that country in haste, to inflict vengeance on the Jews; for his whole soul seemed to be fired with wrath against this people, especially when he heard that Judas had pulled down all his heathen altars, and restored the worship of God. But while on his march to Babylonia, which lay in his way, he was seized with a painful and incurable disease in his bowels, for which no remedy could be found; and yet so ardent was his desire of vengeance on the Jews, that he could not be persuaded to stop, nor to slacken his march. While pressing on, however, with redoubled speed, the chariot in which he rode was overturned, and he was bruised in a fearful manner. He was now obliged to stop in a small village, where he lay suffering excruciating pains. A loathsome ulcer began to discharge fetid matter, and was soon filled with vermin; in which distressing condition he continued until his death. And the hand of God seemed to be heavy upon him, in spirit as well as body; for his conscience was agonized with a sense of his crimes, and especially of his sacrilegious conduct in regard to the temple at Jerusalem. Polybius relates the fact of his agony of mind on account of this crime, but ascribes it to the attempt to rob the temple of Diana, in Elymais. Josephus, however, and the author of the book of Maccabees, refer it all to his actual and horrid profanation of the temple of God, at Jerusalem.

Antiochus being the greatest enemy of the church and people of God, who ever arose, the prophecies have been very particular in describing him. Daniel 11:25-45, seems to be entirely occupied with predicting the character and deeds of this enemy to all righteousness.

The revolt of Ptolemy Macron from Ptolemy Philometor, is referred to in the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses. The twenty-seventh verse relates to the free and apparently friendly intercourse, which took place between the two kings at Memphis, when Antiochus and Ptolemy often eat at the same table; but they spoke lies to one another, while they pretended friendship. In Daniel 11:29-30, there is a prediction of the last visit of Antiochus to Egypt, after he had taken off the mask, for then "he returned again towards the south, that is, to Egypt; but he did not then prevail, as in the former and latter attempts;" that is, in the two former expeditions; because of the ships that come from Chittim: that is, the Grecian ships that brought Poplins and the other Roman ambassadors into Egypt, to Alexandria, whose arrival put an end to all his expectations of conquering that country; for they made him, "to his great grief, return out of Egypt." What is said in verses forty-third and forty-fourth of his stretching forth his hand upon the land of Egypt, "and his having power over the treasures of gold and silver, and all other precious things of that country," was fulfilled exactly, in the frequent expeditions to that country, from which he carried off great spoils.

The prophet in this chapter (Daniel 11:1-45) also predicts, in strong language, the disappointment of Antiochus, upon his being prevented by the Romans from seizing on Egypt, which was just ready to fall into his hands: and, also, how he turned his vengeance against the holy city, and

desecrated the sanctuary of God. "For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the covenant: so shall he do; and he shall have intelligence with them that forsake the covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

These prophecies respecting Antiochus Epiphanes, so exactly correspond with the events related of him by all the historians, that Porphyry, who wrote largely against the Scriptures, acknowledged the exact coincidence, but pretended that these predictions were never penned by Daniel, but by some writer who lived after the time of Antiochus. And to make this the more probable, he compared what is contained in this eleventh chapter of Daniel, with the accounts of all the historians extant in his time, most of which are now lost, and proved that the agreement was most exact; from which he drew the inference, that this chapter must have been written after the events took place. This work of Porphyry is now lost, and also several answers to it by learned Christians. All we now have of it is found in Jerome's Commentary on Daniel.

SECTION XV

history of judas continued—distressing condition of the jews—death of eleazar, brother of judas—death of antiochus—miserable end of menelaus—civil war between the two brothers in egypt—interposition of the romans—demetrius succeeds antiochus—alcimus appointed high-priest—the quarrel of the two brothers, ptolemy philometor and ptolemy physcon, brought before the roman senate and decided

Judas Maccabæus was not permitted to be idle; for although the Syrians were driven from Judea, the neighbouring nations seemed to have entered into a general conspiracy against the Jews. Judas, therefore, turned his arms against the Edomites, who had been foremost in forming this confederation. Of them he slew twenty thousand men. He next passed over Jordan to the land of the Ammonites, where he fought many battles, and having vanquished the enemies of the Jews in that quarter, and taken Jazar, returned to Judea.

The heathen about Gilead, hearing of the discomfiture of so many of their friends, rose against the Jews, and having slain a thousand of them in the land of Tob, forced the rest to take refuge in a castle. The people of Phenicia also rose against the Jews of Galilee; and Judas, receiving urgent calls for help from both these places, was at a loss which way he should march. He, therefore, consulted the Sanhedrim, who advised him to divide his forces. Accordingly, he and Jonathan passed over Jordan, and arrived just in time to relieve the Jews who were besieged in Dathema.

Simon took another division of the army and marched to Galilee, where also he met with great success; for in many conflicts with the enemy, he came off uniformly victorious. But finding that the Jews in those parts could not be protected from the heathen round about, he took measures to have them transplanted into Judea. While these two divisions of the army had been completely successful, a third which had been left at Jerusalem, under Joseph and Azarias, having undertaken an expedition against Jamnia, on the seacoast, where Gorgias commanded, were by him repulsed with great loss.

Lysias, who, after the death of Antiochus, had seized upon the chief authority, as he had the young king in his power, now resolved to march with a great army against Judas. He collected

sixty thousand infantry, as many cavalry as he could find, and eighty elephants, and with this force marched towards Judea. This great army commenced the war by laying siege to Bethsura; but Judas, coming upon them, slew eleven thousand of his infantry, and sixteen hundred of his cavalry, and put the rest to flight. Lysias, growing weary of this unsuccessful war, now made peace with Judas and his people. Quintillus Memmius, and Torquatus Manlius, who were then ambassadors from the Romans, in Syria, were very helpful to the Jews on this occasion. The edict of Antiochus, requiring the people to conform to the heathen worship, was entirely rescinded; and liberty was given them to live according to their own laws. But this law was not of long continuance. The nations by whom the Jews were surrounded, began to raise disturbances as soon as Lysias was gone. Judas was soon called to inflict punishment on Joppa, where two hundred Jews had been drowned. He burned their shipping, and then turning to Jamnia treated them in the same manner, and for a similar offence.

He was next called into Gilead, where Timotheus continued to raise disturbances. He had now collected a more numerous army, which was entirely overthrown by Judas, and thirty thousand of his men slain. Timotheus himself was in his flight taken prisoner; but on the promise that he would release many Jews whom he had in his power, he was permitted to go free. Judas, finding that the Jews beyond Jordan would be perpetually molested, treated them as Simon had the Galileans, and transplanted them into the land of Judea. As the garrison, however, in the fortress at Jerusalem was a perpetual thorn in the sides of the Jews, Judas collected a great force, and prepared all sorts of engines of war used in sieges, and pressed with all his might to take it; but the apostate Jews who were in the garrison, knowing that they should receive no mercy if the castle were taken, several of them made their escape, and going to the king at Antioch, urged their suit so earnestly, that he was persuaded to collect a great army of a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, and thirty-two elephants, at the head of which he marched himself, accompanied by Lysias his guardian. When they arrived in Judea, they laid siege to Bethsura, when Judas making an attack upon them in the night, slew about five thousand men, and returned without suffering any loss. The next day Judas encountered the whole Syrian army with his small force; but finding that he must be overwhelmed by the multitude, withdrew to Jerusalem.

In this battle, Eleazar, one of Judas' brothers, lost his life by a very daring act. Observing that one of the elephants was much larger than the rest, he imagined that the king was carried on the back of this large animal, and that by destroying him he should deliver his country, and obtain everlasting renown; he ran under the elephant and pierced his belly with his sword; but before he could make his escape, the wounded beast fell upon him, and crushed him to death.

Bethsura, now, after a brave defence by its garrison, fell into the hands of the Syrians. Antiochus marched immediately to Jerusalem, and laid siege to the sanctuary: and when they were reduced to great straits, deliverance was obtained in an unexpected manner. When Antiochus Epiphanes was near his end, he had called one of his generals named Philip, and in a formal manner appointed him the guardian of his young son; and committed to him his signet and his crown. But before Philip arrived at Antioch, Lysias, who had been left governor of Syria and guardian of the young king, had taken the supreme power into his own hands, and retained possession of the king's person, refusing to resign either the one or the other to Philip. But now, while Lysias and all the best troops were absent, he watched his opportunity for seizing Antioch, and endeavouring to make himself master of the Syrian empire. Lysias, hearing of this event, found it necessary to

return back, and thereupon, again made peace with the Jews.

Menelaus, the wicked high-priest of the Jews, had a great hand in instigating the king to engage in this war, and accompanied the Syrian army into Jerusalem, with the hope that he would be restored to his office; and also that the government of the whole country would be put into his hands. But when the issue of the war proved to be unfortunate, Lysias was so much exasperated against this wretch, that he accused him to the king as the author of all the mischief: on which he was condemned to death, and carried to Berhœa, a city of Syria, where he was cast headlong into a tower of ashes which was in that place. This punishment was inflicted for treason, sacrilege, and such other crimes as were considered more than commonly enormous; and was well adapted to the shocking crimes of which this man had been so long and signally guilty.

On the death of Menelaus, the office of high-priest should have descended to Onias, the son of that Onias whom Menelaus caused to be put to death at Antioch; but it was conferred on one Alcimus, or Jacimus, as he is sometimes called; a man not less wicked than Menelaus himself. Onias being much dissatisfied that he was thus deprived of his right, escaped from Antioch, where he had resided from the time of his father's death, and fled into Egypt, where he succeeded in insinuating himself into the favour of Ptolemy Philometor and his queen Cleopatra.

On the return of the king and Lysias with the Syrian army. Antioch was without difficulty recovered, and Philip, seeking safety in flight, soon after perished.

It has been seen that there were two brothers in Egypt, Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Physcon, both of whom had been crowned; and although for a while there was a compromise between them, their rival pretensions soon involved them in a fresh quarrel. In this contest Ptolemy Physcon had prevailed against his brother, and driven him out of the kingdom.

The Roman senate, hearing of this civil war in Egypt, sent orders to their ambassadors in Syria, Cneius Octavius, Spurius Lucretius, and Lucius Aurelius, to go to Egypt and settle the dispute between the two brothers. But while they were on their journey, Philometor had fled, and was on his way to Rome, on foot, and in a sordid habit. Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, late king of Syria, who was then a hostage at Rome, being informed of the fact, provided a royal equipage and robes for Philometor, and met him before he reached the city. He not only refused, however, to accept them, but would not even permit Demetrius to accompany him. He did this, that the senate, seeing his miserable condition, might be the more disposed to compassionate his cause, and grant him the assistance which he asked. As soon as the senate heard of his arrival, they sent for him, and immediately directed that he should be furnished with everything answerable to his royal dignity; and having heard his complaint, decreed that the kingdom should be restored to him, appointing Quintus and Canuleius, two of their own body, to see that their decree was executed. These ambassadors, on their arrival in Egypt, made a compromise between the two brothers, assigning Egypt and Cyprus to Philometor, and Lybia and Cyrene to Physcon.

The Roman ambassadors who were sent to Syria, finding that the Syrian fleet contained more ships, and the Syrian army more elephants, than were allowed by the treaty made with Antiochus the Great, proceeded to burn the supernumerary ships, and slay the supernumerary elephants. Many of the Syrians were exceedingly indignant at this arbitrary proceeding of the ambassadors, and one Leptines was so transported with rage, that he fell upon Cneius Octavius while he was

anointing himself at Laodicea and slew him in the gymnasium. This Octavius had recently been consul at Rome, and was the first of his family who had attained that high honour. From him was descended Octavius Cesar, (commonly called Augustus,) who was so long emperor of Rome. It was supposed that Lysias had secretly instigated the man to commit this violation of the law of nations; but he immediately dispatched ambassadors to Rome to disclaim this act, on the part of the government. The Senate heard them, but returned no answer, saying that they would reserve their judgment of the true authors of the murder, until future inquiry.

Demetrius, having made another unsuccessful attempt to obtain permission to return to his own country, by the advice of his friends, (among whom was Polybius the historian,) made his escape from Rome. As soon as he arrived at Tripoli, he gave out that he was sent by the Roman Senate to take possession of the kingdom. The cause of Eupator being now considered desperate, most of the people joined themselves to Demetrius; and Lysias was put to death by his own soldiers.

The first act of Demetrius, after his accession to the throne, was the punishment of two tyranical governors, whom Antiochus had set over the province of Babylonia. This act of prompt and salutary justice rendered him so exceedingly popular in that region, that they gave him the surname of Soter, which he ever afterwards retained. Alcimus, who, as was before said, received the appointment of high-priest from the king of Syria, when he came to Jerusalem to enter on the office, was rejected by the people, because he was one of those who had conformed to the religious customs of the Greeks, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Upon this he collected all the apostate Jews, then living at Antioch, and went with them in a body to Demetrius, to petition for relief against Judas and his brethren; accusing them of slaying many of the king's friends, and expelling others from the country.

Demetrius was so exasperated against Judas, in consequence of these misrepresentations, that he forthwith sent Bacchides, governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, and renewed the appointment of Alcimus to be high-priest, joining him also with Bacchides in authority over the country. On their first arrival, they attempted to circumvent Judas, by offering conditions of peace; but he was aware of their designs, and escaped the snare. Others, however, were deceived by them, and among the rest a company of Assideans, and some of the rulers; who relying on the pacific professions of Bacchides and Alcimus, committed themselves to them. No sooner however, had they got them in their power than they put them all to death.

Bacchides now returned home, leaving Alcimus part of his forces to secure him in the possession of the country, who had influence to draw over many deserters, and in no small degree to disturb the state of Israel. But no sooner was Bacchides gone, than Judas came forth with his forces, and took vengeance on those who had revolted from him, Alcimus being unable to stand before him. This wicked disturber of the public peace, now resorted again to the king, and renewed his complaints against Judas and his brethren; declaring that as long as Judas lived, the king's authority could never be established in that country. This being confirmed by other enemies of the Jews about the king's person, Demetrius, more incensed than ever, sent another army against them under the command of their old enemy, Nicanor, with peremptory orders, to cut off Judas, disperse his followers, and so reinstate Alcimus in the office of high-priest. Nicanor knowing the power of Judas, as having been already defeated by him, was afraid to encounter him in battle. He, therefore, endeavoured to enter into negotiation for peace, and accordingly a treaty was made

between them; after which Judas and Nicanor communed together in a friendly manner. But Alcimus not liking the treaty, as thinking that his own interest had not been sufficiently provided for, went a third time to the king, and so prepossessed him against the peace, that he refused to ratify it; and sent positive orders to Nicanor to renew the war, and not to cease until Judas was slain, or sent prisoner to Antioch. Nicanor was then, though reluctantly, obliged to engage in new hostilities with Judas.

When the agreement made between the two Ptolemies was laid before the Senate, they were not satisfied with the division which the ambassadors had made, thinking that too much had been allotted to Philometor, and too little to Physcon. They, therefore, determined that Cyprus should be taken from Philometor and given to his brother. This was brought about very much by the presence of Physcon at Rome, where, in person, he had the opportunity of urging his suit with the senators. Ambassadors were now sent back with him, to obtain the consent of Philometor to this new arrangement. While they went forward to Alexandria, to carry on the negotiation, Physcon waited on the borders of the kingdom for the result. Philometor treated the ambassadors with great respect, but contrived to spin out the negotiation for forty days, and then peremptorily refused to comply with the last arrangement; but professed his willingness to abide by the allotment first agreed on.

At the same time the affairs of Physcon became more involved in difficulty, on account of the conduct of the Cyrenians; who having heard an ill report of him, were unwilling to come under his government, and raised the standard of rebellion against him. This event prevented his return to Rome, but Merula, the Roman ambassador, who had been employed in the negotiation, spread before the Senate a full account of the whole transaction: on which it was decreed, that all friendship and alliance with Philometor should be broken off; and his ambassador was ordered to leave Rome forthwith.

SECTION XVI

the war renewed—suicide of razis—victory of judas and death of nicanor—bacchides is sent to succeed nicanor—death of judas—dreadful state of the jews—jonathan and simon, brothers of judas, make a successful stand—death of alcimus—the jews enjoy rest for two years—war between the two ptolemies renewed—demetrius abandons himself to dissipation—an impostor arises to claim his crown—both court the aid of jonathan—jonathan assumes the office of high-priest—alexander balas obtains the throne of syria

Nicanor, having received his orders to renew the war, came to Jerusalem with his army, and endeavoured, by craft, to get Judas into his power. For, in the first place, he invited him to a conference, with which Judas complied, relying on the peace which had been agreed upon; but soon finding that there was an ambush laid for him, he made his escape; after which all confidence was at an end, and the war again commenced. In the first action, Nicanor lost five thousand men, and was forced to retreat; and being greatly chagrined and mortified at his defeat, he vented his rage on Razis, a venerable senator of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who was held in the highest esteem by the people for his pious and benevolent acts. Nicanor therefore judged that it would be felt as a sore calamity to the Jews, if he were cut off; he therefore sent a body of men to take him, intending to put him to death. This man, however, was in a castle, where he defended himself for some time with great bravery; but finding that the place could not hold out any longer, he rashly put a

termination to his own life, by falling on his sword. This act is spoken of with approbation by the writer of the Maccabees, which is a clear proof that he was not an inspired man. No countenance is given to such acts of bravery any where in the Holy Scriptures. The idea that suicide in such cases, was not only lawful, but noble and heroic, was derived from intercourse with the Greeks and Romans. It is, moreover, related, that when he found that the wound did not produce immediate death, he thrust his hand into it, and pulled out his own bowels. For this act, he has been reckoned a martyr by the Jews; but St. Augustine, in his Epistle to Dulcilius, has given unanswerable reasons to prove that it was unjustifiable.

Nicanor then went up into the fortress, situated on the mountain of the temple, and demanded that Judas and his associates should be delivered up; threatening, in case of refusal, that he would pull down the altar and burn the temple, and in their place erect a temple to Bacchus. At the same time he uttered many blasphemous words against the temple, and against the God who was there worshipped. But he soon experienced the power and vengeance of Him whose name and worship he dared to blaspheme. For coming out with all his forces to encounter Judas, Nicanor was slain on the very first onset, on which the whole of his army took to flight; and all the country rising up against them, scarcely a man of them was able to effect his escape. When Judas and his men returned from the pursuit, to the field of battle, and found Nicanor among the slain, they cut off his head and his right hand, and hanged them up in the temple, as a memorial of the vengeance of Jehovah. This victory was gained on the 13th of the month Adar; and on account of the wonderful deliverance obtained on that day, it was resolved that, ever afterwards, it should be observed as an anniversary of thanksgiving: accordingly, it is so commemorated by the Jews until this day.

Judas was not only a valiant and skilful general, but a wise politician. Finding that there was likely to be no end to the Syrian invasions, and having heard of the power and magnanimity of the Romans, he sent ambassadors to Rome, to obtain their protection against the Syrians. These ambassadors, Jason and Eupolemus, were kindly received, and a decree was made that the Jews should be acknowledged as the friends and allies of the Romans. A letter was at the same time written to Demetrius, ordering him to desist from vexing them, and threatening him with war if he persisted. But before this favourable intelligence reached Judea, Judas was no longer in the land of the living.

Demetrius, upon hearing of the defeat and death of Nicanor, collected another army of chosen troops, and again sent Bacchides and Alcimus into Judea. When this army arrived, Judas had with him no more than three thousand men; and most of these were so terrified at the mighty force which they had to oppose, that they deserted his standard; so that he was left with only eight hundred men. But such was the undaunted spirit and unshaken confidence of the man, that with this handful of soldiers he dared to engage the host of the Syrians. In this instance his courage seems to have degenerated into rashness; or, at least, the event naturally suggests this idea; for in this unequal battle, Judas himself was slain. I do not believe, that in all the annals of the world, there is exhibited to our view a character more distinguished for bravery and extraordinary success; taking into view the small number of his soldiers, and the numerous and well appointed armies, headed by experienced generals, to which he was opposed. But he evidently was actuated by a spirit superior to mere human courage. His confidence was firmly fixed on God, in whose aid he relied in all difficulties, and in all times of danger.

After the death of Judas, the Syrians overran the land; the apostate Jews came forward in multitudes, and Alcimus was put in possession of the object of his ambition. Now a time of great distress was experienced by all the faithful Jews; not surpassed even by the persecutions in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Bacchides used great diligence in finding out, and punishing, all the Maccabæans, wherever they could be found; putting them to death with every species of indignity and cruelty. At length, Jonathan and Simon, the brothers of Judas, collected a small force of those who were disposed to resist the tyranny and cruelties of Bacchides and Alcimus, and retreated into the wilderness of Tekoa; where, being defended by the river Jordan on the one hand, and a morass on the other, they could not with advantage be attacked.

To secure their goods in these dangerous times, Jonathan and Simon sent their brother John with all their carriages and baggage, to their friends, the Nabatheans, to be kept for them until they should be in a condition to reclaim their property: but while he was on his journey, he was attacked by the Jambrians, a tribe of Arabians, who slew him, and seized all the goods which he had under his care. To revenge this unprovoked violence, Jonathan and Simon having learned that a great marriage was to be solemnized on a certain day, at Medaba, the chief town of the Jambrians, placed an ambush by the road along which the bridegroom and bride with their numerous attendants were to pass, in meeting each other, who killed most of the party, and took from them much rich spoil.

Bacchides, learning that Jonathan and his adherents were encamped on the bank of the Jordan, made an assault on them, on the Sabbath day, calculating upon no resistance; but Jonathan, agreeably to the decision made in the days of Mattathias his father, exhorted his brethren to resist the enemy, which they did so manfully, that they killed a thousand men: but not being able to withstand so great a multitude, they swam the Jordan and escaped.

The next year died Alcimus, the great troubler of Israel. As soon as he was established in the priesthood, he set himself to corrupt and change the Jewish religion, endeavouring to bring it to a nearer conformity with the religious institutions of the Greeks. When the temple was rebuilt after the return from captivity, there was erected around the sanctuary, a low wall, it is said, by order of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, beyond which, no uncircumcised person was permitted to pass. This wall, commonly called Hil, Alcimus directed to be removed, that the Gentiles might be put on a level with the Jews. But during the progress of this work, he was struck with the palsy, and suddenly expired.

After the death of Alcimus, Bacchides was recalled to Antioch, and for two years the land had rest. This was probably owing to the letter which Demetrius received from the Roman Senate; for he was solicitous not to provoke the displeasure of that formidable power; and, indeed, they had never recognized him as the lawful king of Syria. For, as has been related, he fled from Rome, when residing there as a hostage, and coming into Syria, usurped the throne, and slew Antiochus Eupator, the reigning king. He, therefore, took every opportunity of gratifying the Romans, and so earnestly and repeatedly urged his petition for reconciliation, with their ambassadors, that at length he accomplished his wish, and was acknowledged king of Syria, by the Roman Senate, and all the treaties made with the former kings of Syria were renewed with him. The death of Alcimus occurred in the year 160 B. C.

The Jews having now, as was before said, two years of uninterrupted quiet, Jonathan exerted himself to restore every thing to its proper state: but the Jews who were ill affected to him and his cause, sent again to Antioch, and procured an order for Bacchides to return with his army into Judea. A conspiracy was also formed to seize Jonathan and his brothers, and deliver them up; but he, receiving intelligence of it, seized about fifty of the conspirators and put them to death. He and Simon then retreated to the strong fortress called Bethbasi, where one of them remained to defend the place, while the other hung upon the skirts of the Syrian army, until Bacchides grew weary of the war, and turned his wrath against some of those who induced him to undertake the expedition. At which time Jonathan and Simon made to him offers of peace, which he gladly accepted, and solemnly swore that he would never any more carry on war with the Jews, with which he complied; for he never after this returned in a hostile manner to Judea.

In the year 166 B. C. another war broke out between the two Ptolemies. Physcon became so odious to his subjects, that some of them way-laid him, and in attempting to assassinate him, wounded him severely. He attributed it to his brother, who, he supposed, had hired these assassins to kill him; on which, he repaired again to Rome, where he showed his scars, and entered grievous complaints against his brother. The Romans, without much inquiry, directed an army to accompany him, and put him in possession of Cyprus, which Philometor refused to give up. Being met, however, on the island, by Philometor, he was vanquished and taken prisoner; but his mild and affectionate brother, instead of putting him to death, according to his deserts, restored him to his kingdom in Lybia and Cyrene, and added some other territories, to render the possession more valuable.

Demetrius now gave himself up entirely to drinking and dissipation. He relinquished all care of the public administration, and shut himself up in a castle, near Antioch, from which he seldom came out. But while he was thus indulging himself in indolence and pleasure, an unexpected enemy arose. Heraclides, a favourite of Antiochus Epiphanes, whom Demetrius had banished from Babylonia, on account of his maladministration, found an obscure young man, called Balas, who was willing to subserve his views, by acting the part of an impostor, and pretending that he was the son of Antiochus Epiphanes. This imposture could have had little effect, had not several of the crowned heads of the neighbouring countries favoured it; but Ptolemy, Attalus, and Ariarthes, having all received great provocation from Demetrius, were disposed to lend their countenance to any scheme which would have a tendency to annoy, or ruin him.

The three kings, above mentioned, having acknowledged the impostor, under the name of Alexander son of Antiochus, Heraclides took him to Rome; and to give colour to the deception, carried with him Laodice, the real daughter of Antiochus. There, by craft and false pretences, he got him acknowledged, and obtained a decree, not only permitting him to return to Syria, for the recovery of his kingdom, but granting him aid in accomplishing this object.

These events roused Demetrius from his inactivity; and as he had a high opinion of the powers and fidelity of Jonathan, and thought it would be important to secure his services, he appointed him his general, in Judea, with authority to raise forces. As soon as Jonathan received this letter, he caused it to be read in the hearing of the officers of the garrison, in Jerusalem; by which they were induced to give up the hostages which they had in the fortress.

Alexander, hearing what Demetrius had done to gain Jonathan, sent proposals to him also. He offered to make him high-priest, with the title of the king's friend. He also sent him a purple robe, such as princes only wear, and a crown of gold. On this, Demetrius sent new offers to Jonathan, promising him all that had been offered by Alexander, together with extraordinary privileges to the Jewish people. But the Jews, remembering the long and bitter enmity of Demetrius to their nation, and how much injury he had done them, could place no confidence in him, and therefore resolved to take sides with Alexander.

Jonathan now entered on the office of high-priest, which had been vacant for seven years; and from this time the office became settled in the family of the Asmoneans, and so continued until the days of Herod. From the Babylonish captivity, the office descended on the family of Jozadak, until the time of Onias the third. After his expulsion, it was occupied by Jason his brother, then by Menelaus an older brother; and then by Alcimus. Whether the Asmoneans were of the family of Jozadak, is nowhere said; but they were of the course of Joarib, which was the first class of the sons of Aaron.

Alexander, backed by the three kings already mentioned, and his title being acknowledged by the Romans, was in a condition to cope with Demetrius, on equal footing. Demetrius, on the other hand, was not inactive in preparing for a contest, in which his kingdom was at stake. The hostile armies met, and a decisive battle took place, in which, although the wing commanded by Demetrius himself gained some advantage, the left wing was put to flight, and Demetrius slain in the pursuit.

Alexander, having now obtained the throne of Syria, sent to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, requesting his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. To this Ptolemy consented, and carried her to Ptolemais, where the nuptials were celebrated. To this wedding Jonathan the high-priest of the Jews was invited, and was received with signal favour by both the kings; especially by Alexander, who had him clothed in purple, and enrolled among the chief of his friends. And although his enemies presented accusations against him, the king would listen to none of them, but sent him back with honour to Judea.

SECTION XVII

onias obtains the favour of the king and queen of egypt—builds there a temple similar to that at jerusalem—contentions between the jews and samaritans about the place of worship—hipparchus the astronomer—war between alexander the impostor and demetrius—the former forsaken by his father-in-law is overthrown and slain

Onias, who on being disappointed of the high-priest's office had fled into Egypt, became a favourite both with the king and queen; for he was a great soldier and a great politician. By degrees he was advanced to the highest station in the army, and also at court; and had influence to introduce another Jew of talents into the royal favour, whose name was Dositheus: these two, in fact, managed all the affairs of the kingdom. Onias made use of his influence to induce the king to permit him to erect, in Egypt, a temple similar to that at Jerusalem, with the grant that the office of high-priest should for ever be continued in his family. He did not find it difficult to persuade the king that this would be good policy, since it would induce many of the Jews to settle in Egypt. But the difficulty was, to reconcile the minds of the Jews to the idea of worshipping any where else but at

Jerusalem, which had been selected by God himself as the site of his temple. To satisfy their minds, he referred to the prophecy of Isaiah, (Isaiah 19:18-19) where it is said, "In that day, shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts: one shall be called the city of Destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord, in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof, to the Lord." The place selected for this temple was Heliopolis, only twenty-four miles from Memphis, where formerly a temple had stood, which was now in ruins. Onias made it exactly according to the pattern of that at Jerusalem, although not so high, nor so costly; and furnished it with all the apparatus for worship; an altar of burnt-offerings, an altar of incense, a table of shew-bread, and other utensils and vessels, such as were used in the temple at Jerusalem; except, that instead of a candlestick with seven lamps, one large lamp was suspended in the holy place. In this temple daily sacrifices were offered, and the whole ritual service of the law performed by priests, just as it was at Jerusalem; and continued so to be, until after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, when it was shut up, and soon afterwards utterly demolished. The building of this temple took place about the year 150 B. C.

There is pretty strong internal evidence that the prophecy of Isaiah was translated into Greek, by Jews who worshipped at this temple, and consequently, that the version was made after its erection; for the text cited above, is here rendered, not the city of destruction, as in the Hebrew, but (Πολις Ασεδεκ κληθησεται η μια πορις,) one of the cities shall be called the city of righteousness.

About this time there arose a great commotion in Alexandria between the Jews and Samaritans, respecting the place appointed by God for his worship. Ptolemy, in order to quell it, appointed a day to hear both parties, before himself and council. On this trial, the Samaritans failed entirely in their proof, and their leaders were condemned to death, for exciting so great a disturbance without cause.

As soon as Alexander found himself in quiet possession of a rich kingdom, he gave himself up to luxury and vice. He surrounded himself with lewd women, and relinquished all attention to the government. The principal management of affairs was left to one Ammonius, who acted in a very cruel manner towards the people. By such a course of life, Alexander soon became odious to his subjects, and Demetrius, the son of the late king, now grown to manhood, thought this a fit opportunity to recover his crown. Accordingly, he landed in Syria, with some mercenaries from Crete, and soon gathered a considerable army, which was greatly strengthened by the revolt of Apollonius, the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who declared in favour of Demetrius.

Jonathan, who had entered into a treaty with Alexander, adhered to his interest. Apollonius, therefore, turned his forces, in the first place, against him; and drawing together a large army at Jamnia, sent a challenge to Jonathan to meet him in battle. Jonathan marching out of Jerusalem with ten thousand men, took Joppa, in the presence of Apollonius and his army; and then joining battle with him, vanquished him in the open field, and pursued his broken forces to Azotus. Having taken the place, he set it on fire and burnt it down, together with the temple of Dagon, which was in it. In consequence of this victory, Alexander sent Jonathan a buckle of gold, such as was used only by the royal family, and gave him the city of Ekron.

About the year 147 B. C. flourished the celebrated philosopher Hipparchus of Nice, in Bithynia. He spent thirty-four years in studying the motions and relative positions of the heavenly bodies. The

Jews call him Abrachus, and his name is deservedly great among them; for their rabbis received from him that form of the year which has been in use among them ever since.

The war between Alexander and Demetrius, for the crown of Syria, still continued; and Ptolemy Philometor, being desirous of assisting Alexander his son-in-law, marched with a great army into Palestine; where he was met by Jonathan the high-priest of the Jews, whom he received with great honour and friendship, and took him with him to his camp at Ptolemais. But here he found that snares were laid for his life by Ammonius, the general of Alexander; and when he demanded of this prince that Ammonius should be delivered up to him, for punishment, he met with a refusal. Ptolemy was, on this account, so much displeased with Alexander, that he not only ceased to aid him, but even took away his daughter from him, and gave her to Demetrius, his competitor for the crown.

The people of Antioch had Ammonius in such hatred, that they rose up tumultuously against him, and slew him; and at the same time revolted from Alexander, and opened their gates to Ptolemy, whom they invited to be their king. This offer he declined, and recommended to them Demetrius, the legitimate heir of the kingdom, whom accordingly they received into Antioch, and placed on the throne of his ancestors.

Alexander, who was then in Cilicia, hearing of these events, hastened towards Antioch, where he laid waste the surrounding country; until, being met by the army of Demetrius, he was overthrown in a decisive battle, and made his escape with only five hundred horse, to Zabdiel, an Arabian prince, to whom he had privately sent his children for security. But here, in a few days, he was murdered by those in whom he most confided. Such was the end of this successful impostor, after a reign of five years.

The head of Alexander was brought by his murderers to Ptolemy, who was greatly delighted at the sight of it; but his joy was short-lived, for in a few days afterwards, he himself received a wound which caused his death, after a reign of thirty-five years.

SECTION XVIII

carthage and corinth destroyed in the same year—history of polybius—cleopatra marries physcon, who murders her son by her former husband—syria in a disturbed state—tyrannical conduct of demetrius—tryphon conspires against him and overcomes him—theos is made king, who grants great privileges to jonathan and simon

The year 147 B. C. was not only famous for the death of the kings of Egypt and Syria, within a few days of each other, but also for the destruction of the two famous cities, Carthage and Corinth. The former by Scipio Africanus, the latter by L. Mummius. In the burning of Corinth, all the brass was melted down, and mingled with other metals, which formed the famous Corinthian brass of the ancients. With this year ends the history of Polybius, which he wrote in forty books; extending from the beginning of the second Punic war to the end of the third. Of these, only five are now extant; which are written with so much spirit and correctness, that they serve to increase our regret for the loss of all the rest. Polybius was a native of Megapolis in Arcadia, the son of Lycortas, the famous supporter of the Achæan league. Being overcome by the Romans, a thousand of the principal youth were carried to Rome as hostages, of whom Polybius was one. It was here that he wrote his history.

Ptolemy Philometor being dead, his wife, Cleopatra—who was also his sister—wished to secure the succession to her son, then an infant; but Ptolemy Physcon, king of Cyrene, the brother of Philometor, now laid in his claim. On this occasion, Onias and Dositheus surrounded the queen with an army of Jews; but the Romans interposing, to prevent a civil war, proposed that Physcon should marry his brother's widow, and that after his death, the son of Cleopatra should succeed to the throne. This was agreed to; but on the very day of the nuptials, this unprincipled and unfeeling wretch murdered the son of his brother, in his mother's arms. The affairs of Syria were also in a disturbed state, under Demetrius, who was a young and inexperienced man, and of an unhappy disposition.

Jonathan, finding all quiet in Judea, resolved to reduce the fortress of Jerusalem. But as soon as he commenced the siege, complaints were made against him to Demetrius, who coming to Ptolemais, summoned Jonathan to appear before him. He accordingly came down, attended by some of the priests and chief people of Jerusalem, and bringing with him valuable presents for the king. And he so managed, as to obtain the favour of Demetrius, who not only confirmed him in his priesthood, but admitted him to a chief place among his friends, and bestowed on him several cities which had formerly belonged to the Samaritans.

Demetrius conducted himself in a very tyrannical manner at Antioch, so that the inhabitants became greatly disaffected towards him; and on one occasion rose in arms, and would have destroyed him, had it not been for a body of Jewish soldiers, whom Jonathan sent to his aid, in consideration of a promise, that the garrison should be removed from the fortress in Jerusalem, which he was unable to reduce, either by violence or stratagem. These Jewish soldiers fell upon the inhabitants of Antioch; and, it is said, slew no less than a hundred thousand of them. Thus retaliating the massacres of the Syrians in the streets of Jerusalem, in former days.

A man called Tryphon, observing how odious Demetrius had become to his subjects by his tyranny, formed the design of placing one of Alexander's sons on the throne; or rather, as is commonly supposed, of availing himself of his name and claims, to ascend the throne. With this view, he went to Zabdiel the guardian of Alexander's children, and prevailed on him to commit Antiochus the son of Alexander into his hands, and brought the boy immediately to Syria, and proclaimed him king. On this, the soldiers who had been disbanded by Demetrius, and many others, flocked to his standard. He was soon in a condition to march against Demetrius, whom he vanquished in battle, driving him into Seleucia, and taking all his elephants. The result of this victory was, that Antioch fell into his hands; and he was placed on the throne. The people gave him the name of Theos, or divine.

The new king, anxious to secure Jonathan in his interest, immediately sent an embassy to him, with a confirmation of all the grants which he had received from former sovereigns, with the privilege of wearing purple, and the golden buckle. Simon was at the same time made commander of all the king's forces from the border of Syria to Egypt, on condition that the two brothers should declare for him; which they were very ready to do, on account of the perfidious conduct of Demetrius, who had neither withdrawn the garrison from Jerusalem, nor released the country from tribute, according to his promise. The brothers, therefore, raised a large army in Palestine and Coelo-Syria, and Jonathan, leaving Simon in Judea, went to Galilee, where he was very near being taken prisoner, by being drawn into an ambush: but his men rallying, after being put to flight,

rescued their leader, and gained the victory. Bethsura, which had a strong garrison, was reduced, to the great comfort of the surrounding inhabitants, who had been long annoyed by the heathen soldiers.

SECTION XIX

Jonathan renews his league with the romans and lacedemonians—he and simon call a great council of the nation—tryphon treacherously murders jonathan—simon succeeds him—erects a famous monument for his brothers—demolishes the strong fortress at jerusalem—demetrius goes against the parthians, and falls into their hands—his life is spared by mithridates, who gives him his daughter in marriage—cleopatra marries antiochus sidetes, who invades syria, and overcomes and slays tryphon—simon sends an embassy to rome to obtain their confirmation of his authority—antiochus seeks the destruction of simon—bestly character of ptolemy physcon and attalus—simon treacherously murdered at jericho

Jonathan being now relieved from all disquietude at home, sent ambassadors to Rome to renew the treaty which had been concluded with Judas. They were kindly and honourably received, and obtained all that they wished. The ambassadors, agreeably to their orders, on their return renewed the former league with the Lacedemonians, and other allies of the Jews in Greece. The general of Demetrius, who had been defeated in Galilee by Jonathan, returned with a greater force, but was again obliged to fly; and the two brothers brought the whole country under subjection to Antiochus.

When the country was freed from invading foes, Jonathan and Simon convened the great council of the nation to consult about repairing and fortifying Jerusalem, and other strong places in Judea. At this meeting it was agreed that the walls of the city should be repaired, and a new wall erected between the town and the castle, so as to prevent all intercourse between the garrison and the inhabitants; by which means it was hoped, that for want of supplies, they would before long be under the necessity of surrendering.

Tryphon, who had brought back the young king, supposed that the time was now come to execute his nefarious scheme of putting him to death, and seizing the crown for himself. But foreseeing that Jonathan would never countenance such villany, he resolved to remove him out of the way, in the first place. He therefore marched into Judea with a strong force, but found Jonathan prepared to meet him at the head of forty thousand men. He therefore assumed the appearance of friendship, and informed Jonathan that the purpose of his coming was to put Ptolemais into his hands; and so deceived him by his specious pretexts, that he was induced to send away all his men except one thousand. With these he went to Ptolemais, to receive the city, which Tryphon had sworn to surrender to him; but no sooner was he within the walls, than he ordered the gates to be shut, and resolved to put Jonathan and his all men to the sword.

The Jews, greatly intimidated and distressed by the loss of their leader, appointed Simon to be their captain; who soon collected a formidable force, and marched to meet Tryphon, then on his way to besiege Jerusalem, and relieve the garrison. To Simon he pretended that his only reason for seizing Jonathan was because he owed the king a debt, which, if he would pay, his brother should be released. Simon saw through the deception, but lest any censure should light upon himself for not ransoming his brother, he raised the money and sent it to him. But this wicked wretch, instead of complying with his promise, put Jonathan to death. Thinking that the only

obstacle to the accomplishment of his ambitious purpose was now removed, he finished by making way with Antiochus.

As soon as Simon heard of his brother's death, he sent and brought away his bones from Bascama, and buried them at Modin, in the sepulchre of his father; over which he built a splendid monument of marble. Near this monument he erected seven pyramids, one for his father, another for his mother, four for his brothers, and the seventh for himself. The architecture of this monument is said to have been very excellent, and as it was erected on an eminence near the seacoast, it served as a light-house to mariners. Josephus says that it was entire in his time, and considered an admirable piece of architecture. Eusebius, who lived two hundred years later, informs us that it was still standing when he wrote.

Tryphon, now very anxious to conciliate the Romans, sent them as a present, a golden image of victory, valued at ten thousand pieces of gold; hoping to be recognized as king of Syria. The Roman Senate accepted the present; but ordered the name of Antiochus, whom Tryphon had murdered, to be inscribed on the image, as if it had been received from him. Simon, also, sent ambassadors to Rome, after his brother's death, who were received with distinguished honour; and had all their former grants and promises renewed. The same ambassadors renewed their leagues with the other allies of the Jews, who lay in their way home.

The Jews who had joined the young king, in opposition to Demetrius, now felt disposed to return to his aid against Tryphon the usurper, who had perfidiously inflicted on them so deep an injury. Simon, therefore, sent an embassy to Demetrius, with a crown of gold. This aid was so much needed by Demetrius and so seasonable, that he not only confirmed Simon in the priesthood, and renewed all former grants, with an amnesty for all acts done against his government; but actually conferred the sovereignty of the country on Simon, by which means the land was freed from a foreign yoke. The Jews, therefore, from this time, instead of dating their contracts by the years of the Syrian kings, dated them by the years of Simon and his successors. Simon now made a progress through the land, reducing such fortresses as were garrisoned by the heathens, and fortifying those places which served for the defence of the country. He made Bethsura a depository of the munitions of war; and Joppa, the seaport of Jerusalem, it being the nearest place on the Mediterranean. Gazara, which had revolted on the death of Jonathan, he reduced, driving off the heathen garrison, and building a house there for himself.

In the year 142 B. C. the strong fortress at Jerusalem which overlooked the temple, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering for the want of provisions and other necessaries, by which means the inhabitants were delivered from a great and long continued grievance. That they might never again be subjected to a similar annoyance, Simon not only demolished the fortress, but proposed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to take away the hill itself on which it had been built. This proposal met with universal acceptance; and for three years they were engaged in this herculean labour. Simon, also, renewed and strengthened the fortifications of the temple; and built for himself and his attendants, a house within the circuit of the outer wall, which probably occupied the site where the tower called Antonia was afterwards erected. John, the son of Simon, afterwards called Hyrcanus, being a valiant man, and skilled in military matters, his father made him general of all the forces of Judea, and sent him to live at Gazara, as being a frontier town; and also, that he might be near Joppa, to superintend the works, which he was erecting there to render it a

commodious place for commerce.

Demetrius found, this year, 141 B. C., a new enemy rising up against him in the east. The Parthians had extended their conquests from the Euphrates to the Indus; his friends in the eastern provinces therefore invited him to come over and secure his territory from the grasp of usurpers. In compliance with this invitation, Demetrius passed the Euphrates, leaving Tryphon in possession of a considerable part of Syria, behind him. At first, he defeated the Parthians in many battles; but at length being drawn into a snare, he was taken prisoner by Mithridates, king of Parthia, and his whole army cut to pieces. By this event, the Parthian power was established in the east, and became a formidable enemy to all, even to the Romans. Mithridates was the fourth in descent from Arsaces, who, by his revolt, laid the foundation of this empire. He extended his conquests far into India, and to the west as far as the Euphrates. Having got Demetrius into his power, he carried him about, through all the provinces which formerly belonged to him, to let the people see the man in whom they had confided for deliverance from his power. But he treated him in a manner suitable to his dignity; and after a while, gave him his own daughter in marriage, though he still retained him as a captive.

Simon having received from the king of Syria the sovereignty of the nation, all that was necessary to make him a lawful king was the free and explicit consent of the people; and this was given in a general congregation of the priests, elders, and people. Here it was agreed that the office of high-priest, and the supreme power of the nation, should be settled on Simon, and his family, for ever. A copy of this act they caused to be engraved on tablets of brass, and hung up in the sanctuary; and the original writing was laid up among the archives belonging to the treasury of the temple. From this time Simon assumed the state, style, and authority of a royal prince; and all public acts were in his name.

Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius, when she heard of his captivity, and of his marriage to the daughter of Mithridates, sent to his brother Antiochus Sidetes, and offered him her hand and the crown of Syria, if he would come and assist her against Tryphon: which offer he gladly accepted.

In the year 139 B. C., Antiochus Sidetes wrote a letter to Simon, king of Judea, complaining of the usurpation of Tryphon; and to gain him over to his interests, made him many promises. (1Ma_15:2-9) Having landed in Syria with a large body of mercenaries, he marched against Tryphon, whose soldiers having become much disaffected towards him, deserted in great numbers, and joined the standard of Antiochus. The forces of the latter, by the accessions which he received in Syria, soon amounted to more than a hundred thousand men. Tryphon, not being able to withstand such a force, fled from place to place, until he came to Apamia, where he was taken and put to death.

Simon thought it would add much to the stability of his government if he could get the Romans to confirm him in his authority. He therefore sent an embassy to Rome, which was received very favourably, as all former embassies from the Jews had been. In compliance with their request, letters were written to all the kings whose territories lay near Judea, informing them that the Jews were the allies and friends of the Romans, and forbidding all persons to molest or injure them. But the letters to the king of Syria, being addressed to Demetrius, who was then in captivity, they were of no service to the Jews, for as soon as Antiochus was settled on the throne, he sought an opportunity to quarrel with Simon. In pursuance of this design, he sent an ambassador to Simon,

to demand the restoration of Gazara, Joppa, and the fortress of Jerusalem—or five hundred talents in lieu of them—and five hundred more for injuries done in other parts of his dominions. Simon answered that he was willing to pay one hundred talents for Joppa and Gazara, but as for his other demands, the places belonged to the inheritance of his forefathers, which had for a while been unjustly taken from them, but which he was now resolved to keep.

Antiochus, on hearing this answer, immediately sent Cœndebeus into Judea with an army to enforce his demands. Simon, now too old to take the field himself, sent his two sons, John and Judas, with twenty thousand men, to meet the Syrian army. A battle was fought not far from Modin, in which the Syrians were defeated, and two thousand of them slain. They were pursued as far as Azotus, where John took their towers of defence and burned them, and then returned to Jerusalem in triumph with his brother.

Two greater brutes in human shape, perhaps, never appeared in the world at one time, than Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, and Attalus Philometor, king of Pergamus. Folly and madness were never more completely exemplified, than in the conduct of them both. The former either killed or banished all the friends of his late brother, and so oppressed and terrified the inhabitants of Alexandria, that most of them fled to other countries, leaving the city almost destitute. To supply their places, he invited strangers of all sorts to come and occupy the vacant habitations. By the dispersion of men of letters, and of artizans, the countries of Greece and Asia Minor were filled with learning of various kinds; for after the conquests of Alexander, literature flourished nowhere so much as in Egypt, under the fostering patronage of the Ptolemies.

About this time, the Romans sent ambassadors to visit all the countries in alliance with them; a prudent measure, frequently adopted. Of this embassy was Publius Scipio Africanus, Sp. Mummius, and L. Metellus, who made Egypt the first object of their attention. At Alexandria they were received with great honour, and every luxury was provided for them; but their simple republican manners formed a complete contrast with the luxurious effeminacy of the Egyptians. Scipio, then the greatest man at Rome, had in his train only one friend and five servants. In the midst of the most sumptuous entertainments provided expressly for them, they refused to take more than what was necessary for sustenance and refreshment.

Physcon the king was at this time one of the most disgusting sights that could be seen. He was naturally deformed, very short of stature, and very thick, with a belly so prominent, that from this circumstance his name was derived. But to render himself still more odious, he wore a dress entirely transparent, by which means the turpitude of his deformed body was rendered altogether visible.

In the year 135 B. C., Simon, making a progress through Judea, to settle every thing on a proper footing, came to Jericho with his two sons, Mattathias and Judas, where he was invited to an entertainment by Ptolemy, son of Abubus, who had married one of his daughters. But this perfidious wretch, aiming to make himself master of all Judea, and having, it is supposed, concerted the plan with Antiochus Sidetes, had concealed assassins in his house, who at a concerted signal rushed into the room, and slew the venerable old man and his two sons. It was also a part of the design to murder John, who was governor of Gazara; but he had received early intelligence of what was done at Jericho, so that when the persons commissioned to murder him arrived, he fell on them and cut them off. Then, hastening to Jerusalem, he secured the city and

the mountain of the temple against those sent by Ptolemy to take possession of them. John was now declared high-priest and prince of the Jews, who took measures immediately to provide for the security of the country. Ptolemy, the traitor, fled, but what became of him afterwards, is not recorded in history.

SECTION XX

antiochus invades judea—besieges hyrcanus in jerusalem—terms of peace—family of josephus—book of ecclesiasticus—antiochus sidetes marches an army into the east, where he is attacked and slain by phraates—hyrcanus seizes the opportunity of delivering his country from subjection to the syrian yoke—demetrius restored to his throne—invades egypt—is called back by a revolt at antioch—ptolemy raises up a youth who pretends to be the son of alexander balas—he raises an army and defeats demetrius, who is slain at tyre—alexander zebina reigns over syria—vast swarm of locusts—zebina defeated and put to death

Antiochus, the king, on hearing of the death of Simon and his sons, immediately marched with a powerful army into Judea, and overran the country, Hyrcanus being driven from the field by a superior force, shut himself up in Jerusalem, where he was besieged by the whole Syrian army, which Antiochus divided into seven camps, that the city might be entirely surrounded. But the besieged defended themselves valiantly, and often sallied out to burn the engines and works of the assailants. To render it more difficult for those within the walls to hold communication with the country, Antiochus caused two large and deep ditches to be drawn round the city. Hyrcanus, to lessen the pressure of famine, put without the gates, all such persons as were unable to be of any service within the walls; but by means of the ditches they could not make their escape, and he was obliged to take them in again.

When the time for celebrating the feast of tabernacles approached, Hyrcanus sent to Antiochus requesting that there might be a truce, during the festival; which he not only granted, but himself sent into the city beasts for sacrifice; which act of generosity gave Hyrcanus such an opinion of the character of the king, that he sent again to sue for terms of peace. A treaty was accordingly concluded. The conditions were, that Jerusalem should be dismantled; and that for Joppa and other towns held out of Judea, five hundred talents should be paid. Antiochus wished to have the fortress in Jerusalem rebuilt and garrisoned again; but with this Hyrcanus would not comply.

When this treaty was made, the Jews were reduced to the last extremity, and could not have held out much longer. Their enemies were urgent with Antiochus, not to make peace with them; but utterly to destroy the hated nation. And it is admitted, not only by Josephus, but Diodorus Siculus, that it was entirely owing to the generosity and clemency of this prince that the whole nation of the Jews was not extirpated.

Three hundred talents of the sum laid upon Hyrcanus was paid upon the spot; for the remainder time was given. Josephus tells a very improbable story, respecting the manner in which the money was obtained by Hyrcanus. He says he robbed the sepulchre of David, and took from thence three thousand talents. If there is any truth in this account, it must have been, that many rich men, in the times of trouble which the nation had experienced, hid their treasures in this sepulchre, to preserve them from the rapacity of their enemies; for certainly these treasures could not have remained there untouched, from the time of David, and especially during the captivity. About this time,

Mattathias, a priest of the course of Joarib, married a daughter of Jonathan, the late high-priest and prince of the Jews; of whom was born Mattathias Curtis; and from him another Mattathias, whose son, Josephus, was the father of a third Mattathias; of whom was born Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, in the first year of the emperor Caligula, which answers to the thirty-seventh of the Christian era.

In the year 133 B. C. died Attalos Philometor, the mad king of Pergamus, who left all his dominions, by his will, to the Romans, which they did not hesitate to take possession of without delay.

In the year 132 B. C., Jesus the son of Sirach, a Jew of Jerusalem, came into Egypt, and translated out of Hebrew into Greek, for the use of the Jews, who spoke that language, the book of Jesus his grandfather; the same which we now have in the Apocrypha, by the name of Ecclesiasticus.

In the year 131 B. C., Antiochus Sidetes marched a vast army over the Euphrates, under pretence of delivering his brother from captivity, but in reality to recover the eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, which had been wrested from its princes. The Parthian king, Phraates, was overthrown by him in many battles. On this expedition he was accompanied by John Hyrcanus, prince of the Jews, who returned home at the end of the year with much glory.

In the year 130 B. C., Antiochus having remained in the east with his army, was obliged to disperse them in places remote from each other, for the sake of subsistence. Phraates, having ascertained how the Syrians were scattered, formed a plan of a simultaneous attack upon their several encampments. Antiochus hastened to the help of those who lay nearest to him, but was overpowered and slain; and of that vast multitude, said to have been three hundred thousand, who crossed the Euphrates with him, not one returned to Syria to tell the doleful tidings. Of this army, however, more than one-half were butlers, bakers, cooks, confectioners, and others who only ministered to the luxury of the soldiers. As soon as Antiochus had crossed the Euphrates, the king of Parthia released Demetrius, his brother, and sent him back to claim the kingdom in Syria, hoping thus to withdraw him from the east: but upon obtaining this complete victory over the Syrian army, he sent messengers after him, to arrest him and bring him back. Demetrius, however, had made so much haste, that he had passed the Euphrates before they arrived. Phraates took up the body of Antiochus from among the slain, and enclosing it in a silver coffin, sent it into Syria, to be honourably buried among his friends: and finding among the captives a daughter of the king, he was so smitten with her beauty, that he took her for his wife.

After the death of Antiochus, Hyrcanus seized the favourable opportunity of rendering his country entirely independent of Syria. He also took possession of several strong places beyond his own borders, as Medaba, Samega, and several others. From this time, Judea was no more subject to the kings of Syria. Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple, which was built by Sanballat, on mount Gerizim. The Samaritans, however, still offered sacrifices on an altar there, as they have continued to do unto this day.

In the year 129 B. C., Hyrcanus, having conquered the Idumeans, gave them their choice, to leave the country, or to embrace the Jewish religion; they chose the latter, and became incorporated with the Jewish church and nation.

The Parthians, in the war with the Syrians, having called in the aid of the Scythians, these were so much pleased with the country, that as soon as the war was over, they began to seize upon it for themselves. And now Phraates was guilty of a second folly; for having taken, in the late victory, a multitude of Grecian mercenaries, he put arms into their hands and employed them against the Scythians. But these veteran soldiers, resenting the cruel treatment received from the Parthians, went generally over to the Scythians; and having with them ravaged the country, then returned home.

Hyrchanus next sent an embassy to Rome, to renew the treaty made with his father Simon, to which the Roman Senate readily consented. And as Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to the provisions of that treaty, and had exacted from them a heavy tribute for Gazara and Joppa, and by besieging Jerusalem, had forced them to a disadvantageous peace, it was now resolved, that those cities should be restored to them, free from all tribute: and that the Syrians should be accountable for all damages which they might have incurred, while in their possession. And, moreover, it was ordered, that the expenses of the Jewish ambassadors should be paid out of the public treasury.

A war having broken out in Egypt, between Cleopatra the wife of Philometor, and Physcon, the latter was, for a while, driven from Egypt, and took refuge in Cyprus; but collecting an army, he afterwards defeated the forces of Cleopatra; on which she sent to Demetrius, now restored to the throne of Syria, to come to her aid, promising him the possession of the kingdom.

Demetrius readily complied with this invitation, and invaded Egypt; but while he was absent, a revolt was raised against him at Antioch, on account of his tyrannical behaviour. Cleopatra, being now disappointed in her expectation of aid from Demetrius, whose affairs required his presence at home, took all her treasures, and putting them into a ship, sailed to Ptolemais, where her daughter Cleopatra resided. This daughter had first married Alexander Balas, the king of Syria, and afterwards Demetrius, in her father's life-time; but when Demetrius was taken prisoner, in Parthia, she was married to his brother Antiochus; and after his death returned again to the bed of Demetrius.

Ptolemy now returned to the throne of Egypt, and out of resentment for the hostile conduct of Demetrius, raised up a youth called Alexander Zebina, who he pretended was the son of Alexander Balas; and sent him into Syria, where his pretensions were countenanced by many, out of hatred to Demetrius. In a short time he was strong enough to meet Demetrius in the field. A battle was fought near Damascus, in which Demetrius being defeated, fled to Cleopatra, at Ptolemais. But she being not fully reconciled to him for marrying Rhodoguna, the Parthian, refused to admit him into the city; on which he was obliged to fly to Tyre, where he was slain. Zebina now reigned over the greater part of Syria; Cleopatra being permitted to hold in her possession a certain part. John Hyrcanus, who was a politic man, formed a close alliance with Zebina, by which means he enlarged and strengthened his territory.

In the year 125 B. C., a vast swarm of locusts came into Africa, and destroyed all the verdure, and fruits of the earth, wherever they came; and being driven into the sea by the wind, on the coasts of Lybia and Cyrene, and carried on shore by the tide, they occasioned such a plague in those regions, as carried off, according to report, above eight hundred thousand persons.

Seleucus, the son of Cleopatra queen of Syria, being now twenty years of age, aspired to the crown of Persia, with which his mother was so much displeased that she murdered him with her own hands; but finding that she needed some one to bear the royal title, whose claim would be respected, she sent to Athens for Antiochus, her other son, who was then pursuing his education, intending that his power should be merely nominal, as she was ambitious to rule the country herself. This young man, who was not more than twenty years of age, was declared, on his arrival, king of Syria. To distinguish him from others of the same name, he has been called Grypus; though Josephus calls him Philometor; and the name Epiphanes is on his coins.

Zebina, not discovering a disposition to hold Syria as a dependent of the crown of Egypt, according to the wishes of Physcon, who had set him up, he was not permitted by the latter to retain the quiet possession of his power; for he, entering into an agreement with Cleopatra, married his daughter Tryphœna to Grypus her son, and sent an army into Syria. Zebina being overthrown in battle, fled to Antioch, where, being detected in an attempt to rob the temple of Jupiter, he was expelled from the city; and wandering about for a while, was at length put to death.

SECTION XXI

remarkable season—cleopatra dies by a potion prepared for her son—disturbances in syria—john hyrcanus goes on prosperously—is opposed by the pharisees—origin of this sect—hyrcanus joins the sadducees—his death—the castle of baris

The year 121 B. C., (L. Opimius and I. Fab. Maximus being consuls at Rome,) was distinguished for the excellency of its seasons, and value of its productions. The wine made this year was so excellent, that some of it was kept for two hundred years, and is celebrated by the poets under the name of the Opimian wine. The next year, 120 B. C., Grypus having attained to manhood, began to exercise the power of a king, as he had before assumed the name; on which, Cleopatra was so much displeased, that she resolved to dispatch him, as she had done his brother; and, accordingly, prepared a poisonous potion, which he made her drink herself. Nor did it fail of its effect; for in a little time, this ambitious and wicked woman was a corpse, by the draught which she had prepared for her own son.

In the year 117 B. C., Ptolemy Physcon having reigned twenty-nine years after the death of his brother, died at Alexandria. His vile character has already been given. He was succeeded by his son Lathyrus, as he is commonly called in history; though the name assumed by himself, was Soter.

Grypus had been married to Cleopatra, but he was forced to put her away and take Tryphœna her sister; on which the former married Cycizenus, the half brother of Grypus. This young man was brought up in private, to preserve him from death, because an object of jealousy to Grypus; so that he was under the necessity of fighting for the crown as his only means of safety. But being defeated at Antioch, he fled, leaving Cleopatra in an asylum. Her sister, however, would not be satisfied until she was destroyed, although her husband entreated for her life. But her death, which took place in the temple whither she had fled, was not unavenged; for her husband, collecting another army, was more successful in a second battle, in which he obtained the victory, and got Tryphœna into his hands, whom he sacrificed to the ghost of his departed wife, putting her to a cruel death. Grypus and Cycizenus at length divided the Syrian empire between them, the former

residing at Antioch, the latter at Damascus.

John Hyrcanus, while these disturbances existed in Syria, was increasing in power and wealth. He found that he had little to fear from either of the kings of Syria, and therefore sent two of his sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, to besiege Samaria. The inhabitants sent for Antiochus Cyczenus to bring them assistance; who, coming with a great army, was vanquished by them, and with difficulty escaped alive.

The two brothers, after the gaining of this victory, returned to the siege of Samaria, and pressed it so hard, that the besieged sent a second time to Cyczenus; but he, not having force enough of his own, sent to Lathyrus, king of Egypt, and obtained from him six thousand auxiliaries, much to the dissatisfaction of Cleopatra, his mother; for she had then at court Chelcias and Ananias, the sons of Onias, prime favourites, and she did not wish to disoblige them. These auxiliaries being joined by the Syrians from Damascus, wasted the open country; but at length they were obliged to withdraw, and several Syrian towns fell into the hands of the Jews: and Samaria, after a siege of one year, was obliged to surrender. The city was utterly demolished by Hyrcanus, not out of hatred to the Samaritans, as some have said, for as we have before seen, they were all gone from the place, and its present inhabitants were of Macedonian descent. The siege of Samaria occurred 109 B. C.

John Hyrcanus now became master of all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, and being freed from all foreign enemies, enjoyed a high degree of prosperity; but in the latter part of his life, met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a sect which had recently sprung up, and were distinguished for their pride, authority, and ostentatious display of strictness in religion. They are now first heard of in history, but they must have been in existence some time before, as they were at this time so numerous and powerful as to be formidable even to a prince of so decisive a character as John Hyrcanus. They were probably a branch of the people called Chasidim, or Assideans, who rigidly followed the traditions of the fathers, and received their name, Pharisees, from a Hebrew word, which signifies, to separate; on account of their separating themselves from the rest of the people, on pretence of their not being holy enough for their society. As this sect was always held in veneration by the people, on account of their sanctity, Hyrcanus wished to gain them over to his own interests; for he himself had been brought up in their discipline, and professing himself to be of their number, had always patronized them to the utmost of his power. He, therefore, invited all the leaders of the sect to a feast, and then addressing them, said, that his purpose ever had been to serve God, and do justly towards man, according to the doctrine of the Pharisees; but knowing the frailty of men, he wished now to hear from them, whether they had observed any thing defective in his conduct, that he might amend it. All united in giving him unqualified praise, except an old austere man, by the name of Eleazar, who sternly said, "If you would approve yourself a just man, quit the high-priesthood, and content yourself with the civil government." Upon being asked why he gave this advice, he said, "Because, we have it from good authority, that your mother was a captive, in consequence of which you are incompetent to hold the office, by the law of Moses."

Hyrcanus was much displeased, but receiving it as the ill saying of an individual, he intended to take no further notice of it. But Jonathan, a Sadducee, and an intimate friend, insisted that Eleazar merely expressed the sentiment of the whole sect; and suggested that this could be put to the test

by convening them again, and requiring them to declare what punishment this man deserved, for reviling God's high-priest. Hyrcanus pursued this method, and to his astonishment, he heard from them that defamation was not a capital crime, and could only be punished by scourging, or some inferior penalty. Hyrcanus was so much offended with the whole sect, especially as his mother's fame was called in question, that from that day he forsook them, and went and joined the Sadducees. Hyrcanus did not long survive this change of sect; for the next year he died, having held the supreme power of Jerusalem twenty-nine years after the death of Simon. This event occurred in the year 107 B. C. He built the castle called Baris, on a steep rock, where afterwards all the members of the Asmonean family resided, and where the robes of the high-priest were laid up—the same spot on which the castle of Antonia was afterwards erected by Herod, cased with polished marble, so that it was impossible for any one to climb to the top.

SECTION XXII

hyrcanus succeeded by aristobulus, his son, who forces the itureans to embrace the jewish religion, as his father had the idumeans—slays his brother antigonus, but repents and dies in great agony—story of judas the essene—origin of this sect—alexander succeeds his brother, aristobulus—siege of ptolemais—defeat of alexander by lathyrus—civil war—anna the prophetess—death of alexander janneus

John Hyrcanus, at his death, left five sons; Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander, and Absalom: the name of one of them, the fourth in order, is nowhere mentioned. Aristobulus, being the oldest, succeeded his father, both as high-priest and civil ruler; and as soon as he found himself settled in authority, he put a diadem on his head, and assumed the title of king; being the first elevated to this honour after the Babylonish captivity. His mother by the will of Hyrcanus, claimed the sovereignty while she lived; but Aristobulus cast her into prison, and there caused her to be starved to death. His brother Antigonus, was, for a while, his favourite; but his other brothers he shut up in prison, and kept them there as long as he lived.

Cleopatra being much displeased with her son Lathyrus, found means to expel him from the throne, and from Egypt; and calling from Cyprus her youngest son, Alexander, placed him on the throne; forcing Lathyrus to take Cyprus in place of the kingdom of Egypt.

Aristobulus, when settled in his authority at home, made war on the Itureans, and compelled them to embrace the Jewish religion, as Hyrcanus had the Idumeans before. For he required them, either to forsake their country, and seek new habitations, or to become proselytes; and in this manner the Asmonean princes dealt with all the countries which they conquered. Iturea lay to the north-east of Judea, and was originally a part of Cœlo-Syria. It seems to have received its name from Hur, one of the sons of Ishmael; who, in our English version, is called Jetur; (Genesis 25:15.) Aristobulus, returning home sick from Iturea, left his brother Antigonus with the army, to finish the war which he had begun. This country is the same which is sometimes called Auranitis.

While Aristobulus lay sick, his queen, and some of his courtiers, were continually insinuating things to the disadvantage of Antigonus, his favourite brother. When Antigonus had completed the war, he returned in triumph to Jerusalem, and went immediately to the temple, to pay his devotions there, without putting off his armour or changing his dress. This was represented to Aristobulus, now sick in bed, as a very suspicious circumstance. On which he sent word to Antigonus to come

to him unarmed; and having stationed soldiers along a subterranean gallery, through which he must pass, he gave them orders, if Antigonus came unarmed, not to interrupt him, but if he came with his armour on, to fall upon him and put him to death. The queen having heard these orders, bribed the messenger to tell him, that the king wished him to come to him completely armed, that the queen might see his new suit of armour, of which she had heard so much. Accordingly, Antigonus presented himself armed, when the guards, agreeably to their orders, fell upon him and slew him. No sooner was this murder perpetrated, than Aristobulus repented it grievously. His murder of his own mother now also rushing upon his conscience, occasioned such perturbation, that it brought on a vomiting of blood. The servant in attendance, in carrying out the basin of blood, stumbled and spilled it on the very spot where Antigonus had been slain; which accident affected him so exceedingly, that he could no longer restrain his feelings, but bitterly accused himself of both these unnatural murders. So great was his agony, that, in conjunction with the disease, it soon brought him to a dreadful and premature death, after having reigned no more than one year.

Josephus relates a remarkable story respecting one Judas, an Essene, which, though it has not a little of the marvellous in its composition, it may not be improper briefly to state. This man, it seems, pretended to be a prophet, and had predicted that Antigonus should die at the tower of Straton, on that very day on which he returned to Jerusalem; but on seeing him come into the temple he was filled with indignation, thinking that his prophecy would fail of its accomplishment; for Straton's tower was two days journey from Jerusalem, on the seacoast. After the murder of Antigonus, however, he found upon inquiry, that the tower immediately over the spot where he was killed, was called by the same name. This, I believe, is the first mention of the sect of the Essenes, by Josephus. They were devoted to an ascetic life, and inhabited remote and desert places, far from the bustle of worldly commerce, and from the promiscuous intercourse of men. Their origin and history is buried, even in more obscurity than those of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and though largely treated of by Philo, and Josephus in other parts of his work, are not once mentioned in the New Testament. The most probable occasion of this sect was, the long and severe persecutions of the Jews, in consequence of which, many, for the sake of a good conscience, fled far into the recesses of the wilderness, where they devoted themselves to acts of piety and contemplation. Being shut out from the service of the temple and the synagogue, they formed a rule of life, according to which external ceremonies were little depended on; which mode of religious life they were so much delighted with, that they continued to pursue the same, after the necessity which first drove them into the wilderness had ceased to exist. Immediately upon the death of Aristobulus, his wife Salome released his three brothers, who had been kept in prison while he lived; and Alexander surnamed Janneus, the eldest, took the kingdom. His next brother, having made some attempt to supplant him, was put to death; but Absalom being contented to live a private life, enjoyed his favour and protection, and lived for forty years after this; and when Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, he was made a prisoner.

The wars between Grypus who reigned at Antioch, and Cyczenus who had Damascus as the seat of his kingdom, were incessant. This furnished an opportunity for many towns belonging to the Syrian empire to declare themselves independent. Others was seized upon by tyrants, who reigned without responsibility to either of the kings of Syria. This occurred in regard to Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, Gaza, Gadara, Straton's Tower, &c.

The year 106 B. C. was famous for the birth of two noble Romans, whose names fill a large space in the history of after time. The one was Cn. Pompey, the other Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Alexander, as soon as he found himself firmly established in authority, besieged Ptolemais. The inhabitants sent for aid to Lathyrus, now king of Cyprus; but on his arrival, they were as much afraid of him as of the Jews, and refused him admittance into their city; on which, he accepted the invitation of Zoilus the petty tyrant of Gaza, to join him in laying waste the country of Judea. Alexander now offered Lathyrus a large sum, if he would deliver up Zoilus; to which he consented; but before the treaty was executed, he found that Alexander was not acting with good faith, for he was at the same time treating with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, about driving him out of Palestine. He, therefore, broke off the negotiation, and having now determined to do him all the harm he could, left a part of his army to besiege Ptolemais, while with the rest, he invaded the territories of this prince, and took several towns in Galilee, with many captives. Alexander now marched to meet Lathyrus, with an army of fifty thousand men. A great battle was fought between them, near the banks of Jordan; in which Alexander was completely defeated, and lost thirty thousand of his men. Lathyrus pursued the victory to the uttermost; and after the battle, finding the villages full of women and children, he slaughtered them as sheep, and put their limbs into great cauldrons, as if preparing for a feast.

The affairs of Alexander, after this defeat, must have been in a ruined condition, had not Cleopatra come to his aid against her own son; for she feared if he conquered Phenicia and Judea, he would become strong enough to recover Egypt. She, therefore, sent an army into Phenicia, under Chilkias and Ananias, the two favourite Jews already mentioned.

Ananias expected to be received into Ptolemais, and being refused, laid siege to the town; while Chilkias pursued Lathyrus into Cœlo-Syria, where he lost his life. Lathyrus now marched his army directly into Egypt, expecting that in the absence of his mother and the best troops, there would be little resistance made. But he was repulsed and driven back to Phenicia, where he took up his winter quarters at Gaza.

Cleopatra continued the siege of Ptolemais until it fell into her hands, after which she would have seized on Alexandria, and brought the country under the Egyptian yoke, had it not been for the sage advice of Ananias; who alleged, that this would prejudice the world against her, and unite all the Jews in the world in opposition to her. Alexander was, therefore, permitted to return to Jerusalem in safety.

Ptolemy Lathyrus finding it in vain to continue any longer in Palestine, as his mother thwarted all his schemes, returned to Cyprus; but he carried on a negotiation with Cycizenus to aid in recovering Egypt, which becoming known to Cleopatra, she negotiated with his rival Grypus; and to engage him to declare war, she gave him her daughter Selene, whom she had taken away from Lathyrus. A new war therefore broke out between the two kings, which prevented the invasion of Egypt.

Ptolemy Alexander, observing how his mother acted towards his brothers, and that nothing could stand before her ambition, fled from Egypt. Nor was it without great solicitation, that he consented to return; for the Egyptians would not permit Cleopatra to exercise the sovereignty in her own name.

Alexander, 102 B. C., marched an army beyond Jordan, where he took Gadara and Amathus; but Theodorus, prince of Philadelphia, collecting a large force, fell suddenly on him, overthrew him with the slaughter of ten thousand men, and not only recovered his own treasure, but took all Alexander's baggage. The Pharisees, who had become enemies to all the family of Hyrcanus, were especially inimical to Alexander; and having great influence with the people, soon rendered them disaffected to his government.

In the year 97 B. C., Alexander, after a long and destructive siege, took Gaza, which was delivered up to him by treachery. At first he showed clemency to the vanquished; but when he found the place completely in his power, he let loose his soldiers to plunder and kill at their own pleasure. This was in resentment for the injury which he had sustained in consequence of the Gazeans calling in Lathyrus to their aid, against him. In this same year, 97 B. C., died Grypus king of Syria, by the treachery of one of his dependents, named Heracleon. He left five sons—Seleucus, Antiochus, Philip, Demetrius Euchurus, and Antiochus Dionysius.

Ptolemy Apion died 96 B. C., and willed his kingdom of Cyrene to the Romans, which they would not receive; but gave freedom to the people, which, however, only served to bring them under the power of petty tyrants, who seized on particular cities, and subjected them to a more cruel bondage than they had endured before. Cycizenus, on the death of Grypus, seized on Antioch, and endeavoured to make himself sovereign of the whole empire; but Seleucus took possession of many cities, and drew together great forces, to assert his right to his father's dominions.

In the year 95 B. C., Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, of whom mention is made, Luke 2:36, was married to her husband, and from this time, lived with him seven years; when, on his death, she became a widow, in which state she continued fourscore years. Alexander, while officiating this year, 95 B. C., at the feast of tabernacles, was openly insulted by the people, who publicly reproached him, calling him slave, and pelting him with citrons, which so enraged him, that he fell upon them with his soldiers, and slew six thousand men. The disaffection of the people and the insult publicly offered, were owing to the instigation of the Pharisees, who could lead the people as they would.

In the year 94 B. C., Alexander marched against the Arabians, and brought the inhabitants of Moab and Gilead under his dominions. Seleucus having collected a large force about him, Cycizenus went out to attack him, but was overthrown in battle, taken prisoner, and put to death. By this event, Seleucus became master of the whole Persian empire, but could not long retain it; for Antiochus Eusebes, the son of Cycizenus, having collected an army of his father's old soldiers, overthrew Seleucus, who being forced to flee to Mopsuesta, in Cilicia, was there burnt to death by the inhabitants. The brothers of Seleucus endeavoured to avenge his death on the inhabitants of Mopsuesta, but on their return were met by Eusebes; and Antiochus, in attempting to swim the Orontes, was drowned. Philip having escaped, and collected large forces, the contest for the Syrian empire now lay between him and Eusebes.

Eusebes, to strengthen himself in the kingdom, married Selene, the widow of Grypus, at which Lathyrus, whose wife she first was, being offended, sent for Demetrius the fourth son of Grypus, and made him king of Damascus. The contest between Philip and Eusebes prevented either of them from interposing. When the forces of these rivals came to an engagement, Eusebes was defeated, and was obliged to flee to Parthia.

Alexander, ever fond of military expeditions, marched into Gaulonitis, a district of country on the east of the lake Gennesareth, and there engaged in battle with Obedas an Arabian king; by whom he was led into an ambush and lost most of his men. The Jews, when he returned to Jerusalem, were in rebellion against him. A civil war now ensued which lasted for six years, by which the country was exceedingly wasted.

In the year 89 B. C., Cleopatra was plotting to put her son Alexander to death, but he being aware of her designs, prevented it by putting her to death. The Egyptians understanding that she fell by her own son, could not endure his presence among them; and banishing him from the country, recalled Lathyrus, and replaced him on the throne of Egypt. Alexander soon after perished near Cyprus, in a battle at sea. The civil war continued to rage between Alexander and the Jews; and the latter not having command of soldiers and treasures, sent for aid to Demetrius Eucherus; but when he approached, the very people who sent for him turned against him.

In the year 88 B. C., Anna, the prophetess, being left a widow, went into the temple, where she remained day and night, serving God with fasting and prayers, for eighty-four years. The civil war between Alexander and the Jews still raged; and although he was generally successful, he could bring them to no terms.

During the year 87 B. C., the civil war raged more violently than ever. In a decisive battle, Alexander inflicted a terrible blow upon his enemies, and shut up those who remained, in Bethsura. In the year 86 B. C. the place was taken. He then carried eight hundred of the principal persons to Jerusalem, where he caused them all to be crucified in one day, and their wives and children to be slain before their eyes, while hanging on the cross. To enjoy this scene the more, he had a feast prepared for himself, his wives, and his concubines, near the place of execution, whence the whole scene was visible. This shocking cruelty obtained for him the name of Thracian. Thus ended this rebellion, which cost the Jews about fifty thousand lives.

In the year 84 B. C., Pella and Dia, beyond Jordan, were taken by Alexander.

The Syrians, worn out with the continual wars between the princes of the east and Seleucus, resolved to call in some foreign prince, and place him over them. Accordingly, they sent for Tigranes, king of Armenia, who reigned over Syria eighteen years.

In the years 83 and 82 B. C., Alexander Janneus extended his conquests in the country beyond Jordan, taking Gaulana, Seleucia, and the strong fortress of Gamala. After this, he gave himself up to luxury and drunkenness.

In the year 81 B. C., Thebes, in Upper Egypt, was taken by Lathyrus, and so ruined and demolished that it never afterwards made any figure; soon after which he died, having reigned in all, thirty-six years. He was succeeded by Berenice, his only legitimate child. She was also called Cleopatra, as were all the queens of Egypt; just as all their kings were called Ptolemy.

In the year 80 B. C., Alexander, son of him who murdered his mother, came to Egypt to claim the kingdom, and a compromise was made, by giving him Cleopatra to wife. But in a few days he put her to death, and reigned alone, forty years.

In the year 79 B. C., Alexander Janneus, being affected with a quartan ague which had hung upon him for a long time, thought he would try the effect of exercise and exertion. He, therefore,

marched over Jordan, and besieged Razaba, a castle in the country of Gerasans, where, labouring too hard, he brought on a paroxysm of his disorder, of which he died in the camp.

PART VI("tw://[self]?tid=12&popup=0" \l "History_CONTENTS-")

FROM THE CONQUEST OF JUDEA BY THE ROMANS UNTIL THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

SECTION I

alexander bequeaths the kingdom of judea to alexandra his wife—counsels her to conciliate the pharisees—origin of the family of the herods—disputes about the priesthood—pompey comes into the east—his head quarters at damascus—the quarrel between aristobulus and hyrcanus brought before him—imprudent conduct of aristobulus—pompey is received into jerusalem—enters the sanctuary—places hyrcanus in the office of high-priest—orders the walls of jerusalem to be demolished—leaves a garrison in the city, and departs

Alexander left two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but bequeathed the government to his wife Alexandra, with the power to appoint whichever of his sons she pleased, to succeed her. She being with him on this expedition, when she found that he was near his end, was full of apprehensions of the dangers which surrounded her. But he called her to him, and advised her to conceal his death until the castle was taken; then to march back to Jerusalem, in triumph, and to call together the leaders of the sect of the Pharisees, whose enmity had embittered his life, and to lay his corpse before them, that they might cast it out with indignity, or treat it as they pleased; and to promise them, that she would undertake nothing without their advice. All this she exactly followed, and the effect was what he foresaw. Their hatred for Alexander was turned into veneration, and they became the warm friends of Alexandra. When she had settled herself firmly on the throne, she made her eldest son Hyrcanus, high-priest; and to gratify her new friends, the Pharisees, she repealed the edict of John Hyrcanus, in which he forbade their attention to traditions; restored them to all their former privileges, and released all that her husband had confined in prison. The Pharisees, however, insisted on having condign punishment inflicted on all who advised Alexander to crucify the eight hundred persons, already mentioned; and on such pretexts, they caused her to gratify their revenge on all their enemies, but often sorely against her will.

In the year 76 B. C. Bithynia became a Roman province, by the bequest of its king Nicomedes. Cyrene was also reduced to the form of a province, which had been before left to them, in the same manner. The progress of the Romans in the east became more and more rapid. The only king who gave them much serious opposition, was Mithridates, king of Pontus; but it does not lie in our way to give a history of these wars.

Alexandra having given herself up to the counsels and government of the Pharisees, all that were known or suspected of advising or aiding the late king in his measures hostile to their sect, were now persecuted with unrelenting severity. They, of the adverse party, seeing no end of this oppression, collected in a body, and with Aristobulus at their head, went to the queen to remonstrate against these proceedings. If they could not be protected at home, they begged that they might be permitted to leave the county, or might be distributed among the garrisons, where they might be exempt from these cruel persecutions, which they endured for no other reason but

because they were the devoted friends and servants of the late king. The queen pitied them from her heart, but knew not how to relieve them without bringing on herself the vengeance of the Pharisees, who had the people on their side. She however, agreed to place them in the garrisons of the fortresses.

This year, 72 B. C., was born Herod the Great, who was afterwards king of Judea. His father Antipas was a noble Idumean, and his mother of an illustrious family among the Arabians. The name Antipas was changed to Antipater, to make it more conformable to the usage of the Greeks. This man was governor of Idumea under Alexander Janneus. As he was an Idumean, he was, of course, brought up in the Jewish religion; for all the Idumeans had embraced Judaism.

In the year 70 B. C. died Alexandra, queen of the Jews, in the seventy-third year of her age. She was a woman of great wisdom and clemency; but unhappily was under the necessity of yielding to the Pharisees—a faction which she had no power to withstand. As soon as Antiochus saw that his mother was past recovery, having resolved to seize the kingdom, he privately withdrew and repaired to the castles, where his father's friends had sought an asylum; and by means of these, all the strong places in the country were soon in his hands.

The Pharisees were much disturbed at these proceedings, and as Alexandra was yet alive, though very low, they went to her to get her to say, that Hyrcanus should possess the supreme power; but she told them that she was not in a condition to decide on such weighty affairs; and having submitted every thing to their management, soon afterwards expired. By the advice and aid of the Pharisees, Hyrcanus raised an army against his brother; when a decisive battle was fought, in which most of the soldiers of Hyrcanus going over to Aristobulus, he was obliged to flee to Jerusalem; but soon, almost all his adherents declaring for his brother, he agreed to resign the priesthood and the supreme power, and to lead a private life. Thus ended the tyranny of the Pharisees, which had been exercised over the nation from the death of Alexander Janneus. Aristobulus now exercised the office of high-priest, and of supreme ruler of the nation, for six years and six months; Hyrcanus having been in authority only three months after the death of his mother.

In the year 66 B. C., Pompey the Great succeeded Lucullus in the chief command of the Roman army in Syria. Pompey drew into alliance with him, Phraates king of Parthia, and made an offer of peace to Mithridates; but he, calculating on the aid and friendship of the Parthian king, declined the overture. But when he understood that Pompey had been beforehand with him, then of his own accord, he proposed to come to terms. Pompey, however, would listen to nothing but the unconditional surrender of all deserters, and a cessation of all hostilities.

Pompey soon conquered both Tigranes and Mithridates, and marched against the Iberians, a northern people, who had never been subdued. After his return, all the Syrian empire on this side of the Euphrates was reduced into Roman provinces.

In the year 65 B. C. a disturbance arose in Judea, through the ambition of Antipater, the father of Herod. He having had his education in the court of Alexander Janneus, ingratiated himself into the favour of Hyrcanus; but when Aristobulus succeeded to the office and power of his brother, all this man's schemes of advancement were broken. He now saw no way of retrieving his fortune, but by attempting to raise a party in favour of the deposed Hyrcanus. His first step was to negotiate with

Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea, to aid him with troops; and he gathered together many of the scattered Jews, who were ready for an enterprise of this kind. But the greatest difficulty was to excite Hyrcanus himself, who was a man of a weak and quiet spirit. At length, however, he persuaded him, that his life was in danger in Judea, and induced him to flee to the court of Aretas, who in a little time came back with him, accompanied with fifty thousand men. In a battle with Aristobulus, the latter was completely defeated, and was forced to take refuge in the mountain of the temple, where they besieged him. This occurred during the passover, on which occasion, there not being lambs enough within the wall, Aristobulus bargained with the besiegers for a sufficient number, and let down the money outside the wall; on receiving it, however, they refused to send in the sacrifices.

Another impious act of which they were guilty, was their treatment of Onias, a holy man, held in great veneration, because it was believed, that by his intercessions rain had once been obtained in time of drought; him they brought out, and insisted that he should curse Aristobulus; supposing that his curses would be as efficacious as his blessing. Upon which he lifted up his hands, and said, "O Lord God, since they who are besieged, are thy priests, and these without are thy people, hear the prayers of neither against the other!" On which, they were so enraged, that they stoned him to death. Aristobulus now sent to Scaurus, the Roman general, who was at Damascus, and promised him four hundred talents for his aid; Gabinius, also, was offered three hundred talents. Both then wrote to Aretas to withdraw from Jerusalem; which he immediately did, and Aristobulus pursued after him, and coming on him unawares, slew a great part of his men, and among the rest, a brother of Antipater whose name was Cephaleon. About this time, 65 B. C., Pompey came to Damascus, and received rich presents from most of the kings of the neighbouring countries. The ambassadors of Egypt presented him with a crown of gold of the value of five thousand pieces of gold, and those from Judea with a golden vine of the value of four hundred talents, which was afterwards deposited in the temple of Jupiter at Rome, and was there inscribed as the gift of Alexander. It is said, that no fewer than twelve kings came in person to pay their respects to Pompey, while he resided at Damascus.

Pompey had a great ambition to extend his conquests as far as the Red Sea. He had, while in Africa and Spain, extended them to the western ocean on both sides of the Mediterranean; and had lately subdued the country to the borders of the Caspian Sea; and he felt a vain ambition to extend his victories as far as the Red Sea. Having returned to Damascus again, from Pontus, he was waited on by Antipater, from Hyrcanus, and by one Nicodemus, from Aristobulus, each of them soliciting his patronage. Pompey gave them both fair words, and ordered that the two brothers should appear before him. There is reason to believe, however, that Antipater managed his cause with much more address than the ambassador of Aristobulus.

In the year 64 B. C. died Mithridates, king of Pontus, and long the implacable enemy of the Romans. His last effort against them, was an attempt, in imitation of Hannibal, to march an army by land into Italy; and for this purpose he collected a great multitude of soldiers, and actually set out on his expedition. But his army finding out his purpose, and that a march of more than two thousand miles lay before them, over deserts, mountains, rivers, and through hostile countries, revolted against him, and placed his son Pharnaces in his stead. Upon this, Mithridates put an end to his life. At first he attempted it by poison, but not succeeding in this, he fell on his sword. Mithridates was one of the most extraordinary men who has appeared in any age. His natural

endowments were very great, and he added all manner of acquired improvements. No learning of these times escaped his attention. Although he had under him nations who spoke twenty-two different languages, he was able to address them each in their own tongues. He was also a man of great spirit; capable of forming and executing enterprises of the utmost magnitude and difficulty. And although he was fortunate in his wars with the Romans, yet if he had lived to execute his last project, he might have proved the most formidable enemy they ever had. Cicero, in speaking of him, says that he was the greatest king next to Alexander the Great. He was, however, ambitious, voluptuous, and often cruel, even to his own children, wives and concubines.

The cause of the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, was now brought before Pompey, at Damascus, where they both appeared in person, according to his order. Ptolemy being solicitous to prosecute his Arabian war, gave no decision at present; but Aristobulus clearly perceived from what he said, that his cause was not viewed in a favourable light. He, therefore, left the place unceremoniously, and returning into Judea, collected an army for his defence; by which proceeding, Pompey was much incensed. He marched, however, agreeably to his purpose, into Arabia; took Petrea, and made Aretas the king prisoner, but afterwards released him, on his agreeing to all his terms. On his way back, being informed of the hostile movements of Aristobulus, in Judea, he marched into that country. Aristobulus had shut himself up in a strong fortress, built by his father on the top of a mountain, and called after him, Alexandrion. Pompey surrounded the place, and obliged him to come down; when he agreed to give up all the fortified places in his hands. But no sooner was he free from restraint, than he fled to Jerusalem, whither he was followed by Pompey. When Pompey arrived at Jerusalem, this unsteady man again came out to meet him, and promised full submission, and a sum of money. Gabinius was sent to receive the money, but he found the gates shut against him, and no money to be had. Pompey, not enduring to be thus mocked, cast Aristobulus, whom he had retained with him, into chains, and marched with his whole army directly to Jerusalem. Within the city there were two factions; that of Hyrcanus, and that of Aristobulus. The former were disposed to open the gates to the Romans, and they were the more numerous; but the other party retired into the mountain of the temple; and having cut off all communication with the city, resolved there to maintain themselves.

Pompey having been received into the city by the other party, immediately laid siege to the mount of the temple. Most of the sacerdotal tribe were shut up within the temple; but the greatest part of the people were without. Battering engines were brought from Tyre, and an assault was made on the north side of the temple; and, although the siege was pressed vigorously by the Romans, the garrison held out for three months; and might have held out much longer, but for the unwillingness of the Jews to work on the Sabbath, which gave a great advantage to the assailants; for, on that day, the Romans would fill up the ditches drawn round the temple for defence, and bring forward their batteries, and place them to the best advantage. During the whole of the siege, the service of the temple was never interrupted; the priests being deterred neither by the death of their friends or rage of their enemies; and many of them, while officiating at the altar, had their own blood mingled with that of the sacrifices. This unshaken constancy was greatly admired by Pompey himself, and indeed is scarcely to be paralleled in history. After three months the temple was taken; that is, in the first year of the 179th Olympiad; and on the very day observed as a fast on account of the capture of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. All those who were considered the prime leaders of this revolt were put to death.

Pompey, not contented with viewing the exterior of this sacred edifice, impiously penetrated the interior, not only entering the sanctuary, but into the holy of holies, examined all the arcana of that sacred place; thus inflicting the deepest wound on the feelings of the Jews, who considered this intrusion as the highest possible profanation. But although he found two thousand talents laid up in the temple, he neither took them away, nor disturbed any thing else belonging to the furniture of the place. And, as if to make amends for what he had done, in entering the temple, he now ordered it to be cleansed, and the divine service to be resumed. But it has been observed, that although successful in all the previous acts of his public life, from this time no success ever attended him. Having concluded the war, he reinstated Hyrcanus in the office of high-priest, and made him also prince of the commonwealth. But the walls of Jerusalem he ordered to be demolished.

SECTION II

octavius cesar born—diodorus siculus—alexander, son of aristobulus, escapes from rome—seizes several strong places—gabinus, governor of syria—aristobulus himself escapes from rome, and raises new disturbances in judea—crassus visits jerusalem and robs the temple of its treasures—the judgment of god overtakes him—battle of pharsalia—cesar confirms hyrcanus in the priesthood—antipater accompanies cesar in all his expeditions—his four sons—herod arraigned for illegally putting certain thieves to death—meditates the destruction of hyrcanus and the whole sanhedrim—receives from sixtus the government of cœlo-syria

In this same eventful year, 61 B. C., was born Octavius Cesar, afterwards emperor under the name of Augustus, whose mother was the sister of Julius Cesar. About this same time, 60 B. C., flourished Diodorus Siculus, the famous Greek historian. He was born in Sicily, from which he derives his name. He was thirty years in collecting materials for his history, and in composing the work; and that he might obtain accurate information, he travelled over most of the countries of whose affairs his history treats. In this very year he went to Egypt. His Bibliotheca contained forty books, of which only fifteen are now extant. Those which remain are the five first—and from the tenth to the twentieth; all the rest are lost, except fragments preserved by other authors.

In the year 57 B. C., Alexander, the oldest son of Aristobulus, who had been carried to Rome by Pompey, having made his escape, came into Judea, and collected an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, and seized Alexandrion, Macherus, and several other strong castles, which he garrisoned and fortified; and from thence ravaged all the surrounding country. Hyrcanus being able to oppose no effectual resistance, sent for aid to Gabinus, governor of Syria, the general of the horse under him being the famous Mark Antony. Here also, the Roman army was joined by Antipater, and other adherents of Hyrcanus. They came to a battle with Alexander, who was completely overthrown; three thousand of his men being slain in battle, and as many taken prisoner. He himself took refuge in the castle called Alexandrion, where he was besieged by Gabinus. While this siege was carried on, the Roman general took a progress through the country, and found many of its once famous cities lying in ruins, which he ordered to be rebuilt or repaired. While Gabinus was thus occupied, he met with the mother of Alexander, a woman remarkable for her discretion. She being very solicitous about the safety of her husband, Aristobulus, who had been carried to Rome, endeavoured, by acts of kindness, to ingratiate herself into the favour of Gabinus, and succeeded to her wishes; for upon her representations, he

made peace with Alexander, who surrendered all his castles; which, by her advice, were dismantled or demolished. Gabinius now went up to Jerusalem, and having settled Hyrcanus in the priesthood, made great alterations in the form of the Jewish commonwealth; and from a monarchy transformed it to an aristocracy. Hitherto, the government had been managed by a prince, with the aid of the grand council or Sanhedrim, consisting of seventy-two persons, with an inferior court of twenty-three in every considerable town. Instead of this, Gabinius established five independent courts; the first, at Jerusalem; the second, at Jericho; the third, at Gadara; the fourth, at Amathus; and the fifth, at Sephoris. The tyranny of Alexander Janneus had made the Jews weary of monarchy; and they petitioned Pompey for its abolition, when the trial of the two brothers took place before him at Damascus; and he so far complied as to take away the diadem and the name, but left the supreme power in the hands of Hyrcanus. But now, they renewed their petition to Gabinius, and obtained the change which has been mentioned. But when Julius Cesar afterwards passed through the country, he restored things to their former condition. Towards the close of this year, Aristobulus, who had been led in triumph by Pompey with his son Antigonus, made his escape from Rome, and came into Judea, where he excited new troubles, for many resorted to his standard, and he seized several fortresses, which he began to fortify; but Gabinius came upon him and subdued him. He and his son Antigonus were sent back again to Rome. Gabinius, however, in compliance with a promise given to his wife, obtained the release of the latter.

In the year 55 B. C., Gabinius having been called into Egypt to settle the disturbances of that kingdom, Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, excited new troubles in Judea. Having collected a great army, he ravaged the whole country, killing all the Romans he could meet with, and driving the rest to take refuge in mount Gerizim, where he besieged them closely. Gabinius seeing what a force he had collected, thought it best to deal with him by fair means, and sent Antipater with conditions of peace, promising an oblivion of all that was past. But Alexander, confiding in his strength, encountered Gabinius in battle, but was overthrown, with the slaughter of ten thousand of his men. After this victory Gabinius went to Jerusalem and regulated every thing according to the wishes of Antipater; and then marched against the Nabatheans, whom he subdued.

In the year 54 B. C., Pompey and Crassus being consuls, the latter had Syria and the East assigned to him. Whereupon, coming into Syria, with an eager desire to amass as much wealth as possible, and hearing of the riches of the temple at Jerusalem, he marched directly thither. At that time, Eleazer a priest, was the treasurer of the temple. Among other precious things under his charge, was a bar of solid gold of immense value, which to conceal he enclosed in a wooden beam, and then placed the beam over the entrance, from the holy into the most holy place, and suspended the veil upon it. But when he found Crassus very intent on finding treasure, Eleazer told him that he would discover it to him if he would spare the temple and its other treasures. This Crassus swore he would religiously perform; but the perfidious and sacrilegious wretch, no sooner had the beam in possession, than he entered into the temple, and took away the two thousand talents which Pompey had left untouched, and robbed it of other valuable treasures, to the amount of ten thousand talents; by which he thought himself well provided for the Parthian war. But speedy vengeance pursued the rapacious and sacrilegious Crassus; for, being decoyed by the enemy into an unfavourable situation, the Parthians fell upon him, defeated his army, and slew his son and twenty thousand of his men. Crassus himself, while endeavouring to escape, fell under

the conduct of a treacherous guide, and being led by him to Sarinas, the general of the Parthians, was immediately put to death. The Parthians, supposing that there would be nothing to oppose their progress, crossed the Euphrates and invaded Syria; but here they were met by Cassius, defeated, and driven back to their own country.

In the year 49 B. C., Cesar released Aristobulus from prison, and sent him into Judea with two legions, to promote his interest there, and in the neighbouring countries of Phenicia, Syria, and Arabia. But some of Pompey's friends found means to give him poison on the way, of which he died. Alexander, his son, having been informed of the expected arrival of his father, began to raise forces to join him as soon as he came. Pompey sent orders to Scipio to put him to death; who, causing him to be apprehended and brought to Antioch, he was there subjected to a formal trial, in which, being condemned, his head was cut off.

In the year 48 B. C., the contest between Cesar and Pompey was brought to a decision, by the famous battle of Pharsalia in Thessaly; in which Pompey was defeated, and obliged to flee to Africa, where he was beheaded. Cesar, having conquered Egypt, passed into Syria, where Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus the late king of the Jews, came to him, and lamenting the death of his father and brother, begged Cesar to have compassion on him; and at the same time, made heavy complaints against Hyrcanus and Antipater. But Antipater being then with Cesar, defended himself and Hyrcanus so much to his satisfaction, that he rejected the accusations of Antigonus as of a turbulent and seditious person, and decreed, that Hyrcanus should possess not only the priesthood, but the sovereign power, as formerly, and his descendants after him.

Antipater accompanied Cesar in all his expeditions through Syria, and greatly conciliated his favour. When Cesar left this province, Antipater returned to Judea, and regulated every thing to the best advantage for Hyrcanus. He was a man of consummate policy, and by his skilful management had acquired an unbounded influence, not only in Judea, but in Phenicia, Syria, Arabia, &c.

Antipater had married a noble Arabian lady, whose name was Cyprus, by whom he had four sons now grown to mature age. The oldest was called Phaselus; the second, Herod; the third, Joseph; and the youngest, Pheroras. He had, also, one daughter by the same wife, named Salome, who, as well as her brother Herod, is famous in the history of the following years. Antipater, having acquired such influence in Judea and the neighbouring countries, and being so much in favour with Cesar, was now able to make provision for his own sons. Accordingly, he appointed Phaselus to be governor of Jerusalem, and Herod, his second son, to be governor of Galilee; he being then no more than twenty-five years of age. In the printed text of Josephus, it is only fifteen, but this, by a collation of other passages, appears to be a mistake of the copyists.

Herod being a young man of an active disposition, and wishing to signalize himself, made an attack on a horde of thieves who infested the country; and having taken their leader Hezekias, with several of his associates, he put them all to death. By this action he gained much applause, even from Sixtus, the governor of the province; but those who were enemies of Antipater, represented to Hyrcanus that Herod had put these men to death without legal trial, and obtained from him an order that Herod should be cited to appear before the Sanhedrim, to answer for his conduct. Herod appeared before this august tribunal clothed in purple, and surrounded by his guard, by which the judges were so intimidated, that not one of them had courage to open his mouth, except an old

councillor, by the name of Samias. He first accused Herod of audacity, in appearing as he did, before that court, and then turned his accusation against Hyrcanus the president, and the members of the council, for their want of firmness and dignity; predicting that this same Herod would be the means of executing wrath upon the Sanhedrim; which was actually fulfilled, for Herod put every member of the Sanhedrim, afterwards, to death, except this same Samias, and one other individual.

Hyrcanus did all he could to get Herod cleared, as he had a great partiality for the young man, whose father had been the chief cause of all his power and prosperity. But finding that he could not procure his acquittal, he got the cause adjourned until the next day; and, in the mean time, advised Herod to leave Jerusalem, which he did; and went to Damascus, where putting himself under the protection of Sixtus Cesar, he set the Sanhedrim at defiance, and refused again to appear before them.

While Herod was with Sixtus, he so ingratiated himself, that he obtained from him the government of Cœlo-Syria. He now raised an army and marched into Judea, to be revenged on the Sanhedrim for the indignity offered him, by bringing him to a trial before them. His purpose was to depose Hyrcanus from the priesthood, and cut off the whole Sanhedrim. But his father, and brother Phasael, interposed, and made him desist from his design.

SECTION III

the julian year—death of cesar—malichus, his influence and character—death of antipater—battle of philippi—antigonus, youngest son of aristobulus, claims the kingdom—the parthians again cross the euphrates—are hired to invade judea to make antigonus, son of aristobulus, king—his adherents are resisted by herod and phasael—civil war within the city of jerusalem—flight of herod and death of phasael

In the year 46 B. C., Cesar having returned from his African expedition, undertook, in virtue of his office as Pontifex maximus, to reform the calendar; which he happily effected, by establishing the Julian year, of three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours; or, in actual computation, three years of three hundred and sixty-five days, and the fourth, of three hundred and sixty-six: which is in use at this time.

In the following year, 45 B. C., Julius Cesar was murdered in the Senate house, by a band of conspirators whose leaders were Brutus and Cassius. Their professed object was to destroy the tyrant, and restore liberty to the Senate and people. Cesar was a man of very extraordinary abilities and learning. He was, also, naturally humane and generous; but he was ambitious, voluptuous, and irreligious. Upon the death of Cesar, the greatest confusion ensued, not only in Rome, but in all the provinces. Of these events, it would be here out of place to give a particular account, except so far as they may be intimately connected with Jewish history. Next to Antipater, Malichus had the chief authority in Judea. They had been long associated in the support of Hyrcanus; but this man now began to act a very wicked and ungrateful part toward his patron, Antipater. He was not contented to be the second man in the country, but was ambitious to be the first; especially, as he was a native Jew, and Antipater an Idumean. He, therefore, plotted against the life of Antipater; and when the latter obtaining some intelligence of his design was preparing to oppose him, he came to him with so fair a face, and so played the hypocrite, that he removed all

suspicion from his mind. Nay, when Murcus would have put Malichus to death, he was spared at the intercession of Antipater. But, notwithstanding all this, when he was dining one day with Hyrcanus, Malichus bribed the butler to administer poison to him, of which he died. Malichus now took possession of the power which had been exercised by Antipater; but the sons of the latter were not easily to be deceived, and not disposed to leave their father's death unavenged. Although Malichus denied having had any hand in the death of Antipater, they were convinced of the contrary. Herod was in favour of openly attacking the murderer at once; but Phasaël recommended a more crafty proceeding, as one less likely to bring on a civil war. In the meantime, the brothers acquainted Cassius, who then had possession of Syria, with the circumstances of Antipater's death, and obtained from him the liberty of putting the murderer to death; of which order, notice was given to the commanders of the garrison at Tyre. When Cassius had taken Laodicea, all the princes and chief lords of Syria and Palestine came to Tyre to congratulate him. Hyrcanus and Malichus, were on the road for the same purpose. Herod made a great supper, and on pretence of sending invitations to his guests, informed them of Cassius' orders, and the approach of Malichus; on which, men were sent to meet him, who, according to their orders, fell on Malichus and slew him. It was ascertained that he had formed a plot, after getting his son who was at Tyre into his possession, to return to Judea, and excite the Jews to revolt; and while the Romans were busy with their civil wars, to make himself king. But the plot of Herod against him was better laid, and took complete effect.

In the year 42 B. C. was fought the decisive battle at Philippi, in Macedonia, between Octavianus and Antony on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius, the slayers of Cesar, on the other. In this battle, the latter were overthrown, and their cause ruined; and both Brutus and Cassius were driven to such desperation, that they put an end to their own lives. After Cassius had left Syria, the friends of Malichus raised a great tumult, to revenge his death on the sons of Antipater; and had influence to gain over to their party Hyrcanus, and also Felix the commander of the Roman forces, at Jerusalem. At the same time, a brother of Malichus seized the castle of Massada, and several other strong places in Judea. Herod was at this time confined with sickness at Damascus, whither he had gone to see Fabius the Roman governor. The whole of this storm, therefore, fell on Phasaël, who withstood it successfully; for he drove Felix and all his party out of Jerusalem. When Herod returned, the brothers were soon able to put down the opposite faction, and recover the strong fortresses. About this time a marriage took place between Herod and Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, which seemed to reconcile all differences. But this peace was of a short duration. Antigonus, the youngest son of Aristobulus the late king, was made the instrument of the discontented faction at Jerusalem; for his father and older brother being dead, as related above, he claimed the kingdom as his right. In these pretensions, he was supported by Marion king of Tyre, Fabius governor of Damascus, and Ptolemy prince of Chalcis. The last of these had married the sister of Antigonus. Coming with a large army, Antigonus invaded Judea, but he had scarcely entered its borders, when Herod encountered and overthrew him, and returned to Jerusalem in great triumph.

In the year 41 B. C. the Parthians again crossed the Euphrates, instigated and led on by some of the adherents of Pompey, who had fled for refuge to the Parthian court. This army was under the conduct of Labianus and Pacorus, who ravaged a large part of Asia Minor, and took Sidon and Ptolemais. By these generals, a large party was sent to invade Judea, for the purpose of making

Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, king of that country. They were prevailed on to pursue this course, by Lysanias king of Chalcis, who promised them as a reward, one thousand talents, and five hundred Jewish women, if they would restore Antigonus to his father's kingdom. Antigonus himself, having collected an army of Jews from about Mount Carmel, marched with them into Judea; and having vanquished those who first came against him, pursued them to Jerusalem, where having got within the city, he had many skirmishes with the brothers, Phasael and Herod; in which, the followers of Antigonus being worsted, retreated within the mount of the temple, and the other party into the palace; which two places became the head-quarters of the two parties. Their conflicts continued until the time of the feast of Pentecost, when, numbers of people coming to the city from all parts, some took part with one, and some with the other, until the confusion was so great, that the leaders began to think of some means of putting an end to these troubles. Proposals of peace being made to Antigonus, he received them hypocritically, offering to refer the dispute to the Parthian general, whom Pacorus, according to agreement, had sent after him. By this stratagem, the Parthian who was the cup-bearer of Pacorus, was introduced into the city, and lodged with five hundred of his horse within the walls. Here he played his game so artfully, that he persuaded Phasael to take Hyrcanus with him, and go to Barzapharnes, who then governed Syria, under Pacorus. Herod had no confidence in the Parthians, and remonstrated against the course which his brother had determined to pursue.

When Phasael and Hyrcanus came to Galilee, they were met by a guard from Barzapharnes, and the cup-bearer returned to Jerusalem. They were, at first, treated with a show of kindness, until it was supposed that the Parthian general had time to reach Jerusalem and seize Herod, when they were both put in chains. But Herod, aware of the danger, fled from Jerusalem with his family and treasures, and seized the fortress of Massada, on the west side of the Dead Sea, where he left his family, and went to Arabia to solicit assistance of Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas. But Malchus, though under great obligations to Herod for services performed, ungratefully refused to receive or entertain him. He then directed his course towards Egypt, but before he arrived he heard of the death of his brother Phasael. For the Parthians, when they found Herod gone, made Antigonus king, and delivered up Phasael and Hyrcanus into his hands. The former, knowing that his death was determined, beat out his own brains against the wall. The life of Hyrcanus was spared, but to render him incapable of officiating as high-priest, they cut off both his ears; and then delivered him to the Parthians, who carried him with them into the east.

SECTION IV

herod obtains the favour of antony, and is solemnly appointed king of judea—is successful against his enemies—antony sends him two legions to reduce jerusalem, still in the possession of antigonus—herod goes to samosata to meet antony—returns to judea with fresh forces—his brother joseph slain in an expedition against jericho—herod lays siege to jerusalem—mariamne the wife of herod—jerusalem taken and given up to pillage—abject spirit of antigonus

Herod, upon hearing of the death of his brother, did not return, but went on to Pelusium, and thence to Alexandria. Not meeting with any promise of effectual succour in Egypt, he sailed by way of Rhodes to Rome, where he made his complaint and application to Antony, beseeching him, by the friendship which subsisted between him and his father, to pity the distracted and miserable condition of Judea. Antony, in consideration of the promise of a very large sum of money, entered

with much zeal into the interests of Herod, and obtained for him much more than he expected. For he thought of nothing more than succeeding to the power which his father exercised under Hyrcanus. But Antony, first securing the influence of Octavianus in favour of the measure, had Herod introduced to the senate, with a full exhibition of the merits of his family towards the Roman people; on which he was recognized as king of Judea by the unanimous vote of the Senate, and Antigonus was declared to be an enemy to the Roman people. Herod was then conducted to the capitol, with Antony on one side, and Octavianus on the other, where he was solemnly inaugurated into his new office, according to the Roman usage: and this act of the Senate was laid up among the archives of the State.

Herod, having met with such success at Rome, hastened back to Judea. This whole transaction, by which he was solemnly advanced to the royal dignity, occupied no more than seven days. Indeed, his whole journey, both by sea and land, from the time he left Judea until his return to Ptolemais, occupied only three months. His first object after his return was to relieve his wife, mother, sister, and other friends, who were shut up in the castle of Massada, and had been besieged by Antigonus ever since his departure. They were now reduced to such distress for want of water, that his brother Joseph, who had been left in command of the place, had formed the purpose of breaking through the besiegers, and escaping to Malchus, king of Arabia, who, he heard, was now much better disposed to lend them aid than when applied to by Herod. But the night before he had designed to carry his purpose into effect, there fell such plentiful showers of rain as filled all their cisterns; so that they were able to hold out until Herod came to their relief.

Herod had no small difficulty in collecting a sufficient force to meet the besieging army. He received all into his service whom he could enlist, whether Jews or foreigners; but his principal reliance was on Ventidius and Silo, Roman generals, who were then in Palestine with a considerable force. These, however, did him as much harm as good; for having come into Judea to obtain money, they were ready to help him who would pay them best. And, indeed, they received money from both parties, and so managed as to give little real assistance to either. Herod, however, finally succeeded in reducing Galilee, and after a siege of considerable length took Joppa. Having delivered his family and friends from their unpleasant situation in Massada, he placed them in Samaria, and sent his brother Joseph into Idumea, to secure that region in his interests. At this time, Galilee was infested with multitudes of robbers, to suppress whom Herod now adopted measures. With some difficulty he succeeded in vanquishing a large body of them who advanced to meet his army, and compelled them to cross the Jordan. It was some time, however, before the country was entirely freed from these banditti.

Jerusalem, and many other places, still continued in the possession of Antigonus; and the war between him and Herod still went on. To aid the latter, Antony sent Macheras with two legions and one thousand horse, who, approaching the walls of Jerusalem for the purpose of conferring with Antigonus, was beaten back by the archers and slingers on the rampart; by which he was so enraged, that on his retreat from the place he killed all the Jews he could lay hands on. Among them, many of Herod's friends were cut off; on account of which, he went directly to make complaint to Antony, but Macheras overtook him and so explained and apologized, that Herod agreed to think no more of the affair. Still, however, he prosecuted his journey, to visit Antony, who was then at Samosata, who received him with distinguished honour. While there Herod rendered signal service in carrying on the siege of the place. While Herod was absent, his brother Joseph,

neglecting the orders which he had received, made an expedition against Jericho with such forces as he was able to bring together. Being circumvented by the enemy, he was there slain, and most of his men cut to pieces. In consequence of this disaster, many in Idumea and Galilee revolted from Herod. The intelligence of these unfortunate events reached Herod at Daphne, on his way home, and hastened his return. Coming to mount Libanus, he there raised eight hundred men, and with these and one Roman cohort, marched to Ptolemais, and proceeded to subdue those who had revolted in Galilee. Then marching to Jerusalem to avenge his brother's death, he was encountered by the friends of Antigonus and defeated, being himself wounded in the conflict. But soon rallying, he collected more soldiers, and fought another battle with the flower of the troops of Antigonus, under the command of Pappus, and entirely overthrew them, Pappus himself being among the slain. Had it not been winter, he might have marched directly to Jerusalem, and taken that place.

Early the next year, 38 B. C., Herod took the field with a great army, and proceeded directly to Jerusalem, where he commenced a regular siege of the place. While the necessary works were carrying on, he went to Samaria, and consummated his marriage with Mariamne, who had been betrothed to him four years before. Mariamne was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus, by Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus the second. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and great virtue, and accomplished above any woman of her time. Herod, in selecting her for a wife, was influenced not merely by affection, but by political motives; for he thought, that by an alliance with the Asmonean family, so highly venerated by the Jews, he would gain a great influence over that people. After the return of Herod from Samaria, the siege was prosecuted with uncommon vigour; for the governor of Syria came to his assistance with a large number of soldiers. The whole force engaged in the siege was no less than eleven legions and six thousand horse, besides the Syrian auxiliaries. But the city held out until the next year, which was 37 B. C., when many breaches being made in the walls, the assailants entered, and exasperated by the length of the siege, and the hardships which they had endured, filled the whole town with blood and devastation. Herod did all he could to prevent this, but without effect, as Sosius, the governor of Syria, encouraged the soldiers in these lawless and cruel proceedings. At length, when remonstrance failed to put a stop to the utter devastation of the city, Herod redeemed it from further spoliation, by the promise of a large sum of money.

Antigonus seeing that all was lost, surrendered himself to Sosius, and in a very abject manner cast himself at his feet; which, instead of moving the compassion of this stern Roman, only provoked his contempt; for he ever afterwards called him Antigona. It was, at first, designed to preserve him to grace the triumph of Antony; but Herod wishing to remove all danger of new disturbances from the claims of this last male of the Asmonean family, never ceased to petition Antony to have him put to death; which was accordingly done, by the hands of the common executioner, without the least regard to his royal dignity.

SECTION V

herod established on the throne of judea—destroys the whole sanhedrim except two—hillel and shammai—their distinguished descendants—simon—gamaliel—judah hakkadosh—scholars of hillel—chaldees paraphrases—their high estimation among the jews—jonathan ben uzziel and onkelos

Herod was now in full possession of the kingdom of Judea. But as he had made his way to the throne through much blood, so now, when seated on it, he found it necessary to resort to the sword, to subdue the obstinacy of the leaders of the opposite faction, who would not consent to submit to his authority. Of this number was the whole Sanhedrim, the grand council of the nation, every one of whom he put to death, as was before mentioned, except Sameas and Pollio. During the whole siege, these two had declared in favour of receiving Herod as their king, alleging, that God in displeasure for their sins, had decreed to give them up to the government of this man, as a punishment. The others, on the contrary, went about the city encouraging the people, and assuring them that God would certainly protect his temple. On which account, Herod put them all to death; remembering also, the affront which they had put upon him, when they cited him before them as a criminal. It is remarkable, however, that he spared Sameas, who had so boldly denounced him on that occasion; and who was of all the most vehement in requiring its condemnation.

These two men are very famous among the Mishnical doctors of the Jews, and in the rabbinical writings are known by the names of Hillel and Shammai. Of the Sanhedrim, which was now formed, Hillel was made the president, and Shammai the vice-president. The former is called Pollio by Josephus, and was one of the most eminent men for learning and authority, who ever appeared in the Jewish nation. The Jewish writers, with one consent, concede to him the highest place, in the knowledge of the Jewish law and traditions. For forty years he was president of the Sanhedrim, and acquired higher reputation for the justice and wisdom of his decisions, than any one who had occupied that high seat of judgment since the days of Simon the Just. The posterity of this eminent doctor were also famous for a long time. It is said, that his descendants occupied the same high office for ten generations. Simeon, his son, is supposed to have been the very person, who in the temple took our blessed Saviour in his arms. (Luke 2:25-35.) The third in descent was Gamaliel, who presided in the Sanhedrim when Peter and the other apostles were called before that council; (Acts 5:34;) and was the distinguished master at whose feet the apostle Paul was brought up. (Acts 22:3.) In the Jewish writings he is called Gamaliel the Old, because he lived to extreme old age; his death occurring only eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Next to Gamaliel, was Simon, the second of that name. He perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. The fifth in descent was Gamaliel the second. To him succeeded Simon the third. Then we come to Judah Hakkadosh, or Judah the Holy, who composed the Mishna, the great body of Jewish Traditionary Law, which forms the text of the Talmud.

After Judah Hakkadosh, we have, in regular succession, the names of Gamaliel the third, Hillel, and Gemaricus, all lineal descendants of the Hillel of whom we are now speaking, Hillel was born and brought up in Babylonia, where he resided until the fortieth year of his life. After that, he came to Jerusalem and betook himself to the study of the law, in which he became so eminent, that when eighty years of age, he was made president of the Sanhedrim, in which office he continued for forty years more, so that he lived to the great age of one hundred and twenty years. When Hillel was first made president of the Sanhedrim, one Menahem was the vice-president; a leading man among the Essenes. Josephus says, that he had the spirit of prophecy, of which he gives the following instance. One day, meeting with Herod among his school-fellows, he saluted him by saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" and laying his hand on his shoulder, foretold, that one day he should be advanced to that dignity. When Herod was actually made king, remembering this

prediction, he sent for Menahem and asked him whether he should reign as many as ten years. He is said to have answered, "Yea ten, twenty, thirty years," and then paused, because Herod did not wish to inquire further.

Shammai, who is called Sameas by Josephus, was next to Hillel in reputation as a Mishnical doctor. He had been the disciple of Hillel; but when appointed vice-president of the Sanhedrim he did not always concur with his old master in opinion. These differences of opinion between the masters, caused great disputes and dissensions among their scholars, which sometimes arose to such a height, as to cause the shedding of blood. But, finally, the school of Hillel prevailed over that of Shammai. The tempers of these eminent men were diverse; for while Hillel was of a mild and peaceable disposition, Shammai was of an irascible and fiery spirit.

Hillel, it is said, bred up no less than one thousand scholars in the knowledge of the law, of whom eighty were of the first distinction. Of these the Jewish writers say, that thirty were so eminent, as to be worthy that the divine glory should rest on them, as it did on Moses; and thirty, for whom the sun might have stood still, as it did for Joshua.

The most eminent of them all, however, was Jonathan Ben Uzziel, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on the Prophets, who was contemporary with Onkelos, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on the Law. Whether Onkelos was also a scholar of Hillel, we are nowhere informed. These paraphrases are translations of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, from the Hebrew into the language of the Chaldeans, which was used through Assyria, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. They were called Targums, which means versions or translations. As was before mentioned, they had their origin after the return of the Jews from captivity, when the common people, and especially the youth, not being familiar with the Hebrew, needed a version in the vulgar tongue, which was Chaldee. These versions were at first made by learned men, verbally; but in process of time, when Synagogues multiplied, it became expedient to have them in writing, that they might be used when there were none sufficiently learned to render the Hebrew, with correctness, into the vernacular dialect.

There are now extant a number of paraphrases, by different hands, and composed in different ages. The principal are, The Paraphrase of Onkelos on the Law—that of Jonathan on the Prophets—another on the Law ascribed also to Jonathan—The Jerusalem Targum on the Law—The Targum on the Megilloth; that is, on the five small books, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and the Lamentations. There are, moreover, two other paraphrases on the book of Esther. Next, we have the Targum of one-eyed Joseph on the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, and an anonymous Targum on the books of Chronicles. These versions are of little value, except the paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, which are very important; especially in teaching us how the ancient Jews interpreted the Scriptures which relate to the Messiah. That the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan were composed a short time before the birth of Christ, is the opinion of both Jewish and Christian writers, and is strongly confirmed by internal evidence. The only reason for supposing that they were of a later date, is the fact, that they seem to have been entirely unknown to Origen, Jerome, and the other Christian fathers. But if these men did not understand the Chaldee language, they, of course, could not be acquainted with these paraphrases; and they might have been composed and principally used in Babylonia; which supposition well corresponds with the language in which they were written; which is rather the eastern than the western

Aramean. These versions are held in the highest esteem by the Jews, and, therefore, furnish the best weapons for carrying on the controversy with them. They are, undoubtedly, the oldest Jewish writings extant, with the exception of the Scriptures; unless we reckon the Greek version of the Old Testament as a Jewish composition.

SECTION VI

ananelus made high-priest—hyrcanus a captive among the parthians—his desire to return—alexandra, the mother of aristobulus and mariamne his sister, dissatisfied that he was passed over when ananelus was exalted to be high-priest—herod causes aristobulus to be drowned—cleopatra visits jerusalem—her manners so licentious that even herod is disgusted—great earthquake in judea—antony entirely defeated at actium—herod now seeks to conciliate the favour of the conqueror, and succeeds—mariamne manifests the utmost hatred of herod—herod became furious with jealousy, and put both his uncle joseph and mariamne to death—immediately he was seized with intolerable remorse, and fell sick—becomes more severe—is instigated to acts of cruelty by alexandra and others—conspiracy against his life

Herod, on the death of Antigonus, made Ananelus high-priest in his stead. He was an obscure priest, residing in Babylonia; but being well known to Herod, and of the pontifical family, he sent for him, and put him into this office. He seems to have chosen an obscure man, that there might be no collision between the sacerdotal and royal dignity. Hyrcanus, who had been carried away by the Parthians, still lived, and was treated with much kindness by Phraates the king, who, when he understood his former dignity, released him from his chains, and allowed him full liberty to live among the Jews who resided in that country. For, at this time, there were more Jews in Babylonia and other countries beyond the Euphrates, than in Judea. Hyrcanus, on hearing that Herod was made king of the Jews, expressed a strong desire to return; for as he had, in one instance saved Herod's life, he expected to be treated kindly. Herod was no less solicitous for the return of Hyrcanus, but for a very different reason. He wished to get the old man into his power, that he might make away with the only survivor of the Asmonean family, who could have any claim to the throne of Judea. He therefore sent a special embassy to Seleucia, with the double object of getting Phraates to give him up, and of persuading Hyrcanus to come. In both, they were successful, and the aged man, contrary to the advice of his best friends, returned again to the land of his nativity.

In making Ananelus high-priest, Herod had passed by Aristobulus, the son of Alexander, to whom by right of succession it belonged. This produced no small disturbance in his own family; for Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus, and Mariamne his sister, could not bear to see an obscure stranger exalted to that office, while the rightful heir was overlooked. These two ladies not only teased Herod continually respecting the matter, but began to intrigue with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, for the advancement of Aristobulus. The king, therefore, to make peace at home, resolved to gratify them; so, deposing Ananelus, he put Aristobulus in his room, a youth only seventeen years old. But Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus, being an ambitious woman, knew that her son had just as much right to the kingdom as he had to the priesthood, and therefore, began to intrigue further with Cleopatra, for this end also, Herod confined her to the palace, and set spies over her; but she contrived a method of escape, and set off with her son to the court of Cleopatra. Herod, after letting her proceed some distance, sent and brought her back. Aristobulus now became more and more the object of the king's jealousy. At one of the great festivals, when he officiated at the

altar in his pontifical robes, the people were struck with admiration at the beauty and gracefulness of the young high-priest, and their mouths were full of his praises, Herod could endure this no longer; he determined, therefore, to put an end to one who gave him so much uneasiness. He invited him, with this view, to a feast at Jericho, where the young man was enticed to go out to bathe, with a number of others. They, by the direction of Herod, held him under the water until he was drowned; and then it was pretended that his death was accidental. Herod himself put on mourning, and affected the deepest grief for the loss of the high-priest. But his hypocrisy was not concealed, and he was abhorred by the people on account of this cruel act. As to Alexandra, she was inconsolable, and probably would not have survived her beloved son, had it not been for the desire of revenge which now took full possession of her breast.

This murder of Aristobulus took place in the year 3 B. C. Alexandra acquainted Cleopatra, by letter, with the circumstances of her son's death, and fully engaged her interest in opposition to Herod. Antony being then very much under the influence of Cleopatra, was easily induced to cite Herod to answer for his conduct in relation to this matter. But when Antony came into Syria, Herod so mollified him that he dropped the proceedings altogether. While Herod was gone to wait on Antony, he left Mariamne in the care of his uncle Joseph, who had married his sister Salome. Fearing lest, if anything should happen to him, Mariamne would fall into the power of Antony, who already seemed to be in love with her from the report of her beauty, he ordered Joseph, as soon as he was dead, immediately to kill his wife also. This secret Joseph inadvertently let out, one day, when expatiating on the greatness of Herod's love to her. On Herod's return, she reproached him with it, which threw him into a transport of passion; being persuaded, that nothing but an illicit connexion with Joseph, (of which she had been accused by Salome,) could have extorted such a secret, he drew his dagger, and was about to plunge it in her bosom, but his love for her unnerved his arm; then, immediately turning his vengeance on Joseph and Alexandra, he put the first to death without allowing him even a hearing, and throwing the latter into chains, shut her up in prison.

Cleopatra, having accompanied her paramour Antony as far as the Euphrates, visited Jerusalem on her way home, where she was splendidly entertained by Herod; but her manners were so voluptuous, and even licentious, that Herod himself was exceedingly disgusted with her. While she was in his power, he once thought of making away with her, both on account of her former machinations against his kingdom, and out of fear of what she might still continue to effect against him; but he was restrained by a fear of Antony's displeasure.

Herod, being of a suspicious and jealous temper, resolved to select some strong place, and fortify it to the utmost. The tower of Massada seemed to suit his purpose best. He therefore furnished it with arms for ten thousand men, that in all events, he might have a place of refuge for himself. As Antony had promised several kingdoms to Cleopatra, among which was that of Malchus, in Arabia, Herod was directed to make war with him. In this expedition he at first gained a complete victory; but in a second engagement, he was defeated, and scarcely escaped with the fragments of his army.

In the year 31 B. C. there occurred an earthquake, which shook the whole land of Judea in a more terrible manner than was ever experienced before. No less than thirty thousand persons were killed by this convulsion of nature. Herod was so much affected with this heavy disaster, that he

sent to solicit peace with the Arabians; but they, having heard that the ruin from the earthquake was much greater than it really was, put the ambassadors to death, and invaded Judea, expecting to meet with no resistance. But Herod's soldiers happened to be abroad when the earthquake occurred, so that they remained uninjured, and now collecting them together, he fell upon the Arabian army, and having killed five thousand men, besieged the rest in their camp. Being there distressed for want of water, they ventured another battle, in which he slew seven thousand of them, and took the rest prisoners. The Arabians, in their turn, were now forced to sue for peace, and were glad to accept whatever terms Herod chose to prescribe.

Antony, having been entirely defeated by Octavianus in the battle at Actium, fled to Egypt, where he again gave himself up to the charms of Cleopatra. Herod perceiving that he could depend no longer on his protection, began to think of conciliating Octavianus. But still indulging his suspicions of the aged Hyrcanus, who was now resident at Jerusalem, he pretended to discover a plot to render assistance to Malchus king of Arabia, on which he immediately had the old man put to death, though now in his eightieth year.

Herod, intent on securing the favour of Octavianus, if possible, shut up Mariamne and Alexandra her mother, in the fortress of Alexandrion, under a strong guard, and having placed his own mother and sister in the strong fortress of Massada, set off to pay his respects to Octavianus. Herod, in his address to Cesar, spoke with such ingenuousness, in acknowledging every thing which he had done in opposition to him from friendship to Antony, that he won him over to his interests: Cesar, therefore, confirmed him in his kingdom, and caused him to resume the diadem which he had laid down at his feet. Herod, upon this, made him very rich presents, which he had brought with him for the purpose. Herod was now in high spirits on account of his unexpected success, in obtaining all he wished from Octavianus, and returned to Judea to communicate his good fortune to his family and friends. But his beloved wife, Mariamne, received him with the utmost aversion, and gave herself up to sighs and groans. The reason of this strange behaviour was, that she had by some means learned that he had again given orders, that in case of his death she should immediately be put to death. He had also given orders that Alexandra her mother should also be put to death; and that his brother Pheroras should inherit the kingdom.

Octavianus having conquered Antony at Actium, pursued him into Egypt. On his way, he stopped at Ptolemais, where Herod met him, and gave him and his army a most splendid entertainment; and besides which, he presented Octavianus with eight hundred talents, by which munificent hospitality he greatly conciliated the friendship of the conqueror. Antony having been defeated on all sides, and all his attempts to obtain peace proving ineffectual, in despair of ever retrieving his affairs, he fell upon his sword, and left the world to his rival. As soon as Herod heard of his death, he hastened to Egypt to pay his respects to the conqueror, by whom he was received with signal kindness and honour. He accompanied him on his return as far as Antioch, and received from him several grants, by which his power and kingdom were enlarged considerably.

On the return of Herod from this visit to Egypt, he found his domestic troubles increased rather than diminished. Mariamne still expressed for him the utmost abhorrence, and upbraided him on account of her father, grandfather, brother, and uncle, all of whom he had put to death; but she concealed the true reason of her excessive displeasure, out of regard to the life of Sohemus, from whom she had received the secret. At length, Herod losing all patience, endeavoured to extort

from her attendants, by the rack, the secret cause of her grief and anger, but he could only learn that it was owing to something communicated by Sohemus, that she was so exceedingly disturbed. The king then suspected that his secret orders, in case of his own death, had been betrayed; and, as before, in the case of Joseph, that this never would have been done unless there had existed an illicit intercourse between them. He was now so fired with jealousy, that he immediately put this man to death, and then forming a court of his own dependents for the trial of Mariamne, she was, as a matter of course, condemned to die. It was not, at first, intended to carry the sentence into execution, but merely to shut her up in one of the strong fortresses. The jealous tyrant, however, fearing some insurrection of the people, was induced to precipitate the execution. Mariamne suffered death with unshaken fortitude. She was a truly magnanimous and virtuous woman—of greater beauty and accomplishments than any other of the age in which she lived. As she was led to the execution, her mother Alexandra, reproached her in the most cruel manner, for treating an excellent husband with so much unkindness; but all this was hypocrisy, to save her own life, for she had reason to fear that her time would come next. No sooner was Mariamne executed, than the grief and remorse of Herod became intolerable. He found no rest day nor night. Wherever he went, the image of Mariamne haunted him and filled him with the bitterest reflections, until, at length, he became subject to fits of temporary madness. Immediately after the execution of the queen, a grievous pestilence occurred, which carried off great numbers, both of the common people and the nobility. This, all considered as a just judgment of God upon the wicked king. Herod's disorder of mind was increased by this calamity; so that not knowing what to do with himself, he gave up all care of the public business, and retired to Samaria, where he fell into a grievous sickness. When, with much difficulty he was recovered, and had returned to Jerusalem, he was observed to be more disposed to acts of cruelty than before, which continued to be his disposition to the end of life. While Herod lay sick at Samaria, Alexandra, expecting that he would die, began to intrigue for the supreme power. To accomplish her purpose, she negotiated with the governors of the strong fortresses in Jerusalem. The pretext which she used in these negotiations was, that she wished to secure the government for Herod's children by Mariamne. These officers, however, immediately communicated the whole matter to Herod, who sent orders to have her put to death. This happened in the year 28 B. C.

In the year 26 B. C., Salome, Herod's sister, whose first husband was Joseph, and who afterwards married Costobarus, an Idumean, having become weary of her husband, gave him a bill of divorcement, contrary to the usage of the Jews, which permits a husband to divorce his wife, but not a wife her husband. But by the authority of Herod the transaction was sanctioned.

Salome having now returned to her brother, to render herself agreeable to him, pretended to reveal a conspiracy which had been entered into by her late husband with several other distinguished men of Idumea, against his government. To gain the more credit to her story, she informed him where Costobarus had concealed the sons of Babas, whom Herod had directed him to put to death. On sending to the place, this account was verified, which induced Herod to believe all that she said respecting the conspiracy. He, therefore, gave orders that all who were accused by Salome should be put to death. Having now cut off all the branches of the Asmonean family, and all that favoured their pretensions, Herod thought that he might, without danger, make some innovations on the usages of the Jews. He, therefore, erected at Jerusalem a theatre and an amphitheatre; and in honour of Octavianus, (now the Emperor Augustus,) celebrated games and

exhibited shows. These things, however, were exceedingly offensive to the Jews. This led ten persons among them to form a conspiracy against the king, who by his spies obtained some knowledge of the plot; so that when these men came to the theatre, with daggers under their garments, they were seized, and put to death with the most exquisite torments. Nor did he cease to make inquiry until he had discovered every one of the conspirators, and put them all to death.

SECTION VII

divine judgments on the land—herod erects a stately palace on mount zion—erects another palace on a beautiful hill seven miles from jerusalem—aristobulus and alexander, sons of mariamne, sent to rome for education—herod repairs to mitylene, to visit agrippa—augustus himself visits the east—is waited on by herod—all accusations against him turn out to his benefit—undertakes to rebuild the temple—the work commenced just forty-six years before christ's first passover

Herod was moved by his dread of conspiracies, to fortify other strong places besides those in Jerusalem, and selected Samaria as a suitable site for one. The place was now reduced very low, having been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, as before related. It was, indeed, no more than a small village when Herod undertook its restoration. When it was rebuilt, he named it Sebaste, in honour of Augustus; Sebastos in Greek, being of the same import as Augustus in Latin. In this place he colonized six thousand people, collected from all parts; among whom he divided the circumjacent country, which being fertile, the town soon became rich and populous.

In the thirteenth year of the reign of Herod, great calamities fell on the people of Judea; for a long drought produced a famine, and the famine a pestilence, which swept away multitudes of people. On this occasion, Herod did a very popular and praiseworthy action. He melted down the plate of his palace—his treasury being empty—and turning it into money, sent to Egypt for corn; by which means so great an abundance was brought into Judea, that they were able to send a supply to the Syrians, who were suffering under the same calamity. The flocks of Judea having also been cut off by the drought, and there being a want of wool for the clothing of the inhabitants, Herod took care to have a sufficient supply imported from foreign countries. By these acts of generosity and sound policy, he greatly won upon the affections of the people; and among the surrounding nations acquired the reputation of a wise and generous prince. But he could not long refrain from acts of cruelty, which sullied the fame of all his good deeds.

Herod being now at peace with all the surrounding nations, and the country being in a prosperous state, he resolved to build a stately palace on mount Zion, the highest part of Jerusalem. This edifice he made of such size and magnificence, that in appearance it rivalled the temple. Within, he prepared two apartments very large and sumptuous; one of which he named Cesareum, in honour of Augustus, and the other Agrippaum, in honour of Cesar's chief favourite.

There was at this time in Jerusalem a young lady of exceeding great beauty, named Mariamne, the daughter of one Simon, a common priest. Her, Herod married, and to exalt her family, made her father high-priest, turning out Jesus the son of Phebes, to make room for him.

Herod having a passion for building, or finding in this occupation some relief to the troubles of his mind, engaged in another expensive work. He erected a palace about seven miles from Jerusalem, where he had obtained a victory over the Parthians, when his affairs were in a very

critical situation. This palace was built on the summit of a beautiful hill, which had a regular declivity on all sides, and commanded an extensive and delightful prospect of the surrounding country. This palace he called Herodium, after his own name. When this work was finished, Herod went on to build a city at the place on the seacoast, called Straton's Tower. This city he named Cesarea, after the emperor; and on it he spent much time and expense. Before this time, the harbour was very dangerous, so that no ship could ride safely in it when the wind was from the south-west; but by running a mole, or breakwater, in a circular form around the harbour, to the south-west, he made it safe and commodious, and sufficiently capacious for a large fleet. The expense of this work alone was immense; for the stones used in its construction were brought from a great distance, and were of almost incredible dimensions; some of them being fifty feet long and eighteen broad, and nine in thickness. The foundation of this mole was laid in the sea, at the depth of twenty fathoms. Herod was occupied twelve years, before he completed all his works at Cesarea.

Alexander and Aristobulus, the sons of Herod by Mariamne, being now of sufficient age, were sent to Rome to be educated. They were committed to the particular care of Pollio, an intimate friend; but Augustus, as a special mark of his friendship for the father, took the sons into his own palace, where apartments were prepared for them. To give further evidence of his attachment to Herod, he gave him the privilege of choosing his own successor, from among his sons; and added to his kingdom, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batania. When Agrippa was sent by Augustus to the east, he made Mitylene, on the island of Lesbos, his chief residence. As soon as Herod heard of his arrival in the east, he set off to pay him a visit, and renew their former friendship. Soon after his departure, the Gadarenes, at the instigation of one Zenodorus, a farmer of the revenues, came to Agrippa with complaints against Herod; but he would not listen to them, and to gratify his friend, threw the accusers into chains, and sent them to Herod, who, in order to conciliate them, set them free.

In the year 21 B. C., Augustus himself made a progress through the east. When he arrived at Antioch, Herod visited him, and was, as usual, received with great kindness. But his old enemy Zenodorus, hoping to be more successful with Augustus than he had been with Agrippa, brought new charges against Herod in the name of the Gadarenes, accusing him of rapine, tyranny, and sacrilege. These accusations so far influenced the emperor, that he appointed a day for Herod to appear and vindicate himself; but when his accusers observed the tenderness and partiality with which he was treated, they gave up their cause as desperate; and the following night, several of them put an end to their lives; among whom was Zenodorus. This was construed by Augustus as very favourable to the character of Herod. He, therefore, added to his dominions the tetrarchy, which had been possessed by Zenodorus, and joined him in commission with the governor of Syria, as his procurator, in that province. He also gave Herod's brother Pheroras, a tetrarchy in those parts. As an acknowledgment of all these favours, Herod built near the mountain Panias, from which the Jordan issues, an elegant palace of white marble. On his return to Jerusalem, Herod found the people much dissatisfied on account of his various innovations on their religion and laws, in compliance with the customs of the Greeks and Romans. To prevent the evils which seemed to threaten him, he in the first place forbade all clubs and meetings where many persons convened, and had spies in all parts to bring him intelligence of all that was said and done. He also purposed to require an oath of fidelity from all his subjects; but Hillel and Shammai, with all their

followers, and all who belonged to the sects of the Pharisees and Essenes, refusing to take it, he was obliged to relinquish the design.

In the year 19 B. C., Herod formed the project of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, by which he promised himself that he should not only conciliate the Jewish nation, but raise for himself a lasting and honourable monument. The second temple was, originally, greatly inferior to that of Solomon; and, in the course of five hundred years, had suffered exceedingly, not only from slow decay by the lapse of time, but more especially from the almost perpetual wars which had been carried on, in which it was always the last refuge of those pressed by a superior force. His purpose was, to take down the whole edifice, and build it anew with the best materials. He, therefore, convened a general assembly of the people, and laid before them his plan; but they were alarmed at his proposal, fearing lest when he had pulled down the old edifice, something might occur to prevent the erection of another. To quiet their fears, therefore, he promised that he would not begin to take down the old temple, until all the materials for the new were prepared, and on the ground. Accordingly, he set himself to work to make all manner of preparations for this great work; employing for the purpose a thousand wagons for carrying the stones and timber, ten thousand artificers to fit and prepare these materials, and a thousand priests, skilled in architecture, to take the supervision of the whole work. By these exertions, in two years, having got all things ready for the building, he began to pull down the old edifice, to the very foundations. The proposal of Herod to rebuild the temple, was made in the latter part of the eighteenth year of Herod's reign, 18 B. C.

In the year 17 B. C., all the preparations being completed, the erection of the new edifice was begun, just forty and six years before the first passover of Christ's personal ministry, to which reference is had in John 2:20, "Forty and six years was this temple in building;" for, although in nine years and a half it was so far finished as to be fit for the public service, the work was carried on until some time after the public ministry of our Saviour, when eighteen thousand workmen were dismissed at one time.

SECTION VIII

herod visits his sons at rome—attends the olympic games on his way—is received with honour by augustus—brings his sons back to jerusalem—the rebuilding of the temple is driven on—imprudent speeches of herod's sons, alexander and aristobulus—domestic troubles of herod increase—becomes more suspicious—the young men, his sons, continue to indulge in rash speeches—archelaus, king of cappadocia and father-in-law to alexander, comes to jerusalem—herod's expedition to arabia—difference between him and his sons increases—augustus recommends a council—herod accuses his sons, and the judges pronounce sentence of condemnation against them—herod causes this sentence to be carried into execution at sebastia, by strangulation

The next year, 16 B. C., Herod made a visit to Rome to pay his respects to Augustus, and to see his two sons, who were there pursuing their education. On his way he attended the Olympic games, on the 191st Olympiad, at which he presided; when finding that these games had much declined in their reputation, in consequence of the poverty of the Elians, which prevented them from keeping them up in their former splendour, he settled a permanent revenue upon them; in honour of which munificence they appointed him perpetual president of the games, as long as he should live. On his arrival at Rome he was received with great honour and kindness by Augustus;

and having received his sons, whose education was now completed in the best manner, he returned with them into Judea; soon after which he provided suitable wives for both of them; marrying Alexander to Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia; and Aristobulus to Berenice, the daughter of his own sister, Salome. These young men, by the comeliness of their persons, the agreeableness of their manners, and their other amiable qualities, were the admiration of the Jews. But the intriguing Salome pursued them with the envy and jealousy which she had always entertained towards their mother Mariamne.

In the rebuilding of the temple, those parts where divine service was celebrated were first finished. The sanctuary and holy of holies, together with the porch, were completed in one year and a half after the work was commenced; that there might be as little interruption in the public service as possible. But even during this period, the daily service was constantly performed in the court where the altar of burnt-offerings was situated.

In the year 13 B. C., Alexander and Aristobulus, having resided with their father three years after their return from Rome, fell under his grievous displeasure. The cause was this. The young men let fall many rash words, expressing strong resentments against those who had occasioned the death of their mother. Salome and Pheroras, having been the chief advisers of this measure, began to be alarmed; and in their own defence, laid plots for the ruin of the young princes. All these rash speeches of Alexander and Aristobulus were carried to Herod, by his brother and sister, and represented in the strongest colours, with insinuations that they were all directed against his life. And to facilitate the design, these crafty courtiers engaged persons to draw them into free discussion, and provoke them to say what otherwise would never have been uttered. Herod was so much affected by these representations, that to humble the princes, he sent for his oldest son Antipater, by his first wife Doris; but as she was divorced when Mariamne was espoused, her son was educated in private. But now his father placed him over these two brothers, which had no other effect than to exasperate them the more.

The Jews of Asia Minor and Cyrene having suffered much oppression from the heathen inhabitants of the countries where they resided, who would not permit them to live according to their own laws and religion, and deprived them of the privileges formerly enjoyed, sent an embassy to Augustus, to make their complaint and pray for redress. Accordingly, an edict was made in their favour, by which all that they desired was granted to them.

Domestic troubles continued to increase in the family of Herod. Salome, Pheroras, and Antipater, were unwearied in their efforts to fill the king's mind with suspicions and prejudices against his two young sons; until, at length, they so far accomplished their purpose, that an open breach took place between them and their father. By their malicious artifices, these enemies so filled the old man's mind with suspicion and fear, that he was unable to sleep, or obtain rest of any kind. To make discoveries, he put all their confidants to the rack; and some, to obtain relief, would say any thing which they supposed would have that effect. Some of their extorted confessions bearing hard on Alexander, the eldest son, he was cast into prison. On which, becoming desperate, he determined to create as much vexation as possible to his father, and sent him papers in which he confessed a plot which never had any existence; in which he named Salome and Pheroras, and two of the confidential ministers of Herod, as being his accomplices. This had the effect of driving the old tyrant almost to distraction. He now suspected everybody and knew not whom to trust. He

raged like a madman against all around him; tortured some upon the rack, and put others to death; so that his palace was little better than a slaughter-house.

Just at this crisis, 8 B. C., Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and father-in-law of Alexander, came on a visit to Jerusalem. Hearing the accusations against his son-in-law, he affected to be even more violent in his rage against him than Herod himself; and threatened to take away his daughter from him, which after a while had the effect of making Herod his advocate. Upon observing this temper in the old man, he was soon able to bring about a reconciliation between him and his son. Herod was very sensible of the kindness conferred on him by Archelaus, and in acknowledgment of the favour he gave him very valuable presents; and when he returned, accompanied him as far as Antioch, where he reconciled him to Titus Volumnius, the Roman governor of Syria, with whom Archelaus had had a difference.

A reconciliation having taken place between Herod and his sons, he thought it necessary to pay another visit to Rome, to inform Augustus of the improved state of his domestic affairs; he having before informed him, by letter, of the breach between him and his sons; and having accused them to the emperor of many high crimes and treasonable practices against him. While he was absent, the thieves of Trachonitis returned to their old trade, and ravaged all the country of Cœlo-Syria and Judea, which was accessible to them. When, as before related, Herod had driven these banditti out of his territories, about forty of the ringleaders fled into Arabia Petrea, when Sylleus, the governor of that country, not only received them, but granted them a strong fortress called Repta. When Herod went on his last journey to Rome, they invaded Judea and Cœlo-Syria, and ravaged the country in a distressing manner. Sylleus, the governor, felt no disposition to discourage these depredations, for he cherished a mortal hatred to Herod, because he had refused to let him have his sister Salome as a wife, unless he would consent to be circumcised and become a Jew. Herod, on his return, finding the country much injured by the incursion of this band of robbers, and not having it in his power to punish the perpetrators of the mischief, determined to wreak his vengeance upon their friends and relatives in Trachonitis. This exasperated them so much that they made new inroads into his territory, and wasted the country more than ever. When the principal buildings connected with the temple were finished, after nine years and a half from the commencement of the work, Herod appointed a day for its solemn dedication, which falling on the anniversary of his being made king, augmented the pomp and solemnity of the celebration. To put a stop to the incursion of the robbers who infested the country, Herod applied to Saturninus and Volumnius, the Roman governors of Syria, and lodged a complaint against Sylleus for harbouring them. He also sued him for a debt of sixty talents which he had borrowed from himself. To answer to these charges, Sylleus was obliged to appear at Berytus, before the governors; and Herod having made good his allegations, Sylleus, to get clear, bound himself by oath, within thirty days to pay the money and deliver up all fugitives. But when the day came he performed neither of these engagements, but went to Rome to complain to Cesar. Herod now obtained permission from Saturninus and Volumnius to do himself justice. He, therefore, marched into Arabia, destroyed Repta, and slew as many of the robbers as fell into his hands; then returned without injuring the country, but not without leaving three thousand men in Idumea, to prevent the further incursion of the thieves.

Sylleus, now at Rome, having received an account of these transactions, went to Augustus with a doleful account of the injustice of this invasion, and greatly exaggerating every thing, he so

represented the affair that the emperor was much displeased, and wrote to Herod a sharp letter of reproof, and for some time he was actually out of favour with the emperor. Nor was he restored to favour soon.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus began this year, 7 B. C., to write his Roman history, which he finished in twenty books, continued to the time of the first Punic war, at which point the history of Polybius commences. But of these twenty books, only eleven are extant. The work is written in Greek, and is the fullest and most accurate history of the Roman affairs in existence. He was twenty-two years collecting materials at Rome.

The next year, 6 B. C., the quarrel between Herod and his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, was revived. This, combined with the defeat of his Idumean guards by the Arabians, and the loss of the favour of Augustus, fell heavily on the old man. To conciliate the emperor, he sent two embassies to Rome, neither of which was admitted to an audience. He, therefore, sent a third, and employed in it Nicolas Damascus. Augustus now wrote him a kind letter, and condoling with him on account of his domestic troubles, gave him leave to proceed against his sons as he should judge best. And as to Sylleus, Augustus ordered him to return to Arabia, and pay his debt to Herod, after which he commanded that he should be put to death. To adjust the difference between Herod and his sons, Augustus directed that a council should meet at Berytus, consisting of the governors of the neighbouring provinces, together with Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and other friends of distinction, who should have power to hear and determine the whole matter. Herod immediately summoned this council to meet at the place appointed, calling thither Saturninus and Volumnius, governors of Syria, and all others mentioned by Augustus, except Archelaus, whom he considered too nearly related to one of the parties to be an impartial umpire. Before this tribunal Herod personally appeared as the accuser of his two unfortunate sons, and laid so many things to their charge, and urged his suit with so much vehemence, that the majority of the court were influenced to pass a judgment of condemnation against the princes, leaving the execution of the sentence to their father.

Herod, in pursuance of this sentence, sent Alexander and Aristobulus to Sebaste, and caused them to be strangled. Thus did these two promising young men come to a premature end, through the envy and malice of an intriguing woman. No doubt they acted imprudently, and in resentment for their mother's death, uttered many rash speeches. Nay, when exasperated by persecution and false accusations, it is probable, that they were precipitated into crimes of deeper dye. But no one can read the history of their tragical end, without lamenting their unfortunate connexion with a court, in which deceit and craft had such a predominant influence.

SECTION IX

antipater conspires against the life of his father—pheroras displeases his brother by refusing one of his daughters and marrying a maid-serant—he joins the plot of antipater—the temple of janus at rome closed—the angel gabriel sent to mary at nazareth—birth of jesus christ at bethlehem—the registration which called them thither—luke and josephus reconciled—visit of the magians—massacre of the infants—herod causes his son antipater to be put to death—gives orders to slay all the eminent men of the country, that there might be mourning at his own death, which he perceived was near—death of herod—his family and descendants—division of the kingdom among his sons

About this time Zacharias beheld the vision in the temple, as he there officiated in his course, which is recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Antipater, the oldest son of Herod, who was of a cruel, crafty, and ambitious temper, seeing nothing now in the way of his ascending the throne but his father's life, conspired with Pheroras to put the old man out of the way, by poison.

Herod, it is true, had always acted the part of an affectionate brother to Pheroras; but of late, circumstances had occurred to alienate them from each other. Herod wished his brother to marry one of his daughters by Mariamne: but he having fallen in love with a maid-servant, for her sake rejected the offer of the king's daughter, which gave great offence. Herod then gave his daughter in marriage to a son of his older brother Phasaël. But having another daughter, he offered her to Pheroras, if he would divorce his ignoble wife, which he promised with an oath, that he would do; but when the time arrived, he again refused. There was another thing which widened the breach between the two brothers. The whole nation of the Jews were required to take an oath of allegiance to Augustus, and to the king. This the Pharisees, as before, to the number of seven thousand, absolutely refused, from conscientious motives; believing it unlawful to swear allegiance to any foreign prince. To punish their contumacy, Herod imposed a pecuniary mulct on the whole body; which sum the wife of Pheroras, on account of her attachment to this sect, paid down for them. The Pharisees were so much delighted with this act of generosity, that they willingly received, and gave circulation to a pretended prophecy, which some visionary had uttered, that the kingdom would be transferred from the family of Herod to the descendants of Pheroras by this woman. This report having reached the ears of Herod, he was so exasperated that he put several of the Pharisees to death. Then, convening a council, he laid open before them the whole affair, and peremptorily required that Pheroras should immediately put away this woman, or never expect to be treated by him as a brother any more. To which Pheroras replied, that nothing should induce him to part with his beloved wife; that he would rather die than be separated from her. Herod, greatly resenting this obstinacy, forbade Pheroras to enter his house, and commanded Antipater and all the other members of his family to have no manner of intercourse with him or his wife. This rough treatment prepared Pheroras to listen to the plot of Antipater, to take off the old king by poison.

Antipater, to avoid all suspicion, managed to have himself called to Rome, to wait upon Augustus; and Pheroras gladly complied with the king's commands to leave Jerusalem, and go to his tetrarchy; swearing that he would never return as long as Herod lived. This resolution he kept; for although he was sent for by his brother when he was sick, he would not come; yet, when he was taken ill, Herod visited him and treated him very kindly. After the death of Pheroras, some of his servants accused his wife to Herod, of poisoning him. This led to a strict inquiry, which resulted in the discovery of the plot, in which he and Antipater had been engaged against the king's life. It appeared, that Antipater had got a friend in Alexandria, to prepare the poison, whence it was brought to Jerusalem to Pheroras, who had agreed to administer it to his brother.

The wife of Pheroras, on being questioned by the king, confirmed the whole matter; but said, that after his kind visit to Pheroras, he changed his mind, and commanded her to throw the poison in the fire, which she did in his presence, except a small quantity, which she reserved for her own use, if she should need it. The whole testimony went to show, that Antipater, after procuring the death of his two brothers, had now laid a most wicked plot for the poisoning of his father.

The temple of Janus, at Home, was closed this year. The custom was, to keep the gates open in time of war, and to shut them in time of peace. They had been closed before only four times since the building of the city. The first time was in the reign of Numa; the second after the end of the first Punic war; the third after Augustus had vanquished Antony; the fourth, when Augustus returned to Rome from the conquest of the Cantabrians. In the same year, the most memorable in the annals of man, the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to Zacharias in the temple, was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to Mary, a virgin of the house of David, lately espoused to Joseph, of the same lineage, to declare to her the good tidings, that of her should be born the Son of God; and, accordingly, being overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, she conceived and brought forth a son who was, Christ the Saviour of the world.

Joseph and Mary, having their residence at Nazareth, were providentially called to Bethlehem of Judea, by the following circumstances. It was customary in the Roman empire, to take a survey or assessment of all persons and estates every fifth year. In taking this account, a register was made of all sorts of persons women and children, as well as men; with the ages, occupations, and estates of each. Augustus was the first who extended this survey, or registration, to the provinces. During his long reign, he caused it to be executed in all the provinces three times. Such a registration was at this time going on throughout the Roman empire. The decree requiring it was issued in the year 8 B. C.; but, as our present era begins four years later than the birth of Christ, the date of this decree was only three or four years before he was actually born. During these years, it had been going forward in Cœlo-Syria, Phenicia, and Judea, until this year, when it extended to Bethlehem.

Joseph and Mary, belonging to the family of David, whose city was Bethlehem, were required to attend there, to be registered with the other branches of that family. While they were there on this occasion, Jesus Christ the Son of God was born in that place, according to the prophecy of Micah, 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

It need excite no surprise that we have allowed three years for the execution of this decree, since it is known that it was always committed to the governors of the provinces, and they were not always expeditious. To perform such a work, in the whole province of Syria, when the survey was required to be so particular, both as to persons and estates, would take much time. Joab was nine months and twenty days in taking a census of ten tribes of Israel, and only reckoned the men fit for war. When William the Conqueror had a survey made of England—that recorded in Dooms-day book—it occupied six years. But, although the object of this registration was for the purpose of laying taxes, no taxes were collected at the time, nor until twelve years afterwards, when Archelaus was banished, and a Roman procurator put in his place. The procurator under whom this taxing actually took place, was P. S. Quirinius, called by the Evangelist, Cyrenius, who was at that time governor of Syria. A correct understanding of this matter will easily reconcile Luke with Josephus. Thus, in the first verse of the second chapter of Luke, it is said, "that in those days there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," or rather, should be assessed or registered, in order to be taxed. Then, in the second verse, it is said, "and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." That is, the decree took effect, and the taxing was first actually made several years afterwards, when Cyrenius was first governor of Syria;

for when Christ was born, Cyrenius never had been governor of Syria.

In this same year, the fourth before the vulgar Christian era, certain wise men of the Magian sect, came from the east, under the guidance of a star, and worshipped the infant Messiah at Bethlehem. Soon after this, Herod put all the children at Bethlehem to death, who were under two years of age. Macrobius, a writer of the fifth century, says that one of Herod's own children was of this number, and that Augustus when he heard it, said "that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son;" but the story is not probable. The sarcasm of Augustus was probably uttered, upon hearing of his having put to death his three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater. For Antipater, having returned from Rome without knowing that his wicked plot was discovered, was immediately arrested, and being brought before Q. Varus, the new governor of Syria, was convicted of the crime of treasonably designing the death of his father; on which he was condemned, and the sentence being approved by Augustus, was put to death.

Herod lived only five days after the execution of his son. He died in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign. Knowing that he was detested by the Jews, and that the report of his death would be a matter of rejoicing to the people, he formed a project, perhaps the wickedest that ever entered into the mind of man. Having summoned all the most eminent men in his kingdom to attend him at Jericho, where he then lay in the pangs of death, as soon as they arrived, he ordered them to be shut up in the circus; and then sending for Salome his sister, and her husband Alexas, he gave command that as soon as he was dead they should send the soldiers to put them all to death; for this, said he, will provide mourners for my funeral throughout Judea. But wicked as Salome and her husband were, they would not fulfil their promises, in executing an order of such unprecedented cruelty; though, perhaps, they were restrained by a fear of the people, rather than by any aversion to the commission of such a crime.

After the death of Herod, therefore, all these men were set free. The enormous wickedness of this last act of the tyrant's life, seems to remove all objection that might arise in the minds of any, against the account of the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, on the ground that no one could be guilty of such cruelty. The disease with which this wicked tyrant was carried out of the world, was attended with such circumstances as led all the people to believe that the just vengeance of Heaven was pursuing him. Josephus, and after him Eusebius, give the following account: "Herod's disease grew yet more and more grievously violent; God exacting this vengeance on him as the punishment of the many great enormities of which he had been guilty. He had a slow fever, which inwardly consumed him. His appetite was voracious and insatiable. His bowels were ulcerated, especially the colon, which occasioned grievous pains. His feet were swollen, and oozed out a fetid humor. An ulcer broke out in the lower part of his belly, which bred worms and lice abundantly. His breath was short and the smell fetid. He had also a troublesome flux of rheum, with asthmatic difficulty of breathing; and the termination of life was at length produced by convulsions of the whole body." His pains were terrible to the very last moment.

Herod married nine wives, by whom he had several children. Three of his sons, as we have seen, he put to death. Of his other children, it will only be necessary to mention those who are noticed in Scripture. By his wife Malthace, he had Archelaus and Herod Antipas; by Cleopatra, Philip; and by Mariamne, Herod Philip. His son Aristobulus, whom he put to death, was married to Berenice, by whom he had Agrippa, commonly called Herod Agrippa, the same who put James the apostle to

death, and was smitten of God at Cesarea for his impious pride. Herodias was also the daughter of the same parents. She was first married to her uncle, Herod Philip, but eloped from him and became the wife of Herod Antipas. By her first husband she had Salome, who went with her, and was the damsel whose dancing pleased Herod so exceedingly, and occasioned the death of John the Baptist.

To Agrippa, mentioned above, there was born a son, also named Agrippa, and two daughters, Drusilla and Berenice. Before these Paul pleaded his cause. (Acts 25:26.) Drusilla was married to Felix, the procurator or governor of Judea.

Herod distributed his dominions among his sons, above mentioned, as follows: Archelaus was left heir to the kingdom of Judea; Herod Antipas had the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea; and Philip, Auranitis, Trachonitis, Paneas, and Batanea.

SECTION X

joseph returns from egypt—vulgar era—archelaus goes to rome and is deposed—cyrenius governor of syria—the jews resist the taxation by the romans—annas appointed high-priest by the romans—death of augustus

After the death of Herod, Joseph being warned by an angel in a dream, arose and took the young child and his mother, and returned from Egypt into the land of Israel; but when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father, he went to Galilee, and again resided at Nazareth, with Mary his wife. There Jesus abode until he entered on his public ministry.

The Christian era, which is now in common use, by the mistake of Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced it in the sixth century, commences four years later than the real time of the birth of Christ. If Christians had from the beginning used this era, there could have been no mistake in the case; but as the birth of our Saviour was not used as an era for chronological purposes, for more than five hundred years, it is not strange that a mistake of a few years should have occurred. Some, indeed, make the difference only two years, but most of the learned follow Usher, who makes it four.

Archelaus, who succeeded his father in the kingdom, conducted himself in a manner so tyrannical, that ambassadors were sent to Rome, both from the Jews and Samaritans, to complain of his mal-administration. In consequence of these accusations he was cited by Augustus to appear before him and answer for his conduct. When Archelaus went to Rome, Herod Antipas did the same; and also Salome, Herod's sister. The object of Herod was to solicit the kingdom for himself, in which he had the interest of the rest of the family on his side; for Archelaus was held in detestation by all. After Archelaus had left Judea, with the leave of Varus the procurator, an embassy of fifty of the chief men of Jerusalem went to Rome to petition Augustus to permit them to live according to their own laws, under a Roman governor. When he arrived, not being able to justify himself before the emperor, but being found guilty of all that was charged against him, he was deposed from his kingdom, had all his goods confiscated, and was himself banished to Vienne in Gaul. The duration of his reign in Judea was only ten years. After the deposition of Archelaus, Augustus appointed Cyrenius (Quirinius) to be governor of Syria, and sent with him Coponius a Roman knight, to be procurator of Judea, under the authority of Cyrenius, Judea being a part of the province of Syria. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they seized on the goods of

Archelaus and changed the civil government of the Jews. The power of life and death was now taken from the Jews and assumed by the officers of the emperor; and taxes were paid directly into the treasury of the Romans, which was never done before.

The raising of these taxes caused great disturbances among the Jews. Some thought that they were under obligations to serve no king but God; most believed that it was wrong for the Jews to be subject to any foreign power. Those who made opposition on the first ground, were fanatical and seditious men, who were led on by one Judas of Galilee, a very turbulent man, of whom mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, (Acts 5:37) but he was soon cut off, and all his followers dispersed. They who resisted on the latter ground, were a more formidable body, and included the whole sect of the Pharisees. Their opinions were received by the mass of the people. And hence we may learn the reason why the Publicans, or tax-gatherers, were so odious to the Pharisees.

While Cyrenius was at Jerusalem, among other important changes, he removed Jaazar from being high-priest, and appointed Annas, the son of Seth, as his successor. In the same year, our Lord and Saviour being now twelve years of age, came up to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary, and entered the temple, where the doctors of the law were convened, heard their discourses, and engaged in the discussion of important points with them, so that all who heard him were astonished.

In the year ten of the vulgar era, Coponius was recalled from being procurator of Judea, and Marcus Ambivius was put in his place. In this year also died Salome, the sister of Herod, whose crafty and malicious intrigues had been the occasion of unspeakable evil to her brother's family.

A. D. 12. Augustus, now old, associated Tiberius with him in the empire. From this date, his reign is reckoned by Luke, where he speaks of the "fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar;" Luke 3:1. Judea was now destined to a very frequent change of masters, for in A. D. 13, Ambivius was succeeded in his office of procurator by Annius Rufus.

A. D. 14. Augustus Cesar departed this life, after he had nearly attained the age of seventy-six years. The length of his reign was fifty-six years, reckoning from the time of the first consulship; but if we reckon from the victory of Actium, it was forty-four years. He ended his days at Nola, in Campania, not far from Rome. The whole power of the empire now devolved on Tiberius, who had been made a partner with his father before his death. He was at this time fifty-five years of age, and reigned twenty-two years and a half.

SECTION XI

procuratorship of valerius gratus—annas removed from the office of high-priest and ismael substituted—eleazar, son of annas is put in his place, and the next year gratus removes him, and substitutes simon son of cannith—caiaphas—gratus recalled and succeeded by pontius pilate—preaching of john the baptist—battism of christ—death of john—public ministry of christ—death of christ—his resurrection and ascension—pilate's account of christ, sent to the emperor—pilate removed by vitellius, governor of syria, and sent to rome, whence he was banished to gaul—tiberius dies, and is succeeded by caius caligula

A. D. 15, Valerius Gratus was sent into Judea by Tiberius, to be procurator, in which office he continued eleven years.

A. D. 23, Valerius Gratus removed Annas from the office of high-priest, and substituted in his place Ismael the son of Fabus. Annas held the office fifteen years. But the very next year, A. D. 24, becoming dissatisfied with Ismael, he deposed him, and put in his place Eleazar, the son of Annas, whom he had deprived of the office. The year following, A. D. 25, the capricious Gratus removed Eleazar, and put Simon the son of Cannith in the office. A. D. 26, Simon was displaced to make way for Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, who had been deposed. These are the persons spoken of in the Gospels, who had the chief concern in the prosecution of our Saviour. And the facts mentioned above, will serve to explain several things in the sacred history. Caiaphas is said to have been the high-priest for that year, as if the office had been an annual one; whereas, it was for life, by the law, if the person did not become disqualified; but we see from the preceding history, that for a number of years no one person had, in fact, filled the place for more than a year.

A. D. 26, Valerius Gratus was recalled, and Pontius Pilate sent to be procurator of Judea; a man ready for every evil work. Philo Judeus charges him with selling justice, and giving any sentence for money; also of cruelty, rapine, murder, and injuries of every sort.

In this year, A. D. 26, according to the vulgar era, John the Baptist began to preach in the wilderness of Judea. This was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. He continued his ministry for about three years and a half. When John was engaged in his public ministry, preaching repentance and baptising the people, and announcing that the Messiah's reign was near at hand, Jesus Christ came forth from his retirement at Nazareth, and presented himself to John for baptism. At first this good man scrupled to perform the rite, but immediately complied, when he heard the reason assigned by Jesus for desiring it.

When Jesus was baptized in Jordan, the heavens were opened, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "this is my beloved son;" and the Holy Ghost descended as a dove, and rested on him. John knew the divine character of Jesus, and was therefore willing to see all men flocking after him, though his own popularity was thereby diminished. He pointed him out to his own disciples as the Messiah, and corrected their wrong feelings flowing from attachment to himself. Jesus now entered on the public exercise of his ministry, in which he laboured incessantly, until the day of his death.

John, while preaching in Galilee, fell under the notice of Herod the tetrarch, who was pleased to hear his discourses, and so much influenced by them as to make a partial reformation in his conduct. But on John's faithfully reproving him for taking his brother's wife, he was so much offended that he cast him into prison. Herodias was urgent to have him put to death, which Herod declined, more for fear of the people than from any higher motives. But on Herod's birth-day, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, so delighted him by her dancing, that he made her a promise, confirmed with an oath, to give her what she should ask. The girl, instructed by her mother, demanded the head of John, which the king, though reluctantly, commanded to be brought to her in a dish.

The history of the Evangelist respecting Herod Antipas is corroborated by Josephus, who says: "About this time there happened to be a difference between Aretas king of Petræa and Herod, upon this occasion: Herod the tetrarch, had married the daughter of Aretas; but in a journey which he took to Rome, he made a visit to his brother Herod (Philip). Here falling in love with Herodias, his brother's wife, he ventured to make her proposals of marriage. She consented, and agreed that when he was returned from Rome she would go and live with him; and he promised to put away the daughter of Aretas."

Josephus also informs us, that Herodias had a daughter by her first husband, whose name was Salome. Josephus, moreover, represents Herodias to have been a woman of great ambition, and one who had much influence over Herod; for by her persuasions he was induced to go to Rome to solicit his brother's crown. The defeat which Herod met with in his war with Aretas, the father of his former wife, is represented by Josephus as a judgment of God upon him for what he had done to John, called the Baptist; for, says he, "Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both towards one and another and towards God, and so to come to baptism." Josephus, indeed, while he states the fact, seems not to have been informed of the true cause of John's death, but supposes that it was owing to Herod's jealousy of John's popularity, and influence with the people, which might put it in his power to excite them to revolt.

The only mention which the Jewish historian makes of Jesus Christ, is in the following remarkable passage. "Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him, both many of the Jews and of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again, the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and many other things, concerning him. And the sect of Christians, so named from him, is not extinct at this day." Most modern critics, it is true, have pronounced this passage an interpolation, and contend that it was never written by Josephus; but no convincing arguments have been adduced to prove that it is spurious.

Jesus Christ having spent about three years and a half in his public ministry, during which time he performed innumerable miracles, was apprehended by the malice of his enemies; and after being subjected to much injustice, reproach, and cruel treatment, was condemned to be crucified; which painful punishment, he accordingly endured, in circumstances of great ignominy. At his death, many prodigies occurred, a particular account of which is given in the Gospels. On the third day he arose again, and appeared unto his disciples; and for forty days conversed frequently with them, and permitted them, by their sense of feeling, as well as of sight and hearing, to be fully satisfied of the reality of his resurrection. Having finished giving his disciples those instructions which he deemed it necessary to communicate in person, he ascended to heaven, in their sight, from Mount Olivet, while in the act of blessing them. Before he left them, he promised to send the Holy Ghost, or Paraclete, to teach and comfort them; which promise was fulfilled at the feast of Pentecost, about ten days after his ascension; when this divine Instructor came upon them, and furnished them with all the wisdom, strength, and miraculous endowment, necessary for the accomplishment of the great and arduous work for which they were commissioned.

Pilate sent to the emperor, according to the usage in such cases, an account of the character and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, which was extant and appealed to in the second century. But this document is now lost.

Vitellius being now governor of Syria, the Samaritans, who had been treated with severity by Pilate on account of an impostor who arose among them, sent an embassy to the governor complaining of his tyrannical conduct. The consequence was, that Vitellius removed him from his office, and ordered him to Rome to answer for his conduct, appointing Marcellus to be procurator in his place. This was about the year A. D. 37. In the following year, A. D. 38, Tiberius died, and was succeeded in the government by Caius Caligula, before whom the cause of Pilate came; and who banished him to Vienne in Gaul, where it is said he put an end to his life.

SECTION XII

preaching of the apostles—martyrdom of Stephen and ensuing persecution—conversion of Paul—Caiaphas removed from the high-priesthood by Vitellius, and Ananias substituted—Agrippa acquires the supreme power of Judea—Herod Antipas banished to Gaul—embassy from Alexandria to Rome—Philo Judeus—Caius succeeded by Claudius—theophilus removed from the priesthood and Simon put in his place—Petronius, governor of Syria, succeeded by Marsus—Agrippa zealous for the Jewish religion, but severe towards the Christians—remarkable death of Agrippa—his character and successors

After the apostles of Jesus began to preach his resurrection, an attempt was made to suppress them by force, but this proved ineffectual. A violent persecution, however, was carried on against the disciples, in which Stephen was condemned to death by the Sanhedrim, and stoned. It would seem, from this fact, that when this event occurred there was no Roman governor or procurator at Jerusalem; or the Sanhedrim would not, in contempt of his authority, have dared to inflict capital punishment on any one. It is probable, therefore, that the martyrdom of Stephen took place after Pilate was removed, and before another had succeeded him.

The persecution after the death of Stephen, became very hot, chiefly through the zeal of a young Pharisee, whose name was Saul. He was one of the Sanhedrim who gave his vote for the death of the proto-martyr, and superintended his execution. Being determined to extirpate the rising sect, he went from place to place apprehending men and women and committing them to prison. But finding that many fled, and that Damascus was a place of refuge for them, he obtained a commission from the high-priest, and a guard to proceed to that place, to bring bound to Jerusalem all that he should find who were followers of Jesus of Nazareth. But before he reached the place, while journeying, about noon, he was overwhelmed with a blaze of light, surpassing the light of mid-day, and by terror, or some irresistible power, being struck to the ground, he heard a person speaking to him, and in the midst of the light saw near to him the very Jesus whom he was persecuting. The young man when he arose was blind, and was led into Damascus, where he remained blind, neither eating nor drinking for three days; when a disciple, being divinely directed, came to him and instructed him in the doctrines of Christ, and then baptized him. From this time to the close of life, Saul, afterwards called Paul, was a most zealous, able, and successful propagator of the faith of Jesus.

About A. D. 39, Vitellius, the governor of Syria, paid a visit to Jerusalem, and bestowed on the Jews many favours and immunities. One method which Herod had devised of governing that turbulent people, was to keep in his possession the costly robes which were worn on solemn occasions by the high-priest. They were preserved in the castle of Antonia, which he had built, and continued in the possession of his successors in power until this visit of Vitellius, at the passover, when they were given into the possession of the Jews.

Vitellius, on some complaint against Caiaphas, deprived him of his office, and made Jonathan the son of Annas, or Ananas, high-priest in his stead, and then returned home. For some time after this the Christian churches seem to have been undisturbed by persecution, and to have increased in numbers very rapidly. Soon after the events above related, we find Judea under the power of Herod Agrippa. He was the son of Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod by Mariamne, whom his father put to death. Few men ever experienced greater vicissitudes of fortune than this Herod. Josephus gives a detailed account of his adventures, which our limits do not permit us to repeat. Suffice it to say, that after suffering innumerable disappointments and disasters, and being for two years imprisoned by Tiberius, he was not only released by Caligula, but received from him the gift of a golden chain, and a diadem. He was first made king of Lysanias, Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, and Batanea.

The success of Agrippa in obtaining the title of king, so excited the envy and inflamed the ambition of Herodias, that she would not suffer Herod Antipas, her husband, to rest until he should also go to Rome to seek for himself a kingdom. But the event was very different from their wishes and expectations, for as soon as Herod Agrippa heard of their visit to Rome, he wrote to Caius Caligula, that Antipas had held secret communications with the Parthians, and had collected vast military stores. Upon this the emperor instead of making him a king, banished him to Lyons, whither Herodias went with him. His tetrarchy was now added to the dominions of Herod Agrippa.

About this time, A. D. 41, the famous embassy from Alexandria to Rome, composed both of Jews and Greeks, took place. The celebrated Philo went as the principal of the Jewish ambassadors, and one Apion, at the head of the Greeks; of all which, Philo and Josephus have given a detailed account. The dissension between them principally related to the refusal of the Jews to worship the image of the emperor.

Caligula now recalled Vitellius from the government of Syria, and appointed Petronius to succeed him. At the same time he sent express orders that the emperor's image should be set up in the temple at Jerusalem. To enforce this order, Petronius came to Ptolemais with an army, where he was met by many thousand Jews, who expressed their determination never to submit to such a profanation. But by the intercession of king Agrippa, who was then at Rome, the order was countermanded. When he heard of the resistance of the Jews, however, he was greatly enraged, and wrote an angry letter to Petronius, whom he suspected of acting in concert with the Jews. This year, A. D. 41, Caligula was assassinated.

Claudius Drusus succeeded Caius Caligula as emperor of Rome. By his advancement, Herod Agrippa was promoted to be king of Samaria and Judea, in addition to his former dominions; and, moreover, he manifested his particular friendship for him by having him appointed one of the consuls of Rome. To Herod, the brother of Agrippa, Claudius also gave the little kingdom of Chalcis.

The Jews, who had been much oppressed under the government of the cruel Caligula, were greatly favoured by Claudius, who permitted them everywhere to live agreeably to their own law, and put the Jews of Alexandria in possession of their former privileges.

A. D. 42, Agrippa returned to Jerusalem to take possession of his newly acquired dominion, on which occasion he offered many sacrifices of thanksgiving, and as a memorial, suspended in the temple the golden chain which he had received from Caligula, when released from prison. At this time, Theophilus officiated as high-priest of the Jews; but soon after, Agrippa removed him from office, and substituted in his place Simon Cantharus, the son of Simon Boethus. The year following, however, he offered the place to Jonathan, who declined it, but recommended his brother Matthias, on whom the office was conferred. About this time, A. D. 42 or 43, Petronius was recalled from the government of Syria, and was succeeded by Marsus. He was far less favourable to the Jews than his predecessor, and when Agrippa undertook to raise and strengthen the walls around a part of the city, which had been recently built, Marsus interposed, represented the undertaking to the emperor as dangerous to the Roman empire, and obtained an edict forbidding the further progress of the work.

Agrippa was much attached to the Jewish nation, and strict in his observance of all religious ceremonies of the law. Josephus says of him, "That he was of a mild and gentle disposition, and good to all men; beneficent to strangers, but especially kind to the Jews, with whom he sympathized in all their troubles." His residence, after he became king of Judea, was almost constantly at Jerusalem, where he practised the Jewish ceremonies, and did not let a day pass without worshipping God, according to the law of Moses.

It may seem to be inconsistent with the character here given of Agrippa, that he should carry on a cruel persecution against the inoffensive Christians, of which Luke gives the following account: "Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands, to vex certain of the church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword, and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also." (Acts 12:1-3) But we have seen that this prince was superstitiously attached to all the Jewish ceremonies, and that he made it a primary object to please the nation in his whole administration; and as they could not be more gratified by any thing than the death of the leading teachers in the Christian church, he was induced to pursue a course in regard to this matter, not altogether consonant with his general character. Luke, in the passage quoted, adverts to the true motive of his conduct, when he says, "because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also." But his design against the life of Peter was frustrated by a miraculous interposition. An angel was sent to release him from his confinement.

Whatever the character of Herod Agrippa might have been in other respects, he seems to have been a very vainglorious person. There is a remarkable coincidence between the narratives of Luke and Josephus, in regard to the circumstances of the death of this prince. Luke says, "And he went down from Judea to Cesarea and there abode. And upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration to them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god and not of a man; and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

The words of Josephus are these: "Having now reigned three whole years over Judea, he went to the city Cesarea, formerly called Straton's Tower. Here he celebrated shows in honour of Cesar.

On this occasion, there was a vast resort of persons of rank and distinction from all parts of the country. On the second day of the shows, early in the morning, he came into the theatre, dressed in a robe of silver, of most curious workmanship. The rays of the rising sun, reflected from so splendid a garb, gave him a majestic and awful appearance. In a short time they began, in several parts of the theatre, flattering acclamations, which proved pernicious to him. They called him a god, and entreated him to be propitious to them; saying, 'Hitherto we have respected you as a man, but now we acknowledge you to be more than mortal.' The king neither reproved these persons nor rejected the impious flattery. Soon after this, casting his eyes upwards, he saw an owl, sitting on a cord over his head. He perceived it to be a messenger of evil to him, as it had been before of his prosperity, and was struck with the deepest concern. Immediately after this, he was seized with pains in his bowels, extremely violent from the first. Then turning himself to his friends, he spoke to them in this manner: 'I, your god, am required to leave this world; fate instantly refuting these false applauses bestowed upon me. I, who have been called immortal, am hurried away to death. But God's appointment must be submitted to.' While he was speaking, his pains became more violent: he was carried, therefore, with all haste to his palace. His pains continuing to increase, he expired in five days time, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, &c."

Agrippa left behind him one son, also named Agrippa, about seventeen years of age, and three daughters. One of these, Berenice, was married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her father's brother; the other two, Mariamne and Drusilla, were unmarried at the time of their father's death. Of the youngest of these, Drusilla, some notice will be taken in this history hereafter, as she is particularly noticed in the Acts of the Apostles.

SECTION XIII

Fadus made procurator of judea—dearth in the reign of claudius—proselytes to judaism—false messiah—fadus recalled, and succeeded by tiberius alexander—herod king of chalcis displaced joseph the son of camus from the high-priesthood, and substituted ananias the son of nebedeus—tiberius alexander recalled, and cumanus appointed to succeed him—commotions at jerusalem—dispute between the oalileans and samaritans—cumanus recalled and felix appointed procurator—tumultuous conduct of the jews—death of claudius—succeeded by nero—anarchical state of judea during the procuratorship of felix—is succeeded by festus—both reside at cesarea—festus dies—is succeeded by albinus—state of society more and more disordered—ananus made high-priest—cestius gallus visits jerusalem

After the death of Agrippa, A. D. 45, Fadus was appointed procurator of Judea. Claudius would have given the kingdom to the son of his friend, but was dissuaded from it on account of his youth. A contention soon arose between this officer and the Jews, respecting the pontifical vestments which he ordered to be deposited, as formerly, in the castle of Antonia. This was by direction of the emperor. And when the Jews proved refractory, Cassius Longinus, who had been sent to Syria in the place of Marsus, came with an army to enforce the emperor's edict; but the Jews prevailed on him to wait until they could petition the emperor, who was induced by the intercession of Herod king of Chalcis, to relinquish his purpose. Claudius then appointed this Herod to preside over the temple, and select the high-priests. He removed Cantharus from office, and appointed Joseph, son of Camus, to succeed him.

In the Acts we read, that “a prophet, named Agabus, stood up, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world, which, says Luke, came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar.” Now, during the reign of Claudius, there were no less than four times of famine. The one referred to above, occurred while Fadus was procurator at Judea, and was the last of the four; for it extended to the reign of Tiberius. About this time, the Jews received some proselytes to their religion, of rather an extraordinary character for rank, who proved themselves to be very sincere converts, by their munificence to the Jewish nation; especially in the time of the forementioned famine. The persons to whom I refer, were Helena, queen of Adiabene, in Mesopotamia, and her son Izates. At the time when this dearth occurred, Helena, was at Jerusalem, and supplied the people with large quantities of provisions; and Izates sent them, at the same time, large sums of money. These royal personages had built, near Jerusalem, a sepulchre of magnificent workmanship, in which after their death they were interred.

While Fadus was procurator of Judea, a false Messiah made his appearance, who deluded great multitudes of people, and persuaded them to follow him to Jordan, where he promised that he would divide the waters, and lead them over on dry ground. But while this multitude was on their way, they were overtaken by a troop of Roman cavalry, sent after them by Fadus. The impostor was brought back and beheaded, and all his followers were dispersed. Josephus calls this impostor Theudas, but from what Gamaliel said in the Jewish Sanhedrim, (Acts 5:36,) it appears that Theudas was before Judas the Gaulonite, and was accompanied by only four hundred men, who all forsook him. Probably, therefore, Josephus was mistaken about the name; unless, which is not improbable, there were two of the same name.

A. D. 46, Fadus was recalled, and a man of Jewish origin, by the name of Tiberius Alexander, was made procurator of Judea.

A. D. 47, Herod, king of Chalcis, having received authority from the emperor to appoint the high-priest at Jerusalem, displaced Joseph, the son of Camus, and gave the office to Ananias, the son of Nebedeus. This was among his last acts; for he died shortly after, and his kingdom was given to Claudius Agrippa, the son of king Agrippa, with the same authority over the temple and priesthood which had been possessed by Herod, king of Chalcis. In the same year, A. D. 47, Claudius recalled Tiberius Alexander, and appointed V. Cumanus to be procurator in his stead.

The following year, A. D. 48, during the celebration of the passover, a cohort of Roman soldiers were stationed before the gates of the temple to preserve order. But one of the soldiers, by an indecent action, so provoked the Jews, who were going up to the temple to worship, that some rash young men assaulted the soldiers with stones. Cumanus, at first, endeavoured to allay the irritation of the populace; but failing in this, he summoned the soldiers into the castle of Antonia, by which the Jews understood that he was about to make an attack on the temple. So great a panic seized the multitude who were within the walls, that when a violent rush took place to escape through the gates, more than a thousand of them were crushed to death. Another tumult took place in consequence of the impious conduct of a Roman soldier, who, having seized a copy of the law, tore it in pieces, with insulting and blasphemous language. A complaint was made to Cumanus, who, seeing no other method of appeasing the people, ordered the offending soldier to be beheaded. The commotions among the people increased every day. A dispute now arose between the Galileans and the Samaritans, on account of a murder committed on a Jew in one of

the Samaritan villages. The Roman officer refusing to do them justice, the Jews undertook to revenge themselves, by invading and plundering the Samaritan territory; but Cumanus coming on them with his cavalry, soon dispersed them. Many, however, about this time, joined themselves to troops of robbers, and by their predatory incursions, greatly disturbed the peace of the country.

H. Quadratus had been made governor of Syria, in the place of Longinus; and he being now at Tyre, complaints were made to him, both by the Jews and Samaritans. He determined, therefore, to come to Judea, and examine into the affair for himself. At first, he felt disposed to condemn the Samaritans, but on learning that the Jews had acted in a rebellious manner, in defiance of the Roman authority, he ordered such of them as Ananus had taken, to be crucified. He, moreover, put to death a leading man whose name was Doras, and several others; and sent the high-priests Jonathan and Ananus the president of the temple, in chains to Rome. Finally, he ordered all parties, and the procurator himself, to go to Italy, and submit their cause to the emperor; and then returned to Antioch. When the cause came before the emperor, the Jews had justice done them, through the influence of Agrippa, who was then at Rome. The Samaritans were condemned, and three of their leaders ordered to be executed. The Roman tribune, who had been guilty of exciting the disturbance, was ordered to be sent back to Jerusalem, and to be dragged through the streets, and then beheaded. Cumanus himself, also was recalled.

A. D. 53, Felix a freed-man, was appointed procurator of Judea, and continued in office a number of years. Agrippa seems to have been as much a favourite of Augustus as his father; for in place of his little kingdom of Chalcis, he gave him the tetrarchy which had belonged to Philip, the son of Herod the Great.

Drusilla, the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa, was given by her brother in marriage to Azizus, king of Emesa, who to obtain her, had submitted to circumcision. But Felix, who had already two wives, became enamoured of her; and by means of one Simon a sorcerer, made her offers of marriage, and gained her consent.

Although Claudius showed himself favourable to the Jews, so many tumults were raised by them in the city of Rome, that he published an edict that they should all leave the city, which however was never fully executed. He, however, strictly forbade all public meetings among them. During all this period, the Romans made no distinction between Jews and Christians; for the latter were considered as merely a new sect among the Jews. They, therefore, fell under the operation of all edicts which related to the Jews. Accordingly, we read in the Acts (18) that "a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately had come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome."

Claudius the emperor died A. D. 55 or 56, and was succeeded by Nero, the son of his wife Agrippina, by her former husband. Nero was a cruel tyrant when in power, although he appeared to be mild and amiable in private life. Soon after his accession to the throne, he put several persons to death, to gratify his own malignant temper; and among the rest, Agrippina his own mother, to whom he owed the possession of the empire. Agrippa, however, shared the favour of Nero as he had done that of his predecessor; for he increased his dominions, by the addition of the cities of Tarichœa, Tiberias, Abila, and Julias, with the territories which appertained to them.

At the time when Felix arrived in Judea, the country was almost in a state of anarchy. The curse of God seemed evidently to be brooding over that ill-fated nation. The whole land was infested with robbers, and swarmed with impostors. About this time, also, arose the Sicarii, a desperate set of assassins, who received their name from a short sword or dagger which they carried under their outward garment. These men, by mingling with the crowd, would suddenly strike their victim, and then concealing their weapon, hide themselves among the multitude.

Felix employed these men to put Jonathan the high-priest out of the way; for by his intrusion as an adviser, he had become troublesome to the procurator. Jonathan, having had a chief influence in getting Felix appointed to this office, thought he had a right to exercise a good deal of freedom in advising and admonishing him. But he dearly paid for his officiousness, for Felix was not a man that could endure reproof.

Among the many sorcerers, jugglers, and other impostors, who appeared about this time, there was an Egyptian Jew, who drew after him thirty thousand persons, whom he led to the mount of Olives, promising that he would cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall down at his word; but Felix fell upon the deluded multitude, and slew about four hundred of them, and took two thousand prisoners. The impostor himself made his escape. Many other impostors led their followers out into the wilderness, where they promised that they would show great signs and miracles; but Felix showed no mercy to such men, and caused many of them to be put to death. The Jew above mentioned, is probably the man to whom Lysias, the captain of the temple, had reference, when he said to Paul, (Acts 21:37,) "Art thou not that Egyptian which before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men, that were murderers."

Felix, as well as his successors, resided at Cesarea. We find, therefore, (Acts 23:23–35,) that the captain of the temple, Claudius Lysias, when he had learned that a conspiracy was formed by about forty Jews to kill Paul, sent him off by night, escorted by a strong guard, to Felix the governor, at Cesarea. Here he was kept in confinement during the remaining time of Felix's administration, which was two whole years; but liberty was given for his friends to visit him.

On a certain occasion, Felix, and his wife Drusilla, already mentioned, heard Paul preach; and the effect of his discourse, "while he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment," was such that Felix trembled, and he seems to have interrupted the apostle, not wishing to hear any more about these matters at that time; but promising that when he should have a convenient season he would call for him. And he did frequently send for Paul, and converse with him; but his object was to obtain money for his release; thinking, probably, that some of his friends would be willing to pay a large sum for his ransom.

This history of Luke is corroborated fully by Josephus, and in some important particulars, by Tacitus. The marriage of Felix to Drusilla, a Jewess, is particularly mentioned by the Jewish historian, who relates that she was the most beautiful woman of her time, and had been married to Azizus, the king of Emesa, but was seduced by means of one Simon, a Jew of Cyprus, to forsake her husband, and become the wife of Felix. Tacitus says, "That, while Felix was procurator of Judea, he acted in a very arbitrary manner, and scrupled no kind of injustice." When Felix returned to Rome, the Jews forwarded complaints against him to Nero, on account of his cruelty and injustice while procurator of Judea.

The conduct of Felix towards Paul was very reprehensible. When he vacated his office, he left him a prisoner, for no other reason but because he wished to gratify the Jews. The words of Luke are, "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

The exact year in which Festus came into office, is not easily ascertained; but it must have been between A. D. 57 and A. D. 60. That he was the successor of Felix as procurator, is often asserted by Josephus. Soon after his arrival in Judea, he visited Jerusalem, where the Jews renewed their accusations against Paul, and requested that he might be brought up to Jerusalem for his trial. But Paul, knowing the malice and treachery of the Jews, in order to avoid this, made use of his privilege as a Roman citizen, to appeal to Cesar; on which, Festus, after consultation with his council, resolved to send him to Rome.

Soon after this, Festus received a visit from king Agrippa and his sister Berenice. These being Jews, Festus, sensible of his ignorance of Jewish customs, was desirous that they should hear Paul, and then advise him what he should write to the emperor respecting him. Agrippa expressed a strong desire to have an opportunity of hearing the defence of a man who had become so famous by his preaching and his sufferings. Accordingly, on a day appointed, Festus, Agrippa, Berenice, and the chief captains and principal men of Cesarea, came with great pomp into the hall of audience, where Paul was brought before them, chained; and on receiving permission from Agrippa, entered on his defence, in which he gave a succinct account of his life, and especially of his miraculous conversion. At the close of his oration he made a solemn appeal to the conscience of Agrippa, as a Jew who believed in the prophecies, and extorted from him that remarkable expression of his feelings, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

During the administration of Festus, the state of society among the Jews rather grew worse than better. Agrippa having, as was before mentioned, the presidency of the temple, produced a great excitement, by adding to the palace of Herod a high building which overlooked the whole city, and gave him the opportunity of seeing what was going on within the enclosure of the temple. To prevent this, the Jews built a high wall between that and the temple, which entirely intercepted the view from Agrippa's tower. Agrippa, backed by the authority of Festus, gave orders that this wall should be taken down: but the chief men of Jerusalem urged that they might be permitted to lay the whole matter before the emperor. Nero, influenced, it is said, by his wife Poppea, who is thought to have been a secret proselyte, gave permission for the wall to stand. But for some reason he detained all the members of the embassy sent to him on this occasion, among whom was Ismael the high-priest. That office being then left vacant, Agrippa, by the authority vested in him, appointed Joseph Cabis, the son of Simon, to fill the place. After the death of Festus, which occurred about A. D. 63, Albinus was appointed procurator of Judea. He was no better a man than his predecessors, for he was in the habit of compromising with the robbers seized by public authority, for a sum of money. The number of robbers and sicarii, was greatly increased about this time by the dismissal of eighteen thousand labourers from the temple; that work being now entirely finished. These men thus turned adrift and having no regular occupation, betook themselves very generally to unlawful means of procuring a subsistence. Every day, therefore, the state of society became more disorderly and miserable. In fact nearly all the bonds of civil society seemed to be severed. Albinus was not wanting in severity against the disturbers of the peace; except when they could gratify his avarice by a round sum of money; so that many of the

ringleaders escaped punishment, and no salutary purpose was answered by the executions which took place. Just before the arrival of Albinus in Judea, Agrippa had given the office of high-priest to Ananus, the son of the former priest of that name. He was a zealous Sadducee, and according to the spirit of his sect, was severe in executing punishment upon delinquents. When he first entered on his office Festus was dead, but his successor was not yet arrived. In this interregnum, Josephus informs us, "that he assembled the Sanhedrim and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ, and whose name was James, and some others; and having accused them before this tribunal, as violators of the law, he delivered them to be stoned." Of this proceeding most of the Jews disapproved, and begged of Agrippa to write to the high-priest, and forbid his acting in so unjustifiable a manner. And some of them went to meet Albinus, who was on his way to Judea, and by their representations induced him to send a threatening letter to Ananus. Agrippa found it necessary to dismiss him from office a few months after he had been made high-priest, and appointed Jesus, son of Damneus, his successor.

Gessius Florus succeeded Albinus, as procurator of Judea, A. D. 65. This man was of a more detestable character than any of his predecessors. The Jews thought Albinus a very bad man; but in comparison with Florus, they called him good. Florus was rapacious and cruel, and his avarice insatiable. He was openly the patron of the bands of robbers, in whose wicked gains he shared. No wonder then that robbers increased, until their oppression became so intolerable, that many Jews emigrated from their own country and went to reside in foreign lands. The revolt of the Jews is less wonderful, when we reflect on the distracted and desperate condition of the nation. They were now ripening fast for those dreadful calamities which were preparing to burst upon them.

Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, visited Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; and to form some estimate of the number of persons collected at Jerusalem, on this festival, he ordered the number of lambs used on the occasion to be counted. They were found to be two hundred and fifty-six thousand; but this number, Josephus thinks falls short of the truth, which he supposes was not less than three hundred thousand. Now, if we reckon ten persons to every lamb—for small households united in this festival—the number of Jews at Jerusalem, during that passover, will be three millions.

SECTION XIV

Rome set on fire by Nero—disturbances at Caesarea—Florus, the procurator, excites insurrection—his cruelty—the Jews complain to Agrippa—Eleazar son of the high-priest, and master of the temple, persuades the priests to reject all pagan sacrifices—dreadful commotions in Judea, and massacres in the temple—Cestius Gallus marches an army towards Jerusalem—the Jews assembled at the feast of tabernacles, furiously rush on the hostile army, and slay five hundred men—Agrippa interposes—persuades the Jews to make peace, but in vain—Gallus brings back his army to the gates of Jerusalem—retires again to Scythopolis—is attacked in the defile of an ambuscade, and flies with a few hundred men—Josephus, the historian, appointed to the command of Galilee and Gamala—Nero sends Vespasian to Judea—he first subdues Galilee—bands of robbers infest the country—the Zealots—parties in Jerusalem—cruelties perpetrated

In the year A. D. 65, the city of Rome was burnt; set on fire by Nero himself, as all believed, but laid to the charge of the hated and persecuted Christians; who were subjected to the most horrid

cruelties, and torturing deaths, as if they had indeed been the perpetrators of this enormous crime.

A. D. 66, disturbances took place at Cesarea in consequence of an imperial edict, which gave to the Syrian and Greek inhabitants of the place a rank above the Jewish citizens. The spirit of hostility between the parties began to grow hot. Occasions of dispute were not wanting. A Greek, in building his house, nearly closed the entrance into the Jewish synagogue; and on the Sabbath, to insult the Jewish worship, began to sacrifice birds on an earthen vessel, near the door of the synagogue. The parties became exceedingly exasperated against each other, and were just ready to break out into acts of hostility. The master of horse came forward to quell the tumult, but was driven back by the Greeks. The Jews now carried away their sacred books from the synagogue, and made their complaint to the procurator, who was then at Sebaste; but Florus put the embassy, consisting of twelve distinguished men, in prison; alleging as a reason, the removal of their sacred books from Cesarea.

It seems evidently to have been the wish of Florus to excite insurrection, by goading the Jews to desperation. He demanded a large sum of money to be paid to him out of the treasury at Jerusalem, and when this produced a tumult, and called forth bitter reproaches against the rapacity of the procurator, he came in person, accompanied by a body of soldiers, horse and foot. The people came out to receive him with the usual marks of external respect, but he drove them back. He now demanded that all who had joined in the tumult and reproaches against him should be given up, and would hear no apology, but gave orders to his soldiers to plunder the upper market. In the execution of these orders, they were guilty of great disorders, and some massacres. Peaceable citizens were dragged before Florus, and among the rest, some of the chiefs of the publicans, who held the rank of Roman knights, and who, after being scourged, were crucified. The next day Florus ordered the Jews to go out of the city and meet with the usual shout of joy and respect, two cohorts of soldiers who had been ordered from Cesarea; but he sent secret orders to these soldiers to receive them with insult, and if they showed any dissatisfaction, to fall upon them. The result was, that many were wounded, and others crushed to death in the crowd. His next attempt was to press into the temple with his soldiers, but the Jews offered so determined a resistance that the Romans were repulsed, and forced to take refuge in the castle. The Jews now the more effectually to prevent the Romans from entering into the temple, broke down the covered way which led from the castle Antonia to the temple.

Florus, after these commotions, returned to Cesarea, leaving only one company of soldiers at Jerusalem. But he sent an account of these disturbances to Cestius Gallus; and the principal Jews, with Berenice, forwarded their account, in which they complained grievously of the unreasonable and cruel conduct of the procurator.

Cestius, while he ordered an army to be in readiness, sent a confidential messenger to see what the existing state of affairs was. This man met Agrippa on his return from Egypt, at Jamnia, and both together went to Jerusalem, where they were met by the people with loud complaints against Florus. But they received Agrippa with joy, and treated the message of Gallus with respect. Nay, when Agrippa, in an oration, urged them to obedience, they promised acquiescence, and paid up their arrears of taxes to the Romans, and built up the portico which they had recently demolished. But, afterwards, when Agrippa exhorted them to remain obedient to Florus until another should be sent, they were so enraged that they drove him with stones out of the city.

Eleazar the son of the high-priest Ananus, being now the president of the temple, rashly persuaded the priests to reject all sacrifices which came from Pagans; so that the sacrifices offered by the emperor were henceforth discontinued. The orderly part of the inhabitants now sent to Florus and Agrippa for a body of soldiers, to preserve order. The former gave them no answer, but Agrippa, who now resided at Cesarea, sent them a force of three thousand horse. With these, the party in favour of obedience took possession of the upper city, while the temple and lower town remained under the power of the factions. These men were actuated by an insane and fiery zeal, and would not so much as suffer the other party to enter the temple for worship. Skirmishes daily took place between them; and the revolters, aided by the Sicarii, actually broke into the upper city, and set fire to the palace of king Agrippa; and the next day made an attack on the castle of Antonia, which they took, and put the Roman garrison to the sword.

The strong fortress of Masada had been, some time before this, surprised by a band of robbers, and the Roman garrison put to the sword. At this time, many Jews of distinction had fled for refuge to the castle of Herod, where they defended themselves bravely against the revolters. Among these was Menahem, the son of the notorious Judas of Galilee; who, going to Masada, broke open the armory and obtained arms for a set of robbers and desperadoes, with whom, returning to the castle at Jerusalem, he proclaimed himself king, and took the command of its defence. The besieged at length begged permission to depart, which was granted to all except the Romans. The next day, Ananus was found dead in the palace; and his brother Hezekiah was also put to death by the robbers. Soon after this, Menahem was slain in the temple, with most of his followers, by Eleazar and his party.

During this year, A. D. 66, the whole Jewish nation was in a state of terrible commotion. At Jerusalem, the factious Jews who continued to besiege the Romans in the castle were guilty of a horrible act of treachery and cruelty; for having promised safety to the besieged, if they would lay down their arms, they, nevertheless, massacred every one of them. On the same day, all the Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea were massacred by the Greeks; and this served as a signal for an insurrection of the two parties, in opposition to each other. In all the cities, where there was a mixed population, there was no safety for any man, but in the strength of his own party. At the same time, the Jews of Alexandria were attacked, and all who could not make their escape were put to death. Fifty thousand Jews, are said to have been slain there in one day.

Cestius Gallus, to quell the spirit of insurrection which had made its appearance in Palestine, marched an army thither, and invaded Galilee, sacked many cities and slew thousands of Jews. Having apparently reduced the rebellions to subjection, near the close of the year, he marched his army towards Jerusalem, and encamped within a few miles of the city. The Jews were at this time assembled from all parts at Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. When the multitude heard of the approach of the hostile army, they seized such arms as they could get, and rushed forth with incredible fury on the Sabbath, and killed above five hundred of the enemy, while they suffered the loss of only a few men. And the Romans were again attacked on their retreat by Simon Gioras, and suffered considerable loss.

Agrippa now interposed, and sent two ambassadors to persuade the Jews to peace, and to offer them an amnesty for the past; but such was their inconsiderate fury, that they fell upon these messengers of peace and murdered them.

Cestius Gallus now came back with his army to Jerusalem, and having waited in vain for three days to receive proposals of peace, proceeded to obtain possession of two of the northern districts of the city, and drive the rebels into the inner city. He then attacked the upper city, and for five days the most strenuous efforts were used to gain possession of the wall, but they were unsuccessful.

Cestius then formed a testudo,* and was about setting the gates on fire, under the cover of this defence, on which many of the rebels fled from the city, and the peaceable inhabitants invited him to enter. But distrusting the apparent friendship of the inhabitants, he marched his army back to Scopas, which encouraged the rebels to attack him on his way, so that it was with difficulty he reached his entrenchments that night, and made his way the next day to Gabao. After remaining at this place a few days, Cestius endeavoured to draw off his army to Antipatris, but the robbers and rebels increasing in number and confidence, not only pursued him, but way-laid him in the defiles of the mountains, and so obstructed his course, that he left the main body and the military engines, and fled by night with a few hundred men.

The state of things became now so distracted and desperate at Jerusalem, as Josephus informs us, that the more prudent citizens left the city. No doubt he has reference to the departure of the whole body of Christians, who agreeably to the warning of their Master, (Matthew 24:15-20,) fled from the city, and went over Jordan, wherever they could find a secure abode; but the largest body took up their residence at Pella.

The rebels, after the defeat of Cestius, were so elated that they thought of nothing but resistance, and constrained all the peaceable inhabitants to join with them. Ananus the high-priest, and Joseph the son of Gorian, were appointed commanders. Eleazar, on account of his rash and arbitrary disposition, had no office in the new arrangement of government; but having appropriated to himself a large part of the spoils taken from Cestius, he was able by his largesses to gain over the populace to his interest. As resistance was fully determined on, generals, or prefects were appointed for every district of the country. Among these we recognise Flavius Josephus, the historian, who has handed down to us an account of these events. To him was assigned for his command, Galilee and Gamala. Having repaired to Galilee, he began by appointing a council of seventy, to manage all important civil affairs; and in every city, seven judges, to attend to matters of less importance. He took care to fortify all the towns which were capable of standing a siege; and by his industry and address, soon collected an army of one hundred thousand men. But notwithstanding this formidable force, which he took care to have organized and disciplined after the Roman manner, such was the spirit of turbulence and revolt among his soldiers, that his own life was often in jeopardy. It was with much difficulty that he escaped the machinations of John of Gischalus, a very crafty leader of banditti.

Ananus the high-priest, finding that all prospect of peace was gone, endeavoured to put Jerusalem into a state of defence. As Simon of Gioras was committing great devastation with his band of lawless followers, he sent an army against him. But Simon fled to Masada, which had now become a mere den of thieves.

Nero, on hearing of these commotions in Judea, was greatly displeased with the governor of Syria, to whose negligence he attributed all these misfortunes. To put a stop to the growing evil, he commissioned Vespasian, who had just returned from a victorious campaign against the Germans

and Britons, to take the command in Syria. He also sent Titus, the son of Vespasian, to Alexandria, with orders to transport into Judea two Roman legions which were stationed there.

The Jews, in the meantime, made an attempt to take the strong city of Askelon, but were repulsed with the loss of ten thousand men. A second attempt was not more successful; for falling into an ambush, they lost eight thousand men, and the remainder took refuge in the town of Bezedel, which the Romans set on fire, and they perished in the flames.

A. D. 67, Vespasian arrived at Ptolemais accompanied by Agrippa, and having collected troops from all the Roman stations in the surrounding country, and being joined by his son Titus, with the two legions from Egypt, he found himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand effective men.

Vespasian first turned his course to Galilee, where Josephus commanded. The inhabitants were at once filled with consternation, and most of the soldiers of Josephus forsook him and fled. As many Jews had taken refuge in Jotapata, one of the strongest places in Galilee, Josephus threw himself, with the few men whom he had left, into that city. Vespasian soon appeared before the place with his army, and commenced a regular siege. Josephus and the garrison made a brave defence, but after enduring a siege of forty-seven days, the place was taken. Forty-thousand Jews were slain during the siege, and the city was utterly demolished. Josephus, with forty other Jews, concealed himself in a cave; but they were betrayed by a woman, who knew their place of refuge. The Romans entreated him to yield, and promised to spare his life, but his companions would not permit him to surrender. At the suggestion of Josephus, it was agreed that they should by lot destroy one another; but after all were slain except Josephus and one other, they surrendered themselves to the Romans. At first Josephus was put in chains, but after he had predicted that Vespasian would be exalted to the imperial throne, he was treated with kindness and respect.

While the siege of Jotapata was in progress, Trajan and Titus assailed the town of Joppa, in the vicinity, where twenty-thousand men were slain, and none left but women and children. The winter having now commenced, Vespasian marched back to Ptolemais, and sent two legions to Cesarea, and two to Scythopolis. Having visited Cesarea Philippi, in the kingdom of Agrippa, he and his army were splendidly entertained by that prince, for twenty days.

The remaining cities of Galilee were next reduced. The only place which made much resistance was Gamala, on the sea of Gennesareth, and situated on the top of a precipitous mountain, accessible only on one side. After Agrippa had besieged this place for seven months, Vespasian sat down before it, and pitched his camp on the accessible side. Agrippa, while summoning the town to surrender, was wounded by a sling, and repulsed. When a breach was at length made in the walls, and the Romans attempted to enter, most of the assailants were slain; and Vespasian himself was once so surrounded by the enemy, that he escaped with much difficulty. At last many made their escape by clambering down the rocks or creeping through the sewers. But one of the towers having been undermined, fell, and a way was opened for the entrance of the Romans. The Jews now fled to the citadel, but this was scaled, and all the inhabitants put to the sword, women and children not excepted.

The fortress on mount Tabor was soon reduced, but the town of Gischala, held by John, the leader of a band of robbers, was among the last in Galilee which yielded. John at length left it, after which the people willingly admitted Titus.

John of Gischala, being now obliged to relinquish his strong hold, went directly to Jerusalem, and though he concealed as much as he could, the disastrous state of affairs in Galilee, enough was known to produce deep depression in the inhabitants of that place. At this time the companies of robbers spread alarm and devastation through the country. Many of these freebooters having taken refuge in the city of Jerusalem, began to carry on the same trade there. For a while, by their violence and their numbers, they carried all before them, and meeting with no resistance, proceeded with still increasing audacity, until they set aside the most sacred rights and institutions. They made one Phannias high-priest, who, although of the sacerdotal race, had been bred to labour in the field, and knew nothing of the duties of his office. These men gave themselves the name of Zealots, and to secure themselves from any attack, withdrew to the temple and occupied it as their citadel. At length Ananus Gorion the son of Joseph, and Simon the son of Gamaliel, succeeded in persuading the people to resist. But before they could arm themselves completely, they were attacked by the Zealots, and an obstinate battle was fought, in which many were killed and wounded on both sides. These conflicts afterwards became matters of almost daily occurrence, and generally the Zealots had the advantage. On one occasion, however, Ananus succeeded in driving them in, and followed so closely that he entered the outer gates of the temple with his men. On this, the Zealots retreated to the inner temple, whither Ananus, through reverence, would not follow them. But he introduced within the outer wall of the temple a guard of six thousand men, who were periodically relieved by others.

John of Gischala was secretly in league with the Zealots, but openly professed himself on the side of Ananus. Some suspicion of his fidelity having arisen he purged himself by a solemn oath, by which Ananus was so completely deceived, that he sent him with proposals of peace to the Zealots, when he took the opportunity of advising them to call to their aid the Idumeans. In a short time several thousands of these people presented themselves at the gates of Jerusalem, but were refused admittance, on which they encamped without the walls. While things were in this posture, a very stormy night occurred, in which there was much wind and thunder as well as rain. In the middle of the night the Zealots passed the guard in the temple, without being noticed, and found means to open the gates of the temple. Then proceeding to the gates of the city, they let in the Idumeans, and conducted them to the court of the temple, where they fell on the guard, who were totally unprepared for such an attack. The noise soon awakened the inhabitants of the city, but as no timely assistance could be afforded to the men shut up in the temple, they were nearly all cut off. The Idumeans and Zealots then attacked the inhabitants, and slew many of them, among whom was Ananus the high-priest, whose body was found in the morning.

The loss of this man at this time was irreparable, for he was a friend of peace, and by degrees was gaining an influence over the minds of the people favourable to peace; so that Josephus expresses it as his opinion, that if he had lived, a reconciliation with the Romans would have been brought about. But Providence had other things in view for this devoted people.

Great cruelties were now exercised by the Zealots and their auxiliaries on the citizens. They endeavoured first to make them join their party, and those who refused were massacred, scourged, or imprisoned in the temple. Many now sought refuge among the Romans, who looked on with pleasure, to see their enemies destroying one another. But all who were taken in an attempt to fly were immediately put to death by the Jews. In the midst of this confusion, John of Gischala, a brave and sagacious, but wicked man, watched his opportunity for making himself

master of the city, but met with determined opposition. His adherents and opposers, however, divided the citizens into two factions, between whom there were many bloody conflicts. While these things were transacted within the city, the state of affairs in the country was very little better; for, the Sicarii increased daily, and laid the country waste, sometimes even massacring the people of whole villages. One thing which proved that the protection of God was departed from the nation, was that now, when the males went up to Jerusalem to the solemn feasts, these robbers and murderers attacked the towns, killed the women and children, and carried off the property, a thing unknown in all the former history of this people; for God had promised to restrain their enemies at such times.

When Vespasian heard of the wretched condition of Jerusalem, he wished to march his army immediately to the place; but not thinking it proper to leave towns unsubdued in his rear, he set himself with vigour to reduce the country to subjection. Placidius was sent against Perea, where the Jews made an obstinate resistance. At Jericho, a battle was fought on the banks of the Jordan, when multitudes of the wretched Jews were driven into the river and drowned; twelve thousand were slain in the field, and several thousand taken prisoners. The other towns then submitted. This was A. D. 68.

A. D. 69, Vespasian had subdued all the region of Judea round about Jerusalem, so that the communication between the city and country was cut off, and the Zealots prevented those within, who desired it, from joining the Romans. It was now the intention of the Roman general to invest the city of Jerusalem and bring the war to a conclusion; but the intelligence from Italy perplexed him. First, he heard that Vindex had rebelled in Gaul; next, that Nero was dead, and that Galba was proclaimed emperor by the army in Spain; then, that Galba, after a reign of seven months, had been murdered; and that Otho had been declared emperor. Being greatly interested in these revolutions, he deferred the siege of Jerusalem, and waited at Cesarea for further intelligence. This short respite given by the Romans, only rendered the situation of the Jews more wretched; for without and within the walls, all was disorder and mutual conflict.

Simon, son of Gioras, a man of desperate courage, had joined himself to the robbers of Masada, and by his bold exploits became so famous, that multitudes flocked to his standard. He had now at his command an army of forty thousand men. This daring robber extended his depredations far and wide, until he came into Judea. The Zealots sent out an army against him, but they were defeated and driven back to Jerusalem, while Simon himself came up to the very walls, and by his violence and threats, filled the Zealots with dismay. Simon now returned to Idumea, and carried on his work of murder and robbery. The Idumeans fled to Jerusalem, and he pursued them to the very walls. Within the city, the Zealots, and especially John the Gischalite and his party, were guilty of unheard of wickedness. All laws, human and divine, were trampled under foot. To plunder and murder the rich, and to ravish the women, were occurrences of every day. Josephus says that "the whole city was one great brothel, a horrid den of thieves, and a hateful cave of murderers."

The Idumeans, after entering the city this second time, attached themselves to the party opposed to John and the Zealots, and by them many of the latter were slain. They plundered the palace which John had made the depository of his treasures. Upon this, the Zealots scattered through the different parts of the city, united their forces to make an attack on the Idumeans and the people. These, doubting their own strength to resist the force of their enemies, now opened their gates to

Simon and his men, who, coming in, closely besieged John in the temple.

SECTION XV

vespasian's preparations for carrying on the war—state of parties in jerusalem—titus marches his army to jerusalem and commences the siege—great multitudes of people within the walls—external part of the city taken by titus—great efforts made to bring the jews to terms, but in vain—castle of antonia demolished—a lady eats her own child in the famine—the temple is set on fire and destroyed, contrary to the wishes and orders of titus—the walls thrown down, and the site of the temple ploughed over—dreadful infatuation of the jewish nation—their restoration clearly predicted

Before the close of this year, A. D. 69, Vespasian received intelligence that the German legions had raised Vitellius to the throne of the empire. At this, he and his whole army were much dissatisfied. After some consultation, therefore, they proclaimed Vespasian emperor of Rome, and entreated him to uphold the sinking empire. From entreaties they proceeded to threats, declaring that they would put him to death if he refused to accept the honour.

Vespasian first wrote to Tiberius Alexander, in Egypt, continuing him in his office, and engaging him to secure the fidelity of the two legions stationed there. The news of his advancement spread rapidly, and before he left Berytus, many ambassadors waited on him, to congratulate him. In the meantime Vitellius was defeated at Cremona, by Priscus, and Sabinus had taken possession of the capitol at Rome, in the name of Vespasian. Vitellius was murdered in the streets of Rome, and Mucianus, sent with an army by Vespasian, having arrived at Rome, Vespasian was universally acknowledged emperor. Vespasian was at Alexandria when this pleasing intelligence reached him. He, therefore, sent his son Titus back to Judea, to finish the war, and set sail himself for Rome, immediately, although it was in the midst of winter.

A. D. 70. At the commencement of this year a third party arose in Jerusalem, under the conduct of Eleazar, the son of Simon, of whom some account has been already given. He, being jealous of John's power, formed a party and took possession of the inner temple. Thus John had to contend with Simon, who had possession of a large part of the city, and at the same time with Eleazar, who had shut himself up in the inner temple. By the continual conflicts between John and Simon, the whole of that part of the city which was adjacent to the temple, was laid waste, and the houses burnt, by which vast quantities of provisions were consumed. And often the streets were covered with the dead bodies of the slain, which lay there unburied. Nor could any one escape, for the gates were carefully watched, and even the appearance of discontent exposed a man to death, as a friend to the Romans.

A. D. 71. Titus now marched his army from Cesarea towards Jerusalem, and encamped about thirty furlongs from the city. He then rode, with a few hundred horse, to reconnoitre the situation of the town, and to see whether the Jews within were at all disposed to yield. But when he came near, the rebels rushed out and separated him from the main body of his party, so that he had no way of escape, but to break through his enemies, which, at great risk, he accomplished. He now moved forward two legions within seven furlongs of the city, and formed a line of intrenchments behind them. The legion from Jericho he stationed on the mount of Olives, six furlongs from Jerusalem, and began a line of circumvallation. But now the three parties in Jerusalem, seeing the

enemy at the door, united their forces and sallied out against the legion on the mount of Olives. These sallies were made very frequently, and in one of them Titus was again in imminent danger of his life. But this union of parties in the city did not last long. As Eleazar opened the gates of the temple to all who came to worship, John sent in some of his party, with their weapons concealed under their garments. These fell upon the Zealots of Eleazar's party, and a bloody massacre ensued. Thus John made himself master of the whole temple; and there remained now but the two parties of John and Simon.

Titus now summoned the city to surrender, but on receiving no favourable answer, he levelled the land from Scopas, where his camp was, up near to the city, cutting down all the trees and removing the gardens. The Jews now made a sally on the Romans with considerable success; but Titus advanced his army within two furlongs of the city, and stationed some of his best soldiers near the walls. It was now the season of the passover, and vast multitudes of the Jews were collected within the walls of the city. As to the forces within the city, Simon had two thousand men, and five thousand Idumeans, and held possession of the upper and lower city. John had six thousand men, with twenty-five hundred Zealots, and had also possession of the temple, and such parts as were fully commanded by it. Titus was now prepared to make an assault on the outer wall. But before the attack commenced, Flavius Josephus was sent to make peace, but the only answer returned, was a shower of arrows, which wounded a Roman officer who accompanied him. Mounts were now raised near the walls, in erecting which, the soldiers were protected by their military engines. On these mounts three moveable towers were erected, and the battering rams were brought to bear on the walls in three several places. These tremendous engines produced such terror in the city, that the two parties again united and made a desperate sally, to set the machines on fire, but many of the Jews were taken and crucified before the city. One of the moveable towers fell, but it caused no obstruction to the progress of the siege. The battering rams soon made a breach in the wall, through which the Romans rushed into the new city, and took possession of it on the fourteenth day of the siege. They then demolished a great part of the outer wall, and the Jews retired within the second wall. The Roman camp was now removed within the outer wall, and an assault made on the second wall; and in five days a practicable breach was effected. The Jews made a brave resistance, so that for three days the Romans were unable to enter the breach; or, as often as they entered were repulsed. The Romans, therefore, did what Titus had at first resolved not to do; they demolished almost the whole of the second wall.

Titus, having now obtained possession of the interior part of the city, gave his soldiers a respite of four days, suspending operations, in hopes that the Jews would surrender; for he knew that they began to be sorely pressed with famine. But finding no desire of peace among them, he prepared to make an assault on the castle of Antonia, and pressed on the siege with vigour. Being very solicitous to preserve the city from total destruction, he sent Josephus again to persuade the Jews to make peace; but they treated the offer with scorn. Some found means of escaping from the city, whom Titus permitted to pass through his camp, and go wherever they would. The famine, within the city, now increased every day, and the robbers began, in search of food, to break into the houses of the citizens, exercising horrid cruelties on those who were unable to supply them, supposing that they had concealed their provisions in some secret place. The rich were often prosecuted on false accusations, merely for the purpose of getting possession of their wealth; for there was no difficulty in finding false witnesses to swear to any charge. The state of morals was

probably never worse among any people on earth than it was at this time in Jerusalem. It is the remark of Josephus, that "a race of men so abandoned as those who then had possession of the city, never appeared on earth; and that Titus was compelled, by their abominable excesses, to destroy the city."

Multitudes of unhappy wretches, pressed with hunger, ventured out of the city in search of food, most of whom fell into the hands of the Romans, by whom they were commonly crucified in some conspicuous place. Five hundred were often thus executed in one day; but the leaders within the city persuaded the people that those numerous executions were of the deserters who left the city to join the Roman camp. Titus cut off the hands of some of the prisoners, to inform the people that no deserters would be punished, but only such as were made prisoners of war. At the same time, he sent a message to Simon and John, exhorting them not to destroy the city by their obstinacy, but to preserve their own lives, and those of their fellow citizens. To which, from the walls, they returned a taunting answer, saying that they cared not for their own lives, nor for their country.

Preparations being now made for an assault on the tower of Antonia, by three mounts reared in the most convenient points, John, the leader of the Zealots, dug a mine under one of these towers, and overthrew it; and Simon sallied out and set fire to the towers and machines on the other two. Nay, these daring men pursued the Romans into their very camp. Titus now built a wall round the whole circumference of the city, that those within, being more completely blocked up, might be compelled by famine, to surrender. This wall, thirty-nine furlongs in the extent of its circuit, was supplied with thirteen towers, and was finished in ten days.

The distresses of the famine now became dreadful beyond conception. At first, the dead were buried at the public expense; but after a while the dead bodies were thrown over the wall, as it was found impossible to bury them all. And all parties within were so much weakened by the famine, that they could make no more sallies to obstruct the besiegers.

Titus pitying the wretched condition of those pent up in the inner city, determined once more to renew his attack on the castle of Antonia; and for that purpose brought wood, which could no longer be had near the city, from a distance of ninety furlongs. But the distress of the famine produced no effect on the tyranny of Simon. He now put to death Matthias the high-priest, who had let him in the city; and also his three sons, besides the high-priest Ananias, and fifteen others of the first distinction.

Judas, an officer who had the command of a tower, with ten other men of distinction, had, on account of the intolerable cruelty of Simon, resolved to surrender the city to the Romans; but while they delayed through distrust of the enemy's sincerity, Simon came upon the conspirators and cut them all off.

Titus being still unwilling to abandon the hope of preserving the city, and especially the temple, sent Josephus a third time, to endeavour to persuade his countrymen to make peace. But he was now more roughly handled than on any former occasion; for as he was going round the walls, he was wounded in the head with a stone, by which he was knocked down senseless to the ground; nor was it without great difficulty that the Romans could rescue him from the Jews, who made a great effort to seize, and drag him into the city. As it was found that some of the Jews, to conceal their gold, had swallowed it, the Syrians and Arabs cut open in one night two thousand living

deserters, to search for money in their bowels. This cruel practice Titus prohibited on pain of death, as its continuance would have stopped entirely all desertions from the city.

The number of dead bodies carried through a single gate, in one month, was declared by Manneus, who fled to the Romans, to be one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight; besides those buried by their relatives. The whole number of dead bodies carried out during the siege, was stated by some deserters to be six hundred thousand. The number buried elsewhere could not be ascertained. After the famine came to the worst, however, they were not carried out at all, but were heaped up in ditches and corners, which produced an intolerable stench.

On the third day of July, a part of the wall of the town of Antonia was thrown down by the battering rams; but the Jews had constructed an interior wall, in an attempt to scale which, the Romans were repulsed. About three o'clock in the night, however, the guards marched up to the town in silence, slew the Jewish sentinels, and immediately blew their trumpets; on which, the Jewish guard fled, supposing that the whole Roman army was upon them.

Titus brought up his army as soon as possible, and entered into the court of the temple, when an obstinate battle was fought, which continued from three o'clock till noon next day. But the Romans were at length compelled to withdraw from the temple, and be contented, for the present, with the conquest of Antonia. Orders were now given by the Roman general for the complete demolition of this castle, that he might have the more room to station his army, in their assault upon the temple. When Titus heard that the daily service of the altar had ceased, he sent Josephus again to hold a conference with John, and ascertain whether he would be willing to agree to some terms which might preserve the temple from destruction, offering to permit the daily service to be continued by men of his own selection. But John declared that the temple could never be taken, and would enter into no accommodation. Titus, himself, now most earnestly addressed the Jews, entreating them to preserve their beautiful temple—Josephus acting as interpreter—but it was all ineffectual. The Zealots attributed this moderation to mere cowardice. Titus, therefore, brought up his army, and at three o'clock in the morning the temple was attacked. The Jewish guards were found at their posts, and soon sounded an alarm; but the night was so dark that the Jews were unable to distinguish friends from foes, and actually slew many of their own men. This the Romans avoided by their watchword. The battle, thus commenced, lasted till noon, without any decisive advantage on either side. In seven days the castle of Antonia was demolished, and on the space where it had stood, four mounts were reared before the temple. These mounts were designed to bring the battering rams to bear upon the buildings on the northern side of the temple, to which buildings the Jews themselves set fire. The sufferings, by the famine, were extreme. The people devoured any thing which they could lay hold of; even their girdles, shoes, and the leather of their shields.

A woman, whose name was Mary, of a respectable family in the country, having been often plundered by the robbers, had taken refuge in Jerusalem. Being destitute of food, and without means of obtaining any, she roasted her own infant child, and having eaten part of it, reserved the remainder for another occasion, when the soldiers, allured by the smell, rushed into the house and demanded food. She boldly declared what she had done, and showed them the half of the child which was left. This horrid transaction was soon known through the city and in the camp of Titus, who protested that these miseries were not owing to him.

Early in August the battering rams were brought to bear upon the temple, and were plied for several days, without making any sensible impression. Next an attempt was made to undermine the northern gate of the temple, but it was unsuccessful, as was also the attempt to scale the cloisters with ladders; for the Jews fought so bravely that they repulsed the Romans, and got possession of one of their standards. Titus, having relinquished the hope of preserving the temple, now gave orders to set the gates on fire. By this means the flames spread into some of the contiguous buildings. The fire continued to rage the whole day, for the Jews made no effort to extinguish it. On the next day, however, it was extinguished by the order of Titus.

A counsel was now called to deliberate whether the temple should be destroyed. Some were in favour of its destruction, in order to guard against future rebellions of the Jews; but Titus persisted in his resolution to preserve this splendid edifice. He accordingly issued an order that the sanctuary should not be injured. Titus now resolved to storm the temple with his whole army; but while he was preparing for the assault, the Jews made several sallies from the eastern gate. The Romans, in driving them back on one of these occasions, penetrated, after them, into the interior of the temple, when a Roman soldier seized a fire-brand and threw it through a window or small door into a passage, which led to the apartments on the north side of the sanctuary. From this place the flames soon burst out. When Titus heard of it, he hastened to arrest the progress of the flames, but could not command the attention of his men, who were engaged in conflict with the Jews; and even the soldiers who followed him disregarded his commands, and instead of extinguishing, did what they could to increase the conflagration. The battle now raged around the altar, streams of blood flowed into the outer court, and the surrounding space was covered with dead bodies. Titus now went, with his chief officers, into the sanctuary, and into the most holy place, and then made one more attempt to have the fire extinguished, but with as small success as before. The soldiers appeared to be actuated by a sort of fury, and applied firebrands to every combustible part. Finding it impossible to save the temple, Titus retired from the scene. The chambers of the inner court were now consumed, and all the rest of the edifice, except the buildings on the east and south, which were afterwards destroyed.

About six thousand persons, mostly women and children, were burnt in the temple, who, trusting to the predictions of a false prophet, that God would work a miracle for their deliverance, went into the temple, and there remained until it was destroyed. According to the testimony of Josephus, there were then many false prophets employed by the leaders, to deceive the people.

The gold taken by the Roman soldiers, in and about the temple, was in such abundance, that its value, for a time, was not more than one-half of what it had previously been. The lower city was now fully in possession of the Romans, by whom it was burnt as far as the pool of Siloam. The Zealots, therefore, were compelled to retreat to the upper city, where they were closely besieged, and whence they had no opportunity of making their escape. New mounts were now raised, and the machines of war were brought into play; and early in the month of September, the upper city, after a feeble but desperate resistance, fell into the hands of the Romans. Very little mercy was shown to the vanquished. They were slaughtered in heaps in every street and house, and multitudes of dead bodies were found in the houses of those who had died with famine, as well as in the vaults and common sewers. When Titus surveyed the city, he expressed great astonishment at the strength of its fortifications, and exclaimed, that it was surely God himself who expelled the Jews from fortifications from which they never could have been driven by man. The captives were

very numerous. The handsomest were selected for the triumph. A large number were presented by Titus to the theatres of the provinces, but the majority were sent into Egypt, to be sold as slaves. John, the leader of the Zealots, was found almost dead with hunger, in one of the vaults. He begged for his life, which was granted, but he was kept in chains until his death.

The Romans now set themselves to destroy the walls, and all that remained of the city. Josephus says, expressly, that the ground was levelled, as though no buildings had ever stood upon it. Three of the highest of the towers and a part of the western wall were kept standing, as a monument to future ages of the ancient splendour of the city. The tenth legion was left as a garrison, and the other soldiers were all sent away.

The obstinacy of the resistance of the Jews has been sometimes attributed to an expectation of assistance from their brethren in Babylonia, but was really owing to fanatical infatuation. During the siege, ninety-seven thousand became captives, and eleven hundred thousand perished. For the siege took place at a time when the city was full of strangers, in attendance on the passover, and of refugees from the surrounding country.

Titus proceeded from Jerusalem to Cesarea, on the coast, where he left part of his army. He then visited Cesarea Philippi, where he celebrated games; and, for the amusement of the people, caused many of the Jewish captives to be cast to the wild beasts, and many more to kill one another, in the show of gladiators. He exhibited the same cruel spectacle at Cesarea, on the sea-coast, and at Berytus; at the former of which places he celebrated the birth-day of his brother, and at the latter, that of his father.

The fate of John, the leader of the Zealots, has been mentioned. At the close of the siege Simon was not found, but after the removal of the Roman army, he came forth like a spectre from one of the vaults, where he had concealed himself until his provisions were exhausted. Having surrendered himself to the governor of the place, he was sent in chains to Titus, at Cesarea, who directed him to be reserved to grace his triumph.

The same infatuation which brought destruction on the Jews of Palestine, seems to have infatuated those who dwelt in other countries. In Egypt and Cyrene, particularly, they exposed themselves, by their madness, to the same destruction which had so awfully overtaken their brethren in Judea. Their temple in Egypt was destroyed, by order of Vespasian, after it had stood three hundred and forty-three years.

The same reckless fury seems to have actuated the relics of this nation for several ages. In the reign of Trajan, and of Adrian, they were guilty of great disorders, and rose in insurrection against the Roman government, which occasioned the destruction of multitudes of this devoted people. Nor was this all. To this very day, they have been driven from country to country, everywhere oppressed and persecuted—no where finding rest, and never able to collect into a body, or to gain any permanent residence of their own—yet preserved in existence as a distinct people, retaining their national characteristics and their own religious customs, without mingling with the people among whom they dwell.

Thus do they stand, a monument of God's displeasure against their nation's sin, in rejecting and crucifying the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and of the truth of divine revelation, by the fulfilment of numerous prophecies, which foretold their future condition. Still, however, they are

preserved in mercy, as well as judgment. For it is clear from prophecy, that, as a nation, they will be restored to the privileges of the Church from which for so long a time they have been cut off by unbelief. For a season, until the time appointed, God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that in the day of visitation, he may have mercy on all. "So all Israel shall be saved."

S. A Memorial of Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge

A

MEMORIAL

of

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE

in two parts.

Part I. Memoir, and Funeral Sermon.

Part II. Letters to her surviving Children.

PHILADELPHIA:

WILLIAM S. MARTIEN.

1839.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1839, by

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Manners

a

MEMOIR

of

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE

“Jesus wept.”

PART I("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

INTRODUCTION

More than a year has now passed since Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge, the beloved subject of the following brief notices, was taken from us into the saints' everlasting rest. By that event, the little family of which she was the joy and crown, was dissolved. The surviving parent felt that God had

committed to him the interesting but mournful duty of preserving the memory of so inestimable a friend. But it is long after such an event, before the mind is sufficiently tranquil to utter our thoughts and feelings without excess. The peaceable fruits of so dreadful a chastisement succeed, alas! but slowly in our intractable hearts, to the distraction of grief, and the desolation of the grave.

It was in the midst of the deepest of his sorrow, also, that the writer was hastened (by a very kind Providence, as he now sees it to have been) into the active duties of an office which left no rest for body or mind during almost an entire year. So that if his feelings had allowed the attempt at preparing a Memoir, his duty to the Church of God forbade it. In these trying and peculiar circumstances, he was permitted to call in the aid of those honoured and venerable Friends, from whose hands, in a happier day, he had received the lovely wife of his youth. They of all others knew her best, especially from her birth to her marriage. They had done most, under God, to fit her for life's duties, and its close; and to make her "worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance." And none were judged to be so well qualified to do justice to her memory. To the one we are indebted for the following interesting Sketch, making the first chapter. To the other for the valuable Letters to her surviving children, forming the second part of this memorial.

While all must admire the delicacy and candour with which this sketch is drawn, it is evident to those who knew the deceased, that much remains to be said which ought not to be omitted—especially in regard to that portion of her life, embracing more than fifteen years, which passed between the time of leaving the parental roof, and her lamented death. In attempting to supply this omission, the writer felt the inconvenience—even awkwardness of returning upon a narrative which seemed to have been brought to an appropriate close. But this was thought preferable to leaving the memoir incomplete; or to breaking the thread of the narrative given in the first chapter. And moreover it was felt that the design of the work which called for the additional chapters, dispensed with form in the manner of furnishing them. It is intended to preserve the memory of the beloved dead for her bereaved children, and her numerous kindred and friends, rather than to unveil her retiring character to the public eye. The work being designed, not so much for general circulation as for family use, is rather printed, than published; and all its imperfections will readily be overlooked by those who will come to these pages, as Mary went to the tomb of Lazarus—"to weep there."

MEMOIR

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A narrative of the life of our departed friends, bears some resemblance to the representation, on canvass, of their persons and features; it serves to restore and collect our scattered thoughts, and revive our affections; and prevents the hand of time from obliterating entirely, their peculiar mental and moral lineaments.

It was in consequence of the necessity of this help to our natural infirmities, that our Lord gave to his people the bread and wine, as a symbol of his body and blood, and said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He knew too well our careless, wandering hearts, to trust the recollections, even of his great and lovely character, to our unfaithful keeping, and established, as a help to his word, the ordinance which was to continue unto the end of the world, "as a memorial of him." And

we trust that his people are permitted to endeavour to perpetuate the remembrance of each other by means, which, however they may come greatly short of the significant emblem ordained by himself, will assist in enabling them “to love one another as he also loved them.” In view of this encouragement, given us in the Scriptures of inspiration, we would endeavour to bring together, and exhibit, in the history of the short life of Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge, some of those graces of a Christian character, which lead us to hope that the finger of the Lord had engraven his name on her heart, and that his grace was carrying on the work, notwithstanding much infirmity of flesh and spirit, until the body of sin and death within her was rolled away, and a simple, undivided hold taken on the Rock of ages.

She was born September 29th, 1802, in New York, and educated for several years under the immediate instruction of the sanctuary, in a comparatively pure state of the Church, when the name and influence of a few such venerable and holy men as the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, had thrown a restraint on the vices of the world around them, as well as on the constantly recurring disorders of the Church, so that the very vagrants of the street felt their presence.* Every pastor of a flock of Jesus Christ seemed to feel it his privilege, as well as his duty, to feed the lambs of his flock himself, and did not commit them to the ever-varying, heterogeneous instruction of others. The Scriptures, and the Catechism, it was his own business to inculcate; and the same afternoon in each week, had been for many years, in several of the churches of the city, of various denominations, the season for this instruction. By these and other means, the Bible had taken a systematic form in Margaret’s mind, very early; and whenever she met, even in childhood, with a scriptural scene or subject, she generally knew where to place it, and was particularly animated by it. And this peculiar skill, and taste, continued and increased until childhood passed away, and the pride and enjoyment of life opened a new scene before her. For a time it seemed as if every vestige of the sensibility arising from religious instruction would be swept away. She had friends who wished to see her enjoying the innocent pleasures of youth; especially as in person and mind there was a promise of peculiar adaptation to them. And there was a will of her own very clearly developing, which wanted more restraint than parents are generally willing to exercise. Many interpositions, however, in providence occurred, which, though sad in the view of her family, proved a real deliverance to her—frequently arresting her first decisive step in folly. At the age of eleven she was removed with her family to Princeton, in consequence of a call which her father received, to a Professorship in the Theological Seminary in that place. Being thus separated from many snares incident to a city life, she began anew, as it were, to form habits and connexions, which, although in some respects, more dangerous and ensnaring than those which she had left, had not “grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength;” and were, on that account, more ready to yield, when the follies of youth passed away, and the solemnities of this world, in view of another, opened before her. The want of a good school in Princeton, induced her parents to send her, at the age of about fourteen years, to Philadelphia, for the purpose of obtaining for her some finish to the education which she had received at home. She remained there nearly a year, residing with an aunt, and attending a daily and well conducted school. Indeed it was her privilege, as well as the privilege of many others, to receive instruction from a teacher, who not only was competent to every branch of polite learning which adorns the mind of a female, but desirous of having all which he taught so sanctified as to reach the heart, and be made the means of communicating spiritual and saving, as well as intellectual instruction.* The immediate effect of this experiment was injurious to Margaret’s disposition and deportment. She returned to her parents

with more love for the world, and a better opinion of herself; and of consequence was less docile. It was evident that the atmosphere of a city was not the element in which her heart would receive the best influence. In a revival which took place in Princeton, when she was about eighteen years of age, an interest was excited in some of her pious female friends for her conversion. They concluded to make her the subject of special prayer. Of this she was entirely ignorant, until the evidence appeared in herself of the verity of the promise, as to the result of "fervent, effectual prayer." A sermon of the celebrated President Edwards, read in a small, social meeting, arrested her attention, and brought her to continued, deep, serious thinking, which ended, as she thought, in a new view of everlasting things. With all the sanguine feelings of youth, she judged herself prepared to be united with the Church; but owing to the unwillingness of her parents to risk the possibility of a premature profession of religion, this step was delayed. In connexion with this period of her life, it seems necessary to relate some circumstances which took place with regard to a much loved sister of hers; not many years younger than herself. They had been so closely educated together, as to make them one in many of their views and feelings.

Elizabeth, in giving an account of the exercises of her own mind on the subject of religion, some time after they took place, said, that she experienced an irresistible feeling of contempt for the concern which Margaret manifested, and concluded that she was indulging a mere hypocritical affectation; in consequence of which she was beginning to make some observations to this effect, when, in a moment, a deep conviction fastened on her conscience, of the danger of resisting what might prove to be the influence of the Holy Spirit. This impression resulted in a real concern for herself, and in views equally solemn with those expressed by Margaret.

They both now made progress together in their inquiries and experience, and were a mutual help, rather than a hinderance to each other. Both soon thought that they had obtained an interest in "Him, whose blood cleanseth from all sin."

It appeared, however, soon after this, as if our fears with regard to Margaret were but too well founded. "Because of manifold temptations," she seemed to be taking a new hold on the world; but a state of things about the same time, began with Elizabeth, which disciplined and humbled her spirit; and she was soon enabled, to realize all the insufficiency and uncertainty of this world, as a portion.

Many doubts with regard to the genuineness of the change which Elizabeth trusted had taken place in her heart, increased by the weakness which rapidly declining health had induced, perplexed and troubled her, and made her more and more unwilling to make a profession of religion. She had witnessed some of the extravagances of revivals, and felt the danger of being deceived, and of "having a name to live whilst she was dead." In January, 1823, Margaret was married to the Rev. John Breckinridge, and returned with him to Kentucky, his native State, in the spring of the same year. In consequence of a call which her husband received, to a church in Kentucky, (which he accepted,) they were soon after this settled in Lexington. Her departure from her early home was her first real trial. For although, through the course of several months, she had taken a prospective view of this arrangement, with much buoyancy of spirits, as the time approached, every circumstance connected with a separation from all the associations of her childhood and youth, seemed to produce a new and deeper impression, and seven or eight hundred miles appeared at length, as almost an interminable space. The sadness which

irresistibly overspread her countenance, convinced her friends that when, in view of Mr. Breckinridge's first destination, she had given herself unreservedly to a foreign mission, she, like many others, little knew her own heart, and all the sacrifices which such a destination involved. And when it was seen expedient that this intention should be relinquished by him, for a plan more eligible in the view of his fathers in the ministry, a release from this more enduring trial, formed no small part of the considerations which assisted in making her submissively bow to one so much more lenient. And indeed, she had reason to say, that goodness and mercy had followed her at every step. For this very trial which sobered her countenance, made her heart better, and prepared the way for deeper self-examination, and probably more fervent prayer; and the result was, that with a trembling confidence she united herself with her husband's church in Lexington, a few months after he took charge of it. From her letters, after this event, we learned that her connexion with the church took place at the same time—it is thought on the same day—in which her sister Elizabeth, having been delivered from the many doubts which had clouded her mind, made a profession of religion in the church in Princeton. This co-incidence in providence, having occurred without any mutual intercourse or understanding on the subject, seemed so consistent with the plans of Him who “sees the end from the beginning,” and who, from their first serious impressions, appeared to have united the lines of their experience until they ended in one gracious result, that it did much to confirm their friends in the hope, that a good “work was begun in them which should be carried on.” They felt constrained to say. “It is the Lord's doings and wonderful in our eyes.” The kind and affectionate family in Kentucky, of which she now made one, assisted much in alleviating the pressure of sorrowful recollections, and in making the resolution which she had formed of “learning in whatsoever state she was, therewith to be content,” more practical, and more enduring: and when Mr. Breckinridge was called to Baltimore in 1826, although she was pleased with the prospect of getting nearer to her early home, she felt that a new tie had been formed which could not be broken, even partially, without much pain. It was a source of much grateful recollection to her. that she was not permitted to use any undue influence to lead her husband away from his congregation in Lexington, to which she was indebted in so considerable a degree, for the pleasant circumstances which surrounded her. Her health was remarkably firm, especially for one of her delicate appearance, for several years after her marriage, and during all the time that her husband had a settled charge. In Baltimore, to which he removed from Lexington, she seemed to realize with much gratitude, the particularly pleasant circumstances in which her family was placed. Situated on the direct way between her husband's relatives, endeared to her by so many pleasant recollections, and the family of her youth, with both of which she could have frequent intercourse, and in the midst of a kind circle of friends, not limited by the bounds of Mr. Breckinridge's congregation, she was literally at home; and when the summons came to call him to another sphere of labour in the Church, she was the last to be persuaded that it was his duty to obey it, and reluctantly yielded to the opinion of those whose judgment she honoured. From this time she may truly be said to have been a sacrifice to the interests of the Church. The unsettling of her domestic duties and habits, to which her temperament was particularly adapted, was, probably, directly and indirectly at the foundation of those causes, which gradually but too surely undermined her health, and prepared her for a premature grave. Her last change of residence, which placed her in Princeton by the side of her paternal family, and amongst many of her youthful associates, seemed to her to fill up the measure, as it regarded this world, of that providential goodness “which had followed her all the days of her life;” and she said, not long after it took place,

with a humility which was in itself an evidence of her gracious state, "I think, in view of all my mercies, there is a thankfulness experienced which is not the natural growth of my own heart." To us who remain it is given to see, that these unusual comforts were mercifully intended to soothe the infirmities of a rapidly dissolving body, and soften the approach of the last and most formidable enemy.

Several attacks of disease in the course of two years, which threatened to be immediately fatal, were, by the aid of skilful medical treatment, happily arrested, but not until their baleful effect had fastened on her feeble body, and each had left her "more a prey for death." And it was a cause of much thankfulness to her friends, that instead of one of those unexpected instant departures, which so frequently occur, and which in her case it was often feared would take place, the approach of death was gradual and mild, so as to involve no pain, and but little surprise. The simplicity of her character appeared through all her last days, especially after she ascertained that her end was not far off. Her words were few, because she studied to utter none but "the words of truth and soberness;" she seemed to feel that there might be a parade even in dying.

After a short conversation in her room a day or two before she departed, on the subject of the unprofitableness of our best works, which we found had deeply exercised her mind, she remarked with much emotion, a tear starting to her eye, "I feel the truth of these remarks;" but, after a pause, she said, "I have tried to do my duty as a wife and as a mother; I have endeavoured to conduct the affairs of my family with discretion, and to instruct my children in the best things." She evidently clung to this as an evidence of grace, (and not at all as a cause of acceptance with God,) and as affording some hope for her children, when relied on in view of the promises of Him who says, that if this precious seed is sowed, grace shall insure the crop. Her Sabbath evenings, after the good old way of our puritan fathers, saw her with all her household, over whom she had any authority, gathered around her for the purpose of giving them that instruction which, with the promised blessing, would save them from the paths of sin and folly in this world, and prepare them for enjoying the blessedness of another. And through the distractions of an unsettled life, and the hinderances experienced in a large boarding house, in which several winters were spent with her family, she persevered as far as possible, in the instruction of both children and servants in the week and on the Sabbath, with a determination which both she and her friends thought had shortened her life. In view of this peculiar faithfulness to her domestic duties, we are the more willing to offer an apology for what appeared to some of her friends, an indifference to various extra means; which in these last times have been esteemed needful for the awakening of a slumbering church. When her mind began to open to this subject, the glory of our revivals was beginning to be tarnished. "The enemy had begun to sow his tares." The extravagance which so frequently attended them, had produced in her no little disgust for what she thought the mere machinery of religion. In such circumstances, it is difficult to "choose the good, and refuse the evil." The cast of her mind was such, that parade in any thing, and especially in the vital concerns, in which is involved our everlasting destiny, irresistibly revolted her mind. And the errors in principle and in practice, which had been by these means insinuated into, and corrupted the legitimate and professed doctrines and ordinances of the Presbyterian Church, greatly impaired her confidence in what many good people esteemed genuine revivals of religion. Subsequent events have abundantly confirmed the wisdom of her early and deep distrust.

After her constitution had been tried with another violent and unusual attack, in March, 1838, which prostrated nearly all her remaining strength in a few hours, it was evident to many of her friends, that recovery was no longer to be expected. Every means, however, were made use of, that might in any way prove salutary; many of which, as has often occurred, were rather injurious than beneficial. As a last resource, a journey was commenced, for the purpose of trying the Springs of Virginia, so highly recommended to invalids. She was not permitted, however, to go beyond Philadelphia. Her physicians there, judging so long a journey very hazardous, gently arrested it, by proposing a delay of a few days; thus endeavouring to obviate the effects of any disappointment which she might experience. Her own views seemed, spontaneously, to meet theirs, and a quiet acquiescence was every day more manifest. After a consultation of physicians, in which they agreed that an effort might be safely made for her return to Princeton, the sweet complacency with which she said to a very kind friend, who was visiting her, "I am going home to-morrow," encouraged a hope that she had realized her danger; and that her will was gradually moulding to the Divine will, and she preparing for a far better home.

It appeared as if she was permitted to get thus far on her journey, in order to gratify the feelings, and experience the renewed kindness of friends, whom her husband had attached to his family, from his temporary labours amongst them. The attention of these, and indeed many others, whom their interesting circumstances were a means of winning to them, is deeply felt in the family circle, of which she was a beloved member; and which will continue to be felt, as long as her memory shall be cherished amongst them.

It was with difficulty that she was removed to her own residence at Princeton, a few days before she died, fully sensible that her departure was not far off. One of her anxious friends, wishing to be more satisfied of this, said: "You know, my dear Margaret, how ill you are?" A most emphatic "O yes," silenced every remaining doubt. The day before she died, the conversation leading to the subject of death, she said, "I am only afraid of the article of death: I know that when this is over, I shall be in Jesus' arms." From one, so slow to speak, these were encouraging words. A few hours after this, she awoke from a light sleep, with that sort of bewildered spirit, which is frequently experienced under circumstances of so much weakness, especially when accompanied with, perhaps, the effects of an opiate, and repeated the name of a person, with which she had been familiar in her childhood. She observed, "what easy words!" Some one present remarked—there are words equally easy. She said, "tell me some." Upon being referred to a Psalm which had been spoken of the day before, she commenced, as having found something exceedingly pleasant—"The Lord is my shepherd"—and continued to the end of this short and interesting portion of the Word of God, in a tone of sweetness and solemnity, which impressed every one present, adding her testimony to the sweetness of the words. It appeared as if, while the world was fast receding, her character was rapidly finishing in the mould of this precious Word.

Reason was continued to her until the last departing moment, when, after a violent but short struggle, which seemed to arrest every mental exercise, except that which led her spirit immediately to "Him who takes away the sting of death," the freshness of former years was restored to her complexion, which had been, for some months, suffused with feverishness, and marked with suffering, and a calm and solemn composure settled on her countenance, appearing full of meaning, which persuaded those who were around her, that she had some communication to make. But her mouth was sealed, and her hand could no longer effect the gentlest pressure. We

were left to conclude, that when in her agony she had cried—"Come, Lord Jesus—come quickly;"—"Lord Jesus receive my spirit," "she was heard, in that she asked;" and the freshness of everlasting youth, casting one parting ray upon her mortal countenance, had passed upon her, and "she had gone to be forever with the Lord."

"She being dead yet speaketh," and speaks, especially, to all who yet live of her youthful associates. Many of them are, as she was, called to sustain the character of wife and mother, and their history in its prominent features, most probably resembles hers. Her course was marked with much failure in duty, over which she mourned, and, in view of which she seemed deeply humbled. She once said—many months before she died—"O! if the Lord were to send his bereaving commission into my family, I could never forgive myself for the manner in which I have failed to improve the trust committed to me, and fulfilled the duties to which I have been called." Hear the voice which speaking, says, "My dear companions in sin and infirmity, I leave you a poor example. But I exhort you to become believingly and affectionately acquainted with Him, who has borne me through the dark valley and shadow of death, and 'presented me faultless before his Father, clothed in his righteousness, and washed in his blood.' "

"Ye cannot, though Christian wives and mothers, do the things ye would;" but there is a fountain opened, in which your poorest desires and efforts, though like filthy rags, "may be washed and made white, and made instrumental for much good." Point this out to your children, "talk to them in the house and by the way, in sitting down and rising up," of this only hope of perishing sinners. And lest, after all, they should come short, plead, unceasingly, the promises for them, and take hold by faith of the blessing. O! how will you rejoice if you can say, "Here am I Lord, and the children thou hast given me." In order to sustain your character as wives, aim continually, by prayer, to obtain the gift of a meek and quiet spirit, "which in the sight of God is of great price, that even the unbelieving husband may be won to the knowledge of the truth." May such exhortations from our departed friends, reach us all, and be sanctified to us—and may we "exhort one another, daily," so that our social intercourse may be made the means of grace, and assist in preparing us for our last great change!

CHAPTER II("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Additional Illustrations of the Life and Character of Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge

Whoever has been called, in the midst of life, to part with 'the wife of his youth'—if these pages should chance to meet his eye—will know what the writer has felt. Such a bereavement must be felt, in order to be understood. There is a shock in its coming for which no foresight or submission can fully prepare us. There is a chasm created by it which nothing can fill. It is a new experience, replete with dreadful desolation. It is a wonderful attribute of grace that can make these great afflictions so "work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," that the most weighty and enduring of them all, shall seem, in comparison, to be "light, and but for a moment." Yet "no chastisement," (especially such as this) "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but rather grievous." God intends that we shall be moved by such visitations. The call which they utter is too costly to be lightly felt. The stroke is too deep to be hastily healed. "To faint when we are rebuked of Him," is to reproach the goodness of God, when we ought to "lay hold on his strength." But insensibility to his afflictive dispensations is to "despise" the methods of his grace. And who can fail to feel at such a moment! To find one's self strangely, and after all the warnings mercifully

given, suddenly left alone; in the midst of life to be broken in twain; to come to a time when you may no longer pray with her whose presence sweetened devotion itself; no more pray for her who many a year has been the dear burden of all your intercessions; to see your orphan babes left desolate, and enhancing your woe, by being unconscious of their own; yea, “to sorrow most of all” for those dread words, “that you shall see her face no more!” This is sorrow! If it were possible, and being so, were right to ask it for others, we might pray for our readers, that they may be forever ignorant of our experience. But we know that every house is appointed to such a sorrow, sooner or later. They who are yet to pass through these deep waters, if they cannot now fully enter into our trials, may at least be expected to excuse this humble tribute to the dead, as an amiable weakness. But it is not bleeding affection, merely, which has prompted us to add to the foregoing brief narrative, these imperfect illustrations of the life and character of Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge. The bereaved children having been early called to lose a mother’s care, justly claim of surviving friends to preserve her image that they may gaze on it, and her example that they may imitate it, in after life. It is a cruel addition to an orphan’s lot, to consign to the tomb even the memory of the dead. We refer not to the indecent and revolting haste with which every memorial of the deceased is swept into oblivion by those who, studious of new relations, are faithful only to forget. Such a spirit is abhorrent to every sentiment of humanity and religion. But it often happens that the disconsolate survivor, for a season careless of all things but of grief, neglects to treasure and record what God gave in peculiar trust to him—for the good of others. That godly example, which it cost the toils and the trials of a life to exhibit, ought not to be permitted to perish from the world. That “death of the saints,” which “is precious in the sight of the Lord,” and which so gloriously shows forth his praise, is worthy of a monument that time cannot consume. These should live! We should embalm them in the memory of the heart. We should hand them down in the tradition of faithful love. We should record them in a household book, if not publish them to the world—in honour of Jehovah; in memory of the beloved dead; and for the good of those who, even while they were spared to them, were too young to know their value. It is the memory of the wicked alone which God has doomed to rot; or if it live, to stand as a beacon on the brow of death.

There is another consideration of great tenderness and force by which we have been influenced in making these sketches. Woman dwells, to speak so, in the shade of retirement; and not like man, in the blaze of public life. In the household she sits enthroned, the weaker vessel, but the stronger power. Yet the domestic circle, in a great degree, circumscribes her influence; shuts in her character. Her refinement—her patience—her humility—her cheerfulness in trial—her fortitude—her readiness to forgive—her faithful, constant love—her self-devotion to her children—her personal charms—her domestic virtues—her Christian graces—which make her

“The light and music of our happy homes,”

are little known beyond the narrow boundary of her own family, on which they continually rest, “like the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion.” It is not less so with her domestic trials—with her perplexing domestic duties, as she meekly toils in “patient continuance” amidst their innumerable detail, and ever returning round. Now while the full disclosure and rewards must be reserved to the great day of final account, it is a special duty, on proper occasions, to bring such excellence to view. Without our care, this never will be done, since the graces that most adorn, are the most retiring. By an affectionate diligence in this service, a thousand pearls might be brought from the recesses of domestic life, and added to the too scanty stock of memorable

worthies. At least, we ought not to make oblivion the penalty of domestic virtue. On the other hand, the doing of proper justice to real female merit, would most effectually rebuke that assurance of coarse and fanatic women, who, in the insulted name of God, assume the prerogative, and attempt the offices of the stronger sex—forgetting that the immodesty which is offensive to all men, can never be an offering pleasing to a God of purity and order. By presenting to mankind examples of Christian women revolving in orderly beauty, and shining with mild lustre in their appointed course, we not only preserve the memory of those who rest from their labours, but we diffuse their influence abroad. If we may but do justice to the subject of these notices, she would be herself the only being likely to complain, for she shrunk with instinctive sensibility from every such disclosure of her retiring character.

Without repeating what has been said in the first chapter, we proceed to fill up the narrative given therein, by additional notices, which some one ought to furnish, and which a parent could not.

It was God's peculiar mercy to Margaret (Miller) Breckinridge, that she came into life under parental influence so admirable in all respects, that she may be said to have been born and reared in a family, which, like that of Aquilla and Priscilla, "had a church in the house." She enjoyed, in its happiest form, a domestic Christian education, having the Bible for the basis of knowledge; the Parents for instructors; the family fire-side for the school of manners; and the royal law of love and truth, as the standard and source of all true politeness. Truly it is a goodly spectacle in these days of pretension, and vulgar parade; of shallow learning, and degenerate manners, to behold here and there a mother in Israel, after "the manner of the olden time," training her little flock without the aids of modern parties, fashions, vain accomplishments, and earthly tinsel; waiting with them day by day at the door-posts of that wisdom by which grace is poured into the lips, and mien, as well as heart—where "woman indeed becomes the glory of man;" (1 Corinthians 11:7,) and then to see her lead them forth into life, from these sacred shades, polished after the similitude of a palace.* Such a school was well fitted to form the mind, refine the manners, and under God to save the soul of our lamented friend. God had been pleased to endow her with an unusual measure of personal beauty, and great charm of character and mind. So that as soon as she entered into society, which she did with great reserve, she attracted much attention, and was universally admired. These things combined, might have been expected, especially in early life, to draw her into the world; and lead her away from the humbling and self-denying religion of her father's house. But even before she gave her heart to God, there was an inimitable simplicity in her character, manner, and dress, which evinced either a total unconsciousness of her attractions, or a noble superiority, to human praise. Her good taste, and the better principles of the Gospel, enabled her in all her after life, notwithstanding the many temptations to which she was exposed, to exhibit the same transparent and lovely example.

Her Religious Character

The work of the Spirit was early begun in her heart; but it was for some time resisted. Our acquaintance with her began just as she was closing her domestic education, (in her sixteenth year,) and almost before she had looked this evil world in the face. In 1820 she became decidedly serious; and after several months of deep religious impression, expressed a trembling hope of an interest in the Divine Redeemer. At this time she was strongly disposed to make a public profession of religion; but the salutary caution of her parents induced her to postpone it to a future

occasion. Subsequently to this, the extreme fear which she ever after cherished, of self-delusion in religious exercises; the high standard of Christian character which she had proposed to herself; and her strong conviction of the frequent and very hurtful inconsistencies of many professors of religion; influenced her, in the end to defer that solemn step to a distant day. That day, as stated in the narrative, did not arrive until after her marriage, her removal to Kentucky, and her settlement as the wife of a pastor. In the mean time, however, it cannot be doubted, that the grace of God had taken possession of her heart. And when finally she did publicly connect herself with the people of God, her tenderness of heart, her self-distrust, her deep humility, her child-like simplicity, and transparency of Christian character, condemned her only for a delayed profession, and left few fears for her sake in any bosom but her own.

She was in a remarkable measure devoted to the Word of God. Her extraordinary memory faithfully stored with its rich treasure in early youth, vividly retained the chief part of it through life. The Psalmody of Dr. Watts, her favourite author in that department, she had almost wholly at her command. And with the Commentary of the inimitable Matthew Henry, a Latin and a French Bible, and a Harmony of the Gospels at her side, she daily and most devoutly searched the Scriptures. Clarke on the Promises, was also a favourite book, especially in her last days; and the Pilgrim's Progress was her companion to the "water's edge," where her real visions of the celestial city enabled her to lay the sweet Dreamer by, as the Parting Pilgrim did his crutches, when on the bank of the river he saw "chariots of fire" to bear him to the Pearly Gates. Her diligence in studying the Bible, without in the least degree neglecting her domestic duties, (and even in the days of her feeblest health,) was truly wonderful. When a subject specially interested her, she compiled and collated all the leading passages of the Bible upon it; often writing them out at great length, and preserving them for reference on future occasions. Indeed, so far did she carry her interested inquiries into the various parts of the Old and New Testament, and especially into the life of Christ, that she drew out a harmony of the Gospels with her own hand; the better to confirm her knowledge of the true order and relation of the events of his history.

She was a most faithful hearer of the preaching of the Gospel. Her luminous face cheered the progress of the herald of the Lord, and marked the deep measure of her personal interest in the message from the skies. Since her decease, we have found numerous briefs of sermons which she had heard at different periods of her life, from those whom she most admired. Some of these were delivered by Dr. James P. Wilson, and some by her father, others by Dr. Green, but chiefly by the venerable and honoured friend whose tribute to her memory is affixed to this Memoir. He was undoubtedly her most esteemed instructor from the sacred desk. His inimitable simplicity, vivacity, richness, and force of truth, always carried her understanding and her affections along with him; and those appeals which were most searching and simple, were most treasured and admired. To her refined and candid spirit, nothing was more detestable than religious parade. As it is intimated in the former chapter, it sometimes served to repel her from things and people that were good, but savoured of religious cant. She was especially shocked with the numberless and painful examples of female impropriety in this way, which our age has disclosed. But in all the appropriate walks of Christian females, and in every becoming expression of their feelings and influence, though diffident of herself, she promptly took her part. Perhaps her most cherished occupation in the service of others, was that of a Sunday-school teacher. Here she rejoiced in the work of her hands. Here, without indelicacy or pretension, she could use the word of God, in his

house, and on his day, to teach the little children, whom like her Lord, she so much loved to take in her arms and bless. She had for this service uncommon adaptation in the vivacity of her mind, in the charm of her manner, and especially in the rich store of her Biblical knowledge. She continued this relation after she became a wife, and a mother; and the tenderness of a Christian mother's love seemed to be transferred to the little commonwealth of the Sabbath-school.

We shall never forget the animation and delight with which she communicated to us, two years before her decease, the account of a visit which had been paid her very recently, by a highly respectable young gentleman, then attached to a learned profession, the son of a distinguished public man, who had been a member of her Sunday-school class in Princeton, fifteen years before!

Her Dedication to the Work of Foreign Missions

It was not long after the first experience (as was hoped) of the grace of God in her heart, that the relation was formed between herself and the writer of these pages, which, by its consummation and close, became in succession the crowning joy and the absorbing sorrow of his life.

While this interesting event, combined with other causes, was made the occasion (from an excess perhaps of delicacy on her part) of retarding her public profession of religion, it led to an early and very decisive trial of her Christian principles in another form. At this time the friend whom she so much honoured by her affection, was devoted to the work of Foreign Missions; and he had solicited her hand with the distinct expression, both to herself and her venerable parents, of such a purpose. This necessarily called her to consider the question of a personal engagement in this work. She met and decided this question with a promptitude and nobleness of Christian resolution which surprised even those who knew her best; and though in the providence of God she was spared the expected trial of separation for life from her family and country, yet the unreserved dedication of herself to the Missionary cause which her Redeemer enabled her to make, gave elevation to her Christian character, and prepared her for the trials scarcely less severe to which she was called in the domestic field. It was on the ground of her having thus dedicated herself, that with so much self-oblivion, and even cheerfulness, she encountered the many difficulties of which we are now to speak.

Her Sacrifices for the Church of God

By a train of events over which we had no control, and in the interpretation of which we were permitted to enjoy the direction of the Church, (it would be needless to recite them here,) we were hindered from indulging the desire to "go far hence to the Gentiles." But the principle of dedication for life was settled; and hence it was from the first, understood and acted on at all times, that other things being equal, the field at home in which there was opportunity to do most for the conversion of the heathen, was always to be preferred, if offered by the Lord of the harvest. Her first and second settlements could scarcely be considered as giving occasion to many sacrifices. Lexington, Kentucky, was in the bosom of her husband's native state. There, in the garden of America, surrounded by a great circle of the most affectionate kindred and friends, and in a city remarkable as the Athens of the west for its refinement and general intelligence, and connected with a most kind and worthy congregation, Mrs. B. felt, that even separation from the home of her youth, was a form of trial so softened by her circumstances, that it was converted into a mercy. In

our removal to the interesting and important city of Baltimore, we felt that goodness and mercy followed us, changing our abode, but augmenting the number of our friends, and opening to us new and effectual doors of usefulness. Her attachment was very strong to both, cities; she left each with regret; but still referring the decision to others in whose wisdom and affection she confided, she cheerfully obeyed their successive summons to depart. It was in leaving the latter city that her sacrifices for the Church more especially commenced. At this eventful period, (the summer of 1831,) it was found that there were more than one thousand congregations in the Presbyterian Church without a pastor, not to mention the immeasurable destitution of the heathen world. To supply this immense demand required, in addition to the very inadequate means already in use, a greatly enlarged and quickened effort of the entire Church. This necessity was deeply felt by the General Assembly of 1831, and led to the re-organization by that body of its Board of Education. In the solemn providence of God, the writer of these sketches was called to fill the office of Corresponding Secretary and General Agent for that Institution. He found it impossible to resist what appeared to be the voice of God speaking through his Church; though in yielding to it he was constrained to dissolve forever the sacred tie which bound him to a beloved people, and to pass from the endearments of domestic and Pastoral life, to incessant toil and travel in the wide and homeless world. She foresaw, and with keen anticipation felt, all the trouble which such a step must bring upon herself and her little household. But the decision of all her friends, excepting the kind people we were about to leave, was in favour of removal. She remembered her Missionary vows. She saw in it the sweetness as well as the severity of the cross, and without a murmur meekly bowed to the burden of the Lord. In this service, which continued for nearly five years, she shared; and like an angel, soothed the trials of the work. The comforts of domestic life were almost annihilated, either by incessant separations, or the nameless discomforts of a constant absence from home. During one entire year her house was occupied by her but six weeks, the rest being spent in hotels, and boarding houses, and steamboats, and stages, with occasional intervals of repose in the bosom of related or attached families scattered through the wide field of her visits from the Mississippi to the Hudson. Yet never did woman shine with more lovely lustre at home; never was woman more indisposed to step from this, her undisputed and delightful empire, into the confusion and folly of this selfish and evil world. Yet did she give up all, and consent to erect her domestic altar in the wilderness, and gather her little fold on the highway, for Jesus' sake. When weary of a year of travel, undertaken to shun a year of separation, she returned to occupy and order her solitary home. There she was constrained, though both tender and inexperienced, "to guide her house" alone; and to receive her husband only as an occasional visitant. Still, she never murmured; nor would we complain. But faithful history—now that she rests from her labours, requires this narrative; and God permits the record of "those works which follow" such "as die in the Lord." Thus, for five years, were kept up the alternations of these affecting trials. They were relieved, it must devoutly be acknowledged, by the unremitting attentions of those kind and lovely families in Philadelphia, whose virtues bound them to us by better ties than those of earthly kindred—as "Zion's friends, and ours;" whose reward we will not attempt to take out of a Saviour's hands by our poor praises; and whose displeasure we shall only then be sure of incurring, when we attempt to unveil to the public eye, the authors of so much disinterested and untiring goodness. The same reference is due to very many families in the city of New York, in which, for several successive years, she passed the winters with her husband. He who thus imperfectly attempts to record his gratitude, knew her worth so well, that he cannot wonder that such friends should love

her; and he feels it his duty here to say, that any portion of success in the work herein referred to, is under God, largely owing, not only to her influence on his labours, but to the charm which she threw upon every circle with which she mingled, and the interest she kindled in all the persons and objects which interested her. When, at the end of two years, he felt overwhelmed with the review of her domestic trials, and was strongly moved to abandon a work which made them inevitable, she earnestly resisted the thought of change: and with generous self-devotion urged her husband forward in a work which, though painful to her feelings, was in her view useful to the Church, and pleasing to its glorious Head. As her impressions were those of all her friends, and apparently of the Church at large, and as the Board itself kindly relaxed some of the severer features of our trials, we were confirmed in the conviction that it was our duty to persevere, lest we should incur the divine displeasure, "by being weary in well-doing."

When, however, the indications of divine Providence in the spring of 1835 seemed plainly to say, that our work for the Board of Education was done, and that we ought to enter the door opened for us at Princeton, she was the last to see the duty of a removal; and though her parental home was there, and though her heart and her wearied nature cried aloud for rest, she would not allow any reasons for the change, to be drawn from her wishes or her sacrifices, and to the last, rather submitted to, than heartily approved of, the new relation. But how deep are the ways of God! Scarcely had she time to establish herself in her new home at Princeton,* when another and loud call to an agency, directly in behalf of Foreign Missions, was pressed upon us. Though at this period her health had become evidently far more delicate, she heard and heeded again the voice of her Saviour; and still recalling the Missionary vow, offered herself again a willing sacrifice on the altar of God. In deciding this momentous question (in the winter of 1838, after having spent but eighteen months in Princeton, nearly half of which was occupied by her husband in active agency in behalf of the funds, library, &c. of the Theological Seminary,) we found ourselves incapable of being instrumental in recalling her still again to the commotion, desertion at home, and incessant cares, of another agency. Three months therefore were given to the important work, and the offer of the office finally declined. Even here however, she persisted in referring the decision to public relations alone, leaving all personal considerations out of view. And though fast approaching her end (what at that time none of us knew) she spontaneously put herself at the disposal of the friends of the Board of Foreign Missions, for her part of any service which might be required of her husband. whether it was in extensive journeys with him, or separation from him, or a winter's sojourn with him and her children in the city of New York. For the first, hoping it might invigorate her health, she was actually furnished; and when that was abandoned for the last, she repaired, with the spirit of her Master in her heart, to meet the trials it induced. It was in the fresh recollection of the parting scene, on her way thither, that the following sentences were addressed to the writer by the Rev. Dr. Alexander.

"I cannot conclude, without a word to dear Mrs. Breckinridge. I admire her ready submission to the calls of Providence. For although she cannot help dropping the silent tear, she makes no complaint, but shuts up her comfortable house, leaves her home and her friends, and as cheerfully as she can, goes to live in a hotel, and among strangers. Well, she shall not lose her reward. For these sacrifices she shall have rich compensation: and our sweetest earthly pleasure is in doing the will of our Heavenly Father." (Dated Princeton, December 17th, 1837.) At the close of the winter we returned to Princeton, hoping that now God would grant us a little rest in that quiet

village and that delightful home, where not “unaware we entertained an angel.” But ah! this blessedness was not long intended for us. Having done her work, (though still we did not fear it,) she was soon to be taken to her rest and her reward on high.

Her Last Sickness and Death

Her last sickness was of a protracted and very interesting character. When she returned from New York, she was delicate and her state of health was mysterious, but not yet alarming even to her physicians. Very soon after this, she had a violent attack, which in a short season prostrated her frame, and, disclosing a peculiar complication of diseases, overwhelmed every mind in the family, but her own, (she was calm,) with the most gloomy apprehensions of her danger. At the close of the winter term of the Theological Seminary, (May first,) it was our anxious desire to take her to the Red Sulphur Springs in Virginia. But it was too early in the season; and being yet doubtful, whether this or that place would be useful or hurtful, it was agreed by her physicians to indulge her strongly expressed wish to try the waters of Saratoga. Thither therefore we went, pausing only a short time in the city of New York for medical consultation. At this time, she was a most interesting object to all who saw her. Her debility was so extreme that she was borne from place to place in the arms of her husband, which, from her delicate frame, it was easy to do. The gentleness and patience with which she endured her sickness, the inimitable moral beauty of her countenance, and the general expression of frailty mingled with grace, excited the deepest interest wherever she passed.* At Saratoga we spent a very quiet season of three weeks, (before the great hotels were opened, or the crowds had arrived) at the house of a most kind and deserving Christian woman, Mrs. Taylor, whose unceasing attentions greatly conduced to soothe sufferings which God had pleased should not be arrested. During this visit she used the waters freely, as a beverage, and in the bath, with no apparent injury, except that it evidently disclosed the fatal symptoms of her malady. She was able almost every day, to take gentle rides in the open air, and frequently to mingle with the family. But her chamber was her sanctuary. There she reclined, feeding on the Word of God. She was especially delighted with Clarke on the Promises. During that season of seclusion, she seemed to grow in grace with a progress which surprised (while it delighted) us; for we knew not then how near she was to the perfection of the heavenly rest. But it has since been interpreted to us, by the event, as one of God’s peculiar mercies. What made this the more pleasing evidence of grace was, that she did not know her own danger. It was the power of religion poured upon her spirit by Him who was “hastening to make her up among his jewels.” At one time, she said—“Oh, yes, pray that the distance between God and me may be taken away.” And after uniting, with the most affecting solemnity and tenderness in the prayer which was offered, she at its close expressed aloud her joy in the exercise, (a thing most unusual with her) and her delight in God her Saviour, who draweth nigh. On another occasion, after hearing some of the promises of healing to the body, as collected by Clarke, she seemed for a moment to be musing, she then gently said: “My dear —— I am like the poor woman who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any; but rather grew worse. My hope is in the Great Physician!”

Since we have been calm enough to review the various stages of her last sickness in relation to her religious exercises, it has been a subject of deep regret, and of no little self-reproach, that we had not made the attempt at recording, as they were uttered, some of the deeply affecting expressions of her Christian principles and feelings. But the tumultuous hour of hope and fear, and hurried, anxious watching at the bed of death, is not the time for cool calculation. Some of the

most affecting parts of such scenes are incapable of being written down, even by one not interested in the sufferer. Nay, more—like the voices which John heard from heaven in Patmos, the Spirit seems to say of them, “write them not.” These are “joys with which the stranger intermeddleth not.” (Proverbs 14:10.) It is a sanctuary which no creature can enter. And then our beloved Friend, who was often afraid to whisper her religious joys to her Saviour, lest she should be found offering “strange fire” on his altar, seldom talked of her hopes, (though often of her sins,) to her nearest friends; and never, by writing them down, put it in the power of posthumous publications to expose them to the view of others. We can only, therefore, illustrate her religious character, at the stage which we now approach, by broken fragments of thoughts and feelings, caught from her lips amidst the awful mercies of a dying hour.

She began at length, visibly to sink, when Dr. Freeman, of Balston, whose skilful and kind attentions she enjoyed, (Dr. Steel, of Saratoga, having himself been recently removed by death,) strongly advised a discontinuance of the use of the waters, and an attempt to reach the Red Sulphur Springs. For now the prevailing type of the disease had become distinctly pulmonary; and the skill of physicians, and the healing waters, and all the help of man were vain. Now, for the first time, we began to discern the dread reality of her approaching dissolution; and had some foretaste of the first anguish of such a loss.* With heavy hearts, but hastened steps, we returned to Princeton; whence almost in despair, yet anxious to try any and all means for so great an end, we hastily set out with our meek sufferer for the Virginia Springs: but as the previous narrative has recited, we were arrested at Philadelphia. Here all was done by the assiduity and skill of her physicians,* and the most tender and constant attentions of a great number of friends. But her divine Redeemer claimed her for himself. She returned to Princeton, to bless her household, and to die. On the evening of June the 13th, she reached her children, and her earthly home. On the morning of the 16th, a quarter before ten o'clock, with her reason unclouded, in a frame of calm and holy triumph which marked the dawning of heaven on her soul; with a meek prayer for permission to die, and with but a single pang, she bade the world farewell, and ascended to God! Her remains were attended to the grave by a very large and deeply affected assembly, after the delivery of the impressive funeral discourse affixed to this Memoir; where they rest by the side of her three little children, two daughters and a son, removed by death before. The like number and of the same sex, two daughters and a son, are left to the surviving parent, to mourn her loss, to treasure and imitate her example, and, by the grace of the Saviour, to follow them to the skies, where the “house now left desolate unto them” shall be restored with added bliss; and the little family thus divided in the midst of life, being reunited in pure and perfect love, be received into everlasting habitations. A neat marble monument points to the spot where her dust reposes.

CHAPTER III(["tw:///self?tid=11&popup=0" \](#) "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Closing Reflections

Thus it has pleased our Heavenly Father to “take away from us the desire of our eyes, with a stroke.” The first impression of such a loss is that of amazement—overwhelming and bewildering the soul, and with strange horror, destroying for a time, the power to feel. “Deep calleth unto deep—all thy waves, and billows have gone over me.” Such is the abyss of grief! At such a time, our part is “to be still”—sitting, like the Marys, “over against the sepulchre.” When the disciples of John lost their earthly Master, “they came and took the body, and buried it, and went and told

Jesus.” This ought to be the first act of every mourner, to tell it unto Jesus. With him we shall find both sympathy and support. And more than this: He resolves the death of our friends into his own gracious sovereignty, when he calls it, “the coming of the Son of Man.” Death loses its terror when it becomes his act of grace. “The death of his saints is precious in his sight,” and is always ordered with a supreme regard to their blessedness, and his glory. So that the feeblest of his dying children may confidently say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me.”

There is a feeling about the death of our friends, which is made up in part of unbelief, and in part of that tender regard which is produced by their dependence on us through life. Those endearing relations which make us their protectors, and supports, send their deep sympathies even into the grave. Who of us that is a husband, or a parent, that does not feel the horror of the separation aggravated by the spectacle of our helpless kindred struggling alone in mortal strife with “the king of terrors”? We, to whom they have always looked for succour, are then as helpless as they, in their extremest need. We cannot even share their agony. It is this which gives a nameless anguish to such a moment.* But it is because we forget that “when father and mother,” and all they most depended on in life, “forsake them, then the Lord doth take them up.” The Christian is never so little alone as on the verge of heaven. The Lord of life is there. Underneath are the everlasting arms; and through all the terrors of the grave; and above all the tumult of that last hour, the Shepherd’s voice is heard, saying—” It is I—be not afraid.” While some pass over Jordan on the wing, and some struggle through the waves, yet all safely pass. Not one of them shall perish, but each appear in Zion before God.

It adds tenderness and force to these consoling hopes, that Jesus once “tasted death himself.” It moves us, that “Jesus wept.” But it gives a new nature to death, that Jesus died! For while the merit of his death takes the sting from ours, his presence in the tomb dispels all its terrors. Therefore, since Jesus died, let us consent to death; and surrender at his call those most dear to us.

The graves of all his saints he blest,

And softened every bed—

Where should the dying members rest,

But with their dying head!

It must be sweet to lie in that grave which he has hallowed by his presence among the dead.

One of the considerations which should make us acquiesce in the removal of our beloved friends who die in the Lord, is this—that we are suffering for their sakes; and that they could not be blessed without our sufferings. For their death, (the dread cause of all our grief,) was necessary to their perfect and eternal blessedness. This thought ought to soften every pang. If we really love them, and if our sacrifices for them while they were here below, were the fruit of our love, then we have only to remember that this is one prolonged, supreme sacrifice for their sakes.—This reflection if properly pursued, would often turn our mourning into gladness.* And then, if this weight of sorrow that is laid on us may but be duly improved and meekly borne; if it may not only mark the bliss of our friends begun on high, but be made by a wise and good God conducive to our growth

in grace—it will have in it the pledge of our everlasting re-union in heaven; and thus be an affliction doubly blessed. But the silencing, yea, elevating thought of all is, that it is for Jesus' sake, we are called to suffer. "The Master is come and called for her." It is indeed the richest of our earthly treasures. Our own life were a far lighter offering. But for that reason we honour him the more. It is our Isaac that God calls for; and it is then indeed we honour God when we can offer like Abraham. We shall receive the offering back, if not as soon, as certainly—and at no distant day! When, therefore, He who laid down his life for us, asks for our richest gift, let us not call him a hard master, but give without a murmur. The death of our friends should have the effect of bringing Heaven nearer to us. We ought to cultivate, if we may so speak, domestic views of that blessed world to which we are so much honoured as to have sent up angels from our households. While all superstitious emotions are carefully to be quelled, we are permitted to draw very nigh to them. We may cherish their image in our memories and hearts; we still belong to the same great communion—and all are members of that body of which Jesus is the head. "As death does not separate from the Lord, neither does it divide the saints from one another. Our spirit and theirs daily meet at the one throne—they to praise, we to pray; therefore, in that sense, though we are absent in body, we are present in spirit." And the distance which lies between them and us is daily growing less. How swiftly we travel, yea, fly, in all the speed of time! It may not be an inappropriate close to these meditations, to insert the family hymn, with which the remnant of a bereaved household often close the day, and comfort each others' hearts, at the hour when we feel most desolate.

Come let us join our friends above,
That have obtained the prize;
And on the eagle wings of love,
To joy celestial rise.
Let saints below his praises sing,
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King,
In heaven and earth are one.
One family, we dwell in him,
One church above, beneath:
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God,
To his commands we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Ten thousand to their endless home,
This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die.
Dear Saviour, be our constant guide,
Then when the word is given,
Bid the cold waves of death divide,
And land us safe in heaven.

And now, in bringing to a close these very imperfect notices of a beloved saint of God, it is proper to say, that much more might truly have been added in reference to many points of her character, that would have been proper, and interesting: as for example, her intellectual endowments; her extensive acquirements; her domestic life; her personal accomplishments. But we fear to indulge our feelings. Nor is it needful. For it was her Christian character mainly which we designed to illustrate. Her love for the Redeemer, and her sacrifices for his sake, were the jewels which adorned her on earth, and which lose not their lustre in death. It was the glory of all those qualities which so eminently fitted her to attract the admiration of this world, that she meekly laid them at the Saviour's feet. There also, we desire to leave this humble tribute to one whose "sun went down while it was yet day," praying that he who thus early fitted her for heaven, may by these poor means prolong her usefulness, and bless her memory on earth.

SUBMISSION:

a sermon

occasioned by the death of

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE

by the

REV. A. ALEXANDER, D. D.

SERMON

Psalm 46:10

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Omitting all critical discussion of the true import of the text, I will consider the words as addressed by Jehovah to his own people, when suffering affliction under the strokes of his mighty hand. It may be considered as the language of authority; or of consolation. According to the first view, it is as if the Almighty had said, "Be still, and neither repine, nor rebel, for your affliction comes not from the dust, but from me, your rightful Sovereign; to whom you owe absolute subjection." If viewed in the sense last mentioned, then it will be as though God, feeling compassion towards his afflicted saints, puts them in mind of the sure refuge which they had in him; as if he had said, "Be

calm and unruffled, in the midst of all your overwhelming calamities, for I am able to sustain you, and to deliver you by my Almighty arm." "Be still, and know that I am God." In either case, the result, as to our duty, is the same. Unreserved submission is the thing enjoined, and the reason to enforce the injunction is, "I am God."

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. His days are determined: the number of his years are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass." No condition in this life is exempt from trouble. No bulwarks can be erected by kings and princes, strong enough, and high enough, to be a safeguard against the shafts of adversity. In regard to this matter, the rich and the poor stand very much upon a level. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Hence, this life has justly been denominated, "the vale of tears." Uninterrupted bliss cannot be found beneath the skies. The righteous are not exempt, but many are their afflictions. Besides a participation in the common lot of humanity, they have troubles peculiar to themselves. The dispensations of God towards his own people, are, indeed, in covenant love and faithfulness, but they are not calculated to encourage them to take up their rest in this world, but to render their path so thorny, and their bed so uneasy, that they are continually admonished of their duty to set their affections on things above, and to press forward as pilgrims to the possession of their heavenly inheritance. The reasons which should persuade us to exercise unreserved and uncomplaining submission to the will of God, as manifested in the dispensations of his wise and righteous Providence, are at the same time obvious and weighty. But, here, as in other cases, theory and practice are very different things. On this subject, we all can teach and inculcate what is right; but when it becomes necessary to practise our own lessons, we experience a sad deficiency. This is a school in which, sooner or later, we must all be learners; and it behoves us to use diligence in preparing ourselves to endure trials with fortitude, and cheerfully to acquiesce in those painful events, which we cannot avoid. Some persons, when overtaken by severe strokes of adversity, are, like the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, restive and rebellious; they resist the hand which presses them, and struggle to throw off the yoke. Such a course is altogether unwise, and must be unsuccessful. "Wo to him that striveth with his Maker. Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth," but let not a feeble, sinful worm rise up in rebellion against the Almighty; for who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered? And when there is no open rebellion, there is often a spirit of discontent and murmuring, which, though smothered in the breast, partakes of the nature of rebellion, and is the very opposite of cordial, filial submission. Every degree of this temper, whether concealed or expressed, is exceedingly offensive to God, as we learn from his word, and is so far from mitigating the evils which we suffer, that it doubles their pressure; it makes even a light burthen intolerable.

Others again, endeavour to form habits of hardy insensibility; they seek refuge from the keen arrows of affliction, in a stoical indifference. They affect to contemn, as weak, and wanting in fortitude, all those who seem to suffer exquisitely under the strokes of adversity. Much practical progress never can be made in this unnatural system. Whatever men may profess or pretend, nature will assert her claims, and if her feelings may be for a season suspended, she will again resume her sway; and indeed the equanimity acquired by these principles, has been more in appearance than reality; and the greatest adepts in eradicating the susceptibilities of our nature, have only learned the art of successfully concealing the emotions of their bosoms from the

observation of others. But while some endeavour to obtain relief by rendering themselves insensible to the calamities of life, and aim at braving the storms of adversity, there are others, who err on the opposite extreme. Under the chastising hand of God, they are prostrated in the dust; not in humility, but in despondency; their sorrow not only casts them down, but overwhelms them. They find themselves sinking in deep waters, where there is no standing. Such persons not only put away all hope, but cease from all exertion, and abandon themselves to grief; forgetting the exhortation which speaketh unto them as to children, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."

There is but one effectual remedy for the evils to which man is heir, while on his earthly pilgrimage; and that is religion—true religion, not merely apprehended and approved in its theory, but deeply felt, and cordially embraced in the inmost soul. This is the only principle of sufficient potency to tranquillize the perturbations of the soul when deeply afflicted. This only can sustain the mind, ready to sink into despair. This furnishes the only medicine which heals the anguish of the broken heart; the only balm which relieves the wounds made in the spirit by painful bereavements. Here the superlative value of true religion is realized; and this principle of heavenly origin is found to possess a power, not only to sustain the soul under the heaviest pressure of affliction, but to pour sweet consolations into the desolate and troubled heart. Here, indeed, is opened a fountain of refreshing streams, in the midst of this dreary wilderness, of which the poor heathen had no knowledge, and of which the men of the world are still ignorant.

These blessed effects of genuine piety are not produced by any irrational process, or blind impulse; but by the contemplation of truths adapted to the end. Consolations which do not rest on this firm foundation, will ever be found precarious and commonly evanescent. Buoyant hope and cheerful resignation must have the solid pillar of truth on which to repose. It will therefore be consonant to our present purpose, to bring more distinctly into view, some of those important doctrines, the practical belief of which leads to the exercise of Christian submission. That which lies at the foundation of the whole, is, that God exists, and governs all events by his providence. Whatever men profess, or speculatively believe, as it relates to the actual presence and operative providence of God, there is undoubtedly much practical atheism in the hearts of men. Most feel and act as if there was no God, and as if all things happened by chance. This is remarkably manifest when they are suddenly cast down into deep affliction. They recognise not the hand that smites them. They seem to think, that affliction cometh from the dust, and that trouble springeth out of the ground. In all their bitter lamentations, their views extend no farther than to the proximate causes of their distress; and they often experience the bitterest regret, because they did not pursue a different course, or make use of different means from what they did; although with the knowledge possessed, they could not have done better. Under the same short-sighted views, they are prone to censure others who have had an innocent instrumentality in bringing about the events by which they are distressed. All this arises from the want of faith in Divine Providence; and too much of this unbelief cleaves to the pious themselves, and greatly aggravates their calamities. But when their faith in the being and providence of God is strong, they see his hand in every thing good and evil, which occurs; they behold him operating through all nature, and giving efficacy to all second causes; and are as fully persuaded that he directs the fall of a sparrow, as the overthrow of a kingdom. This doctrine of an universal and particular Providence, is the foundation of our trust in God, for security and sustenance. How beautifully did Christ teach this lesson to his disciples,

when he said, "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you O, ye of little faith?" When the dark and cloudy day of adversity, or the long and tempestuous night comes upon us—when our comforts are suddenly blasted, and our brightest earthly prospects are obscured, then, instead of repining or desponding, we should be take ourselves to the doctrine of an overruling Providence. The dispensation may be dark, and afflictive, and even profoundly mysterious; yet we should think, it is God that hath done it. These are his footsteps. This is the operation of his hand. He it is, "who formeth the light and createth the darkness; that maketh peace, and createth evil." The more, in such circumstances, we look beyond all creatures, and second causes, and fix our thoughts and our faith, on God alone, the sooner shall we find composure of mind. If we fully believe that God is in the storm, and that it is his voice which is heard in the thunder, and his face which is seen in the flashing of the lightning, the less shall we be terrified with the apprehension of unknown dangers. But we are permitted to know not only that God governs all human affairs by his Providence, but also that his dispensations, as it relates to his own people, are all ordered in wisdom, in faithfulness, and in love. The doctrine of Providence can bring no true consolation to any who are unreconciled to God. They may know that it is his rod by which they are smitten, but they cannot tell but his strokes are those of vindicatory justice, and only a prelude to more intolerable pains. Before we can repose with confidence and comfort on the faithfulness, wisdom, and goodness of the Divine dispensations, we must possess some evidence that our sins are pardoned and our persons accepted; for the more perfect the Divine government, the more certainly will punishment pursue the guilty. Our cheerful resignation to the afflictions of life, is therefore, closely connected with our justification through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. While we contemplate our own sins and imperfections only, we can entertain no other feeling, than a fearful looking for of wrath; but when with the spirit of adoption we can look up to our heavenly Father's reconciled face, we need not be alarmed nor cast down, under the heaviest afflictions which befall us. We know that he doth not willingly afflict his beloved children, but out of love chastises them for their greater good, that they may become in a higher degree, partakers of his holiness. They are assured, therefore, that all these painful events shall be so overruled, as to work for their good. And the Holy Scriptures clearly teach, that although these chastisements are, for the present, not joyous, but grievous, yet, hereafter, they will produce in them who are exercised thereby, the peaceable fruits of righteousness. They eminently conduce to wean the affections from this vain world, to humble the spirit in the dust under a sense of unworthiness, and to excite an ardent spirit of prayer. It is, moreover, by a severe but salutary discipline of this kind, that saints are made meet for the heavenly inheritance. And not only so, but these temporary afflictions, somehow or other, will have a direct efficiency in increasing their future felicity and glory, according to that remarkable declaration of Paul, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It is not surprising, therefore, that God who loves his people with an unchangeable love, should visit them with the rod. It is the method which he takes to purge out their dross and their tin. Affliction is therefore compared to a furnace, in which the precious metals are assayed and purified. Thus Peter comforts suffering Christians in his time:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Again: "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that purifieth though it be tried with fire, might be found unto peace, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In the testimony just cited, there is another interesting reason suggested for the affliction of Christ's disciples. And it is one which must be touching to the hearts of all who truly love their Lord. It is, that as he was pre-eminently "the man of sorrows," there is a congruity in their participating in suffering, that in this respect, as in others, they may be conformed to his example. Paul also makes express and repeated mention of the same thing. "If children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." He speaks of this communion with Christ in suffering, as a characteristic of discipleship, and as a high privilege, "Always' bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Christians, therefore, in primitive times, gloried in their severest sufferings. And now, no consideration is more efficacious in fortifying the believer against fainting than the idea of the sufferings of Christ for us. It would seem that they who have been privileged to endure nothing for Christ's sake, would scarcely be admitted to reign with him in glory. And as we should endeavour, while in the world, to glorify God to the utmost of our power, by letting the light of a holy example shine forth, so there is no situation in which piety appears to greater advantage, than when exercised in deep affliction. What disposition can be conceived as possessing more moral beauty, than the grace enjoined in our text; cheerful, quiet submission to the will of our heavenly Father, under the heaviest pressure of his hand. And as we all are conscious that there is yet much impurity and dross cleaving to our nature, we should rejoice in being subjected to a process, though it be a fiery one, by which we might be more and more purified from sin. Indeed, we cannot do without this salutary discipline: our salvation, probably, depends upon our sufferings as a means of conservation in a state of grace. We ought not, therefore, "to think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try us, as though some strange thing happened to us; but should rather rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy."

"Be still, and know that I am God." Be calm and submissive; be not alarmed nor perturbed; let your resignation to the Divine will be unreserved and cheerful. Seize the occasion, which severe afflictions offer, to show your entire willingness that God should govern and dispose of you and yours according to his own sovereign will. He is wise, and knows how to order every thing for the best. He is powerful, and can bring light out of darkness, and good out of evil. He is faithful, and will certainly fulfil all his gracious promises. He is good and merciful, and will consult the best interests of his children in all his dealings towards them; and even those events which seem to be most adverse, he will so temper and overrule, that ultimately, and relatively, they will be made to work for their good.

Under sore and unexpected bereavements, the human heart will bleed; and the susceptible feelings will be lacerated, and the gush of sorrow will have its course; but grace comes in and suggests considerations which ought to moderate our grief; and to teach us to be quietly submissive to the hand of the Almighty. It is a blessed state, when the feelings of the man are absorbed in the nobler feelings of the Christian; when our will is swallowed up in the will of God.

What He doeth we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. It will not be long until we shall be able to see, "that he hath done all things well." In the recent mournful dispensation of Divine Providence, we see how many hearts may be wounded, and how many joys withered, by a single stroke. In this interesting group of mourners, we behold the aged parents weeping over the lifeless body of a much loved, and very lovely daughter. They have lived to witness the premature departure of one, whom they might naturally have expected to be a comfort to them in their declining years, and to wipe from their foreheads the cold drops, in a dying hour. Parental bereavements admit of less alleviation, than others, from earthly considerations. The friends and comforts which, late in life, we lose, we cannot hope to have made up to us. And, sometimes, the parents of a numerous offspring are preserved so long, that they survive all, or most of their children; and they stand, like aged trees, which, by successive storms, have been stripped of their foliage and branches. But, although bereaved parents cannot draw much consolation, under their afflictions, from this world; yet the rich consolations of the Gospel are accessible to them, and peculiarly appropriate to their condition. The pious do not know how to appreciate the promises of God rightly, until, in the hour of affliction, they are made to experience their power and sweetness. We cannot blame these parents for mourning the loss of a first born and very amiable daughter; but we trust that they now find support and comfort in that God on whose Almighty arm they have long trusted. They have not now for the first time, to learn the riches of that grace which is treasured up in Christ Jesus; and may they be enabled to come now to that fountain of mercy, by the streams of which they have been so often refreshed and comforted, under former trials! The grief of affectionate brothers and sisters also, flows this day, in a strong current. They feel as if a part of themselves had been taken away; and yet they can scarcely realize the extent of their calamity. It often requires time for grief to become rooted in the soul. The first gush of sorrow from the bleeding heart, is indeed a more sensible emotion, but the full value of our loss is not felt, until after serious reflection. It is a painful thing to be separated from those around whom our earliest and tenderest affections were entwined. The thought of never again, in this world, seeing a face, from which always the most benignant affections beamed upon us, cannot but leave a melancholy and heart-sinking impression. Who can adequately describe the anguish produced by the sudden severance of hearts, long cemented in the bands of the tenderest affection! But, though nature will be obeyed, and the floods of sorrow cannot be altogether restrained, yet there is a Christian duty incumbent on those placed in these circumstances. The command does not say, that we should not weep, but that we should not sorrow as those that have no hope. Christians are not divested of the common sensibilities of humanity; but they possess principles much higher than mere humanity, by which they moderate their passions, and by which the stream of natural sorrow may be sanctified, and turned into that of "godly sorrow, which worketh a repentance not to be repented of." But among the weeping mourners, on this sad occasion, I see some, who though deeply affected, can scarcely be supposed capable, on account of their tender age, of estimating the irreparable loss which they have sustained. I call the loss of a mother irreparable; because, however many affectionate friends may stand ready to do all in their power to supply a mother's place; yet, the assiduity, forbearance, and tenderness, so requisite in the treatment of young children, can be expected in perfection from nothing but that affection, which the Creator has deeply implanted in the hearts of mothers. To those who have had long experience in the world, there are few ideas more affecting than that of a motherless child. But orphaned, as these dear little ones are, by the loss of one parent, they are, I may say, on this account, more peculiarly the

care of a covenant God, whose promise extends not only to believers, but to their seed, and whose kind care extends especially to such children of the faithful, as have been bereaved of one or both parents. These dear children, we confidently trust will be the objects not merely of God's common goodness, but of his special grace; and after spending a life of usefulness in acts of piety and beneficence, will enjoy the blessed privilege of regaining their beloved mother, in the mansions of glory, where sickness, death, and tears, will be known no more. In addressing the interesting group of mourners now before me, I perceive one, whose griefs are too big for utterance, and whose swelling bosom cannot be soothed, at this time, by any of the common topics of consolation. An officious intrusion into the sacred recess of such indescribable sorrows, only serves to exacerbate, rather than mitigate the wounded spirit. All that the kindest friends can do, in such a case, is to let their warmest, tenderest sympathies fall in with the tide of overwhelming grief, which rejects all consolation. "Weep with them that weep." There is another thing which we can do, and that far more important, we can pray for our afflicted and bereaved brother. In such circumstances, prayer is almost our only refuge; for all our help must come from God. While the voice of man is powerless to afford relief, there is one who causes his voice to be heard even in the midst of the tempest. And his authoritative, his affectionate language to our beloved brother is, "Be still, and know that I am God." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It is somewhere related of that eminently pious reformer, Luther, that when he fell into any great trouble, he was wont to say to his friends, "Come, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm." A striking example of uncomplaining submission we have in the good old priest Eli, who, when informed that God was about to bring such judgments on his house, as would cause the ears of every one that heard them to tingle; meekly replied, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." And the patriarch Job, when deprived of all his property, and of all his children, humbled himself and worshipped God, saying—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." "What, shall we receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" When Jesus visited the mourning family of Bethany, who were among his dearest friends, he did not say to the afflicted sisters, weep not—but the compassionate Redeemer united his tears with theirs; for it is written, "Jesus wept." These were indeed only the tears of sympathy, for it was in his benevolent purpose to restore the deceased brother to his disconsolate sisters. Here also, we have a striking illustration of the truth, that God's children are ignorant often of his kind designs, when he permits sore afflictions to come upon them; "If thou hadst been here," said both the weeping sisters, "my brother had not died." Their regret was keen, and unmitigated by any known circumstance; but in one short hour, they were, no doubt, glad that their Lord was not there—they rejoiced that their beloved brother had died; because the glory of God and the power of the Redeemer had now been manifested. Indeed, a gracious visit from Jesus will turn our bitterest sorrows into joy. His name—his word—his grace—has a mighty power to calm the swelling surges of overwhelming sorrow. He can say, as he did to the raging storm, "Peace, be still," and there will be a great calm. Were it not for thoughts of God—of his providence, and promises, and of the seasonable and effectual aid of his grace, grief would often drown the soul in perdition; as it often does work death in the heathen, and in the men of the world, who are without God, and without hope.

It would be in place here to speak of our dear departed sister, whose loss we now mourn; but this task will hereafter be better performed by another hand. And to this audience little need be said; for she was brought up among you from her childhood, and enjoyed the affectionate regards of

this community in no common degree, as is manifest by the general and tender sympathy felt on this occasion. By her sweet simplicity, engaging vivacity, affectionate temper, and affable manners, our beloved friend endeared herself to her acquaintances and neighbours, wherever she resided. And in regard to her Christian character, she adorned her profession by a consistent life and conversation, in all the relations which she sustained. Her latter end was calm and peaceful. She felt some dread of the pangs of dissolution; but in regard to what comes after death, she had no fear—her hope continued firm and her prospects bright to the last moment.

It is always a cause of lively gratitude, when God is pleased to sustain his dear children in passing through “the valley of the shadow of death.” It affords to mourning friends the sweetest consolation which could be received under such sore bereavements. This consolation of our benignant Father has not been withheld in the present instance. Mourning friends are permitted to rejoice in the midst of their overflowing sorrow, in the confident hope, that the departed spirit of our dear sister, free from all sin and pain, rests sweetly in the love and beatified vision of her divine Redeemer.

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

LETTERS

of

A GRANDFATHER,

to the surviving children of

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE

by the

REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

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LETTER I("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Introductory

My Dear Grandchildren:—The decease of your beloved and lamented Mother, has placed both you and me in circumstances of great solemnity and responsibility. To be deprived of a mother's care and counsel at the tender age at which she left you, is indeed a loss which no human arithmetic can estimate; especially to be deprived of such a mother, one so well qualified by strength of intellect, by sincere piety, and by peculiar loveliness of character, to be a blessing to you, for time and eternity, is a bereavement of which, even now, I know not how to speak without emotions too strong for utterance. While this precious Parent lived, she seemed to interpose between your beloved grandmother and myself, and any immediate responsibility in regard to your education; but now that she is removed, we seem to be brought, in the mysterious and mournful Providence of God, to stand in some measure in her place, and to perform some of the most important duties which she owed to her children. And, although your surviving Parent is eminently fitted, both by nature and grace, to be a guide to your youth; yet, as he is engaged, and is likely for

some time to be engaged, in active, arduous, and extended labours for the Church of God, which will probably separate him from you often and much for a considerable time;—an additional responsibility on our part seems to grow out of every circumstance.

It is under these impressions that I now address you. Your grandparents are drawing near to the end of their course. They must soon leave you in a depraved and ensnaring world. What they do for your benefit, they must do quickly. As one placed in these tender and endearing relations to you, and in these solemn circumstances, allow me to pour out the fulness of a heart most earnestly engaged for your welfare, and desiring more ardently than I am able to express, to see you walking in truth and happiness, and embalming by your conduct, as well as by your affection, the memory of that blessed Parent, who, if she is ever permitted from her high and holy abode, to look down on those whom she has left behind, will rejoice to see you making choice of that path which leads to the same blessedness.

There are two considerations, beloved grandchildren, which, I think, you will all agree, entitle me to expect from you a respectful and affectionate attention to what I have to offer in these letters. The first is, that I have lived a long and somewhat eventful life; and, of course, my range of experience has not been small. In my three-score and tenth year, I have had an opportunity of following many young people from the cradle to the grave. I have seen the training, the subsequent course, and the end of thousands. Need I say, that the lessons derived from such experience are not unworthy of your regard? O, if you could start in your career with that practical knowledge of the vanity, the snares, and the sufferings of the world, which has come to me through the medium of many a melancholy sight, and many a painful conflict, how great would be the advantage! But this cannot be. Happy were it for you, if you were willing to profit as you might from the experience of others. But neither can this be expected, in ordinary cases, to be realized. I cannot, however, admit the thought, that you will be willing to reject this teaching altogether. The second claim which I have on your attention is, my ardent and affectionate desire to promote your happiness. You cannot suspect me of any sinister design in what I have to say. This would be to suppose me capable of “hating my own flesh.” No, dear children, I have no desire to damp the sanguine joy, or cloud the smiling sun of your youth. I would not take from you a single rational pleasure. On the contrary, I delight to see you happy; and desire, by all the means in my power to promote your true enjoyment and honour. But you must allow me now, in my old age, when I have seen so much of the illusions of the world, and so many examples of the destruction of those who yielded to them, to counsel you, not in the style of youthful flattery, but in the language of “truth and soberness.” You will find nothing in these letters intended to carry a point by overpainting, or by any other artifice. If you have a real disinterested friend on earth, who unfeignedly wishes to promote your best interest in both worlds, it is he who now addresses you. I shall not give a counsel or an injunction, but what I verily believe your precious Mother, if she were permitted to speak from the bosom of her Saviour, would ratify with all her heart.

You will observe that some of my counsels have a respect to objects beyond the period of childhood, which you now occupy. The truth is, I expect soon to leave you. Probably long before any of you shall reach adult age. Of course, I feel that what I have to say at all, had better be said now. I may have no other opportunity. Besides, one of the great truths which I wish to impress upon your minds is, that you are, even at your present age, sowing the all important seeds of a future harvest of good or evil. You will not find a single habit or attainment recommended in the

following pages, which, if you are ever to gain it, you will not find an advantage in having calculated and prepared for, as far as possible, at the earliest age. The earlier you begin to imbibe good principles, and lay good plans, the better will it be for all the future.

Let me entreat you, then, to receive with all the affection and docility of dutiful children, the counsels of one who, while he writes, looks up to "Him who has the residue of the Spirit," that what is rightly said, may be impressed upon your hearts, and made to bring forth precious fruit, to your happiness, and to the glory of his holy name!

Letter II("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Human Nature

Dear Children:—On all important subjects there are certain great facts which must be regarded as fundamental; as lying at the foundation of all truth, and all duty. I feel that this is peculiarly the case in regard to the counsels which I am about to give you concerning your course in life. Among these fundamental facts are the depravity, the misery, and the numberless temptations of the world in which you live; the depravity of your own nature, ever ready to be attracted by the allurements and corruptions of the world; and your consequent need of the grace of God, at every step, for your guidance, protection, and deliverance. And until you know and feel, and in some degree lay to heart, that the world in which you live is a fallen, depraved world; that its habitual maxims and ways are hostile to your best interests; that you are yourselves, by nature, miserable sinners, standing in need of pardoning mercy; and sanctifying grace; and that you are every day exposed to snares and perils, from the joint influence of a depraved nature and a corrupt world;—until you have learned, in some good measure, to recognise these facts; to dwell upon them daily and hourly; and to receive the lessons which they are adapted to teach; you are not prepared even to begin life. You are not prepared to meet or encounter the most common scenes, much less the more formidable dangers which are likely to beset your path every day that you live. But the moment you are brought to admit these humbling, momentous truths; to feel their reality; and to consider and treat them in some degree according to their practical importance; then, and not till then, may we hope you will be ready to make a proper estimate of the world; to guard against its allurements; to ponder well what you need for securing your true happiness; and to implore that divine aid which is necessary if you desire, in such circumstances, to perform any duty aright. And, therefore, when I see young people apparently forgetful of the character of their own hearts, and of the world in which they live; thinking that all is gold that glitters; and imagining that they can safely trust to their own wisdom and strength in every situation, I regard them as objects of the deepest commiseration, and as wholly unqualified for either the duties or the best enjoyments of life.

Know, then, dear children, and remember, that you belong to an apostate race; that we are all, according to the declaration of God's own word, "born in sin," and "shapen in iniquity;" that we are "by nature the children of wrath;" that our native propensities are all of them corrupt; opposed to God; impelling us to habits and practices forbidden by his law, and unfriendly to our best interest. Remember, too, that, so far from being able to trust your own hearts to resist the temptations around you, and to guide you aright, they are all naturally inclined to that which is evil, and disposed to take side with the vanities and corruptions of the world. So that there is constant need of self-denial; of imposing restraints upon all our appetites and passions; and of submitting, especially in early life, to the counsels of the wise and the good, who have gone before us in the

journey of life, and have had more experience than ourselves of its temptations and dangers.

Hence it is, that so large a part of religion is represented in Scripture as consisting in opposing our own corrupt inclinations; in “crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts;” in constant efforts to bring down pride and vanity; to mortify our evil propensities; “to keep under the body;” to “rule our own spirits;” and, in general, to gain the victory over ourselves. All these expressions imply that the course of true wisdom is a warfare with evil; that our most formidable enemies are within; and that resisting our own corrupt nature is at once the most constant, and the most serious part of our duty as accountable creatures. Nor is this all. Not only is our nature corrupt; not only are we from our very birth, prone to evil “as the sparks fly upward;” but we are also by nature under condemnation. In the language of that incomparable Catechism, with which you have been familiar from lisping infancy—and every doctrine of which, as I believe, is drawn from the Bible—“All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.”

Such is the condition of our race by nature. Not only depraved and unworthy, but guilty, condemned, and perishing; not only in danger of being forever lost; but already under a sentence of death, unless rescued from it by the power and grace of the Saviour. All the posterity of Adam are by nature, “dead in trespasses and sins,” having no resources within themselves for regaining the favour and image of God. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not in subjection to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” So that, left to ourselves, we should infallibly go on in sin to eternal, merited, and hopeless destruction.

Here you are, then, dear children, in a revolted, polluted, lost world, where the vast majority of the population is in open rebellion against God; where the prevailing habits and maxims are selfish, carnal, and opposed to all that is truly and spiritually good; where, if you fall in, and continue to go with the prevailing current, you are inevitably and eternally lost; where your only safety consists in renouncing the world, its idols, its master, and its hopes; in “crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts; in resisting the fashions and allurements which reign around you;” and taking refuge in that Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Such are the temptations and perils with which you are constantly and every where surrounded; and such your only refuge. And, what greatly adds to your danger is, that if the representation which I have given be correct, your own hearts are naturally disposed to take the side of the enemy, and to betray you into his toils and his power. So that you are like persons travelling in an enemies’ country, and liable every moment to be taken in some insidious and fatal snare, and whose own inclinations to yield to the enemy are among their greatest dangers. These are the humbling facts which it behoves you constantly to keep in view, and to regard as the great practical index of all your plans, resolutions, and efforts, as long as you live. And as you can never be truly wise until you learn the corruption of your own nature, and how indispensably you need pardoning mercy, sanctifying grace, and unceasing guidance and help from on high; so you are not prepared to begin your intercourse with a corrupt world, until you have learned to appreciate the real character of human nature as it appears in all the walks of social life. The young, anterior to experience—and indeed many, long after experience ought to have taught them otherwise—are too ready to put confidence in the professions and arts of men. They are apt to believe the flattering tongue; to rely on plausible promises; to trust heartless professions of attachment; to repose confidence in civilities never meant to be accepted; and to expect much from protestations of kindness, and assurances of

friendship—all dictated by the merest selfishness, and never intended to be fulfilled. Rely on it, dear children, you live in a cold, selfish, heartless world. Its civilities are hollow; its promises are deceitful; its flatteries are insidious; its most splendid attractions are delusive. Expect little from the warmest professions, and be very backward to avail yourselves of the most fervent proffers of friendship. I am far, indeed, from recommending a misanthropic suspicion of every body. Your parents and grandparents ought to be the last persons in the world to indulge or recommend such a spirit. They have been so happy as to enjoy friendships sincere, disinterested, active, and unwearied, never to be forgotten. For these they would be thankful, and enjoin it upon you never to forget such precious friends. But remember, that social confidence is a plant of slow growth; that there are few cases in which it can be safely indulged; that where it exists, great care ought to be taken not to abuse it by laying too much upon it; and that, while you ought to receive all expressions of civility and respect with a suitable acknowledgment, nothing can be more unwise and unsafe in such a world as this, than to trust indiscriminately to the professions and promises of men.

If such be our deplorable circumstances, as a race, and as individuals, then we need deliverance. We need salvation. To this great subject I would next entreat your attention.

Letter III("tw:///self?tid=11&popup=0" \ "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

The Way of Salvation

Dear Children:—Salvation is a word often on your lips, and on the lips of many around you. The truly pious look forward to it with humble, joyful hope. And those who have no piety, and even the profane and profligate often speak of it as something which they desire and anticipate. But what is salvation? The very expression presupposes that we are all by nature in a state from which we need to be delivered or saved. We never apply this term to any but those who are in danger of being lost. When a man is drowning, or in the utmost peril of death in any form, and by the interposition of some benevolent and active friend, is rescued, we say he is saved. Now in a similar sense is the term used in the case before us. The salvation of man implies that he is, by nature not only in danger, but in a lost and perishing condition. Accordingly I told you, my dear children, in the preceding letter, that our whole race, and you among the rest, are, by nature in a state of guilt, depravity, and misery; that we are fallen creatures; under condemnation; exposed to the wrath and curse of God; liable not only to natural death, but also exposed to all the terrors of eternal death, that is, of eternal separation from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, unless delivered, or, in other words, saved by the interposition of some mighty and merciful deliverer. Such a great Deliverer has appeared to save sinners of our race;—to “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” And now, the word of God assures us, that there is “no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.”

It is my earnest desire, dear children, to open this way of salvation to your minds, and to recommend it to your serious and solemn attention. Believe me, “it is not a vain thing for you, it is even your life.” Unless you are, by the grace of God made partakers of this great salvation, it “had been better for you that you had not been born.” By the salvation revealed in the Gospel is meant, delivering us from all the ruins of the fall—from the condemnation of sin and the power of sin—restoring us to the favour and image of God—and bringing us to the everlasting enjoyment of his presence in heaven. This is salvation. Now I wish to show you how this great and blessed

result is accomplished by the undertaking and work of Jesus Christ, whom we are accustomed, on that account, to denominate, with emphasis, our Saviour.

Man was made upright; in full possession of all the powers necessary to perfect moral agency, and with all the dispositions which prompted to a perfectly correct use of those powers. But “man being in honour abode not.” He rebelled against God. He violated the covenant under which he was placed, and became liable to the dreadful penalty which it denounced against transgression. In this fall of our first parents we are all sharers. “In Adam,” says the apostle, “all die.” “By one man’s disobedience,” he again declares, “many were made sinners.” We have all totally lost our original righteousness; so that there is now, by nature, “none righteous, no not one.” In short, we have all become guilty and polluted before God, and incapable of regaining his image or his favour by any merit or doings of our own. How, then are we to be delivered from these deplorable circumstances? How shall we escape that perdition which is the just reward of sin? “How can we escape the damnation of hell?” How can any be saved? God cannot set aside his own law, or permit his authority and majesty, as a righteous Governor, to be trampled under foot. To “clear the guilty,” to take impenitent rebels into the arms of his love, would be to “deny himself.” Where, then, is our refuge? Must we sit down in despair, and say, “There is no hope?” No, by no means. A God of infinite wisdom, power, and love, has devised and proclaimed a wonderful plan by which sin was punished while the sinner is pardoned; by which justice is completely satisfied, while mercy is extended to the guilty and vile; by which “grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” This wonderful and glorious plan of mercy consisted in the Father giving his own Son to obey, suffer, and die in our stead, as our substitute; and in the Son consenting to bear the penalty of the law for us; to put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself; and to bring in an everlasting righteousness for our justification. Yes, dear children, however coldly an unbelieving world may receive the amazing annunciation, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, condescended, in his wonderful love, to assume our nature; to take the place of the guilty and the perishing; and to become the victim of Divine justice in their stead. His language, in the eternal counsel of peace, was, “Let me suffer instead of the guilty. Let me die to save them. Deliver them from going down to the pit; I will be their ransom.” This wonderful, this unparalleled offer was accepted. The Father was well pleased for the righteousness sake of his Son. He accepted it as the price of our pardon; as that on account of which all who repent and believe should be justified. So that the Scriptures may well say concerning the Saviour—He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He is the Lord our righteousness. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed. He bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

Here then, dear children, is the way, and the only way of a sinner’s acceptance with God. In virtue of the covenant of redemption, the righteousness of Christ, or what he did and suffered on our behalf, is placed to the account of his people, as if they had performed it in their own persons. Though sinful and unworthy in themselves, God is pleased to pardon and accept them as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness sake of his beloved Son. I am aware, indeed, that some who speak much of “the merits of Christ,” and profess to rely entirely on those merits, represent the whole subject in a very different light. They suppose that in consideration of the

sufferings and death of our blessed Saviour, the old, original law of God, requiring perfect obedience, is repealed, and a mitigated law now prescribed as the rule of our obedience. So that now, under the Christian dispensation, a perfect obedience is not even required, but only an imperfect one, accommodated to our fallen condition and our many infirmities. But still, they insist, that this imperfect obedience is the meritorious ground of our acceptance with God; and, of course, that eternal life is the purchase of our own obedience. In short, the doctrine of these errorists is, that the benefit conferred by the sufferings and death of Christ, consists, not in providing an entire righteousness for us, but only in abating the demands of the law; in bringing down the divine requisitions more to a level with our ability; and still enabling us, low as we have fallen, to be the purchasers of salvation by our own works. Be assured, dear children, this view of the subject is a grievous departure from the Scriptural doctrine concerning the way of salvation. The Bible represents our pardon and acceptance with God as not founded, in any respect, or in any degree, on our own obedience; but as wholly of grace—as a mere unmerited gift, bestowed solely on account of what the Redeemer has done as our substitute and surety. It represents the holy law of God as remaining in all its original strictness without repeal or mitigation; and as falling with the whole weight of its penalty on all the impenitently guilty. But it declares that penalty to be removed from those who repent and believe the Gospel, not on account of any worthiness in themselves, as the meritorious ground of the benefit; but only on account of the perfect righteousness of Him who came to seek and save those who were lost. In short, a gracious God saves his people not by overlooking their sins; but by lifting the penalty from them, and laying it upon the divine Redeemer, and for his sake letting them go free, and accepting them solely on account of his merit. This righteousness of Jehovah the Saviour is said to be “to all, and upon all them that believe;”—that is, it is imputed to none—set to the account of none but those who receive Christ by faith. Faith is that great master grace by which we become united to the Saviour, and interested in his atonement. This righteousness, therefore, is called the righteousness of faith, and the righteousness of God by faith. Hence we are said to be justified by faith, and to be saved by faith. Not that faith, as an act of ours, is, in any measure, the ground of our justification; but all these expressions imply, that there is an inseparable connexion, in the economy of grace, between believing in Christ, and being justified by him, or having his righteousness imputed to us. Happy, thrice happy they, who can thus call the Saviour theirs, and who have thus “received the atonement!” Though unworthy in themselves, they are graciously pronounced righteous by their heavenly Judge, on account of what the Mediator has done. Their sins, though many, are, for his sake, forgiven them. They are freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. They are “accepted in the Beloved.” Though polluted and undeserving in their own character, they are “complete in Him.” There is no condemnation to them now; and in the day of judgment they shall find, to their eternal joy, that there is both safety and happiness in appearing in the righteousness of Him who loved sinners, and gave himself for them, clothed in “robes which have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.” But we not only need to be justified by the righteousness of Christ; we also indispensably need to be sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Accordingly, the purification of our nature, as well as the pardon of our sins, is one of the benefits purchased by Him, and secured by covenant to all believers. Hence the teaching and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit must be regarded as an essential part of the great salvation of which I am speaking. We need as much to be delivered from the love of sin as from its condemnation. And for both, the plan of mercy held forth in the Gospel of Christ, makes equal and

effectual provision. "Whom he justifies, them he also sanctifies; and whom he sanctifies, them he also glorifies." By the power of the Holy Spirit, the dominion of sin is broken in the hearts of all who are brought under the power of the Gospel. The reign of corruption in the soul is destroyed; the love of it is taken away; and though not perfectly sanctified in the present life, yet every believer has his sanctification begun. It is carried on, not by his own wisdom or strength, but by the same divine power by which it was commenced; until he is, at last, made perfectly holy, as well as perfectly happy in the presence of his God and Saviour.

Thus does it appear that salvation is all of grace, sovereign, unmerited grace. The original devising of the plan, in the eternal counsels of peace, was prompted, not by any foresight of faith and holiness in the fallen creature; but in mere grace. The plan itself, in all its principles and provisions makes our salvation perfectly gratuitous, and wholly excludes all human merit. After the plan was formed and executed, and the knowledge of it imparted to us, no one would ever accept of it, did not the same grace which formed it, incline the sinner to lay aside his native opposition, and accept of the offered mercy. And even after cordially accepting it, no individual would ever cleave to his hope, and continue to embrace it, and live under its power, were he not "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

After the foregoing statement, the great question is, what message does this plan of salvation bring to you? The message which it brings, dear children, is an unspeakably solemn one. It charges you with being sinners—miserable sinners in the sight of God—without merit—without help, and without hope in yourselves. It offers you peace, and pardon, and sanctification, and eternal life, through the atoning sacrifice of the blessed Redeemer. It entreats you to lay aside your enmity, and to receive these benefits with humble and adoring gratitude, as a free, unmerited gift, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Its language is, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." And again, "Whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." It calls upon you to renounce all confidence in yourselves, and to receive and rest on Christ alone for salvation as he is freely offered in the Gospel; to receive him as the Lord your righteousness, and the Lord your strength, and rejoice in him as your only hope. To this end, it is indispensable that you be convinced of sin; that you experience a deep and cordial sense of your own sinfulness and unworthiness; that you despair of saving yourselves; that you fall at the footstool of sovereign grace, feeling that you deserve to die, and that you can have no hope but in the atoning blood, and sanctifying Spirit of the Redeemer. It is your duty and your privilege to go to the Saviour at once, and cast yourselves on his mercy, without waiting for any qualifications to render you worthy of his favour. You are commanded to go to him as miserable, helpless sinners, not with a price in your hands; but to receive from him all that you need to make you holy and happy here and hereafter. And until you are prepared thus to go to him, as miserable, unworthy sinners, who deserve God's wrath and curse forever; until you sincerely feel that you have nothing to plead but the merit of another; until you are ready to cast yourselves at the feet of the Saviour, and to be indebted for pardon and eternal life as a mere gift of grace, you have yet to learn the vital element of practical religion.

Dear children! will you hesitate a moment—will you wait for a second invitation to accept of such a Saviour? Will you turn away with ingratitude from such a salvation? Listen to the entreaty of one who loves you, and who has no stronger desire concerning you than to see you walking in the Spirit, and enjoying the consolation of the Gospel: or rather listen to the voice of that blessed

Saviour himself who died for sinners; and who says to you, and to all who hear the Gospel—"Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Think not, I beseech you, of putting off this acceptance of the Saviour's love until you are farther advanced in life. Do you forget that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace," and that you cannot too soon begin to be happy? Besides, have you any assurance that you will live to be much more advanced in age than you now are? Not long since, a graduate of one of our colleges was heard to say, "I have finished my college education. I will now devote two years to the study of a profession; and then I will take one year to see what there is in that mighty thing they call religion." So calculated this careless, blooming youth. But before his plan was half accomplished, he suddenly fell sick; was seized with delirium; and died without hope. But there are facts, dear children, which ought to come nearer home. Can you forget your beloved brother and sisters, who, in the very threshold of their existence, were cut down, and laid in the grave? And what security have you that you will live to see another year? But even if you are permitted to live until you reach adult age, or until you are old and grey-headed, what reason have you to hope, if you go on hardening yourselves against the Gospel until that time, that you will then have grace given you to "consider your ways?" O, how many who were in youth thoughtful and tender, have become more and more callous to every serious impression, as they advanced in life, and have, at length, sunk into the grave without hope! Be entreated, then, dear children, now, while your hearts are tender; before the world has twined around them a thousand entanglements; before you become hardened by inveterate habits of sin; be entreated to make choice of that "good hope through grace," which will form the best treasure, and the only effectual pledge of safety and happiness in the voyage of life: the treasure which is emphatically "that good part which can never be taken away from you."

Letter IV("tw:///self?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

The Bible

Dear Children:—If you were walking, in a dark night, along a road full of sloughs, and pits, and snares, and dangers of every kind, what would you do for safety? You would naturally, if you could obtain it, take a light in your hands. You would also, if possible, engage a guide, strong and faithful, well acquainted with the road, and qualified to conduct and defend you. And, besides all this, you would vigilantly look around you at every step, and eagerly mark and avoid every spot that had a suspicious or doubtful appearance. Your situation, dear children, in the journey of life, is precisely such as I have described; or rather, I ought to say, "the half has not been told you." You are just entering on a world, dark, corrupt, and full of allurements and danger. On every side enemies lie in wait to deceive and betray. You are and will be exposed to a thousand temptations and perils from which you have no wisdom or strength to deliver yourselves. You need direction and guidance at every step. Now the Bible presents the only complete and perfect map of the road which you are travelling. It was given us to be "a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path." It exhibits, with unerring fidelity, every enemy, every snare, every danger which beset your path. It gives all the information, all the warning, all the caution, and all the encouragement which you need. It tells you, more perfectly than any other book, all that you have to fear, and all that you have to hope for. There is not a form of error, or of corruption, against which it does not put you on

your guard; nor an excellence or a duty which it does not direct you how to cultivate and attain. "Wherewith," asks the Psalmist, "shall the young cleanse their way?"—"By taking heed thereto," he replies, "according to thy word." No one ever made this holy Book the guide of his life, without walking wisely, safely, and happily; without finding the truest enjoyment in this world, and eternal blessedness in the world to come. Can you wonder, then, beloved children, that I place a high value on this blessed Book; that I earnestly recommend it to your serious attention, to your constant study, and to your devout and affectionate application and confidence? Can you wonder that I should delight to see it daily in your hands; much of its sacred contents committed to your memory; and your hearts deeply imbued with its spirit and its power? You, no doubt, remember how earnestly your precious Mother, now gone to the God who gave this Book, recommended it to your attention; how assiduously she put it into your hands; how often she constrained you to commit portions of it to memory; and how frequently, on Sabbath evenings, she gathered you round her to recite those portions in her hearing, and to receive her instructions and counsels in regard to them. Can you ever forget these scenes, and the solemn, tender lessons which you then received? Call to mind her earnest looks, her affectionate tones, her unceasing labour to impress the contents of this sacred Book on your minds and hearts. Think of these things; and if you can recollect them without gratitude to God for such a mother, and without tears of regret that you have not profited more by her faithful counsels, you have less moral feeling, and less filial sensibility than I have been accustomed to give you credit for.

Why is it, my dear children, that so many young people regard the Bible with aversion, and consider the study of its pages, and especially committing them to memory, as a task and a burden? When we reflect that it is sent to us from heaven; that it contains the glad tidings of peace, and love, and salvation to a lost world; that it is besides full of the noblest specimens of literary beauty, and of tender pathetic eloquence that the world ever saw; that there is something in it adapted to touch the finest and best cords of human sensibility—why is it that you so often feel aversion to the study of this volume, and would gladly be excused from the task of perusing its chapters? Alas! dear children, this is one of the many proofs that your nature, as I before stated, is depraved; and that you need the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, before you can understand and relish a book given by his inspiration. Every feeling of reluctance to the study of this Book which you experience, ought to fill you with alarm, and to constrain you to cry mightily to God that he would open your eyes and your hearts, and give you that taste for the best of all books, without which you cannot be prepared for the joys of his presence. Consider, I beseech you, that, as you have been made acquainted with this Book from your earliest childhood, so you will have to give an account for this knowledge. Many children around you have never had the Bible put into their hands; have never been taught to venerate and love its sacred pages; but you have been informed of its origin and value. You have enjoyed a privilege denied to thousands. Will you not be grateful for this privilege? Will you not manifest that you know how to prize a gift of more value than all the world beside? Can you deliberately consent to meet the dreadful condemnation of those who, from childhood, "knew the Master's will, and did it not."

I hope I need not remind you that the Book of God is to be read with feelings and in a manner very different from those with which you read all other books. When you have read books of human composition once or twice, you have gotten from them all they contain—you have done with them. But with the perusal of the Bible you can never have done. The oftener you go over it, if you feel as

you ought, the richer and more delightful will it appear. You can never exhaust its meaning or its interest. Like its divine Author, it has a length and breadth and depth and height, concerning which no human reader can ever say that he has completely fathomed its meaning, or measured its riches.

Other books are to be read with attention, and, if they abound with truth and wisdom, with respect; but the Book of God is to be read with the deepest veneration, as containing the mind and will of our heavenly Sovereign. In fact, every line of it is to be considered as the voice of God speaking to us. Woe to those, whether young or aged, who can handle the Bible with levity, make sport of its contents, or recite its solemn language as matter of jest! The Lord will not hold them guiltless who thus, practically, “take his name in vain.” The Mohammedans manifest much more reverence for their Koran, than many Christians for the Bible. They never allow themselves to touch it without washing their hands. They handle it with the most pointed respect, never holding it lower than their girdles. Every copy of it commonly contains an inscription or label on the cover, in these words—“Let none touch but those who are clean.” How very differently do many, young and old, among us, treat the Holy Scriptures! I have often been distressed when I have seen children toss about their Bibles, and even throw them in the dirt, as they would the least valued of their play-things, or rattle over some of the most solemn language of the Bible with as little apparent thought or respect as they would repeat the veriest effusions of nonsense. The Bible, farther, is to be read daily, and with diligence, as containing that daily food from which you are to derive spiritual aliment, and strength continually. It is to be read with fixed attention, seriously directing your mind to its rich and important meaning; with humility, feeling your need of the instruction and grace which it contains; with prayer, imploring the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that he may open your hearts to receive the engrafted word which is able to save your souls; with application—asking continually—“How does this concern me? Does it describe my case? Does it not contain a lesson which demands my special regard? Do I know any thing in my own experience of what is here taught?” In this precious Book you will find every thing adapted to enlarge the mind, to gratify the taste, to elevate the affections, and to purify the heart. If you only sought the richest entertainment, you could not open a book more fitted to gratify you. It is an inexhaustible mine of instruction as well as of beauty—the deeper you dig, the richer will you find its treasures. Its exquisite simplicity, its pathos, its sublimity, its heavenly wisdom, its purity, are all adapted to turn us away from the vanities of the world; to enlarge our views beyond these regions of disorder and darkness; to strengthen every high and holy motive; and to lead us upward to Him who is the source and the sum of all good. Happy, thrice happy will those children and young people be, who early learn to go to the Bible for all their sentiments, principles, and rules of action; who learn daily to go to that precious Book to direct them in their pursuits, to comfort them in their sorrows, to guide them in their perplexities, and to animate them in their labours whatever they may be! Such have the best pledge of temporal enjoyment, and of eternal blessedness. When, therefore, those who love you, and would in some measure take the place of your dear departed Mother, daily put this precious Book of God into your hands, and urge you to read and commit to memory a portion of its contents, do not allow yourselves to regard it as a task or a burden. Think from whom it comes—from the God who made you. Think of the great purpose for which it was given—to make you wise and eternally happy. Think of the only means of making it truly profitable to you—studying it with devout attention, laying it up in your hearts, and practising it in your lives. Think of the solemn responsibility which the possession of this Book lays upon you—for to

whomsoever much is given, of them shall much be required. And may the great Author of this Book give you grace to “seek for the heavenly wisdom which it contains as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures!”

Letter V("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Prayer

Dear Children:—“Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.” This is the definition given in a Catechism with which you are familiar, and a more complete and perfect one could scarcely be conceived. It is the offering up of our sincere desires; for unless it be sincere, it is but solemn mockery. It is to be addressed to God alone; for prayer addressed to any created being, is an act of treason to our rightful Sovereign. It is to be “for things agreeable to the divine will;” or else it is unauthorized and presumptuous. It is always to be presented in the name of Christ; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can draw near to a holy God with acceptance, but the name of Jesus Christ. It must be accompanied with confession of sin; because the approach of a sinner to God, without an humble sense and acknowledgment of unworthiness, would be contrary to every principle of reason, as well as to the Christian plan of salvation. And, finally, it ought to include a thankful acknowledgment of divine mercies; for without a grateful sense of God’s goodness, we cannot be in a frame of mind fitted to receive farther favours.

I trust, dear children, I need not dwell long on either the reasonableness or the duty of prayer. If we are entirely dependent on God for every temporal and spiritual blessing, then it is surely reasonable that we acknowledge our dependence, and apply to him with humility and earnestness for his aid. If his favour is life, and his blessing the best riches, it is evident that we ought to supplicate them with importunity and perseverance. If we are sinners, unworthy of the divine favour, we ought to humble ourselves at his footstool, and make confession of our sins with penitence and obedience. If he has revealed a plan of mercy and grace to us, of which he invites and commands us to avail ourselves, then every principle of self interest concurs with reason, in urging us to seek with earnestness a participation in that mercy. And if our Maker and Redeemer has, in so many words, commanded us “by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known our requests to God,” who can question, for a moment, the reasonableness of a compliance with that command? Nor is the duty of prayer less apparent than its reasonableness. The command of our Father in heaven is—“Pray without ceasing—pray always with all prayer and supplication, and abound therein with thanksgiving. I will be inquired of by my people to do that for them which they need. Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him? All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. If any one lack wisdom, let him ask of God, giveth liberally, and it shall be given him. Is any afflicted? let him pray. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. The Lord is rich in mercy to all that call upon him. In the day

of my trouble I called upon the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my distresses.”

Such are some of the numerous passages of Scripture which plainly require and encourage prayer. Can any one who reads and believes the Bible, doubt for a moment, that it is equally his duty and his privilege to go daily to the throne of grace to supplicate for all the temporal or spiritual good which he needs? I hope, my dear children, you will not be disposed to say, notwithstanding such express and positive declarations of God’s word, in the language of profane objectors of old—“Wherefore should we seek after God? Does he need to be informed of our wants? Can we, by importunity, alter his purposes? Where is, then, the advantage of asking for what we need? What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?” If you should ever be tempted to ask such a question, I would answer—“Much every way.” God has connected our asking for blessings with receiving them. He has promised to hear and answer prayer. He has condescended to say, that he will regard with all the tenderness of a parent’s heart, the cries of his children. He has said in his word, “Ye have not, because ye ask not.” This is enough. But it is not all that is worthy of our attention. Prayer is not intended to inform God, but to benefit ourselves. It tends to remind us of our dependence and unworthiness; to impress our hearts with a deeper sense of the divine goodness and mercy; and to beget in our minds that humble, grateful, tender sense of our own weakness, and of our obligation to the Author of all good, which constitute the best preparation for receiving the gracious gifts of our heavenly Parent.

While your precious, lamented Mother was alive, what a privilege did you consider it to be allowed to go to her in all your troubles, and to make known to her all your desires! How much greater the privilege to be allowed every hour free access to your Father in heaven, with all your anxieties and distresses, to pour out all your wants and wishes, your hopes and fears into the bosom of an Almighty Friend, who is ever able and ready to help!

Since, then, dear children, there are so many reasons prompting you to prayer; since you are always weak, always dependant, always unworthy, and always in need, can you doubt that it is your duty and your interest to abound in prayer? Let me entreat you, therefore, never to suffer a day to pass without engaging in this delightful and most reasonable exercise. Set apart fixed times for the purpose, that you may form such habits as will aid your memory, and prevent your neglecting it. Retire as soon as you can, after rising in the morning, to return thanks for the mercies of the night, and to implore the protection, the guidance, and the blessing of your heavenly Father, through the day. And in the evening, before drowsiness overtakes you, retire again, to praise him for the mercies of the day, and to ask for his guardianship during the night watches. But are these the only subjects of prayer? Far from it. They are numerous as the moments you live, and various as the objects which you are called to contemplate. Pray in the morning, that God would keep you from all evil in body or soul, through the day; that he would create in you a clean heart, and renew within you a right spirit; that he would guard your speech and behaviour at all times, and in every situation; that he would enable you to mortify and subdue every sinful affection, and to overcome every improper habit; that he would deliver you from sloth, and pride, and vanity, and malice, and envy, and every evil temper; that he would enable you to treat all around you in a dutiful and becoming manner; in a word, that he would enable you to spend the day in a manner profitable to yourselves, and to the benefit of all around you. And in the evening pray, that he would pardon all the deficiencies and infirmities of the preceding day; that he would make you grateful for all the favours of his merciful Providence; that he would watch over

you during the hours of darkness and repose; and bring you to the light of another day in health, in the exercise of your reason, and in the enjoyment of his favour and love. And while you thus pray daily for yourselves, it is your privilege and duty to include in your petitions all with whom you are connected in the various relations of life. You ought to pray continually for your beloved father, who is engaged in such important labour for the Church, and who loves you with an affection and solicitude which you can never repay; for your grandparents, who are daily praying for you, and who are falling more and more under the infirmities of age; for one another, that you may be guided and blessed amidst all the temptations and dangers of youth; for your teachers; for your school-mates; for the poor children around you, who have none of the advantages of instruction and restraint which you enjoy; for your friends, and neighbours, and all with whom you are acquainted. O, my dear children, if you prayed as you ought every day for all these, how much happier would you be! What a benign influence it would have on your whole temper and conduct! It would make you kind, tender hearted, and forgiving toward all with whom you conversed; and make all of them, in their turn, love you as a friend and benefactor.

Let me make, on this subject, one more suggestion. Most people, especially most young people, have no idea of engaging in prayer unless at particular times when they retire for the purpose. I wish you all, dear children, besides your stated seasons of prayer, morning and evening, to form the habit of lifting up your thoughts and your desires to God in any and every situation; when walking by the way; when surrounded with company; when met by any call of duty, or by any circumstance of a doubtful aspect, or perplexing character—be in the habit of silently but devoutly looking up to God for wisdom and strength to perform every duty. This kind of intercourse with God may be carried on at all times, and in all situations; and, I will add, was never sincerely adopted by any one without being connected with guidance and consolations of unspeakable value. In this way the suggestion of the apostle in writing to Timothy will be realized, that “every thing be sanctified by the word of God, and prayer.”

Letter VI("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Cultivation of the Mind

Dear Children:—That every human being is bound to cultivate, in the best manner, the intellectual powers which God has given him, I hope you will take for granted, anterior to all argument; and, although the moral aspects of education are the most vitally important, yet as no one can be a moral agent without some degree of intellect; so it may be said, that the wisest and best culture even of our moral powers, depends more on the discipline, the enlargement, and the furniture of the intellect, than is commonly supposed. The cultivation of the mind comprises two things, and two only, viz: giving it proper habits of exercise, and filling it with useful knowledge. The case is precisely similar with regard to the body. The sum total of all that we are called to do for the benefit of the body, is to secure its strength by constant and wholesome action or exercise, and to furnish it with appropriate nourishment. On the one hand, were its exercise ever so abundant, if left without aliment, it would speedily sink into weakness and death; and, on the other, if its aliment be ever so plentiful and rich, yet if it be left wholly without exercise, it will soon become a mass of disease and corruption. Precisely so is it in the cultivation of the mind. Exercise and aliment are equally indispensable, and must go together. If the mind be not taught to think, and to feel an appetite for intellectual provision, all the knowledge in the world, if introduced into it, would be of

little use. But, if it be taught only to think and feel, and be furnished with none of the appropriate aliment of knowledge, it cannot grow either in strength, or in a capacity to act its part in the world with dignity or usefulness. As these principles lie at the foundation of all intellectual culture, so they are also adapted to instruct us with regard to the wisest and best means of conducting that culture, with regard to the departments of knowledge most worthy of being studied, and the relative stress which ought to be laid on different pursuits. If you would be trained up merely to be splendid butterflies, to shine and to please the superficial and the empty, for a day, and, having done this, to die like senseless insects; why, then, a corresponding plan of culture must be adopted. But, if you wish to be regarded as rational creatures; to be prepared for sober thought and action; to “serve your generation by the will of God;” to die in peace, and to be remembered with love and veneration when you are gone, then it is perfectly manifest a very different method of training is indispensable.

I trust you will not hesitate a moment in deciding which of these courses you ought to choose. I trust the way of practical wisdom, of piety, and of usefulness, will be the object of your prompt and decisive choice. If so, the course of mental culture which you ought to adopt, cannot possibly be mistaken by a mind of the least reflection. If you are to feel and act as moral accountable agents, and to consider human life as a serious, momentous thing; then, doubtless, you will feel that you are bound, first of all, and above all, to exercise your minds in such a manner, and to store them with such branches of knowledge, as will tend most effectually to enlarge them, to strengthen them, to inspire them with practical wisdom, and to furnish them with the means of the most solid and extensive usefulness.

Upon this principle, I would say, let your first and chief attention be directed to those branches of knowledge which lie at the foundation of all that is enlarged, liberal, and elevated in human pursuits; such as Grammar, Rhetoric, Geography, the Latin, Greek, and French languages, Natural and Moral Philosophy, the elements of Mathematical science, Chemistry, and as many of the branches of Natural History as may be within your reach, especially Botany and Mineralogy. These are all proper for both sexes; and the more you gain of all of them, the better fitted will you be both for enjoying life, and for fulfilling its various and momentous duties. I grant, indeed, my dear grandson, that with regard to what is denominated Classic literature, and Mathematics, I wish you to go more thoroughly to work, than would be desirable, or perhaps proper, for your sisters. But I hope that neither of these will be entirely neglected by them. For I have an impression, that the careful study, to a certain extent, of the best of the dead languages, and an intelligent acquaintance with the elementary principles of Mathematics, ought to be omitted by none who can possibly attain them. In my opinion, they are adapted to produce an effect on the mind, and to diffuse an influence over all its other acquisitions, more happy and more important than is commonly recognised, even by many of the educated themselves.

Besides the popular sciences just mentioned, with which every human being who can afford it, ought to seek some good acquaintance, there is an extensive and important field of knowledge, which is defined by the general term of literature, and, in our case, of English Literature. There is a large class of writers, with whose works every one who claims to be intelligent and well informed, must be familiar. To this department belongs the whole subject of History, which, I trust, will receive the serious attention of all of you; and about which I hope you will take enlightened advice, as a number of the most attractive and popular writers in this department, are unfit to be perused

without much reserve and caution. To these, of course, ought to be added, those great writers, both in prose and poetry, which deserve to be ranked as English Classics; and, with which, I feel confident, you will seize the earliest opportunity of becoming acquainted. I refer to such writers as Milton, Shakspeare, Dryden, Addison, Steele, Pope, Thompson, Gray, Young, Goldsmith, Johnson, Cowper, Beattie, and a number of others, whom I cannot pause to specify, but with whom it would be highly discreditable not to have some intimate knowledge. Without an acquaintance with these writers, you cannot appreciate the riches, the beauties, or the purity of your vernacular tongue, or form for yourselves a good style of writing. In these writers, too, you will find a great store-house of fine sentiment, as well as diction, adapted greatly to enlarge and elevate the mind, to impart to it its highest polish, and to prepare it for its best efforts.

There are certain accomplishments commonly called ornamental, deemed by many desirable for females, and by some considered as of much consequence. Among these are dancing, music, painting, drawing, embroidery, &c. With regard to dancing, your beloved grandmother and myself never thought proper to permit any of our own children to be instructed in this art; not because we thought the act of dancing itself criminal, but because we considered it as inseparably and almost necessarily connected with the whole system of balls, dancing assemblies, midnight parties, &c., all of which we deemed criminal, and in a great variety of ways, hostile to the principles and the claims of true religion. We do, indeed, find dancing spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures, as having been employed, even on occasions of religious joy; but never on such occasions do we read of the midnight dance, nor of promiscuous dancing, that is, of the sexes together. And with respect to the New Testament, we read there of only one actual dance, and that was performed by a profligate woman, and connected with crime of the most atrocious and revolting character. As to music, I am persuaded it is the duty of every one who is able to do it, to acquire the power of uniting in the social praise of God with excellence and efficiency. The cultivation of vocal music, and the attainment of such a degree of skill in it as is essential to imparting an interest in the exercise, are conducive to health and favourable to moral and spiritual improvement. So far, I am confident you ought all to go. And if my granddaughters should have a special taste and love for instrumental music, I am by no means prepared to advise that they deny themselves the pleasure. It is an elegant accomplishment, and when wisely employed, may be connected with innocent pleasure, and sometimes with benefit. But I should deeply regret to find them aiming at that exquisite skill in instrumental music, which cannot be attained without great expense, much loss of time, and that intense and long continued attention which cannot fail to engross the mind and stand in the way of more worthy objects of pursuit, if it do not wholly exclude them. This is so unworthy of a rational accountable creature, that I would infinitely rather my dear grandchildren should know nothing of music, than that they should carry their zeal for it, and their devotion to it, to such an injurious length. And as to my dear grandson, while I hope always to hear him unite in singing the praises of God in the sanctuary with taste and skill, it would give me unspeakable pain to hear that he was regarded as a highly acceptable and admired singer at convivial meetings, and that his company was courted on that account. I concur in opinion with the old Grecian sage, who, when a young gentleman of his acquaintance, of respectable station and employment in society, had performed on an instrument of music with consummate skill and effect, said to him, "Are you not ashamed, my young friend, to play so well?" In conducting the intellectual culture of the young, there is one question which I presume you will not fail to ask, and which I wish to anticipate and answer in this little system of affectionate advices. The question is, whether Novels ought to have

any place in the course of reading prescribed for young people? This is a question of exceeding great importance. When I was a youth it was far less interesting and momentous, as a practical matter, than it has now become. Three quarters of a century, and more especially a century ago, the number of this class of writings was so small, and their popular circulation so inconsiderable, that their influence was scarcely worthy of notice, compared with that which they have more recently exerted, and which they are daily going on to extend. Bear with me then, dear children, while I dwell a little on this subject, and call your attention to some thoughts which I pray God may be deeply impressed upon your minds. That fictitious history is not in its own nature and necessarily criminal, will probably be acknowledged by all. It may be so construed as to awaken curiosity, to excite sympathy, and to impress the understanding and the heart in a salutary manner. Of course, to condemn every thing of the kind as such, and however constructed or employed, would be to pronounce an unjust judgment. Hence we find examples of this mode of instruction in the holy Scriptures; and on the same principle, some of the wisest and best human teachers in all ages, have used the vehicle of lively and interesting fiction, known to be such at the time, for insinuating into the mind moral and religious lessons, which in a different form, might not so readily have gained admittance. But the great error of modern times is two-fold; First, in multiplying publications of this kind, until they bear an inordinate and injurious proportion in the current literature of the day; and, Secondly, in constructing them upon a plan adapted to degrade virtue and piety, to recommend vice, and of course to prove seductive and immoral in their whole influence.

Even when such works are perfectly unexceptionable in their character; when they are wholly free from any thing improper, either in language or sentiment, they may be productive of incalculable mischief, if, as now, they are issued in excessive numbers and quantity. Leaving the character of modern novels entirely out of the question, the enormous number which for the last half century has been every day increasing, has become a grievous intellectual and moral nuisance. As long as they were few in number, and were regarded not as the substance, but only as the seasoning of the literary feast, they occupied but a small share of public attention. The chief time and attention of the reading portion of the community were mainly devoted to works of substantial value, fitted to strengthen, enlarge, and enrich the mind. But, within the last twenty or thirty years, the number of novels has increased so rapidly; they have become so prominent and alluring a part of the current literature of the day; and by their stimulating and inexhaustible variety, have so drawn away the minds of the aged as well as the young from solid reading, that they have formed the principal reading of a large portion of the community, and, of course, have become a snare and an injury to an extent not easily calculated. As long as exhilarating gases, or other stimulating substances, are administered sparingly, and as medicines, they may be altogether harmless, and even essentially useful. But, when those who have taken them for some time in this manner, become so enamoured with them as to be no longer satisfied with their moderate and salutary use, but make them their daily and principal aliment, they become inevitably mischievous. They destroy the tone of the stomach, and, in the end, radically undermine the health. So it is with the insidious excitement of novels. Were the reader of them to take none into his hands but those which might be safely pronounced perfectly pure and innocent; and were he certain that he would never be tempted to go beyond the most moderate bounds in seeking and perusing even such, there would, perhaps, be little danger to be apprehended. But no one can be thus certain of either. The general stimulus of fictitious narrative is morbid and disorderly. It excites the mind, but cannot

fill or enrich it. The probability is, that he who allows himself to enter on this course, will be led on, like the miserable tippler, from one stage of indulgence to another, until his appetite is perverted; his power of self-denial and restraint lost; and his ruin finally sealed; or, at least, his mind so completely indisposed and unfitted for the sober realities of practical wisdom, for the pursuits of solid science and literature, as to be consigned to the class of superficial drivellers as long as he lives. The truth is, novels—even the purest and best of them—are adapted, not to instruct, but only to amuse; not to nourish and strengthen, but only to exhilarate. They even enervate the mind; they generate a sickness of fancy; and they render the ordinary affairs and duties of life altogether uninteresting and insipid. After wading through hundreds of the most unexceptionable volumes belonging to this class—what has been gained? What has been laid up for future use? Nothing. Not a trace of any thing useful has been left behind. The days and nights devoted to their perusal have been absolutely lost. What infatuation is it for a rational creature who is sent into the world for serious and important purposes, and who is hastening to the judgment seat, thus to waste precious time; and, what is worse, thus to pervert his mind, and disqualify himself for sober employments! The celebrated Dr. Goldsmith, in writing to his brother, respecting the education of his son, expresses himself in the following strong terms, which are the more remarkable, as he himself had written a novel:—“Above all things, never let your son touch a romance or novel. These paint beauty in colours more charming than nature, and describe happiness that man never tastes. How delusive, how destructive are those pictures of consummate bliss! They teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed; to despise the little good which fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave; and, in general, take the word of a man who has seen the world, and has studied human nature more by experience than precepts—take my word for it, I say, that such books teach us very little of the world.”* He might have gone farther, and said—They teach us little of any thing; and so pervert the taste, as to take away all relish for applying the mind to any thing sober or useful. Often have I known young men and women so bewitched by novels, that they could read nothing else. They sought for new works of this class in every direction; devoured them with insatiable avidity; and became less and less disposed for pursuing any study either prescribed by their preceptors, or adapted to promote their ultimate enjoyment; until their prospects for both worlds were irrecoverably overcast with clouds and darkness.

Imagine not, dear children, that you will exercise more resolution than others, and thus avoid the snare of which I have spoken. You cannot answer for yourselves in this matter, any more than the man who is constantly exposed to the temptation of stimulating drinks can be sure of escaping the danger. Rely upon it, the more confident you are of your own wisdom and firmness in avoiding the evil in question, the greater your peril. In this, as in many other things, the only complete safety is to be found in wholly avoiding the dangerous territory. But there is another source of evil in this department of literature, still more serious and formidable. A very large proportion of modern novels, are far from being innocent. They are positively seductive and corrupting in their tendency. They make virtue to appear contemptible, and vice attractive, honourable, and triumphant. Folly and crime have palliative and even commendatory names bestowed upon them. The omnipotence of love over all obligations and all duties, is continually maintained; and the extravagance of sinful passion represented as the effect of amiable sensibility. Surely these representations can have no other tendency than to pervert the moral sentiments, and to corrupt the hearts of those who habitually dwell upon them. And even though they be, at first, contemplated with abhorrence, no

one can tell how soon the mind may be gradually and insidiously reconciled to them, by familiarity with the infectious influence. For example; the novels of Sir Walter Scott have been read with eager delight by millions of the young and the old; and many pronounce them at least innocent. But those who read them with intelligence, and with a proper estimate of the times and the characters which he undertakes to portray, will perceive that the writer arrays himself against the patriotism and the piety of some of the best men that ever adorned the history of his country; that he exhibits orthodoxy and zeal under the guise of enthusiasm and fanaticism; that he strives to cover with dishonour, men “of whom the world was not worthy;” and to elevate and canonize their persecutors. In short, that his general influence is wholly unfriendly to religion. These characteristics pervade the most popular of his novels. Of course few of his readers, especially of his youthful readers, are aware of his misrepresentation, and, therefore, are not armed against the mischievous influence. But there is a poison lurking in this field, still more virulent and fatal. A large portion of novels may be charged with being seductive and immoral, upon a more refined and deep laid plan. They are systematic, and, in some instances, ingenious and plausible apologies for the most atrocious crimes. In many modern productions of this kind, the intelligent reader will recognise the following process of representation: Corrupt opinions are put into the mouth of some favourite hero, the splendour of whose character, in other respects, is made to embellish the principles which he holds, and the force of whose eloquence is employed to recommend the most unreasonable and mischievous dogmas. When this hero commits a crime, and when, by this crime, according to the fixed laws of the divine government, he is involved in serious difficulty, if not lasting and fatal misery, the fashionable novelist endeavours to throw the blame on the religious and moral institutions of society, as narrow, illiberal, and unjust. When a splendid but corrupt woman, has forsaken the paths of virtue, and when she suffers in her reputation and her comfort, by such conduct, all this is ascribed to “the wretched state of civilization”—to “the deplorable condition of society.” Every opportunity is taken to attack some essential principle of morality, under the title of a “prejudice;” to ridicule the duties of conjugal and domestic life, as flowing from “contracted” and “slavish” views; to stigmatize the sober pursuits of honest industry, as “dull” and “spiritless;” and, in a word, to frame an apology for robbery, murder, suicide, and the indulgence of every propensity, for which a corrupt heart can plead an inclination.

Now, my dear children, when novels of this kind are placed on the shelves of every circulating library, and strewed over every part of our land, what security have youthful novel-readers that many of this class will not fall into their hands, and that they may not imbibe the fatal poison before they are aware? Is it any wonder that wise parents and guardians are painfully apprehensive of such danger? Many amiable and well-intentioned young people, who fancied they were gaining amusement only, have been unwarily betrayed into opinions, and prepared for practices which they would once have regarded with abhorrence, and which ultimately led them into error, crime, and ruin. Since, then, there are so many novels of this insidious and baneful character; and since it is by no means easy for the young and inexperienced to distinguish between the innocent and the vile, you will not wonder that I advise, nay, entreat you to avoid the reading of novels altogether; never to allow yourselves to take a volume of this kind into your hands at all. The most innocent of them, as you have seen, are worthless, and the perusal even of them, a waste of time; and if you allow yourselves to touch any of them, you will be in danger of being led astray to an extent which you can hardly be made to anticipate. I beseech you, dear children, trust one who sincerely loves you; who understands the subject of which he is speaking; and who would not deprive you of a

single safe or solid pleasure—trust him when he earnestly exhorts you, never to read a novel.

You will, perhaps, ask, what is my opinion of what are called “religious novels,” that is, of fictitious narrative, designed to illustrate and recommend religion? I am compelled to say, that my deliberate judgment is unfavourable to these also. They are neither edifying nor safe as instructors in the great department of religion. I do not deny that some of this class may be adapted to do good, and may have been actually useful. But this is not the question. The question is, whether, as a system, it is better to instruct in religion through the medium of fictitious narrative, and by means of thrilling incidents, or by plain, sober, didactic, and exhortatory address. In general, I cannot help deciding in favour of the latter. The reason why the large majority of mankind prefer fictitious narrative is, that they love excitement; and most youthful readers will be more likely to take interest in the “story,” than in the moral lessons which it conveys. Condiments and stimulants are useful in our food; but to make our daily food consist wholly or mainly of condiments and stimulants, would not, surely, be wise or salutary. But this is not the worst. Among the novels called religious, there are various classes. Almost all the different religious denominations have issued novels appropriate to their respective sectarian characters. We not only have those which have been put forth by the friends of truth and piety; but, also, many by the advocates of error. Socinianism is now strenuously inculcated through the medium of fictitious narrative. Cold Pelagianism on the one hand, and Antinomianism on the other, have been presented in the same manner. Amidst these alternate pleadings of orthodoxy and heresy, how shall the youthful learner discriminate? Were he to take up a didactic treatise in favour of Socinian or Pelagian opinions, he would see the error in a moment, and be on his guard against it. But when he is borne away by the excitement of a stirring narrative, and a spirited, eloquent dialogue, he may imbibe the poison of error, before he is aware.

You must not, dear children, consider me as fanciful, if I express an opinion, that the present prevailing state of mind of the religious public has some connexion with that class of novels of which I am now speaking. The most striking characteristic of the present time is a love of excitement. The old and sober mode of proceeding in any thing has become unpopular and intolerable. Our children can scarcely be prevailed upon to read any thing unless it comes in the shape of a striking story. If any one wishes a pious tract to be read, he must construct it in the form of a thrilling fictitious narrative. Every dish must be highly seasoned; every draught must be a dram. Is it any wonder that, in such a condition of the public taste, all old methods of doing good should be despised, and the Church as well as the world filled with new opinions, new estimates of things, and “new measures?” Be assured, when your mind is brought, by any means, whether by an insatiable love of fictitious narrative, or by any other form of exciting composition, to relish nothing conveyed in the old form of solid, didactic, direct instruction, it is high time to examine whether you are not acquiring habits unfriendly to sober thought, to the best mental culture, and to the acquirement of the most valuable knowledge. How often have I met with young people, of both sexes, who could talk fluently, and with apparent intelligence, of the volumes of Miss Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe, Madame De Stael, Miss Edgeworth, and Scott, and Cooper, and Bulwer, and even of the depraved and infamous Byron;—but, who were struck dumb if you spoke to them of Shakspeare; of Bacon; of Milton; of Addison; of Thompson; of Young; of Dryden; of Pope, and Johnson, and Robertson, and Junius, and Cowper, and other English classics, of whom, if they had ever heard, they seemed to know nothing! Is this the way to cultivate the mind? Does this

speak for or against the devourer of novels? The sum of my counsel, then, under this head, is, that if you wish really to cultivate your minds, and to prepare them for healthful and useful action, let your studies be solid, diligent, and persevering. Let your reading be such as will fill your minds with the knowledge of facts, principles, and sentiments of the enriching and elevating kind. Let your first and most intimate acquaintance be with those authors whose works will tend to fit you for answering the great purpose for which you were sent into the world. Carefully avoid every species of reading which tends to turn away your minds from sober, practical views of life and duty. And remember that, for every book you read, and for every mental influence which you invite, you have to render a solemn account.

There is one more counsel, dear children, with which I will close this letter. It is, that whatever subject you study—whatever book you read, you do it faithfully and thoroughly. Leave nothing until you understand it well;—until you have, as far as possible, gone to the bottom of it. You may rely upon it that no solid knowledge is to be gained without patient, unwearied labour. Be not in haste, then, to pass on to another subject or lesson, until you have completely mastered that in which you may be engaged. Be not contented with merely enabling yourselves to recite a lesson with plausible fluency. Be sure that you thoroughly comprehend, not only its obvious meaning, but also its elementary principles. Despise the indolence of those, who, in learning languages, are constantly using the miserable crutches of translations, instead of walking with the use of their own limbs; and who, whenever a difficulty occurs in mathematics, or any other subject, instead of delving it out themselves, ignobly ask help from some wiser and better scholar. This is cheating yourselves. That which is gained by your own efforts, and with considerable labour, will be better understood, and more firmly lodged in the mind, than that which is imparted gratuitously by others, without any vigorous mental exercise on your part. The fact is, the pursuit of knowledge may be compared to the task of one who is called to cross a high and craggy mountain. If he is willing to forego his own best interests, both as to bodily and mental health, he may employ some sturdy, athletic assistant to take him up in his arms, and bear him over the steep ascent, and deposit him in safety on the other side, without the use of a muscle of his own. But what would he be the better for it, at the end of his journey? His limbs would not be braced. His chest would not be expanded. He would miss a thousand interesting objects of attention which the use of his own feet would have brought to his view. After a thousand such boasted expeditions, he might live and die the same feeble, nervous dyspeptic, that he was when he set out. Whereas, he who resolves to climb the same mountain by his own efforts; who addresses himself to the task with patient persevering labour; who takes step after step, slowly, but wisely and firmly; may not gain the ascent quite as speedily as his weaker contemporary; but he will gain it much more to his own profit and comfort, and, in the end, find every power invigorated by the enterprise. O, if children and young people could feel how foolish it is to procure themselves to be borne up the mountain of knowledge by others, instead of climbing it themselves, they would despise all the “labour-saving machinery” to which many of them are so fond of resorting; and would remember that what is gained by their own intellectual efforts, is more solid, wears better, digests better, and is productive of richer fruit, both to themselves and others.

It is a law impressed by our Maker on the intellectual, as well as the physical man, that “if any will not work, neither shall he eat.” It is a real blessing, if we did but know it, to have labour connected with all our attainments. Thus do we best answer the great end of our being; thus do we invigorate

every power, and become prepared most effectually to “serve our generation by the will of God.”

Letter VII("tw://[self]?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Cultivation of the Heart, and the Moral Habits

Dear Children:—By the heart, I mean the moral feelings, dispositions, and affections. And by cultivating the heart, I mean directing much attention to restraining, regulating, and purifying all its exercises. This may be said to lie at the foundation of all duty and all happiness. Were your intellectual powers cultivated with all possible care and success, and your moral faculties neglected, you might be polished and elegant demons; but would be miserable yourselves, and a curse to society. Whether, therefore, you regard your own present enjoyment, and everlasting welfare, or the happiness of those around you, you cannot too early remember the great purpose for which you were sent into the world, and the relations which you sustain as rational, social, and immortal creatures. You cannot too early or too diligently learn to restrain your passions; to deny yourselves; and to cultivate those benevolent, meek, humble, and amiable habits, which are indispensable to tranquillity and peace of mind, and which alone can prepare you to adorn and bless the social circles with which you may be connected. I draw your attention the more earnestly to this great subject because I see so many young people who appear never to think of the importance, or even utility of this part of their education.

If you have not learned, dear children, that you are by nature prone to be proud, vain, selfish, envious, irascible, sensual, malignant, and, in a word, to indulge the various appetites and passions which tend to destroy your own peace, and to invade the comfort of those around you; if you have not discovered that this is the tendency of your nature, and that resisting it will call for much self-denial, and continual, and sometimes for agonizing effort, you have attended less to your own feelings, and habits, and less to the character of your friends and associates than I am willing to suppose.

Perhaps you will ask—Does not religion cover all this ground? Where the power of Christian principle reigns in the heart, will not every thing intended to be included in this letter follow as a matter of course? If the plan of salvation, treated in a former letter, be received and obeyed, will not all the objects contemplated in the present letter, be included and secured? Whence, then, the necessity, or even the propriety, of making it matter of separate consideration? I answer, the religion of Christ, in its spirit and power, does indeed embrace all moral excellence. It does, in fact, where it bears appropriate and entire sway, include every moral feeling, affection, and habit, which can adorn and elevate human nature. And yet it is to be lamented that many who cherish the Christian hope, are not as much aware of this fact as they ought to be; and are not so careful to exhibit all the loveliness, as well as the purity of example which become them, as is desirable. And, besides, I have always found that there is a great advantage in pursuing rather more into detail the various branches of the Christian temper, than is commonly done even in the best treatises on religious character and duty. The French have a phrase which expresses more exactly than any English one which I can recollect, my meaning in the title of this letter. The phrase I refer to, is *Les petites morales*; by which they appear to understand those moral delicacies of feeling, temper, and intercourse, which, though not always found actually shining in every professing, or even every real Christian, do really belong to the Christian code of ethics, and are indispensable to a complete and exemplary character. The duties which grow out of our relations

to God, are generally acknowledged by all professors of religion. However defective their obedience, their obligations are seldom disputed. But if it be the law of God, not only that we should “love Him with all our heart and soul and strength and mind,” but also that we should “love our neighbours as ourselves,” then the duties growing out of this great law are more multiplied, tender, delicate and important than most of those who are called religious people recognise in practice, or even in theory.

It is true, the root of all sound morality is religion. And it is equally true, that the deeper sense any one has of the constraining love of Christ, and of the holiness, majesty, omniscience, and omnipresence of God, the more faithful he will be in the discharge of all moral duties, both in private and in public. Labour then, day by day, to gain a deeper impression of the claims of your Creator and Redeemer upon you. Meditate much on the Divine glory. Cultivate a devout spirit. Study to walk with God in the exercise of faith, and love, and prayer. And endeavour to keep constantly before your minds his all seeing eye, his infinite holiness, his judgment seat, and those righteous retributions which he has in store for all his creatures, whether they be good, or whether they be evil? This is cultivating the heart in the most essential and radical sense. This is going to “the root of the matter.” That morality, and that alone, which is grafted upon this sanctified stock, will be regarded with approbation by the Searcher of hearts, and stand the test of the great day. But while you labour with your hearts, that they may be habitually laid open, with all the softness and tenderness of spiritual sensibility, to the claims of your Creator and Redeemer; study with no less diligence to cherish a deep sense of all the duties which you owe to your beloved relatives, to your friends, to your neighbours, and to all with whom you have intercourse. To perceive the theory of these duties, is the province of the understanding; to enter into them, as a practical matter, and under a solemn sense of obligation, is an affair of the heart; and the more deeply your hearts are schooled both in the principles and practice of these duties, the more they may be said to partake of that culture which I am now recommending. When I imagine to myself what an influence your precious Mother might have had in cultivating your moral feelings and habits, if it had pleased God to spare her to you; when I think of the happy power which her delicate, forming hand, might, by the divine blessing, have exerted over the heart of each of you;—the heart—as Mrs. Hannah More expresses it—that “seat of evil propensities—that little troublesome empire of the passions;”—I could sit down and weep afresh that you are never to enjoy that culture. But, happily, there is a source of infinitely better culture. Try to lay to heart your weakness and your wants, and implore without ceasing the enlightening, subduing, and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, and you will find “his grace sufficient for you.”

There are special duties which you owe to your beloved surviving Parent, and to all your domestic relatives, of the most peculiar and tender kind; duties which it is equally your privilege and your honour to discharge. These are veneration, love, gratitude, and a dutiful respect to all their feelings, as well as their interests. Here children are extremely apt to fail. Affection is generally found to descend from parents to their offspring, and in general from elder to younger relatives, in great strength; but from children to parents, or from the young to the old, it seldom rises with equal vigour. Let not this be said of you. Constantly cherish toward your beloved Father, and all your elder relatives, not merely an outward respect, and dutifulness of deportment, but a cordial and ardent affection; a sincere and lively gratitude for all those anxious cares and labours on their part for your benefit, for which you have been indebted ever since you were born, and for which you

can never make an adequate return. Try to please them by the constant manifestation of love, confidence, and grateful veneration; and let them see that you treasure up, to your profit, all their instruction, reproofs, and warnings. When the heart, as well as the outward conduct, is conformed to these sentiments, O, how endearing and happy is the intercourse between parents and children! What a charm is diffused over the whole aspect of domestic society!

Let me entreat you, also, early to learn the duty and the pleasure of living in affectionate harmony among yourselves. I can scarcely express to you the pain which I have sometimes felt when I have perceived any thing like a spirit of strife and acrimony rising between you, and leading to the exchange of angry looks and passionate language. Surely three motherless children ought to feel more closely bound together than to indulge in such a temper and conduct. If you do not love one another, who can you expect will love you? Be careful, then, continually to cultivate a spirit of brotherly and sisterly affection toward each other. Let nothing interrupt this. When any contest arises, let the only strife be, which shall be the first to yield, rather than contend. On no account allow yourselves to employ harsh, much less violent language toward each other. And if any contest arises which you cannot settle between yourselves without violence, let a united appeal to your Father, if he be present, or in his absence, to your grandparents, terminate the controversy. Seldom does a conflict of this kind arise without there being blame on both sides. And who so proper to make the proper award, and to adjust every difficulty, as those who love you all equally and dearly, and have age and experience on their side?

Let me enjoin on you to begin, as early as possible, to cherish a spirit of habitual benevolence—a desire, wherever you go, to promote the happiness of all around you. Selfishness is the great master-sin of human nature. “All seek their own.” The young, especially, are apt to be swallowed up in the excessive pursuit of their own enjoyment, and that enjoyment is rarely sought or found in ministering to the wants, and promoting the comfort of others. But rely upon it, dear children, this is a narrow and altogether deceptive view of the best means of happiness. Not only is it the divine command that we “love our neighbour as ourselves,” but it is equally certain that obedience to this great law tends as directly to make ourselves happy, as it does to promote the comfort of the objects of our benevolent attention. If you wish to be happy yourselves, study continually to make all around you so too. The luxury of doing good is the richest luxury of which we are capable. It is the very spirit of Christ, who “went about doing good;” and the more closely we commune with him in the exercise of the same spirit, the more we secure true and rational enjoyment. Wherever you are, then, cultivate a spirit of sympathy with the afflicted, and the habit of flying spontaneously to the relief of suffering. You cannot begin too early to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to minister to the wants of the sick and dying, to relieve distress of every kind, and to “please every one for his good to edification:”—not by flattery, which is too commonly the method of pleasing adopted; but by letting it be seen that you seek, as much as in you lies, to make all around you truly happy. Never promote mirth at the expense of others. Never allow yourselves to “set others by the ears” as it is sometimes expressed, for the sake of derision. Carefully avoid all those “tricks,” which so many of the young delight in, and by which so much suffering, and sometimes even ultimately the loss of life, have been incurred. In a word, conscientiously cherish the principle and the habit of never giving a moment’s pain to a human being, or even to a brute beast, unless it be necessary for their real good; and wherever you see pain, by whomsoever inflicted, do all in your power, consistent with other obligations, to relieve it, and to give rational pleasure. There is

nothing, be assured, dear children, in all the splendour of fashionable display, in all the gratifications of sense, in all the delirious joys of giddy dissipation, once to be compared with the hallowed pleasure of habitually doing good to all within your reach. Yes, make doing good your “ruling passion,” and you will be among the happiest of mortals.

Let me beseech you to watch over your temper with studious care. Few things are more unhappy in a young person of either sex, than an irritable, irascible temper. It betrays into a thousand indiscretions. It poisons social intercourse. It alienates friends. It destroys the comfort of the individual who indulges it; and it interferes with the comfort of all with whom he converses. I have known this infirmity to cast a cloud over the whole course of many persons who were otherwise fitted to adorn and bless society. Watch and pray against it with the utmost diligence. “He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city.” “Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” Learn “by soft answers to turn away wrath,” both in yourselves and others. Be not ready to take offence, or to consider any one as “an offender for a word.” Never regard an honest difference of opinion from yourself as a personal affront. Surely the indulgence of such a spirit is as unreasonable as it is unhappy. Guard with the utmost vigilance against a jealous, suspicious temper. Ill nature, peevishness, and a disposition to take every thing by an unfavourable handle, and to indulge in satire and sarcasm, are revolting in every human being, but especially in the female sex. I have never known such a temper to be indulged without diminishing both the respectability and happiness of its possessor. Let a mild, amiable, conciliatory spirit reign in all your intercourse. Be ever kind, tender hearted, and forgiving, even as you hope to obtain forgiveness from the God of all grace. Let the spirit of benevolence, and a desire to please, shine in your countenances, and be manifest in your deportment in all companies; at home and on journies; in the public hotel, and in the parlour of a friend; towards servants, as well as towards your equals or superiors. In a word, in temper as well as in conduct, “Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.” In forming your moral character and habits, I entreat you to lay great stress upon cultivating a sacred and delicate regard to truth, in all your social intercourse. Rely upon it, you cannot pay too conscientious a regard to this point. A fault here is as dishonourable as it is criminal. I do not allow myself to fear that my beloved grandchildren, after the training they have received, will ever indulge in deliberate falsehood. In this there is a meanness as well as a sin, which I hope they will equally despise and abhor. But it is to be lamented that there is much in social conversation, in which many people deemed respectable are apt to indulge themselves, and which I hope you will make conscience of sacredly avoiding. I mean all exaggeration in your descriptions; all high-colouring in your statements; all indulgence in fabulous narratives, even in jest, for the amusement of company. Aside from the dictates of religion in this matter, which are sacred and conclusive, there is something in these habits adapted to lower the character, and to diminish the influence of those who indulge them, with all sober-minded people. Whatever may be the consequence, let a regard to the strictest verity, as if you were on oath, reign in all you say and do. Avoid the meanness, as well as the sin of the slightest departure from absolute truth. Let all underhand deceptive contrivances, all low cunning, all habits of carrying your plans by disingenuous arts, be abhorred and avoided. How gratifying would it be to those who love you, to know that it had passed into something like a proverb among your acquaintance—“The statement is from a Breckinridge—and therefore may be depended on!”

Let me farther entreat you to guard against all indulgence of the spirit of pride, or vanity. By pride, I mean such an inordinate and unreasonable conceit of our own superiority in any respect, as leads us to look down on others as beneath us, and to treat them with haughtiness, or contempt. And by vanity, I understand that excessive desire for the applause of others which leads to egotism, and such a weak anxiety to attract the notice, and gain the approbation of those around us, as are apt to betray into little and unworthy arts for gaining the object. That both ought to be repudiated, as at once folly and sin, I hope no formal argument will be necessary to convince you. But still, they are both besetting sins, which cleave with deplorable obstinacy to multitudes whose judgment is against them. Be assured, dear children, pride is as foolish as it is criminal. Who made you to differ from others? And what have you that you have not received? If you have minds, or an education, or outward circumstances more favourable than those of many others, who conferred them upon you? If, therefore, you have received all, why should you glory as if you had not received them? I know that we sometimes hear people talk of a "laudable pride," an "honest pride," "a noble pride," &c. But such language is a grievous abuse of terms, and ought to be forever banished from the vocabulary of Christians. Pride was "the condemnation and snare of the devil," and is in all cases a weakness and a sin. To call a proper personal dignity and self-respect by this odious name, is altogether incorrect and deceptive. To speak of a disposition to avoid a mean action as "a noble pride," is a perversion of language, as well as of moral principle. "Be clothed with humility;" for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall; for when pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom." Vanity is a passion still more childish and degrading. It exhibits a rational creature hanging on the smiles and the praise of his fellow worms for his importance and happiness. O, what infatuation for miserable sinners, who deserve nothing at the hand of God but wrath, and the overflowing of wrath, and who are dependant on his bounty for every breath, to be puffed up with high thoughts of themselves, and arrogantly to claim the incense of praise! Fly, then, from pride and vanity with the utmost vigilance. Study to be "meek and lowly in heart." "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." "In lowliness of mind esteem others better than yourselves." "Be not wise or great in your own conceits." Be not greedy of praise. Despise all the unworthy arts of seeking and fishing for it. Rely upon it, the lower you lie in the dust of abasement, the happier you will be. The more you are disposed to love and honour all around you according to their real character, the more infallibly you will secure their love and confidence in return. And the less anxious you are to gain the applause of men, the more likely you will be to attain it, if you are found humbly and diligently performing your duty. In short, if I wished you to gain the highest degree of esteem and honour among men, I would say—Do not seek this object anxiously, or even directly at all. Never inquire what others say or think of you. Speak of yourselves, in conversation, as little as possible. Treat your superiors with uniform respect, but not with fawning or flattery; and your inferiors, down to the lowest servant or beggar, with undeviating condescension and kindness; trying to benefit every one, and promote the happiness of every one; and you will have as much of the love and respect of all as you really deserve, and probably more. If you sincerely try to promote the happiness of all around you, and do it with a kind and amiable manner, I believe it is one of the cases in which our Lord's declaration never fails to be fulfilled—"Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down and running over shall men give into your bosom."

Strive with sacred care against every feeling approaching to the passion of envy. As you are now at an age when you are called daily to compete with school and play-mates, you may be sometimes strongly tempted to indulge in this passion. But it is a base passion. Beware of it. How friend-like, to sicken and repine at excellence! How base, to be displeased and mortified when we contemplate the superior prosperity, happiness, or accomplishments of others! When you witness such superior attainments or excellence, let the only effort be to excite gratitude to God for its existence, and a generous emulation of it in yourselves.

Guard with vigilance against a talebearing and tattling spirit. I will not suppose you capable of deliberate slander, or cruelly circulating reports to the injury of others without just evidence. This is so base and mean, that I trust you will ever abhor and despise it. But it is the infirmity of many, who intend thereby no injury, that they delight in circulating news concerning their neighbours, and have not a little of the true gossiping spirit. This is a bad habit. It degrades the individual who indulges it, in the view of all wise, reflecting people; often involves in painful explanations and difficulties; and is frequently followed by consequences of the most perplexing and disreputable kind. Never indulge the disposition to repeat idle stories about neighbours. If they are repeated in your presence, listen to them either in silence, or with a civil remark, which cannot possibly implicate you, or be construed into an approval of the scandal. It was an excellent appeal which was once made by a wise and benevolent man whom I knew in early life—"Why can you not talk more about things, than about persons?"

Let me farther exhort you, as a point of duty, to cultivate habitual cheerfulness. When I say this, you will not understand me as recommending a spirit of levity and frivolity. This is unworthy of rational, accountable creatures, and indicates as much of weakness as of sin. Those who spend their lives in gaiety and mirth, are "dead while they live." But by cultivating habitual cheerfulness, I mean cherishing a pleasant state of the animal spirits; as opposed to constitutional gloom, mental depression, and settled, clouded taciturnity, I mean habits, not of light, but of lively and affable conversation. Such a state of mind does good like a medicine. It contributes to our own enjoyment. It makes us more pleasant and useful to those with whom we converse. It may even operate to promote health and prolong life; and in various ways extend our power of doing good.

Guard with conscientious care against habits of indolence. A tendency to this sin is one of the radical symptoms of the great moral disease of our nature; and you cannot begin too early to labour and pray for effecting a cure. Fly from idleness as a habit connected with a legion of evils. Make a point of always having something useful to do—something to fill up every moment left vacant between the larger and more important tasks of life. I am aware that we all stand in need of recreation; but this is often best attained by a change of employment. When you have finished a sedentary task, which required intense application of mind, think, for a moment, whether there be not some other object to which you may attend for a short time, which will require no mental effort, but by attention to which, you may promote either your own health or comfort, or the advantage of others. Make it your daily study to "redeem the time." Try to turn every moment to some valuable account. For this purpose, form, as early as possible, a plan, a systematic order in your daily tasks. Without such a plan, more or less formally adopted, you will inevitably lose much time in passing from one engagement to another. But if you manage always to have something useful with which to fill up every little interval; so as never to be idle, and never to waste time with frivolous, or worse than frivolous employments, you will be more happy, and live more to your own

true honour, and the benefit of your generation.

I have only to add on the subject of this letter, a single word on the great importance of maintaining strict and habitual temperance in all your enjoyments. If you wish really to enjoy life, and to “live out all your days,” you must exercise moderation and self-denial in eating and drinking, and in every department of indulgence. Temperance has been defined—the moderate use of things useful, and total abstinence from those which are pernicious. This is an excellent definition, which I trust you will ever keep in mind, and make your daily and hourly rule. To be thus temperate, is a divine command. It is eminently conducive to health. It is highly advantageous to the activity and strength of the powers of the mind. And it is an admirable defence against a thousand irregularities and mischiefs which cloud the faculties, destroy comfort, and lead to multiplied forms of disease, and to premature graves. If you habitually restrain appetite, deny yourselves, and “let your moderation be known” in all things, and to all men, you will avoid many evils which continually beset those who act on the system of self-indulgence. Never drink any thing but pure water, when in health; indulge in animal food but once in each day, and that in smaller quantities than most people consider as temperate. Labourers in the open air may, not only with impunity, but perhaps with profit, eat animal food more than once every day; but I am persuaded few other persons can do it without disadvantage to their health. My personal experience and observation in regard to this point are very decisive. Nay, I would advise you to go one step farther. Make the experiment of wholly abstaining from animal food at least one day in each week, for the purpose of “giving nature a holyday;” of clearing the body and the mind from crudities; and taking a new start in refined feeling and unclogged activity. In fine, let it be the object of your unceasing study and prayer, to “keep under the body;” to “crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;” to subdue and restrain all irregular tempers; “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, to live peaceably with all men;” to avoid wounding the feelings of any one with whom you converse, unless required to do it by a pure sense of duty; to promote the happiness of all around you; and to be continually seeking and improving opportunities of doing good.

Letter VIII("tw:///self?tid=11&popup=0" \l "Memorial_CONTENTS-")

Manners

Dear Children:—I wish it were in my power to give you a perfect and vivid representation of the manners of your lamented Mother. There was in them a sweetness, a gracefulness, and an attraction truly rare. Wherever she went, they at once gained her friends. I am sure if you had been old enough at her decease to appreciate them; or, if I could now depict them to the life, you would have a deeper impression of the importance of happy manners; of their value to their possessor; of their benign influence on social intercourse, than I can now hope to impart. As it is, I hope you will be willing to take on trust my statement of the fact concerning her, and that you will be stimulated to seek a similar accomplishment.

If it be true, as has been often said, that a good face is an “open letter of recommendation,” wherever its possessor appears; we may, with quite as much emphasis, say the same of pleasant engaging manners. Nay, we may go farther. The most beautiful face and form that ever existed, if unaccompanied by agreeable manners, will soon be contemplated with indifference, if not with disgust. While, on the contrary, where there is an entire absence of personal beauty, there may be, and often are found, such manners as captivate and win wherever they are seen, and with a

power felt by all, however remote they may be from the possession of such manners themselves.

I shall not tax either your patience or my own, by entering largely into the subject of manners. On this extensive subject I refer you to a volume on "Clerical Manners and Habits" which I published a few years ago, and in which considerable minuteness of detail is indulged. For although that work was intended more particularly for the benefit of clergymen, and especially of candidates for the sacred office; yet a large portion of it is equally applicable to all classes and professions, and to both sexes. I recommend the volume referred to, to your serious attention, and to your careful study. And whatever may be your situation in life, I think you will find much in it worthy of your regard. At any rate, if it be not so, I have failed of gaining my main object in its publication.

I will not, however, content myself with merely referring you to the volume in question. It is my wish, in this little system of affectionate advices, to call your attention to a few particulars on this subject which may be considered as more immediately appropriate at your present tender age and perhaps on that account, more likely to dwell upon your memory than the contents of a volume.

You will, perhaps, ask me, what I mean by those "good manners" which I would recommend? I answer, by such manners I mean that mode of personal address and deportment toward all with whom we converse which is dictated by the meekness, benevolence, and purity of the Gospel. In a word, "true politeness"—the most genuine politeness—that which I would earnestly desire those whom I love to cherish and cultivate—is the religion of Christ acted out in the whole temper, conversation, and deportment. The simple, unembarrassed, gentle expression of mingled respect and kindness toward all with whom we converse, from the hovel to the palace, is the perfection of manners. These are manners which become all times, places, companies, and circumstances, and which will carry their possessor through the world with acceptance and comfort.

Perhaps, in your inexperience, you may be disposed to ask, what is the great value of such manners as are here recommended? If you have any doubt on this subject now, I am persuaded a little more knowledge of the world will satisfy you that their value is unspeakably great. Few people are adequate judges of those solid intellectual and moral qualities which form a character of high excellence. But of personal manners, all are judges; at any rate, all are capable of perceiving, and in some degree estimating, their value. Only a small portion of those with whom you converse are able to discern whether you are wise and well informed; but every child can see whether you have a sweet voice, a pleasant countenance, an amiable, kind and respectful mode of address, or the contrary. Can there be, then, a more obvious dictate, both of policy and duty, than to cultivate that which, to multitudes, is more attractive than real merit; which secures to merit a hearing, and an influence which it would not otherwise obtain; and which will be likely, in many cases, to open a door to usefulness which, without it, would, in all probability, have continued impenetrably closed? In repeated instances have I known persons of weak minds, and of small information, but of remarkably fascinating manners, carry all before them in circles of society into which persons of far higher qualifications, both intellectual and moral, but defective in the attractions of manner, were scarcely able to obtain admittance, and very inadequately esteemed when admitted. A soft, insinuating address has, a thousand times, rendered its possessor every where acceptable and popular, when, on the score of real merit, he ought by no means to have enjoyed so much public favour. But this is not all. Pleasant attractive manners not only have a paramount influence with the superficial and unthinking; but they have more power even on the minds of the wise and the

good than is commonly imagined. To every human being, that which is intrinsically excellent, appears doubly attractive when presented in a pleasing manner. Truth, even to those who know it to be truth, finds a more cordial welcome; and duty, even among its most sincere and enlightened friends, commands a more ready obedience, when they are clothed in an attractive garb, and speak in alluring accents. That the very same words, which, when uttered by some, are intolerably offensive; when spoken in the mild, respectful manner of others, are welcome, and even delightful—that the very same action, which, performed by some, is censured; when performed by others, of perhaps less talent or virtue, is lauded to excess; are among the most notorious facts in human life; and that not in the circles of ignorance and dissipation only, but also in those of the most estimable portions of mankind. To despise or undervalue the cultivation of manners, then, argues a great want of practical wisdom. It is a subject worthy of your constant regard. To neglect it, is equally to oppose reason and experience, and to set at naught some of the most precious means of gaining access to the human heart. And when I speak of cultivating good manners, do not imagine that I mean the formal, showy, pompous manners which some commend, and seem to aim at. The truth is, the perfection of manners—the ultimate point which is the result of the very best culture, is to attain that ease, simplicity, modesty, and gentleness of deportment in every thing, which has nothing of the artificial, nothing of display about it. But to be more particular. The first characteristic of manners to which I would direct your attention, as lying at the foundation of all excellence, is benignity. Without the law of benevolence, reigning in the heart, and governing the temper and the life, there may be much pomp and courtliness of manner; many a heartless smile, and many a flattering form of address; but there can be no genuine politeness. The essence of this consists in the spirit of cordial good will and kindness shining in the countenance; expressing itself in the language and tones of respect and benevolent regard; and flowing through all the channels of human intercourse, and all the minutiae of human life. This is the vital principle of good manners. Just in proportion as you really desire to increase the happiness of all around you; to consult their ease; to anticipate their wants; and to promote their welfare—you will spontaneously manifest these feelings in all situations and companies. Your whole deportment will be pleasing, attractive, and graceful, without your having studied artificial rules. This is the foundation and the sum of all; but it may not be improper to trace the radical principle into some of its minute details. In all social intercourse, let respectful attention mark your whole manner. To turn away your eyes from the person who is addressing you; or to manifest in any way that you are thinking, or wish to be thinking, of something else, is a great breach of good manners; cannot fail of giving pain to those with whom you converse; and must deprive you of a large part of the benefit of conversation. When you look your companion gently and respectfully, but firmly in the face, you manifest attention; you enable yourselves to watch his countenance, and mark the impression which you make on his mind; to say nothing of the power of the eye in seconding and enforcing all that is said.

Cultivate affability of manner. By this I mean that style of manners which is distinguished by ease, simplicity, and courteousness; a deportment opposed to haughtiness, reserve, coldness, or taciturnity; in short, to every thing that is adapted to repel, or to prevent freedom and comfort of approach. I am aware that constitutional temperament has much to do with this. But still, it is equally true that affability may and ought to be carefully cultivated; and that there are few things better adapted to conciliate good will, to inspire confidence, to invite freedom of communication, and to place at ease all with whom we converse.

Study to exercise gentleness and mildness in all your deportment and conversation. Guard against every thing harsh, severe, rough, abrupt, or in any way repulsive in your language, voice, or manner. Let the meekness and gentleness of wisdom appear in every look, tone, and expression. By a mild, respectful address, you may at once reprove impertinence, disarm violence, and put even brutality to shame. Give all diligence, then, to be “gentle toward all men.” Learn the happy art of conversing with gentleness, of giving your commands with gentleness, of arguing with gentleness, of contending with gentleness, and of even reproving with gentleness. Both commands and reproofs, as well as arguments, when dispensed in this manner, have not only more dignity, but also more weight than when invested with an opposite character.

Few things are more opposed to good breeding than a loud, boisterous manner in social intercourse. Whether this be indulged in laughter, or in conversation, it is equally exceptionable as an offence against both delicacy and dignity. With regard to females, an offence against this rule, is peculiarly revolting. It is a sure sign of vulgarity, and ought to be carefully avoided. But, in either sex, it is a blemish which well bred people never fail to notice.

Closely allied to this is the habit of rude familiarity which some affect, and to which they give the name of social pleasantry. This is undignified, and, to all delicate people, offensive. Mutual dignity and respect are indispensable to the continued existence of Christian intercourse, in its most pure, delicate, and profitable form. If you wish to maintain such intercourse, be free and unconstrained; but never indulge in coarse familiarity. Those who are worthy of your love will certainly be repelled rather than attracted by it.

Remember, too, that all interruption of any one with whom you are conversing, or blunt contradiction of his statements, is an offence against delicate manners. However erroneous he may be, hear him out; and however certain you may be that his representations are false, rectify his mistake, not bluntly, but with kindness and respect.

Guard against talking too much in company. He who is very talkative incurs disadvantages of a very serious kind. He cheapens himself; tires his hearers; and must, of course, diminish his usefulness. However rich and instructive any one's talk may be, yet, if there be too much of it, both his dignity and his influence cannot fail of being impaired. “A fool's voice,” says Solomon, “is known by the multitude of his words.” “In the multitude of words,” says the same inspired teacher, “there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” And again, “He that hath knowledge, spareth his words.” But another extreme in social intercourse, is that of excessive reserve and taciturnity. Some from physical temperament; others from abstraction or absence of mind; and a third class, perhaps, from still more exceptionable causes, wrap themselves up in a chilling reserve in company—never speaking but when addressed; and then answering as briefly as possible, and relapsing into silence again. This is surely unhappy in a social being, and ought to be carefully avoided. While you avoid garrulity, then, sink not down into obstinate silence. If you find yourselves, from any cause, prone to this, it is abundantly worth while to take pains to counteract it, and to labour to have something ready to say that shall be at once acceptable and instructive. In regard to uncleanly and vulgar personal habits, I will not suppose you capable of them: and, therefore, shall not dwell upon them. All spitting on floors, lounging in your seats, putting up your feet on chairs or stools, leaning with your elbows on tables—these, and all similar habits, I hope, after the training you have had, you will avoid with instinctive repugnance. But there

is one habit which I would earnestly recommend, as favourable not merely to good manners, but also to health. Learn to sit erect, not only in company, but even in your most private apartment. Reading or writing in a half-sunken or reclining posture is unfriendly to a graceful carriage; is apt to betray unwarily into similar postures in company; prepares the way for the sinking, half-bent postures which disfigure so many of the feeble and aged: and really tends to bring on premature decrepitude. Do not affect wit or punning in conversation. So many of those who try to make themselves acceptable by such attempts, not only fail, but often render themselves a laughing stock by it, that there is little probability of your succeeding as wits or punsters. But even with respect to those whose talents in this way are ever so great, there is so much danger of their indulging those talents unseasonably and imprudently, so as to offend and alienate friends, that such powers ought to be deprecated rather than desired, and their exercise, if possessed, subjected to the severest restriction. I never knew more than one person of wit who was strictly discreet and delicate in its use. But I have known thousands who, by their miserable attempts to display what they possessed either not at all, or in a very small degree, succeeded only in exposing themselves to ridicule. And I have known many real wits, who almost every day wounded feelings, and alienated friends by their reckless effusions. Do not indulge the habit in conversation of talking of yourselves. Hardly any quality is more apt to appear in social intercourse than personal vanity. This leads to egotism, so that the idea of self appears to be ever present to the imagination. Hence we perpetually find people talking of themselves; what they have done; what they have said; what others have said and done to their honour; in short, bringing into view something to their own advantage, or that of their family or relatives. Rely upon it, if you have real worth, the less you say about it the better; and if you have it not, every claim of it, direct or indirect, can only sink you lower in the estimation of those with whom you converse.

Carefully form the habit of adverting to all the properties of time, place and circumstances in conversation. When you are about, in company, to make a remark, or to introduce a new topic of conversation, look round on the circle, and ask yourself, whether there is any one present whose feelings would be likely to be hurt by what you are about to say, or who would be placed by it in embarrassing circumstances. Be very sure for example, when about to make, in company, an unfavourable remark on an absent person, that no relative or special friend of that person is among your hearers. For, although you ought never to make a remark on any one which the Christian spirit cannot justify; yet in certain circumstances, a remark perfectly proper in itself, may be unseasonable, and peculiarly painful to some who hear it. Guard against the possibility of such an occurrence. This is a dictate of sound worldly policy. A departure from it is a gross violation of true politeness. But it may be said, still more emphatically, to be a departure from the principles of Christian benevolence.

Avoid the too frequent use of superlatives in conversation. The habit of many, when they wish to express either approbation or censure, is to employ the very strongest terms which the English language affords. If they think favourably of the talents or the performance of any one, they are apt to speak of them as "noble, admirable," as of "the first order;" or in some terms expressive of the very highest excellence. And, on the other hand, if they undertake to express disapprobation, the terms "mean," "execrable," "detestable," are the softest that they think of employing. This is a bad habit. It renders both the praise and censure of those who indulge it of less value in the estimation of all sober-minded and discriminating judges. If you wish your judgment to pass for any thing in

the view of the wise and reflecting, you must learn to express opinions in that guarded and moderate manner which indicates intellectual discrimination rather than undistinguishing emotion. You know where it is said "Fools admire, where men of sense approve."

Carefully avoid giving unnecessary trouble wherever you are. The difference between different persons in this respect is very conspicuous. Some, when in the houses of their friends, have so many little wants, so many errands to perform, and are so absorbed in their own affairs, that, if permitted, they would keep several servants and others constantly employed in waiting upon them. You may rely upon it you can never be, long together, welcome visitants in families which you subject to so much trouble. Make as few demands as possible on the time and attention of those whose hospitality you are enjoying. Never call upon their servants to wait upon you when it is practicable to avoid it. Never allow the occupations or order of any family to be set aside or disarranged on your account, where it is possible to prevent it. In short, act universally on the principle of doing every thing that you can for yourselves, and making as few demands as possible on the time and labour of those around you. In calling on friends consult their convenience, as well as your own; and in some cases in preference to your own. Many make their calls at such hours, and sit so inordinately long, as to throw a whole family into disorder, and inflict very serious pain. Never sit long in your social calls at any time; but when you make them at times which may, by possibility interfere with domestic meals, let them be very short; be on the watch for every symptom of engagement or uneasiness on the part of those whom you visit, and on the appearance of any thing of the kind, instantly take your leave.

Constantly maintain the habit of early rising. Few things are more conducive to health and activity both of body and mind. A disposition to lie long in bed in the morning, is, at once, a symptom and a cause of feeble digestion, of nervous debility, and of general languor. Go early to bed. Avoid much night study. Quit your beds by dawn of day, and, in winter, before the dawn, and thus secure several hours of unbroken time, for devotion, for study, and for gentle exercise in the open air, before breakfast, and before the interruptions of the earliest visitors commence.

Cultivate habits of moderation in dress. You are never likely to be able to indulge in very inordinate expense in bodily adorning; and I will venture to say, this inability, wherever it exists, is a great blessing. Few things evince more weakness of mind, and absence of Christian principle, than extravagance and splendor in dress. In young men it is a sad evidence of "dandyism" and folly; and even in young females, an excessive indulgence in fashion, in finery, and the extreme of devotion to bodily adorning, never fails to depress their character in the estimation of the wise and good. Try to set an example of sober, dignified moderation in regard to this whole subject. Always guard against negligence of dress. Conscientiously avoid exposing yourselves to the charge of careless, slatternly habits. But never make dress an idol. Reject every thing dazzling, or what is commonly called "dashing," in outward ornament. Be not seen aping the extreme of fashion; and ever remember how unworthy it is of Christians to be worshippers of external adorning; and how peculiarly disreputable for the children of clergymen to bear such a character.

Thus, dear children, I have endeavoured, with brevity, to give you a few paternal counsels, which, I would fondly hope, may, by the grace of God, be made to promote your benefit, when the hand which penned them shall be sleeping in the dust. You will perceive from the order in which I have placed my counsels, that I consider real heart religion as the most indispensable and precious of

all attainments; that my first and highest wish concerning you is, that you may love your Father's and Mother's God, and make it your daily aim to follow her to that world of bliss and glory to which, as we trust, she has gone before us. Next to seeing you real Christians, my desire is to see you enlightened, polished, benevolent, amiable, attractive members of society, respected and beloved by all who know you.

Remember, I beseech you, that the friends of your Parents will expect much from you. The advantages which you have enjoyed, and are daily enjoying, impose upon you a solemn responsibility in the sight both of God and man. Many prayers have ascended to heaven on your behalf. Pray without ceasing for yourselves, that you may be preserved from the paths of sin and folly, and led in the ways of heavenly wisdom.

I have no doubt that the counsels I have given you will commend themselves to your judgment, and that you will promptly form the resolution to make them your constant guide. But you cannot rely upon your own wisdom or strength to do this. Such are your own infirmities, and so multiplied the temptations and allurements which surround you, that you will need at every step, guidance and help from above. Happy will it be for you if you habitually bear this in mind, and acknowledge God in all your ways, that he may direct your steps. And now, dear children, I bid you farewell. When I look forward, and imagine to myself what may be your course in life—when I think of the corruptions and perils with which you are surrounded, and what may be the result of them, I hardly know how to express my anxieties and fears: but when I recollect the love and faithfulness of that God who blessed your Parents, I feel willing to commit you into his hands, and to trust his grace for your temporal and eternal welfare. May he guide you by his counsel! May he guard you amidst all the dangers of youth and of riper years; and finally, “present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy!” O how unutterably precious the thought of meeting you all at last—with those of our beloved family who have already gone before us, and those who are yet to follow—around the throne of our covenant God, and rejoicing forever in his presence and glory! Such will be the prayer until his last breath, of your

Affectionate Grandfather,

SAMUEL MILLER.

Princeton, July 10, 1839.

S. A Missionary Sermon, Preached in the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia

A

MISSIONARY SERMON,

preached

IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

in

PHILADELPHIA,

On the twenty-third of May, 1814.

BY ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER.

PHILADELPHIA:

WILLIAM FRY, PRUNE STREET.

1814.

SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

Resolved, That the standing Committee of Missions be requested to present the thanks of this assembly to the Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., for the missionary sermon, which, by their appointment, he had preached the preceding evening; and that the Committee request of Dr. Alexander a copy of the sermon for publication.

Attest,

JOHN E. LATTA,

Perm. Clerk.

BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF MISSIONS,

May 24th, 1814.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Committee be presented to the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, for his missionary sermon, and that the Committee request a copy for publication.

Extract from the minutes.

EBEN. HAZARD,

Secretary.

SERMON, &c.

Mark 16:15.—Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

The promulgation of this command marks a new and important era in the history of the church and of the world. These words may be considered as the public and formal abrogation of the Mosaic economy; and the authoritative annunciation of the new order of things under the gospel. The first communications of divine truth, through Adam and Noah, were made indiscriminately to the human family; but, in both instances, the precious deposit was generally adulterated, and nearly lost. The wisdom of God, therefore, saw it to be necessary to select and separate from the idolatrous world, a particular family which might serve as a repository of the divine oracles and institutions; until that 'seed of the woman' should come, of whom it was predicted, that he should 'bruise the serpen's head:' and that 'seed of Abraham,' in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

During this period, the church of God was, for the most part, circumscribed within the limits of the elect nation. Its institutions were not designed, nor calculated, for general use; but were local, temporary, and burdensome in their nature, yet well adapted to the purposes for which they were appointed. It is true, a permission was given to the Israelites, to receive proselytes from other nations, of such as resided among them, or should choose, for the sake of the worship of the true God, to come to them; but they never received a command to propagate their religion among the surrounding nations. They were not authorised to send out missionaries to convert the world. These were the times of ignorance, which God winked at. He would leave the world to make a fair experiment of its own wisdom, and to exhaust all its own resources; that it might ever afterwards appear evident, that the world by wisdom did not know God; and that a divine revelation was absolutely necessary for its instruction. But now the middle wall of partition was broken down; the law of commandments contained in ordinances, being abolished in the flesh of Christ; that is, this law received its accomplishment, when the body of Christ was lifted up on the cross, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. By this means, those who were far off are made nigh, by the blood of Christ. That the kingdom of God, or gospel dispensation, was not fully introduced until after the death of Christ is evident, because the Mosaic institutions until that time continued in full force, and Christ himself rendered obedience to the ceremonial law until the very day of his passion. The kingdom of Heaven, indeed, was preached; that is, it was announced to be at hand, by John the Baptist, and by our Lord and his disciples. The nature of this kingdom was unfolded, and its future condition in the world predicted; but no new laws were promulgated, nor any new institutions set up, which in the least interfered with, or superseded the ceremonial liturgy of the Jews. But when Jesus Christ, our great high priest of good things to come, had, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God to bear the sins of many; and had by this one offering of his own body, perfected forever them that are sanctified, the service of the first tabernacle was set aside, and as to any utility, or divine authority, ceased forever; as an emblem of which, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, at the very moment of expiation; when Christ our high priest, by shedding his vital blood and pouring out his soul unto death, offered his one great sacrifice for sins. At the rising of the sun, the feeble light of the stars is lost in the superior splendour of his beams. When a living person is before us, we no longer want an obscure delineation of his features. The shadow may serve to give us a faint idea of the substance; but when the substance is come, we may be content that the shadow should flee away. The

restrictions, tutors, and governors, requisite in a state of minority, are not needed by the man of mature age. So, when Christ was manifested as our priest and sacrifice, the twinkling of the types, and the obscure sketch of the ceremonies of the law, were wanted no more. The King Messiah, had already, by a series of stupendous miracles, and by completely fulfilling the prophecies which related to him, established his claim to the high character and office which he assumed; and having laid an ample foundation for the kingdom which he was about to establish, he now issues his commission to those, whom he had chosen to administer and act in his name, and by his authority, upon earth, and says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." As his kingdom was not of this world, he would not avail himself of the powers of the earth in its establishment: as it was his purpose that his religion should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God, he rejected the aids of human learning and eloquence; and selected, as his ministers, rude and illiterate men, taken from an unimproved part of the country, and from the lowest occupations in society;—men totally unversed in the policy of the world, and incapable of speaking even their own vernacular tongue with propriety. To such ministers did Christ commit the management of his kingdom, and sent them forth into all the world, to preach, without any earthly protection or patronage. This little band of heroes went forth to achieve the conquest of the world, with no other aid than the help of God, with no other armour than the panoply of the gospel. Their weapons were not carnal but spiritual, yet mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. But we are not to suppose that our Lord Jesus Christ sent out these men to instruct and convert the world, without qualifying them for their work. Whom he sends, he calls; and whom he calls, he qualifies. The apostles were therefore directed to tarry at Jerusalem, until they should be endued with power from on high. Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, they were thoroughly baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The effects of this baptism were, that they were enlightened to understand the sacred scriptures of the Old Testament.—They were enabled to recollect distinctly and comprehend generally the meaning of all the discourses, which they had heard from the lips of Christ.—Their faith, love, fortitude, patience, and assurance of the favour of God, were wonderfully strengthened and increased.—They were endowed with the extraordinary faculty of speaking with perspicuity and propriety, languages, which they had never learned, nor heard;—and with the power of healing the sick, dispossessing the demoniac, and raising the dead. There was moreover given to them a mouth and wisdom which none of their enemies could withstand; and a presence of mind and promptitude of utterance, which enabled them to defend themselves with composure and dignity, and plead the cause of their Lord with convincing force, however suddenly called upon, or however august and imposing their audience. So great, however, was the power of early and national prejudice, that the apostles did not, for some time, understand the extent of their commission. They had, before, been sent on a short mission, on which occasion it was ordered, that they should not go into the way of the Gentiles, nor even enter into any city of the Samaritans; and they seem to have thought, that by going into all the world, and preaching to every creature, no more was intended, than that they should go to the seed of Abraham now widely dispersed among the nations. But this veil was soon removed, by a particular revelation made to Peter in a vision; and by the calling of Paul to the apostleship, who, from the beginning, received commission to go to the Gentiles, and was, in a peculiar manner, designated and directed, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We read in history of many persons travelling into foreign countries to acquire curious and useful knowledge, and of their imparting their dearly purchased treasure to a few chosen disciples on

their return; but I believe this is the first instance on record of any persons leaving their own country, and visiting foreign parts, with no other than the benevolent purpose of communicating important information to their fellow creatures. The very novelty and sublimity of the project of reforming a world lying in wickedness, bespeaks a divine impulse; but the success of these first missionaries stamps the gospel with such a seal of authenticity, as neither the lapse of ages, nor the sophistry of its enemies can ever obliterate. The apostles divided the world amongst them, and whilst some went to the East, others directed their course to the North,—the West,—the South. They turned their back upon all their earthly friends and prospects, and went forth to meet sufferings and death in their most frightful forms; but they were supported by the conviction that they forsook nothing, but what was perishable; and by the confidence that Heaven was before them, whichever way they turned their faces; and near, wherever they might breathe out their souls. Discouraged by no difficulties, and appalled by no dangers, they penetrated into countries not described by the geographer, and whose story has not been told by the historian: and even the record of their own labours is only in heaven. Suffice it to say, that they proved faithful unto death, and have gone to receive a crown of life. Most of them it is believed, received also the crown of martyrdom: but where, or how, or when, we cannot with any certainty say. In further considering this subject, it shall be my object—

I. To show that this commandment imposes an obligation on the ministry and on the church, now existing, to propagate the gospel among the nations, who are not yet blessed with its light.

II. Endeavour to answer the question, “What is the present duty of the American churches, and particularly of our own, in relation to this command?”

III. Conclude with some considerations and motives to stimulate and encourage us to exert ourselves in carrying our Lord’s will into effect.

1. In the first place then I am to show, that this command imposes an obligation on the ministry and on the church to propagate the gospel among the heathen.

The proof of this proposition is so plain, that few remarks will be necessary to establish the point.

It is evident from the tenor of this commission, that it did not respect the apostles only, but their successors in the ministry; for the work here prescribed was too great to be completed by so small a number of labourers. What could be done by zeal, diligence, and perseverance, they effected: but the world was too wide, and the life of man too short, to admit of a few persons preaching the gospel to all the tribes and nations, scattered over the surface of this globe. As our Lord intended that this work should be accomplished, we may conclude, that the commission to execute it, extended to the successors of the apostles, as well as to themselves.

Again, every authorised minister of the gospel, derives his authority to preach and baptize, from this commission which Christ gave to his apostles. He has received his office, it is true, immediately from the hands of others, already in the ministry; but all the authority which they possessed to confer such an office, is derived from the original commission. Otherwise the office of the gospel ministry would be merely of human, and not divine, appointment. But Christ is king in his church, and is the fountain of power as well as honour.

Now, that instrument which gives authority, must be allowed to regulate its exercise. If we receive the office, we of course take upon us the obligation to fulfil its duties. But the commission says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The conclusion therefore is inevitable, that every minister is bound, by the very nature of his office, to use his best efforts to propagate the gospel through the whole world. To this it may be objected, that that part of the commission, which directs the conversion of the nations, was peculiar to the apostles and other extraordinary ministers of that age; but of this there is no proof: and if it were true, the consequence would be, not only that other ministers were not bound to execute this work, but it would be unlawful for them to attempt it. And, conversely, if it be lawful to preach the gospel to the heathen, it must be because it is included in our commission; and if comprehended in our commission, then we are bound to its performance. But a more plausible objection is, that, according to this view of the subject, it would follow, that every preacher of the gospel must become a missionary, and go to preach to the heathen. But this difficulty will vanish, if we consider the commission as given to a body of men, that is, to the ministry of reconciliation, who are to act in concert in carrying it into effect: and also if we interpret it agreeably to the great end which was designed to be accomplished.

Suppose a literary society were directed by authority, to communicate the knowledge of some art or science to the whole world, and also to preserve a lively recollection of the truths communicated on the minds of their disciples; it is plain, that, whilst it would be expedient for some to go into foreign parts, others should commence their work at home; and whilst some were engaged in teaching those who had never learned, others would be as properly employed in keeping up, and increasing, the knowledge of those already initiated.

Such is the state of the case with the ministry, who are commissioned to preach the gospel to all nations. The ground which has been gained, must not be abandoned for the hope of gaining more. The knowledge of evangelical truth must be preserved; and those, who have heard and believed, must be further instructed, and their children, as they become capable, must also be taught. This requires a stationary ministry. And so we read that, when Christ ascended up on high, he gave not only some apostles, prophets, and evangelists, but also pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Accordingly, the apostles ordained elders in every city, where they collected churches. But all are comprehended under the general commission; and however it may fall to the lot of some to be stationary, they are, nevertheless, as a part of the body, bound to promote the diffusion of the light of the gospel, by every lawful and practicable means. But to establish the point under discussion beyond all possibility of doubt, I will adduce the promise of our Lord, which he annexed to the commission, for the support and encouragement of those appointed to execute it. The command of Christ, on this occasion, is not expressed in the very same words by the evangelists, Matthew and Mark; or rather, they have recorded different parts of the discourse, which the risen Saviour delivered on this occasion. In Matthew, Christ says, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Now these last words clearly ascertain the extent of the commission. Christ well knew that none of those persons then in his presence would live to the end of the world; but he addressed the apostles as standing at the head of a long succession of preachers, which should not cease, until he should come

again, when the world would be at an end.

Now it is plain, that the promise and command are of equal extent: for they are addressed to the same persons, at the same time, and the one was intended to encourage those, who should obey the other; but the promise reaches through every age to the end of the world; therefore so also does the command. We think ourselves authorized to plead this promise; but as surely as we do so, we recognize the obligation of the command: for, those with whom Christ hath promised to be always, are such as are engaged in propagating his religion over the world.

If more were needful to be said on a subject already sufficiently plain, I would argue from the circumstances of the case. The work commanded to be executed is not yet completed. It is agreeable to the will of God that it should be done. It is predicted that it shall be accomplished. Those therefore who manage the affairs of Christ's kingdom, are bound, by every lawful means, to comply with the revealed will of God, and to fulfil his unchangeable purpose, of giving the heathen to his Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The only thing which remains under this head is, to show that the obligation of this command extends to the private members of the church as well as to the ministry. Not that they are bound to preach the gospel; for no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. The nature of the duty incumbent on the church, in relation to this object, can easily be made apparent. If a king should send forth heralds through the whole extent of his dominions, to announce some important intelligence to his subjects, it would be the duty of all not only to avoid throwing any obstacle in the way of the royal messengers, but to facilitate their progress by every means in their power, and to give them every encouragement and support whilst engaged in the king's business. Well, Zion's king, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, hath sent forth his heralds, and commissioned them to go to the ends of the earth, announcing every where the glad news of salvation: are not all the subjects of this King, then, under obligations to promote this object? And how will they answer for it, to the Great King, who throw obstacles in the way of the preachers of the gospel, or who are negligent about affording them assistance? This is a great work which is undertaken, deeply involving the honour of God, the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. The call is loud for every one to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Every thing which can contribute to the accomplishment of the important end in view, is put in requisition. Power, influence, talent, learning, wealth, navigation, commerce, medicine, ought all to lend their aid in propagating the gospel.

How much might a christian government effect by friendly negotiation with heathen powers for the introduction of the gospel, and for the liberty and security of missionaries! What a blessing to the world, if commerce, so often stained with injustice and cruelty, should be sanctified to this glorious end! What a noble return for the precious commodities of the East, to send them the word of God and the preachers of salvation! What a change in the affairs of men, if our merchants esteemed the diffusion of truth, and the salvation of the heathen, a merchandise better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof preferable to the gain of fine gold! Thanks be to God! some such merchants there are on both sides of the Atlantic! But oh! may he increase their numbers an hundred fold! But not only those possessed of power and wealth may promote this great work, but every humble, pious Christian, is permitted and enjoined to bring his offering. If they cannot make large contributions in silver and gold; or if they do not possess talents, learning, and power, yet they have access to a throne of grace, and may employ humble, fervent prayer, the most effectual

of all means, in promoting the cause of God.

II. I come now, in the second place, to inquire, What is the duty of the American churches, and particularly of our own, in relation to this command?

1. I have had occasion, already to observe, that this command does not oblige us to abandon the vineyard which has been planted in this western world, and that it is as much the duty of one portion of the ministry to feed the flock of Christ, already gathered unto the fold, as it is of another to go in pursuit of the lost sheep, which are still wandering in the wilderness. Nay more; this is our first duty. To leave the churches without any regular supply of the means of grace, for the sake of planting new churches among the heathen, would be no less absurd, than for the husbandman to relinquish a field already in-closed and cultivated, to clear and plant new ground in the wilderness. Besides, it ought to be taken into serious consideration, that in the increasing and widely expanded population of this extensive country, there are multitudes destitute of the regular administration of the word and ordinances: and this is true, not only in regard to our frontier settlements, but to the very suburbs of our largest cities. How many thousands, in this land, scarcely hear the sound of the gospel once in a year! Without the most energetic exertions, there is much reason to fear, that some large districts of our country will sink into a state of ignorance and indifference on the subject of religion, equally as fatal as paganism itself. The souls of our neighbours and countrymen are as precious as those of the heathen; and they are more within our reach; to these, therefore, we should first devote our attention and exertions. The blacks and people of colour also, in a peculiar manner, demand our attention. They have been a highly injured people, and justice, as well as humanity, demands, that we should in some way, afford them redress; and what better can we do for them, than to convey to them the knowledge of a crucified Saviour, in whose precious blood they may find a balm for all their bleeding wounds, and in whose gracious promises, a cordial to revive their fainting hearts, under the various afflictions which they are destined to endure. These people are amongst us, understand our language, are easily accessible, and willing and desirous to hear the gospel. Let us not, therefore, overlook them because they are a degraded people, but let us rather pity their miserable condition, and provide for them the rich consolations of the grace of God.

2. Again, it must appear obvious to all, that the heathen of our own continent, and on our own borders, have a peculiar claim on our benevolence. Without a divine warrant we have driven them from this land. The fine country which we now occupy was theirs, as much as any country can be ours. But what have we given them in return? The gospel, the richest treasure which we could communicate, and the communication of which would not have rendered us the poorer, we have in a great measure kept back.

How little have we, as a nation, been concerned for their conversion to Christianity, although the propagation of this religion was made the ostensible reason, by the governments of Europe, for taking possession of all these countries. This is a national sin, the guilt of which is, probably, at this moment, imputed to us, by him, who weighs the actions of men, and renders righteous retribution unto nations as well as individuals.

Let it not be said, that the savage habits and roaming life of the western Indians render their conversion impracticable. The gospel, accompanied by the power and blessing of God, has a thousand times triumphed over obstacles equally as insurmountable. Obstacles as formidable

existed in the case of our own heathen ancestors, before the gospel was propagated among them. Had those men of apostolic spirit, who preached the SALVATION OF CHRIST among them, been as easily discouraged as we are, how miserable might our situation have been at this moment!

Let it not be said, that they must first become civilized, before they can receive the gospel. This is a mere refinement of modern times, totally unsupported by historical testimony. What, in fact, has been the great means of civilizing Europe, but Christianity? What, in the nature of things, has such a tendency to subdue the ferocious passions of savages, as the doctrines and institutions of our holy and benevolent religion? Have not the Caffres and Hottentots, the Greenlanders and Esquimaux, the most degraded of all savage tribes, embraced the gospel in our own times? Let us then hear no more of waiting for the civilization of the Indians, before we attempt their conversion. Let us rather believe, that the truest, and most effectual instrument of civilization, is the word of God; and that the renovation of the heart, which it produces, will do more to mitigate savage ferocity, than all the arts in the world.

If, therefore, we possess any zeal for the salvation of the heathen, let us endeavour to propagate the gospel among the Aborigines of this continent.

3. But, is it the duty of the American churches to send missionaries to the East? This question has of late engaged the attention of the Christian public; and is of great importance. Previously to expressing an opinion, I would premise, that, if there existed any proportion between the labourers and the harvest, according to every principle of judicious distribution, the heathen on this continent, would, undoubtedly, fall to the lot of the American churches; and would furnish a field sufficiently large, for all their zeal and exertions. But at present, the harvest truly is great, and the labourers are few. As in a great field, which cannot all be reaped, it matters little where you thrust in the sickle. The only question of any importance is, in what part will our labour be likely to produce most fruit? Or, what part of the harvest is most ripe for the sickle? Such is the present state of the great harvest of souls, which lies before us. The little band of missionaries, who have gone forth, or who are likely to go forth from Christendom shortly, to labour in this field, are not adequate to the thousandth part of the work to be performed. They should, therefore, commence and prosecute their labours, wherever the harvest is richest and ripest. When I turn my eyes to the East, two considerations strike my mind with great force. The one is, the multitude of people who inhabit those regions, most of whom are still sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death. Hundreds of millions of immortal souls, hastening to eternity, without any knowledge of the only name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved. How overwhelming the thought! If our object be, according to the tenor of our commission, to preach the gospel to every creature; here, here is the place to publish the glad tidings, where millions, in a short time, might be made to hear the joyful sound. The other consideration is, that there appears to be a great and effectual door opened in the East, at this time, for the propagation of the gospel. For many years past, Providence seems to have been preparing the way of the Lord. The Bible has been recently translated into many Eastern languages; and THE WORD OF LIFE begins to be extensively circulated among the heathen. The attention of the Christian world has, after a long sleep, been awakened, and directed to this portion of the globe: and by the gracious interposition of Providence, favouring the exertions of the pious and benevolent, those odious and disgraceful restrictions, which prevented the introduction of missionaries in the East, are now, in a great measure, removed. The loud call, which the present dispensations of Providence seem to send

forth, to all Christian nations in behalf of the millions of Asia, is, Go over and help them. Some of our sister churches have not been disobedient to the heavenly call. Our brethren in the eastern states have made a magnanimous beginning, and have set us a noble example, worthy of imitation. Another large Christian society seems to have felt the divine impulse, and are at this moment in motion. Many sober Christians are of opinion, that the awful darkness of a long night begins to break. Undoubtedly, a new era has commenced, in regard to the propagation of the gospel. And shall our church, as numerous as any in the Union, remain idle spectators of the exertions of others? Shall we only, pay no regard to the signs of the times? Can we be contented, to prosecute the great business of missions, in the same cold and circumscribed manner as we have hitherto done? I trust not. I sincerely hope, that the General Assembly, which constitutes the Missionary Society of our church, will, at their present sessions, take the subject of foreign missions into serious consideration; and that they will resolve to co-operate cordially and energetically, in carrying on this glorious work. To this, I am aware, there are some plausible objections, the principal of which I will now endeavour to obviate. The first is, the want of funds. If our efforts hitherto have been barely adequate to collect sufficient funds to defray the expense of missions to our frontier settlements, how can we expect to carry on, successfully, an expensive foreign mission? To which I answer, that our churches have proportioned their contributions to the object which we have held up to their view. But, if we should determine on a foreign mission, it will excite the attention of many, who have never yet been pervaded by a missionary spirit; and will bring into operation a liberality, which only waits for an opportunity to discover itself. But, whether sufficient funds can be obtained for this purpose, is a problem, which experience alone can certainly solve. But, if I am not deceived, there is, at present, a disposition in the people of this country to promote this object. It has been evinced, in every instance, in which any call has been made on their liberality, for the dissemination of evangelical truth in those populous regions. The success of our brethren in the eastern states, in collecting funds, is calculated to afford ample encouragement. Only let the people know that you mean to send missionaries to the East, and many will be forward to contribute.

If this respectable audience were assured, that the collection of this evening would be appropriated to a foreign mission, I have little doubt that their contributions would be doubled. Nay, I believe I should not misrepresent the sentiments and feelings of some of my hearers if I should assert, that with this object in view, they would increase their contributions tenfold. Many have begun to taste the refined luxury of beneficence. Experience has taught them the truth of that saying of our Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and of the aphorism of Solomon, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." For the liberal soul has been made fat, and those who have lent unto the Lord have been repaid with large interest. It seems to be a principle in the conduct of Providence, that they who give most liberally, shall have the more to give.

Wealth has acquired a new value with those, who have learned this exquisite mode of enjoying it; for no treasures ever afforded such delicious gratification, as those, which are dedicated to the Lord. That surplusage of wealth, which has commonly been employed in feeding vanity and gratifying ambition, would be abundantly sufficient to promote all the important objects of real benevolence. Indeed, if only the one hundredth part of the money expended in dissipations and luxuries hurtful to health and morals, were reclaimed for missionary purposes, it would be more

than adequate to all our wants.

One resource may, I think, be depended on, if others fail. When the expensive work of the Levitical Tabernacle was on hand, the fair daughters of Israel, not only performed much by the labour of their hands, but with a willing heart brought their most valuable jewels of gold, and precious stones, and dedicated them to the service of the Lord; and we read that, the laver, a very costly and important part of the sacred furniture of the Court of the Tabernacle, was made out of the looking glasses, or brazen mirrors, of the women who were accustomed to assemble at the door of the Tabernacle. The dignity, happiness, and usefulness of the female sex, are intimately connected with religion. It has often been mentioned to the praise of Christianity, that wherever it has been received, woman has arisen from her degradation, and assumed her proper rank in society. To which we may add, that in proportion as the genuine spirit of this religion is prevalent, the importance of the exertions of the female sex become evident. Not to detain you with accounts of their frequent instrumentality in the introduction and propagation of the Christian religion, which 'are recorded to their honour, in the early history of the church, I will only advert to their recent exertions, in this city, which furnish a noble pledge of what may be expected from them in this glorious cause. But another objection is, that we cannot obtain missionaries willing to go among the heathen, in lands so distant. A few years since, this would have appeared an insurmountable obstacle; but a great change has taken place. We have not only heard of some of the inhabitants of Europe leaving their native shores, but we have seen the youth of America willingly offering themselves, to go and preach the gospel to the heathen, on the other side of the globe. And even delicate females, influenced by the love of Christ and the ardent desire of promoting the salvation of the heathen, have broken asunder the tenderest bonds of human nature, and have deliberately forsaken affectionate parents and beloved brothers and sisters, to go into the remotest lands, never, never to return. The same hallowed flame by which they were inspired, glows, at this moment, in many a youthful bosom. The language of their hearts is, Here am I, send me. Open the way, provide the means, and missionaries will not be wanting. But the most formidable objection is, that by sending missionaries abroad, we will rob our own vancancies, and retard the propagation of the gospel, among the Aboriginal inhabitants of this country. If I believed that this consequence would follow, I should feel myself bound to protest against foreign missions. But, before this objection be admitted, let it be considered, that the number of preachers, who might be expected to go on a foreign mission, would be too inconsiderable to produce any sensible effect on the churches here; but whilst the labours of less than half a dozen persons would scarcely be missed at home, they might perform the most important services as missionaries in the East. But this measure would not diminish the number of faithful labourers in our churches. There is the strongest reason to believe that the effect would be exceedingly beneficial in many ways to professing Christians. It would excite a missionary spirit, which is the true spirit of Christianity. It would raise the tone of religious feeling many degrees. It would tend to the destruction of bigotry and of a narrow sectarian spirit. It would promote peace and harmony in the churches. If Christians had their minds properly occupied, and their hearts suitably expanded, with this noble object of propagating the gospel among the heathen, they would not, they could not, spend their lives in petty contentions. The adoption of this measure would excite a spirit of prayer for the heathen among God's people. If they had missionaries labouring in the East, they would frequently and earnestly be endeavouring to hold up their hands by prayer. And so far will our sending missionaries to the East be from diminishing the number of preachers, for the supply of our

vacancies and churches, that I sincerely believe, it would be the best measure which we could adopt for the increase of candidates for the sacred ministry. One successful missionary sent to the East, would also enable us to do something more effectually for the conversion of the heathen on our own borders, than has hitherto been done. It would produce that very ardor, which is necessary for the commencement and vigorous prosecution of such a work. It would not be long before enterprising missionaries would explore our Western wilds, and visit the many tribes of Indians who are scattered over this vast continent: and the labourers in the West would soon begin to emulate those in the Eastern parts of the vineyard.

III. But in whatever way, or among whatever people, we may think it most expedient to propagate the gospel, let us without delay be active in the fulfilment of this most important duty. The motives, which should urge us to activity and combined exertion, are of the most forcible kind. The honour of our God and Redeemer, are deeply concerned in this matter. The consideration of so many millions, giving that worship to dumb idols, which is due to God only, ought deeply to affect our hearts, and will, if we really love his name. Our bosoms should glow with inextinguishable zeal to overturn, by the artillery of the gospel, those monstrous temples, and hideous idols, on whose altars such multitudes of our degraded fellow-creatures are daily offering their polluted worship, and their sacrifices of cruelty. And is it no dishonour, think ye, to Christ, that, although he offered himself a propitiation, for men of every nation, that so many have never yet heard his name. When oppressed with a sense of sin's desert, when wounded and stung with remorse, they pine away and die in their sins, and no messenger of mercy comes near, to speak to them in words of consolation. Did not Christ come to destroy the works of the devil, and yet are not four-fifths of the population of the world under the baleful influence of this Prince of darkness? Consider, I beseech you, the value of one immortal soul; which nothing could redeem from death, but the precious blood of the Lamb of God; and which is destined to an immortal existence, in glory and happiness, or in darkness, disgrace, and everlasting misery! Calculate how many souls are, every year, perishing for lack of that knowledge, which, by sending the gospel, we might convey to them. I have no wish to enter into the discussion of the question whether the salvation of some of the heathen be possible without the knowledge of a Saviour, in some extraordinary way unknown to us. In whatever way this question may be decided, it will have little or no influence in altering the motives which should impel us to seek the conversion of the heathen; for it will be admitted by all, that they who are abandoned to gross and abominable idolatry, or to enormous vices against the law of nature, cannot be saved in that state. If they could, it would be a great blessing for multitudes in Christendom to be converted back again to paganism, because under the gospel, it is plain, that He who believeth not shall be damned. What then, I would ask, is the condition of the heathen in regard to religion and morality? Are they not almost universally either idolaters, or enslaved to the most degrading vices? No words are sufficient to describe the abyss of depravity, into which most heathen nations are sunk. Their moral condition is wretched and disgusting beyond any thing that the imagination can easily conceive. All those encomiums which philosophers of a certain school, and for a certain purpose, have lavished on distant savage tribes, are proved to be false—utterly false.

Now, prejudice and system aside, I appeal to your good sense—I appeal to the benevolent feelings of your hearts—I appeal to your conscience to decide, whether it be more charitable, to neglect the conversion of the heathen, on the supposition that they may possibly be saved without

the gospel; or to carry to them the word of God, which we KNOW, is able to make them wise unto salvation? The apostles certainly acted under the belief that the knowledge of Christ by the gospel, was ordinarily necessary to the salvation of sinners; otherwise they would never have sacrificed their lives in endeavouring to bring the heathen to the knowledge of the truth. They believed that there was but one name given under Heaven, by which men could obtain salvation; and therefore they exerted themselves to the utmost, to spread abroad, in all lands, the savour of this precious name, knowing that men could not believe on him, of whom they had not heard; and that they could not hear without a preacher.

O ye ministers of the gospel! the successors of the apostles! imitate their praise-worthy example. To you now, are the treasures, and the keys, of the kingdom of Heaven, committed. Have compassion, I beseech you, on your fellow creatures and brethren, in whose veins the same common blood circulates, and who are destined to the same immortal existence. O pity their wretched condition, and endeavour to rescue them from impending ruin. And ye people of God! who have tasted the sweetness, and experienced the power of the gospel, you know how dreadful a thing it is to stand exposed to the sentence of a broken law; and how inexpressibly delightful, by faith, to view The Lamp of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Your feelings have been-made alive to what concerns the glory of God, and the honour of your Redeemer, and the welfare of immortal souls. Can you therefore remain at ease? Can you cease from exertion? Can you restrain your prayers? Will you suffer your silver and gold to canker in your coffers? Or will you any longer lavish your treasures on inferior and unnecessary objects, when you enjoy such an opportunity of applying a portion of your wealth to the most excellent of all objects? God, in his providence, is, in our times, wonderfully opening a door for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen. The long, dark night of superstition and error, we trust, is drawing to a close. The morning star already appears in the Eastern horizon; and ere long, we hope, that the Sun of Righteousness will arise on the millions of Asia, with healing under his wings; and will extend his benign influences over the whole habitable world. The sound of the trump of Jubilee, proclaiming the day of salvation and acceptable year of the Lord, is now heard on the plains of Hindostan, in the deserts of Africa, and in the remote and far separated Isles of the Southern Ocean. The Indian, the Negro, the Hottentot, and Otaheitean, begin to emerge from the dismal darkness of barbarism, and to assume the dignity of man, and enjoy the privileges of the Christian. They begin to taste the sweetness of redeeming love, and sing the praises of THE PRINCE OF LIFE, in their own native tongues. The Bible, which contains the words of eternal life, has been circulated of late to an extent, and with a success, which fills the world with astonishment. A few years ago, we would have deemed incredible, that which we have lived to witness;—and if an angel from heaven should declare the events, which will occur during the next half century, perhaps our faith would stagger at the wonderful report. But however great and glorious the events, which may be evolved by the revolutions of the great wheel of Providence, they will probably be effected by the means, which God has already appointed, and which have been commonly employed. The churches will be roused to exertion. A spirit of prayer and supplication will be granted. A liberality, unknown to former ages, will be called into exercise. Many will be stirred up to offer themselves as missionaries. Christians, agreeing in the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, will become more united in spirit, and more harmonious in operation. The aspect of the nations will be changed. Wars will cease, and the sword be turned into the plough-share, and the spear into the pruning hook. National animosities and antipathies will be extinguished or mitigated. Kings will

then esteem it their highest honour, to become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church. There will then be no occasion for pathetic addresses to the passions to extort a scanty pittance from the pockets of the avaricious. The people will offer to the service of the Lord, as of old, when they were obliged to tell them to stay their hand—that it was enough.

Whether any anticipation of the spirit of these future times, is possessed by my present audience, will now be put to the test. The object is now before you. Funds are needed for missionary purposes—Perhaps, to send missionaries to the East.—I will not urge you to give, nor attempt any appeal to your passions: The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Let every one then, according as the Lord hath prospered him, and according as he hath purposed in his heart, bring his oblation to the treasury of the Lord. The ponderous gift of the man of wealth and the widow's mite will both be acceptable. Of one thing however you may rest assured, that no one will become ultimately the poorer, for giving liberally to such an object. And this I believe would be the result, if your contributions should be increased tenfold. Finally, remember that the principal fruit of your liberality will be enjoyed in heavenly blessings. He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. And now may God make all grace abound toward you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work; being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

S. Practical Truths

PRACTICAL TRUTHS

by the

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CONSISTING OF HIS VARIOUS WRITINGS FOR THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

and

correspondence from the society's formation in 1825, to his death in 1851.

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This volume comprises about forty articles written by Dr. Alexander, in the latter years of his life, for the American Messenger; seven standard Tracts on high evangelical themes, for the Tract Society's general series; six small books written in simple style, and issued in large type, to gain the attention of common readers; selections from his cheering correspondence with the Society, and brief sketches of his life and character.

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PRACTICAL TRUTHS

“the poor have the gospel preached unto them”

This must have been a new thing, or it would not have been given to John the Baptist as a proof that Jesus was the Messiah. In our public system of religious instruction in cities and villages, the poor are too much overlooked. They cannot pay a high rent for a place in the house of God. They cannot appear in costly apparel, and they do not love to be stared at on account of the coarseness of their clothes.

Go into the churches of any Protestant denomination, and you will probably find a large, respectable audience of well-dressed people quietly occupying their own pews, and listening with more or less attention to the instructions of the pastor; but where are the miserable poor? In society they form a large proportion of the people, but here we see perhaps a few old women, the beneficiaries of the church.

There must be some more effective measures for conveying the gospel to the destitute poor than our splendid churches furnish. The system of tract distribution by pious men and women, who, as far as they have opportunity, converse with the people on religious subjects, is excellent. This system, in New York, has been the instrument of much good to the poor. But cannot a plan be contrived and carried into effect, by which they can be brought within the sound of the gospel? I think there can. Let every rich church build a meeting-house, plain but commodious, and let them, under the direction of their pastors, employ some zealous, self-denying young minister to go about and collect as many of the poor as he can, and preach to them in a plain, familiar, affectionate style. At first perhaps few would come, but by degrees the number would increase. The preacher

must be assisted and encouraged by the occasional presence of the pastor and other officers or members.

In every Christian church there are men and women who wish to do good, but they know not how to go about it. Let each of these go out into the lanes and dark alleys of the city, and persuade at least one to go with them to the house of prayer: all such exertions are useful to the person himself, whatever may be the effect on others. Let the meeting-house be seated with benches, and every seat be in common; so that the first person who comes shall have the right to occupy it. And let the missionary to these people speak kindly to them, and inquire into their wants and afflictions, and make known cases of extreme suffering to those whose office it is to relieve distress.

In the villages and country places there are often found many poor, miserable families, who are never seen in the church for want of a place to sit, for want of decent clothing, or for want of disposition. Let five or six persons agree to visit these families in turn, and let them provide a room for evening meetings, and let the pastor, as often as he can, preach to them; or let some layman read to them a tract or short sermon. Time is short. Try, try what can be done.

distribution of books no new thing

“Another furtherance of my work,” says Baxter, “was the ‘writings’ which I wrote and gave among them [his people.] Some small books I gave each family, one of which went to about eight hundred; and of the bigger I gave fewer. And every family that was poor and had not a Bible, I gave a Bible to. And I had found myself the benefit of reading to be so great, that I could not but think it would be profitable to others.

“Many children did God work upon, at fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age. And this did marvellously reconcile the minds of the parents and elder persons to godliness. They that would not hear me, would hear their own children. They that before would have talked against godliness, would not hear it spoken against when it was their children’s case. Many that would not be brought to it themselves, were proud that they had understanding, religious children. We had some old persons, near eighty years of age, who are, I hope, in heaven; and the conversion of their own children was the chief means to overcome their prejudice and old customs and conceits.

“When the grievous plague visited London, I printed a half-sheet, to stick on a wall, for the use of the ignorant and ungodly who were sick or in danger of the sickness. And I rather did it because many well-minded people that are about the sick, that are ignorant and unprepared, and know not what to say to them, may see there in what method such persons should be dealt with in such a case of extremity; and they themselves may enlarge as they see cause.

“Mr. Nathaniel Lane wrote to me to entreat me to write one sheet or two for the use of poor families who will not read or buy any bigger books. Although I knew that brevity would unavoidably cause me to leave out much necessary matter, or else to write in a style so concise and close as will be little moving to any but close, judicious readers, yet I yielded to his persuasion, and thought it might be better than nothing, and might be read by many that would read no larger; and so I wrote two sheets for poor families. The first containing ‘The Method and Motives for the Conversion of the Ungodly;’ the second, ‘The Description or Character of the True Christian, or the Necessary Part of a Christian’s Duty, for the Direction of Beginners in a Godly Life.’ ”

Selected by A. A. from Baxter's Life, etc.

value of a good book

When we consider how much good has been done by the published works of such men as Baxter, Owen, Doddridge, Alleine, Boston, Edwards, etc., we wonder that men gifted with a talent for writing attractively and powerfully, do not devote more of their time to the preparation of good books. But although, in theory, we acknowledge the all-pervading power of the press, yet the importance of the subject is not practically felt in all its momentous consequences. The man who is enabled to write a truly evangelical and useful book, or even a single tract of first-rate excellence, may convey the saving truth of the gospel to a thousand times more persons than the living preacher can ever instruct by his voice. And hundreds of years after the death of the writer, the production of his pen may be but just commencing its career of usefulness, only to be terminated with the end of the world. Those men, therefore, who are blessed with the ability of producing one work of evangelical excellence, may be considered among the most highly favored of our race, and must enjoy a rich reward hereafter.

The plan of first publishing important views of evangelical truth from the pulpit, and then from the press, with such changes as may serve to render them more popular, is a wise economy of time; and considering the incalculable power of the press, more of our learned and eloquent preachers should avail themselves of this method of benefiting the public, by diffusing abroad the precious truths of the gospel.

A. A. in Bib. Repertory.

the tennents' views of revivals

The following passages give us the views entertained by the Tennents, Rev. William Tennent and his three sons, Gilbert, William, and John, who in the time of Whitefield and Edwards, about the year 1740, were greatly instrumental in the revival of true religion. It is extracted from a late interesting work by Rev. Dr. Alexander, entitled, "The Log College," which was a school founded by William Tennent, senior, in which his three sons and Rev. Dr. Finley, President Davies, and a few other leading men in the great revival, pursued their theological studies.

"It is shocking to think that any should dare to oppose a work attended with such commanding evidence as has been among us. We would beseech all such solemnly to answer the following paragraph of the Rev. Mr. Robe, minister of the gospel in Kilsyth, Scotland, in his preface to his 'Narrative,' which is as follows:

" 'I seriously beg of any who are prejudiced against this dispensation of God's extraordinary grace, and look upon it as a delusion, that they will show themselves so charitable as to direct me and other ministers what we shall answer distressed persons of all ages, who come to us crying bitterly that they are undone, because of unbelief and other sins—'What shall we do to be saved?' And as a young girl about twelve, who had been in distress for some time, called upon me in the house where I was, and asked me with great sedateness, 'What shall I do to get Christ?' Shall we tell them that they are not Christless, and are not unconverted, when we evidently see many of them to be such? Shall we tell them that their fears of the wrath of God is all but delusion, and that it is no such dreadful thing that they need to be much afraid of it? Shall we tell persons lamenting their

cursing and swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and other immoralities, that it is the devil that now makes them see these evils to be offensive to God and destructive to their souls? Shall we tell them who, under the greatest uneasiness, inquire of us what they shall do to get an interest and faith in Christ, that Satan is deluding them when they have or show any concern this way? In fine, shall we pray, and recommend them to pray to God, to deliver them from such delusions? It would be worse than devilish to treat the Lord's sighing and groaning prisoners at this rate.' ”

“A few minutes before the Rev. John Tennent expired, holding his brother William by the hand, he broke out into the following raptures: ‘Farewell, my brethren; farewell, father and mother; farewell, world with all thy vain delights. Welcome, God and Father; welcome, sweet Lord Jesus! Welcome death; welcome eternity. Amen!’ Then with a low voice, he said, ‘Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus!’ And so he fell asleep in Christ, and obtained an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour.”

the faithful elder

The following sketch is from memory, and relates to the last century.

J. L—was the son of pious parents in humble circumstances. He was brought up to labor on the farm, and was restrained from open vice by his religious education, and by a regard to the authority and feelings of his parents. On a certain Sabbath, there being no preaching in the immediate neighborhood of his father's residence, he had formed the purpose to attend a great meeting at the distance of twelve or fifteen miles. He owned a young horse on which he intended to ride to the place, but on going to the pasture in the morning to bridle the colt, he eluded all his attempts to catch him, and he was obliged to return to the house foiled, disappointed, and much chagrined. How to spend the wearisome day he knew not.

At length the thought struck him that he would take a book and go out into the woods and amuse himself with reading. He stepped to the bookcase and seized the first book which came to hand, which happened to be “Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.” It being summer, he sought a cool, shady, and sequestered spot, where he lay down and began at the beginning of his author, and there is reason to believe that the Holy Spirit accompanied every truth which engaged his thoughts with a divine influence, for, as he assured the writer, he was deeply convinced of sin on reading the first chapters, and when he came to the expiation of Christ and the method of salvation, the whole plan was opened to his believing mind, and he deliberately embraced the Saviour as offered in the gospel, and was filled with peace and joy. Thus, this young man went out into the woods in an unconverted and condemned state, and in a few hours returned a renewed man, freely justified by the grace which is in Christ Jesus. In due time he entered the communion of the church, and became an active, zealous professor, at a time when great lukewarmness had taken possession of the church. He married an intelligent woman, who by the force of his example and instructions embraced religion, and became as zealous and more communicative than her husband. They lived happily, and were blessed with three sons and two daughters.

About middle age he was elected a ruling elder in the church to which he belonged, and in this office he received grace to be faithful. He held up the hands of his minister, and defended his character from calumnies attempted to be heaped upon him. He visited the poor, and contrived

methods of relief; wherever there was sickness, J. L—was to be found sympathizing with the sufferers, and offering up fervent prayers for the recovery of the sick, and for a blessing on the rod of affliction. By this means prayer was introduced into families where the voice of supplication had never before been heard.

The writer when a boy had an awful dread of this man, and shunned him for fear he would speak to him about religion, but a little sister being very sick, he was pleased to see this faithful man come to the house. He sympathized and advised with the parents, and spent the night in watching with the sick child; but what affected all most, was his prayer, so fervent, so affectionate, so appropriate. It was felt as if surely the Lord would hear and answer such a prayer.

When few professors kept themselves unspotted from the world, this man and his wife stood firm in their adherence to truth and duty. Worldly amusements were introduced by some influential professors; strict religion was scorned and the liberal professor was lauded; but our elder could not be moved to favor dancing and cards. He set his face resolutely against all such practices as inimical to the spirit of true religion. He faithfully warned professors against the deadening influence of these innocent amusements, as they were called; and when private exhortation and remonstrance failed, he had the fidelity to present the cases of such professors to the session to be dealt with as acting inconsistently with their Christian profession. This exposed him to a load of obloquy; and he was clamored against as an enemy of all cheerfulness and enjoyment. Some ministers also took sides against him, and their opinions and example were published by multitudes who never remembered any of his pious sayings. J. L—, however, went on his course unmoved; and though hated and dreaded by the wicked, whenever any one became serious he was immediately sought out, and his counsel and sympathy and prayers were always cheerfully bestowed. The state of religion in the land seemed to grow worse and worse just after the close of the revolutionary war, until he and his wife and a few others seemed to be left alone. But even in this time, the presence of this tall gray-headed elder would strike an awe into the minds of the most careless. One day he had business with a man who was at a dancing party in a private house, and when he approached the house consternation seized the company, and at once the fiddling and dancing ceased. He, however, administered no reproof to the company, but transacted his business and departed.

It pleased a gracious God, about the year 1789, to revive religion with extraordinary power in all the country around where he lived. It was what he had prayed for night and day, but scarcely hoped to see, for he had never before witnessed what is called a revival. Almost his whole time was now spent in conversing with the new converts. I have known him often to ride six or seven miles to see persons under religious impressions. And he would labor with them in the most earnest and affectionate manner, and would bring to them suitable books, for he was much conversant with the most spiritual and experimental authors. Many were deeply indebted to his faithful labors, and none more than the author of this article.

Senex.

the elder's eldest son

Perhaps there never existed since the fall, a family in which there was less to corrupt youth, than in that of the faithful elder noticed in a former number of the Messenger.

In this family there were no servants, but the elder's wife performed all the work of the house, except that, when sick or unwell, some woman of good character from among the neighbors assisted her; and the elder himself did the whole work of the farm, except in the more busy seasons, when a man was hired for a few days. In this house purity, peace, and order prevailed. As soon as the children were capable, their aid was used both in the house and out of doors. The oldest child was a son, a fine healthy boy, large and handsome. This boy was carefully instructed in the principles of religion both by his mother and father, and he appeared remarkably docile, and learned so well that his parents felt a strong desire to devote him to God in the work of the holy ministry, if it should please God to make him early a subject of his grace, for which blessing they ceased not to pray daily.

When the boy had arrived at the age of sixteen or seventeen years, it was thought advisable to send him to an academy at no great distance, to commence a course of liberal education under an approved teacher, a man of piety as well as learning. And it was hoped the young man's morals would be safe, as he would board in the house of an aunt who lived near the academy.

The youth had scarcely ever lodged out of his father's house in his life, and had never been exposed to any temptations from bad company, and was perhaps as innocent as any of Adam's children in a natural state. He had, however, much natural susceptibility of impressions from without, and a sociable disposition.

At this time there were some young men in the academy who belonged to wealthy irreligious families, and from their parents and the company which frequented their houses, they had imbibed a spirit of hostility to religion, and had picked up some objections to the Bible, and learned to make a jest of sacred things. These young men, as soon as the elder's son entered the school, determined to do what they could to seduce him from the path of morality and innocence. They began by throwing out hints and innuendoes against revealed religion, and expressing pity for such as were held under the restraints of religion, or were conscience-bound, as they expressed it.

These ideas were entirely new to the elder's son, and he drank in the poison greedily; for he had a strong inclination to sinful indulgences, which was only restrained by his religious education. These sceptical opinions were exceedingly agreeable to his corrupt nature, but he wanted more conviction that these objections to Christianity had a solid foundation. He therefore sought for books which would have the effect of confirming him in his infidelity, and the works of Hume, Voltaire, and others, were obtained by means of the young men before mentioned. And being now in a great measure freed from the restraints which had been on him, he rushed forth into a course of dissipation and licentiousness, in emulation of his new comrades. Indeed, it was not long before he went beyond any of them in boldness in sinning. Those who become vicious in opposition to the restraints of a religious education, commonly run to greater lengths than others in transgression, because the strength of passion necessary to overleap this barrier is sufficient to drive them on far in the paths of iniquity.

For some time he was careful to conceal his irregularities from his parents, but ere long this was impracticable, and he began to appear boldly in the ranks of the greatest transgressors. He was a leader and corrupter of others, and seemed to have lost all sense of religion, and to be confirmed in his infidelity. It is impossible to describe the disappointment and anguish of his pious parents. They could do nothing for him but weep and pray in secret. The young man had gone on in this

way for several years, growing worse and worse, until his character was ruined, and all decent people shunned his company.

About this time a young man, a cousin of his, came in from the west, where he had lived for some time, and had recently experienced a great change. He had also been very wild, and having been somewhat suddenly converted, he was full of zeal, and spoke freely to his old acquaintances of the necessity of religion, and did not neglect the elder's son, to whom he addressed himself in a very earnest, but affectionate manner; and it was apparent that his example and solemn exhortation produced some impression. As he was now on his way to college, he asked the elder's son to accompany him and bring back his horse. Indeed, the plan was secretly agreed upon between his cousin and his father to get him to go, for at that time a powerful revival was in progress in the college and vicinity; and the father being acquainted with the president of the college, wrote him a full account of his son's unhappy state of mind, and entreated him to try to bring him off from his infidelity. This letter he did not put into the hand of his son, but of his cousin, with a request that he would not let his son know that he had written. The Rev. President on receiving this letter invited both the young men to his house; and after some general remarks, he commenced a conversation on the subject of the causes of the prevailing infidelity, and took up in order the arguments of deistical writers: he refuted them with a clearness and force which overthrew the system which the elder's son had long been building up. He never hinted that he had any suspicion that the young man belonged to this unhappy class, and indeed directed his discourse mainly to his cousin. The device answered the purpose intended. The young man not only renounced his infidelity, but fell under deep conviction before he returned home. What a comfort to his pious parents! His mother had always entertained a confident hope of his conversion, and her prayers were about to be answered.

It was some time before the young man could be persuaded to entertain any hope that his sins could be pardoned. He evidently felt that he was the chief of sinners. Never was a change more manifest in outward appearance. He now became deeply serious at all times, and under the impression of his exceeding wickedness, he seemed little disposed to go into company of any kind.

After much prayer and deliberation, he felt constrained to think it a duty to enter the holy ministry. But before he commenced the study of theology, he undertook to teach a classical school for a year. He had scarcely commenced his school when he was seized with a violent bilious fever. His case from the first was considered dangerous. His parents made haste to see him, though he lay at a considerable distance from their residence. While the issue hung in doubt, the father, a man of strong mind and sober principles, suffered one of those hallucinations to which pious persons are sometimes subject. Having been earnestly pleading with God for the life of his son, the text of Scripture, "this sickness is not unto death," was impressed so forcibly on his mind that he was fully persuaded that this was an answer to his prayer, and rejoiced in the prospect of receiving his first-born from the verge of the grave. But alas, the young man in the midst of his days was cut down. Thus, again the hopes of these good people were sadly disappointed; but there was now comfort mingled with their sorrow, for they had hope in his death.

Senex.

a great truth—eve of great events

“In vain do we seek to awaken in our churches zeal for missions as a separate thing. To be genuine, it must flow from love to Christ. It is when a sense of personal communion with the Son of God is highest, that we shall be most fit for missionary work, either to go ourselves or to stir up others. If we allow it to become a business of dollars and cents, we shall see no results. ‘Find preachers of David Brainerd’s spirit,’ said John Wesley, ‘and nothing can stand before them; but without this what can gold or silver do?’ Let gushing affection to the Lord Jesus Christ become the ruling passion, and it communicates the thrill of evangelical zeal to every member of the electric chain. A church of such ministers, of such members, would be an apostolic, a heavenly church.”

“The impression is general that we are on the eve of great events. A cloud impends—perhaps of mingled evil and good. It is an expectation which is solemn and emboldening. It leads a man to say, ‘Away with trifles; I must abandon all that is frivolous. Life is short. A great work is before me. I must gird myself. I must pray more.’ It must affect men in their relations as associated. ‘We are on the eve of great things; therefore let us be sober, let us be vigilant, let us be active, let us be at peace, let us live for Christ.’ ”

walking by faith, not by sight

Selected from Baxter by A. A.

“Even in worldly matters you will venture upon ‘the greatest cost and pains for the things that you see not and never saw. The merchant will sail a thousand miles for a commodity that he never saw. Must the husbandman see his harvest before he plough his land and sow his seed? Must the sick man feel that he has health before he use the means to get it? Must the soldier see that he hath the victory before he fights? Hath God made man for any end? No reason can expect that he should see his end before he begin to travel towards it. When children first go to school, they do not see or enjoy the wisdom and learning which by time and labor they must attain. To look that sight, which is fruition, should go before a holy life, is to expect the end before we will use the necessary means. Shall no man be restrained from felony or murder, but he that sees the assizes or the gallows? It is enough that he foresees them, as made known by the laws.

“Till the light appear to your darkened souls, you cannot see the reasons of a holy, heavenly life; and therefore you think it pride, hypocrisy, fancy, or imagination, or the foolishness of crack-brained, self-conceited men. If you saw a man do reverence to a prince, and the prince himself were invisible to you, would you not take him for a madman, and say that he cringed to the chairs, or bowed to a post, or complimented his shadow? If you saw a man’s actions in eating and drinking, and saw not the meat and drink, would you not think him mad? If you heard men laugh, and hear not so much as the voice of him that gives the jest, would you not imagine them to be brain-sick? If you see men dance, and hear not the music; if you see a laborer threshing, or reaping, or mowing, and see no corn or grass before him; if you see a soldier fighting for his life, and see no enemy that he spends his strokes upon, will you not take all these for men distracted? Why, this is the case between you and the true believer.

“Do you fetch your joys from earth, or heaven? From things unseen, or seen? Things future, or present? Things hoped for, or things possessed? What garden yieldeth you your sweetest flowers? Whence is the food that your hopes and comforts live upon? Whence are the cordials that revive you, when a frowning world doth cast you into a swoon? Where is it that you repose your

soul for rest, when sin or sufferings have made you weary? Deal truly; is it in heaven or earth? Which world do you take for your pilgrimage, and which for your home? I do not ask where you are, but where you dwell? Not where are your persons, but where are your hearts? In a word, are you in good earnest when you say you believe a heaven and hell? And do you speak and think, and pray and live, as those that do indeed believe these things? Do you spend your time, and choose your condition of life, and dispose of your affairs, as a man that is serious in his belief? Speak out: do you live the life of faith on things unseen, or the life of sense on the things you behold? Deal truly, for your endless joy or sorrow doth much depend upon it. The life of faith is the certain passage to the life of glory; the life of sense on things here seen, is the certain way to endless misery.

“Can you forget that death is ready to undress you, and tell you that your sport and mirth are done, and that now you have had all the world can do for them that secure it and take it for their portion? How quickly can a fever, or one of a hundred messengers of death, bereave you of all that earth afforded you, and turn your sweetest pleasures into gall, and turn a lord into a lump of clay? It is but as a wink, an inch of time, till you must quit the stage, and speak and breathe, and see the face of man no more. If you foresee this, O live as one that does foresee it.

“I never heard of any that stole his winding-sheet, or fought for a coffin, or went to law for a grave. And if you did but see how near your honors and wealth and pleasures do stand to eternity, as well as your coffin and winding-sheet, you would then desire and value them as you do these. Oh, what a fading flower is your strength! How will all your gallantry shrink into the shell! ‘If these things are yours,’ saith Bernard, ‘take them with you.’ It is awful for persons of renown and honor to change their palaces for graves, and turn to noisome rottenness and dirt; to change their power and authority for impotency, unable to rebuke the poorest worm that feedeth on their hearts or faces.

“Princes and nobles, you are not the rulers of the immovable kingdom, but of a boat that is in a rapid stream, or a ship under sail, that will speed both pilot and passengers to the shore. ‘I am a worm, and no man,’ said a great king. You are the greater worms, and we the little worms, but we must all say with Job, ‘The grave is our house.’

“The greater are your advantages, the wiser and better should you be, and therefore should better perceive the difference between things temporal and eternal. It is always dark where these glowworms shine, and where a rotten post doth seem a fire.

“Write upon your palaces and your goods that sentence, ‘Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?’ ”

evils of war

No man in his senses can believe that it is a right thing for men to destroy each others' lives. For a man to shed the blood of his brother, is murder: to shed the blood of hundreds, is murder on a large scale. There is no excuse for war but dire necessity. As long as possible, every nation should avoid war; but a state of warfare may be forced on a nation. Self-defence is the first law of our nature, and is a duty. On the contrary principle, the lawless and violent would have every thing in their own hands, and the virtuous and peaceable would be the prey of the wicked. But still, it is an evident truth, that every case in which human life is taken in war, is a case of murder; some

persons must be accountable for the shedding of all the blood which is spilled. And if this be so, then that nation which, without sufficient reason, commences a war, or provokes a war, has an awful responsibility resting on it; and so also, when a war is in progress, that nation which refuses to make peace, or insist on unreasonable conditions, is guilty of all the blood which may be shed, and all the misery produced. Disguise it as we may, a battle-field exhibits a shocking scene to the moral feelings. Suppose there never had been any account of war in the history of nations, what would be our feelings in reading an account of a bloody battle?

But the loss of human life is not the only evil consequence of war: many families are left destitute of the support and guidance of their natural heads, and are thrown upon an unpitied world in a state of helplessness. See the widowed mother of a family of young children. Were she alone, she might make out to struggle through the world; but when she looks upon her dear babes, her heart sinks, and she is ready to give herself up to despair. Military glory is a poor compensation for her loss; and the honors bestowed on the dead a poor solace for a broken heart. These remarks relate to all wars; they are a horrible evil, wherever the guilt may lie.

The moral effects of war are also most deplorable. Men employed as soldiers commonly become exceedingly profane, and reckless of their conduct.

The writer is old enough to remember the evils brought into a retired village, by the return of a number of disbanded soldiers, after the war of the Revolution. These men, having been habituated to a soldier's life, were averse to labor, and as long as they had any thing to spend, they met in companies to drink and swear and fight, to the annoyance of the neighborhood. And even the return of the officers was not favorable to the cause of sobriety and purity. They now wished for scenes of fashionable amusement, such as they had enjoyed in the army. Cards and dancing were introduced into a society where such amusements had been almost entirely unknown. Teachers of dancing were now in demand, and the attention of the young was much occupied with this fascinating amusement. Domestic order was frequently interrupted, and family religion rendered odious to the young. Pious parents could not restrain their own children, and many professors were led astray by the opinion that these social meetings were harmless, and tended to rub off the rustiness of the young, and to give a polish to their manners. One consequence of these things was, that the church was brought into a cold and languishing state. The young manifested a great aversion to religion, and for years none of them applied for admission to the communion. Discipline was exercised, but public opinion being strongly against it, it failed in most instances of effecting the desired end. Had matters remained in this village in the state into which they had been brought by the means mentioned, religion would soon have become extinct, for it seemed to be confined to a few aged persons. But it pleased God after a few years to revive religion in that place, and many were converted from the error of their ways, and were added to the church.

The writer expresses no opinion respecting the necessity of the war in which our country is engaged, (1847.) He is no politician, and does not pretend to understand the reasons on which our government acts in the present contest; but of one thing he is fully persuaded, that war is a fearful calamity and a heavy judgment from God on any nation, whether it be entered on for sufficient or insufficient reasons. And as it is much easier to draw the sword than to return it to its scabbard, we may find much trouble and inconvenience before we can bring this contest to a safe and honorable conclusion. As far as we know, our government are solicitous to obtain peace, but our enemies

seem not likely to concur in these pacific views.

In these circumstances, the Christian people of this land should unite in earnest prayer that God would remove from our country the pressure of this heavy judgment. God may have seen that we needed chastisement, and therefore permitted this fierce contest to take place, by which so many precious lives have been lost to their country and to their families. As in some churches days of prayer have been appointed, let all who know how to pray, and believe in the efficacy of prayer, join in supplicating the throne of grace for mercy, and for the removal of this heavy judgment. Let them cry, "Spare thy people, O Lord," and restore peace to our country, which has already expended so much blood and treasure.

Rednax.

william wirt and the blind preacher

The power of religion, in promoting happiness in this life and in disarming death of its terror, has seldom been more beautifully illustrated than in the example of William Wirt, Attorney-general of the United States. When a young man, just commencing his professional career, he was distinguished for his genius, his eloquence, his fascinating powers of conversation, and his polished manners. In every circle his society was courted. Fond of pleasure, and the centre of attraction of every convivial party, he was living for the joys of this short life, and was in great danger of being ingulfed in that vortex of worldliness and fashion where so many thousands have perished.

While thus living, as he was on one of his professional circuits as a lawyer, he passed a Sabbath where the celebrated blind preacher of Virginia, Rev. James Waddell, was to preach. Mr. Wirt having no other way to pass the Sabbath, entered the humble church with the congregation. He has himself described, in his own forcible language, the scene which ensued. The primitive simplicity of the preacher, the subdued pathos of his tones, his unaffected piety and fervid eloquence, all combined, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, to touch the heart of Wirt. He felt the emptiness of his own joys, and the unprofitableness of his own life. He reflected and wept and prayed. "God be merciful to me a sinner" became, for many days and nights, the anxious supplication of his soul. Forsaking his thoughtless companions and his dangerous habits of gayety, he commenced a new life of Christian usefulness. True peace visited his heart, and his benignant countenance proclaimed that he had sought happiness and found it, where alone happiness can be found. He became the advocate of Christian missions, and to every object of philanthropy he consecrated the energies of his noble mind.

Though necessarily called to move in the highest circles of opulence and intellect, and to encounter the temptations with which those circles are ever filled, he humbly, yet fearlessly sustained his character as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and gave his commanding influence, unreservedly and constantly, for the promotion of piety. Revered by the community, and loved almost to devotion by a wide circle of friends, he spent his days in doing good. And when the dying hour came, hope and joy beamed from his eye, brilliant with almost celestial vision, as the glories of his heavenly home were unfolded to his view. His body has long ago mingled with the dust, and his spirit has long dwelt, we trust, with the God who gave it.

Such are the effects of religion. Infidelity can show no such triumphs. Who will not utter the prayer, "Let me die the death of righteous, and let my last end be like his?"

why will ye die?

This question seems strange, as "it is appointed unto men to die," and "in this warfare there is no discharge." But there are different kinds of death. There is what is called the second death; and though we cannot escape that natural dissolution of the body, we may escape that which consists in a state of everlasting sin and misery.

Misery no one ever loved; it is abhorrent to every sentient being. Sin, however, may be loved—is loved by many. They who love sin, may therefore be said to choose death; for sin is the cause of misery. How strange the delusion, that men should cleave to sin for the sake of happiness; for no man ever chose sin for its own sake; there is always some lure held out to entice the sinner. Our first mother sinned because the fruit of the tree of knowledge appeared to her to be "good for food," and to be desired to make one wise. Some prospect of good or pleasure, or relief from present misery, is uniformly the motive to sinning. But in every case this is a delusion.

This earnest expostulation with sinners implies, that there is no necessity for them to die; yea, that they cannot die, unless they choose the road to death. Life and death are set before every man; and if any one perish eternally, it will be his own fault—his own perverse choice. Oh, what a pitiable case to see so many men turning their backs on heaven, and rushing on in the way that leads inevitably unto death!

But do they know their danger? have they been faithfully warned? Many have been, and yet neglect to turn from iniquity. They do not intend to die; they think of doing all that is necessary to escape from the second death at some more convenient season. Alas, such a season, to most neglecters of the great salvation, never comes. Time bears them along its noiseless, rapid stream; habits of sinning, instead of becoming weaker, become every day stronger by indulgence. And yet the delusion of a future escape is cherished.

O sinner, stop! Pause in your downward course. God calls you to turn. God asks you, why you will die. He solemnly declares that he "has no pleasure in the death of the sinner." Repentance, or a complete turning from sin, and accepting the mercy of God as offered in the gospel, is the only way of escape from the second death. Omit this a little longer, and your case will be hopeless. God commandeth all men now everywhere to repent. "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." "O that you were wise, that you would consider your latter end," and speedily flee from the wrath to come.

Rednax.

christianity in its nature aggressive

In the charter which Christ gave to his disciples, who formed the first church under the new dispensation, the first command is one which requires action. "Go," says he. Every Christian must be on the alert. He has marching orders from the Captain of his salvation. He cannot sit down in ease and idleness, and yet be a Christian. As the father said to his son in the parable, "Go, work in my vineyard," so Christ says to every disciple; and it will not answer to say, "I go, sir," and yet refuse obedience. We must be doers of the word, and not mere hearers. We must be doers of the

word, and not mere professors. The command given by the risen Saviour is still in force, and as it was obligatory on all who heard it at first, so it is binding on all who hear it now. "Go."

But what are we to do? "Proselyte." Make disciples. Convert to Christianity. The very word "proselyte" will frighten some people. No heresy in their view is so great as sectarianism. But Christianity is so intolerant, that it will bear no other religion; it seeks to overthrow every other system. If it would have admitted the claims of other religions, it would have escaped persecution. But no; it denounced every other system and mode of worship as hateful to God, and destructive to the soul. And it made every disciple a proselyter. And every one now, whether male or female, bond or free, Jew or Greek, who professes Christianity, takes upon himself or herself the obligation to convert others to Christianity.

Consider the extent of the field in which we are called to labor. "Go into all the world." "Go, teach," make disciples of, "all nations." And when converted, let the new proselytes not be ashamed to avow their allegiance to the King of Zion, by assuming his badge. Let them be baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity. Now they are in the school of Christ, and must be carefully taught all his commandments.

Here is a great work, requiring the coöperation of all who are already initiated. The greatest charity in the world is the communication of divine truth to the ignorant. Must all preach the word? Yes, in a certain sense, and according to their ability, and in observance of due order. All may teach. All Christians are bound to teach—the parent his children, the master his servants, the schoolmaster his scholars, the citizen his more ignorant neighbors, the colporteur the families which he visits with books and tracts, the pastor his flock, and the missionary the unconverted Jew and heathen. Here is work enough for all, and all may labor in their appropriate sphere; but all must labor: the duty is incumbent on them, and the obligation cannot be evaded.

The time seems to be coming predicted by Daniel, when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." What a change within the last half century! Then there were no Bible societies, no tract societies, no Sunday-schools, no colporteurs, no Protestant missionaries. There is, indeed, another time predicted, when there shall be no need for one to say to his neighbor, "Know the Lord; for all shall know him from the least to the greatest." Then the work will be completed; but O, how much teaching must there be before the hundreds of millions of souls now ignorant, shall be so instructed as that none shall need farther teaching. But perhaps the prophecy does not mean that none shall need farther instruction, but farther admonition—not that all shall have learned enough, but all will be fully disposed to learn. Blessed time! teaching will be then an easy as well as a delightful business.

a. a.

the almost christian

The almost Christian may have a speculative knowledge of all the leading truths of Christianity, and may be able to defend them. The almost Christian entertains a great respect for religion and its professors and institutions. The almost Christian feels a strong desire to enjoy the benefits of the gospel, and may often have his affections much moved, and may form many good resolutions; he may indeed possess a counterfeit of experimental religion, so like that it may deceive not only the man himself, but the most judicious ministers. The almost Christian may be exceedingly

conscientious and exact in attending on all the external duties of religion; as touching these, he may be “blameless;” and in regard to zeal, he may be ardent, so as to put to the blush the real believer.

He may also be liberal, and contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, and to feed the poor. He may become a popular preacher of the gospel, and be the means of the conversion of others. He may even go to foreign lands, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen. He may, in short, do every thing which the real Christian does, and feel every thing which the real Christian feels—but one. He fails in one single point, but that is an essential point. He never has given his heart to God. He loves the world better than he loves Christ. That most excellent gift of charity has never been poured into his heart. His religion may be all traced to the mere love of happiness, and the operations of a natural conscience, enlightened and awakened by the doctrinal knowledge of the truth.

The apostle Paul teaches, that if a man without charity, that is, love to God and man, should possess angelic eloquence, prophetic knowledge, and the power of working the greatest miracles; yea, if he should have zeal strong enough to make him a martyr, and liberality great enough to induce him to give away all his goods, it would “profit him nothing.” Such a one would, after all, be only an almost Christian.

The deceitful heart of man will turn itself into every conceivable form and shape but that of true holiness; of this it may assume the shadow, but never the reality.

a. a.

prayer a privilege

Although God is everywhere present, yet he is invisible. He is an all-pervading Spirit, yet is perceived by none of our senses. We behold his glorious works in the heavens and in the earth, and may learn something, by careful observation, of the general laws by which the material universe is governed; but still the great Architect is concealed. As far as reason can lead us, we seem to be shut out from all intercourse with our Maker; and whether prayer is permitted would remain for ever doubtful, were it not for divine revelation. We are not surprised, therefore, that some deists have denied that prayer is a duty, or that it can be available to the Deity. Indeed, considering man as a sinner, it would seem presumptuous for such a creature to obtrude himself into the presence of a holy God. Natural religion, as it is called, is not at all suited to the wants of sinners, but divine revelation teaches us that God may be acceptably approached by sinners only through the mediation of his Son.

Prayer is everywhere in the Bible recognized as proper, and inculcated as a duty. But it is also a most precious privilege, one of the richest blessings conferred on man. It opens a method of intercourse and communion with our Father in heaven; it furnishes a refuge for the soul oppressed with sin and sorrow; it affords an opportunity to the heart overwhelmed with an intolerable weight of misery to unburden itself, to pour its griefs into the ear of one who can pity and help.

The moral effect of prayer is important. It humbles the soul, and excites veneration for the august and holy character of God. But though prayer brings into exercise the noblest acts and emotions of which our nature is capable, yet it would be a grand mistake to confine the efficacy of prayer to

their moral effects. Prayer, when offered in faith, for things agreeable to the will of God, actually obtains for the petitioner the blessings which he needs. It has an efficacy to obtain forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and deliverance from a thousand evils. Prayer enters into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth; the prayer of faith is the mightiest engine upon earth. The Lord of heaven has given his word to answer prayer. He will be inquired of by his people, that he may bless them.

God can make any means effectual; and among the instituted means for the government of the world, and the preservation and comfort of his people, prayer holds a high place. The objection that God is immutable, and knows what we need, has no more force against prayer than any other means—no more force than if urged against the necessity of cultivating the ground in order to obtain a crop, or receiving food to nourish the body. The Christian life is sustained by prayer. By it every grace is exercised, every blessing is obtained. Without the sincere desires of the heart, prayer is nothing; it is worse—it is a mockery. He is the best Christian who prays most. As God is ever near to us, “for in him we live, and move, and have our being,” we are permitted to hold intercourse with him at all times, and in all places. We are commanded to “pray without ceasing”—to “be instant in prayer”—to “pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands.”

In prayer there is not only an outgoing of the soul to God, in acts of faith, love, and confidence, but there is an actual communication from God to the soul. Prayer is a holy converse—a fellowship with God. One hour spent in prayer, will accomplish more good than many employed in study or labor. Surely, then, it is good to draw nigh to God.

a. a.

a good tree

Trees are beautiful objects. If we had never seen this part of the creation, we should be filled with admiration at the sight. A stately oak or cedar is really a majestic object. It stands firmly by its own strength. It raises its head towards the heavens, and spreads out its arms on every side; and when verdant, affords a canopy and grateful shade to the weary traveller, and a secure habitation for the birds of the air. Trees are the handsomest ornaments of gardens and pleasure-grounds. Eden itself, without trees, would have been shorn of its glory.

But a tree laden with nutritious fruit is an object still more beautiful and interesting than the trees of the forest. What spectacle is suited to give more pleasure to the contemplative mind than a tree bending under the weight of precious fruit?

Between natural and spiritual objects there is a striking analogy. Of this the sacred writers often avail themselves, to give a lively representation of important truths. The discourses of our Lord are enriched and adorned by the employment of striking emblems. His figures are almost all derived from natural objects.

Among fruit-trees, the vine is often mentioned in the Scriptures, because everywhere to be seen; and when loaded with fine clusters like those of Eshcol, the sight is most pleasing. To represent the vital union of believers to himself, our Lord employs the union of the branches to the vine. He is the vine, they are the branches; and the effect of this union is fruitfulness. As a branch severed from the vine cannot bear fruit, neither can believers without Christ. And the cogent motive to induce them to bear much fruit is, that their Father in heaven may be glorified.

“Make the tree good, and his fruit good.” “By their fruits shall ye know them.” No man, by merely looking at a tree, can tell whether it will bear fruit, or whether the fruit will be good or bad. When we see persons making a good profession in the church, we cannot tell whether their religion is genuine or spurious, until we have an opportunity of seeing the fruits. When John the Baptist called men to repentance, he required them “to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” A good life is the best evidence of sincerity in religion. How beautiful is a consistent Christian character. Such a one “does justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly with his God.” To his prayers he joins alms, and he abounds in every good work. As he makes his way through this sinful world, his bright example sheds a light on all around, and others seeing his good works are led to glorify his Father in heaven. He makes no ostentatious display of his religion; and yet his good deeds cannot be hid; they are like the ointment which betrayeth itself. He is not ashamed of Christ and his gospel, but glories in the cross, and esteems all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

As the true Christian advances in years, his fruits become more mellow and mature; and he goes on to bring forth fruit, even in old age. And finally, like a fruit fully ripe, he drops into the grave; but his works follow him, and he is blessed in death, as the voice from heaven declared, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

a. a.

the godly and the ungodly

“The godly man is one that, being formerly in a state of sin and misery, both strange and backward to God and heaven and a holy life, and prone to earthly, fleshly pleasures, is now, by the powerful work of the word and Spirit of God, converted to unfeigned faith and repentance; broken-hearted for his former sin and misery, flying to Christ as the only hope and physician of his soul, and so is made a new creature, having his heart set upon God and everlasting life, and contemning all the pleasures of the flesh and the things of this world, in comparison of his hopes of glory; hating all known sin, and not wilfully living in any, and loving the highest degree of holiness, and willing to use the means that God hath appointed to destroy the remnants of sin, and bring him nearer to perfection. This is a truly godly man.

“And he who is not such is ungodly. He that yet remaineth in his natural, depraved state, and is unacquainted with this great and holy change; that hath any sin that he had rather keep than leave, and any that he wilfully liveth in; and wilfully neglecteth Known duties, as one that had rather be free from them than perform them, and had rather live a fleshly than a spiritual and holy life, and is more in love with the creature than with God—with his life on earth in flesh and sin, than a life with God and his saints in perfect holiness—this man is undoubtedly a wicked and ungodly man, how civilly or religiously soever he seem to live in the world.”

a. a. from Baxter's Life, etc.

“thou fool”

“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” What harsh language, some will be ready to say. But it is true; and the occasion requires all earnestness. If you see your neighbor's house on fire, while he is sound asleep in his bed, you do not hesitate to alarm him with the most penetrating cry that you can utter. The reason in both cases is of the same nature, but much

stronger in the latter, because the loss of the soul is infinitely greater than that of the body; the fires of hell are much more to be dreaded than any material fire, which can only destroy property, or at most, shorten life.

But why is this man called a fool? Surely he was not such in the world's estimation. He evidently possessed the wisdom of this world. He knew how to manage his farm successfully. If there was any defect in this respect, it was in not building his barns large enough at first. Often enterprising, industrious men run far before their own anticipations. Wealth flows in upon them, so that they have more than heart could wish. This man, no doubt, had labored hard, but now thinks of taking his rest, and entering on the enjoyment of his rich possessions. He said to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." No cloud appeared in all his horizon to darken his prospects. His expectation was, not only rest from labor, and ease from trouble, but actual enjoyment in feasting, and unceasing mirth. The course of this farmer and his success are the very objects at which thousands are constantly aiming. They look no higher; they ask no more than he possessed. How then was he a fool? Will not the epithet apply as truly to more than one half the people in the world? If this were our only state of existence, it would be hard to prove the folly of such a course and such sentiments. Then men might with some show of reason say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But if this were all of man, and death the end of existence, the scene will so soon be over, and all joys and sorrows so soon buried in eternal oblivion, that it would still be unreasonable to be solicitous about our condition. If there were no hereafter, of what account would it now be, whether the thousands of millions who have inhabited this globe were sad or merry while they lived?

The arrant folly of this worldling, and of thousands like him, consisted in this, that being the creature of a supreme Being, he neglected to serve him, and took no pains to secure his favor, or to arrest his wrath. The folly of this he must have felt when God spoke to him and said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Oh, what a sudden interruption to his plans of future pleasure. What, must he give up all his possessions—his fields loaded with ripe harvests, the fruit of his anxious toil? In a moment his fond dream of feasting and mirth is terminated. God, his Maker, calls for him, and none can resist his command. "And who knoweth the power of his anger?" His soul is required. His account, whether prepared or unprepared, must be rendered. "Give an account of thy stewardship." Show in what manner you have improved the talents committed to you. What good use have you made of the riches conferred on you?

Poor, wretched man; what can he say for himself? What justification can he offer for a life of disobedience and forgetfulness of God? Whither now can he turn; whither flee for refuge from his angry Judge? Alas, there is no escape. His riches cannot profit him now. The whole world could not redeem his soul from destruction; and while his heirs are striving about his great wealth, his soul is writhing in interminable anguish. Careless reader, take heed lest this be thy case. Thou art in the same condemnation.

a. a.

looking unto Jesus

1. A look of inquiry. Who is this Jesus? I see that he is a man, for I behold him a babe in Bethlehem. I see him clothed with a body like other men, and growing in wisdom and stature. He

has flesh and bones, and eats, drinks, and sleeps. Yes, I see his body wounded and bleeding, lacerated with the scourge, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross. See, he bows his head and dies!

But is he no more than man? In this child do we not see rays of divinity encircling his sacred head, and indicating that in union with this child is the mighty God? Divine glory beams forth from his face. This is the only begotten Son of God—God manifest in the flesh, possessed of the power and knowledge of the Most High. I gaze upon this mystery. Angels can do no more. I am lost in wonder—so are they. This union of the infinite and finite I cannot comprehend; but I can adore the incarnate God.

But my anxious spirit still inquires farther, Why such condescension—such humiliation—such unparalleled sufferings? I learn that all this was to qualify him to be mediator between a just God and the sinner. Being a daysman, he must lay his hand on both, and therefore he must partake of the nature of both. But my inquiry farther is, What work, as mediator, does he perform? What offices does he execute? The ancient prophets, from Moses downwards, have foretold him as a prophet—a priest—a king. Such offices the sinner needs: he is ignorant, and must have a divine Teacher; he is guilty and condemned, and needs a Saviour—a substitute—a great High-priest, to offer an atoning sacrifice sufficient to satisfy divine justice. It was this which required his incarnation, and his accursed death on the cross. And the redeemed sinner needs a King to deliver him from the power of his enemies, and bring him to glory.

2. The look of inquiry leads the soul to the look of confidence. The soul, burdened with its guilt, and with the fearful expectation of coming wrath, finds no rest nor peace, until it gets a glimpse of the cross; beholding the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, it is assured of pardon and salvation. Nothing is wanting to its peace: justice is satisfied, the law is fulfilled, precept and penalty are satisfied, God is reconciled, and conscience can demand no more. “There is peace and joy in believing.”

3. A look of dependence. The poor beggar looks to his benefactor for relief and help, because he is benevolent, and especially because he has promised him all needed supplies. The believing soul, sensible of its own weakness, looks to Jesus for all needed help and strength. It relies simply on his word of promise, knowing that what he hath said he will most certainly perform.

4. “Looking unto Jesus.” This is also a longing look—a look of intense desire after conformity to his glorious and perfect character. As the child looks at the copy-plate when he is learning to write, so the Christian looks unto Christ as his perfect model. It is a look of imitation—copying his fair example. His language is, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.”

5. It is a look of hope and joyful expectation. Christ is absent from our sight; but we have the promise that he will come again. Saints are looking for his second appearance. This often fills their thoughts. They “love his appearing,” “looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God.” This is the look of constant watchfulness, that they may be found of him with their loins girded and their lamps lighted. All Christians should be in the attitude of watchers, for they know not the day nor the hour when their Lord cometh.

a. a.

the king of terrors

His dominion is wide as the world; his subjects, all men except two. His tyranny is inexorable. By no art, by no flight, by no concealment, by no resistance, can we escape. Death is the doom of every man. And whatever we do, wherever we be, his approach is unretarded. Every moment lessens the narrow span between us and death. It is in vain that we shut our eyes to the reality of his nearness; this only serves to make the surprise more terrible when he, at an unexpected hour, pounces on us.

Death is terrible, because he cuts us off from all our possessions. However painfully and unjustly wealth has been accumulated, and however cautiously the soul clings to its treasure, death forces it away. As "naked we came into the world, so naked we must go out." Death severs the strongest, tenderest bands of nature; it takes away the beloved wife at a stroke, or the kind husband; snatches children, tenderly beloved, from the affectionate embrace of their parents—even the only son is not spared; the bond of friendship is rudely sundered, and the affections of the heart are torn and left bleeding with hopeless sorrow. All plans and projects are in a moment frustrated, and anticipated pleasures and honors are left behind.

Death is a terror to men, because it drives them into a world unknown. We look into the grave and inquire anxiously, What is the condition of our departed friend; or does he still exist in a conscious state? We see no sign of life; he gives no token by which we can learn any thing respecting him. We consult the oracle of reason, but there is no satisfactory response; she mutters some ambiguous and uncertain answer, but casts no light on the darkness of the grave. Oh, how awful, to be obliged to go down into a world of darkness, not knowing whither we are going, or what is our destiny!

This obscurity is not all that terrifies; there is something far worse. This king of terrors comes armed with a tremendous sting. Conscious innocence would inspire us with courage; but guilt, a sense of sin, a feeling of deserved punishment, above all other things, renders death terrible. In the gayety and bustle of life, men may drown the voice of conscience; or by repeated violations of its dictates, men may enjoy temporary ease; but when death comes near, the voice of the monitor within sounds an alarm. The guilty soul would give worlds to be delivered from the stings of conscience. Nothing so corrodes the soul with anguish indescribable as remorse.

A celebrated statesman and orator of our own country, when arrested by this king of terrors, wrote on a card this awful word, remorse, and nothing more, and then died. The sting of death is sin. The time of death is commonly an honest hour. When a man is about to appear before his Judge, what need is there of any concealment? Yet sometimes the pride of character and dread of disgrace lead men to dissemble even at the hour of death.

What a transition, from time to eternity—from ignorance and unbelief, to the realities of the judgment!

Thus far, there is nothing in death but terrors. Has he no other aspect? Does no animating light from any quarter shine upon the darkness of the tomb? Yes; I see One rising from the sepulchre with the air of a conqueror. I hear him proclaiming, "I am the resurrection, and the life; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." I hear a voice from heaven, saying, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." I see, through the narrow vista of the grave, a shining

light. It brings to view the gates of the celestial city. By faith, I behold many of the dead entering in, clothed in robes of light. I hear them singing a song of gratulation and triumph to their great King, who has by his own death redeemed them from the power of the grave. Death is then no more “the king of terrors.” He now appears with the face of an angel. Welcome death! Welcome the hour of complete deliverance from sin and sorrow, and all the evils to which fallen man is heir. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and receive a soul ransomed by thy blood into thy bosom.

“There shall I bathe my weary soul

In seas of heavenly rest,

And not a wave of trouble roll

Across my peaceful breast.”

a. a.

heaven

Heaven is a reality, not seen by eyes of flesh, but made known by revelation, and received by faith. Heaven is a rest from toil, trouble, temptation, and sin. Such a rest is very desirable, if it were only a sweet sleep; but heaven is more.

It is a state of delightful activity. Every faculty and every affection will find appropriate exercise; and probably latent powers, not needed here, will there be waked into activity—powers suited to the new condition in which the soul exists.

Heaven is full of light; all darkness and doubt are absent. Knowledge will there be clear, and will possess a transforming efficacy; still, knowledge in heaven will be progressive; the pleasure will partly consist in ever learning something unknown before.

Heaven is a region of perfect love; all the heart and mind and strength will be exerted in love; and if the power of loving should, in the progress of the immortal soul, be increased a thousand-fold, all this increased ability will be kept constantly in full stretch by the loveliness and glory of the objects of affection. Christ is the centre of attraction in heaven. From him radiate the rays of divine glory which enliven, attract, and beautify all the innumerable host of worshippers. Love in heaven is pure, perfect, and reciprocal. He who loves, cannot be satisfied without a return of affection. And the more exalted and excellent the character of the person beloved, the sweeter the sense of his favor. Heavenly joy consists in loving with all the heart, and in being beloved. As heaven is a society, the members are happy not only in loving their King, but in mutual love. There will exist no envy, nor jealousy, nor apathy; every soul will be transparent to every other, and all will see that nothing but pure love exists in every heart.

Heaven is a place of peace—sweet peace and uninterrupted harmony; all disturbing elements will be left behind. In the symbolical heavens of the Revelation, we read of wars; but in the heaven where saints and angels dwell and worship, war can have no place. The atmosphere of heaven is exempt from all malaria; it is purity itself; all sin and impurity are denied admission into that holy place.

Heaven is a place of song: high affections are expressed in celestial music. O how elevating, how delightful the melodies! Heaven is an unchanging state; or all change is advancement in knowledge, in dignity, in happiness.

a. a.

the judgment

And is it certain that I must appear at the judgment? Yes. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." And must I there give an account of my actions? Undoubtedly; every one will be judged "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And will my most secret iniquities be revealed in the light of that day? They will. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Must I render an account of my words as well as my actions? Even so. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof, in the day of judgment." Will any account be taken of our thoughts, and of the desires and imaginations of the heart, on that day? Most certainly; for the heart is the source of all wickedness, and God knows and remembers every evil thought which ever passed through the minds of men: these come under the class of "secret things;" and it is written, "God will judge the secrets of men," in that day, "by Jesus Christ." Perhaps this relates to secret actions. Not alone; for it is written, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

Will all sinners fare alike on that day? All impenitent sinners will be condemned to everlasting misery; but there will be a wide difference between the punishment of those who sinned in ignorance, and those who sinned in the midst of light and against light. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Bethsaida and Capernaum. "That servant that knew his Master's will, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes; while he that knew not his Master's will, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Every man shall receive according to his work. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men chose darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Is the judgment day determined? Yes. "For he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." Is there reason to think that that day is near at hand? It is nearer now than ever before. It comes on apace; but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, nor the angels in heaven.

Will any man be able to stand in the judgment? None but such as are clothed in the righteousness of Christ: these shall not only be acquitted, but their imperfect works of faith and labors of love shall be richly rewarded. All others shall be condemned. No man's morality or good works can stand the scrutiny of that day. All not interested in Christ will be cast into outer darkness; they will hear the Judge's sentence, "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire."

a. a.

a distant view of new york

Within that small space nearly half a million of souls are congregated. There are the rich and luxurious, living in splendid palaces, and faring sumptuously every day; and there are the wretched, suffering poor, crowded together in dark alleys, and lying sick in garrets and obscure corners, destitute of every comfort. And yet these and all the intermediate classes are of one blood, and are all hastening to a similar end.

If we could bring into one view the countless variety of feeling which at this moment agitates the breasts of this great multitude, what a strange spectacle would be exhibited. While some are rejoicing in scenes of mirth and revelry, others are groaning under the pressure of excruciating disease. While the rich and gay are indulging in the highest exhilaration, forgetful of the future, a far greater number are oppressed with want, and bowed down with incurable disease, or with the burden of increasing years.

As the contrast, on such a view, would be great between the joys and sorrows of the inhabitants of a large city, the difference of moral character is no less marked. How many are employed in works of shame, which shun the light of day. How many minds teem with schemes of wickedness, a large part of which they are never able to execute. Providence often places a barrier in the way of those who enterprise schemes of villainy and murder. How should we rejoice, and be thankful, that in this emporium of America, where the practisers of enormous vice so abound, God has provided a conservative body, by whose influence the wickedness of the multitude of evil-doers is restrained. We speak not of the efforts of the magistracy, and the watchfulness and energy of the numerous police, the benefits of which, however, are inestimable; but our reference is to a class of men and women, found in every Christian denomination, who are not conspicuous in society, but who labor incessantly to check the progress of abounding iniquity. These true friends of man are found operating with inextinguishable zeal and indefatigable industry in disseminating gospel truth, in admonishing and exhorting transgressors, and in unceasing supplications to the God of all grace, to send down, in copious effusions, the influences of the Holy Spirit, for the conviction and conversion of sinners.

Those tall spires, which first meet the traveller's eye, and attract his attention in approaching the city, furnish interesting associations. As these point to heaven, they give us the delightful assurance that the fear of God is not banished from the place. There is here a worshipping people. Numerous assemblies flow into the spacious churches, whose doors are open to all on the Christian Sabbath. In these hallowed temples the preacher of the gospel dispenses "the word of life;" thousands and tens of thousands drink in the precious truth, and are enlightened, strengthened, and encouraged to go forward in their contest with the powers of darkness. The pulpit is God's device for the destruction of the works of the devil; no wonder, then, that Satan's greatest malice is directed against the pulpit. The influence of a sound, able, evangelical ministry on such a city is unspeakably great, not only in the positive good accomplished, but in the unknown evils which are prevented by the power of the truth on the consciences of men. It is only by the preaching of the gospel that a healthy tone of morals is preserved. By means of the sentiments often advanced in the public periodical prints, and by the influence of the theatre, and even of legislative and judicial bodies, the standard of Christian morals is lowered. The conservative power against this tendency is the gospel. Take this away, and the deterioration of morals would be appalling.

We cannot omit also those obscure, but truly benevolent and useful persons, who are seen penetrating into the darkest recesses of vice and infamy, bearing in their hands precious tracts, and whose lips are ever ready to pour forth from a benevolent heart words of exhortation, admonition, and encouragement. The Lord prosper the self-denying company of tract distributors; they are more efficient, and no less necessary than the city watch.

a. a.

what the disciples saw

“Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see,” said our Saviour; “for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

What things did the disciples see and hear which prophets and kings desired to see and were not gratified? They saw the seed of the woman, predicted in paradise to bruise the old serpent’s head. They saw the person who was to descend from Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. They saw the Lamb of God, whom Isaac so strikingly typified, when he was laid upon the altar to be sacrificed. God did not suffer the stroke to fall upon Isaac, but he did not withhold the sword of justice when his own Son stood in the room of sinners; but said, “Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow—smite the shepherd.”

They saw Shiloh, to whom was to be the gathering of the people. They saw Messiah, the prophet whom God promised to raise up, like unto Moses—the King Messiah, whom God promised to sit upon his holy hill of power. They saw the Priest whom God swore that he would raise, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek.

They saw Immanuel, the wonderful child, who had the government on his shoulders. The branch from the root of Jesse and stem of David, whose kingdom was to be everlasting. They saw the “Word made flesh.” “God manifest in the flesh.” The eternal Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and express image of his person. They saw the stupendous and beneficent miracles wrought by Jesus, in the healing of all manner of diseases by a word or a touch, and even at a distance. They saw him give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. They were witnesses of his power over the elements in commanding the winds and the sea to be still, and these boisterous elements obeyed him. Also when he multiplied a few loaves and fishes, so as to feed thousands of hungry people, they were the dispensers of his bounty to the multitude, and gathered up of fragments, after the feast was over, vastly more bread than was originally possessed.

They saw the “Man of sorrows,” whose visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. They saw the Lord of glory, to whom belonged the world and the fulness thereof, so poor, that while the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, he had nowhere to lay his head. And soon after these words were spoken, they saw the Prince of life dying between two thieves, as though he had been a chief malefactor. Yes, they saw the author of life expire in death, and laid in the grave a pale and lifeless corpse. But soon they saw that tomb empty, and were permitted to see the Saviour risen to life, in the selfsame body. They inspected the wounds in his hands, his feet, and his side. They saw him transformed, so that he ascended to heaven before their eyes, in like manner as he will be seen when he makes his second appearance. All these

were sights which prophets and kings desired to see, but saw them not.

And their ears were also blessed. The ear is an organ expressly blessed of God, for “faith cometh by hearing.” The word of God commonly goes into the heart through the ear, rather than through the eye. The apostles heard Jesus preach, who spoke as never man spoke. They heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth. They heard the sermon on the mount. They heard all his striking and beautiful parables, and their lucid explanation. They heard his kind inculcations and gracious promises, his prayers and his predictions. They heard what made their hearts burn within them.

But men may be blessed who have not seen, but have believed. As our Lord said to Thomas, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

a. a..

deceitfulness of sin

All sin takes its origin from false views of things. Our first parents had never sinned, had they not been deceived by the tempter. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was beautiful, and she was persuaded also good for food, that is, pleasant to the taste and nutritious. Here was a deception. This fruit was never intended for nourishment, whatever might have been its flavor. It was intended for trial, and not for food. But the greatest deception practised on our first mother by the arch beguiler was, that the eating of this food would make her wise to know good and evil, even as it is known to God. The deceitful words of the tempter wrought this unfounded persuasion in her mind. The desire of knowledge is natural, a part of man’s original constitution, as well as the appetite for food; but these natural propensities are not to be indulged by every means, and gratified on all occasions, but should be kept under the government of reason and conscience. The brutes were made to be governed by appetite and instinct; but man is the subject of law, and he cannot but feel the binding obligation of law. He is a moral agent, and may properly be subjected to a trial whether he will obey the law of his Creator.

How widely different does sin appear after it is committed from what it did before. Passion or craving appetite creates a false medium by which the unwary soul is deceived, and led into transgression. After our first parents sinned, “their eyes were opened.” A sense of guilt unknown before now seized them, and this was like a new vision—not of beauty, but odious deformity. Innocence was lost. Shame and confusion take the place of peace and purity. Unhappy change! The guilty pair are now sensible of their great mistake, of their guilty act, of their disgraceful condition, of their ruined state. Their Whole race is ruined. What will they do when their Creator shall make his usual visit—heretofore so delightful and instructive? Hark, he comes—his voice is heard in the garden. The wretched culprits are seized with terror and consternation. Guilt causes them to flee from the presence of the best and kindest of fathers. They try to hide themselves. They run into the densest thickets of the trees of the garden. But they cannot conceal themselves from the eye of Omniscience. They cannot escape from the arm of the Almighty, much less resist his power.

Behold, the Creator not finding his creature man in his proper place, sends forth a voice, which must have been like the most terrible thunder, when the awful sound penetrated his ear, and

resounded through his whole soul: “Adam, where art thou?” Trembling, the guilty pair come forth to meet the frowns of a displeased and righteous Judge. We need pursue the interesting history no farther at present.

From this first transgression, by which sin entered into the world, we may form some idea of its deceitful nature. This first sin is a sort of exemplar of all other sins. As they flow from this as streams from a fountain, they all partake of the poison of their origin. In all sin there is some bait—some apparent good—some expectation of pleasure or profit from unlawful indulgence. In all sin the mind is under a delusive influence. Right thoughts and motives are for the moment forgotten or overborne; the attention, like the eye of a fascinated bird, is fixed on a point from which it cannot be withdrawn. The enticement prevails, and guilt is contracted.

a. a.

wells of salvation

“With joy,” says Isaiah, “shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Pure water is often employed by the sacred writers as the emblem of grace. The figure is used in several different senses. Water represents purity; and the washing with water, the purification of the soul. “In that day,” says Zechariah, “shall a fountain be opened for sin and uncleanness.” “Wash ye, make you clean,” says Isaiah; and in the New Testament, we read of “the washing of regeneration,” of being “born of water,” and of having our “bodies washed with pure water.” The ordinance of baptism evidently implies, among other things, this, as was said by Ananias to Paul, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.”

But as water is necessary to the comfort of life, yea, to its very existence, we find it often used as an emblem of life and refreshment. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” “On the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” And Christ said to the Samaritan woman whom he met at Jacob’s well, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” And again, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” And in the book of Revelation we have one of the sweetest, richest texts on this subject: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Another use of certain waters among men is, for healing diseases. Medicinal springs are sought after and resorted to all over the world; but I do not find that, except in case of miraculous healing, any mention is made of water as medicinal in the Bible. The pool of Bethesda was famous, in the time of our Saviour, for the healing virtue of its waters; but this, we are told, was owing to a miraculous cause: “An angel descended into the pool, at certain seasons, and troubled the water; and whosoever first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” So, also, we read in the Old Testament, that Naaman the Syrian, by the direction of Elisha, was healed of an inveterate leprosy by dipping himself seven times in the river Jordan. And the blind man whom our Saviour healed by placing clay on his eyes, was directed to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; and “he went, and washed, and came seeing.”

If there should be a miraculous fountain opened in some part of the world, which had the virtue of curing all sorts of bodily diseases, what an amazing rush would there be to reach it by the rich and the poor. The ways leading to it would be constantly crowded with pilgrims seeking a cure of their various diseases. The sick and decrepid, as when our Lord was on earth, would be borne by their friends and bathed in the fountain of life. The superstitious heathen travel hundreds and thousands of miles to visit some fountain supposed to possess a healing virtue; and in some popish countries, sacred wells are visited at certain seasons by a poor deluded people, who expect healing from waters which possess no healing quality but what imagination gives them.

But when it is announced that a well of salvation is opened for the healing of the maladies of the soul, very little interest is felt by most in the tidings. Men are not sensible of their spiritual diseases, and therefore do not seek a cure. Yea, they are under such a direful delusion, that they are unwilling to be healed: they fondly cherish their mortal maladies, and are often offended when urged to come to the wells of salvation to be healed.

A few, however, are thirsting for salvation, and they rejoice to hear that a fountain is actually springing up in this wilderness, to which they are freely invited. Such come with joy to the wells of salvation. And Oh, how sweet are the repeated draughts of the water of life which they drink in! Others are deeply affected with the conviction of their moral defilement. They ardently desire cleansing. To all such we bring glad tidings, when we announce that “a fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness.” Do you ask where? In the gospel—in Christ, who is the centre and substance of the gospel.

a. a.

christ the believer's life

He is the believer's life, because he has redeemed him from death. The sentence of death, eternal death, has gone forth against every sinner. “The wages of sin is death.” “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” From this curse all believers are delivered by Christ, who endured the curse for them. To such “there is no condemnation;” and they are adopted into the family of God, and made heirs of eternal life. They stand completely justified on account of the perfect righteousness of their Surety. This exemption from death, and title to life, could in no other way be obtained than by Christ's making a sacrifice of his own precious life. Christ is held forth as a Redeemer, and his great work as a redemption. The persons redeemed are condemned criminals, who can be released in no other way than by the payment of a ransom. This Christ has paid, satisfying, by his “obedience unto death,” both law and justice. Thus the believer has life, not by virtue of his own obedience, but only through Christ. His union with Christ gives him a title to the life which he has procured.

Again, Christ is the source of spiritual life to the believer. By nature all men are dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritual life was lost to the whole human race by the transgression of Adam. If there were only a spark of life in the human soul, it might be cherished, and by assiduous culture, might grow to maturity. But in man's corrupt nature there dwelleth no good thing. All the thoughts and imaginations of his heart are “only evil continually.” To introduce life into the depraved soul, as much requires the exertion of omnipotence as to create man at first. God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, must shine into the heart. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which Christ

sends forth, the soul is united to Christ, and from him derives life. Just as the branch derives nutriment from the vine, so the believer receives from Christ, his spiritual head, vital influences, by which he lives. This communication of life is called regeneration, or the new birth. Persons who experience this change are “born of the Spirit,” “born from above.”

And as Christ is the author of this life in its commencement, so he is the cause of its preservation and growth. Every kind of life requires nourishment; and this spiritual principle, called by the apostle “the new man,” must be fed. Christians are compared to “new-born babes,” who naturally thirst for the pure milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. Their growth depends very much on their increase in knowledge; the word of God, therefore, is the means of the believer’s advancement in the divine life. By the Spirit of Christ the word is made effectual; and Christ himself is the sum and substance of the word. The word testifies of him. The word exhibits Christ as “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” As the body is supported and made to grow by bread, which is called “the staff of life,” so Christ is “the bread that came down from heaven.” The believer eats his flesh and drinks his blood, “not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith.” “The flesh profiteth nothing.” Christ guards against any gross interpretation of his words by saying, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Spiritual life cannot be nourished by flesh.

Another respect in which Christ is the life of the believer, is the resurrection of the body. “I am,” says he, “the resurrection and the life.” “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” The bodies of believers are united to Christ as well as their souls. The saints do therefore wait and hope for “the redemption of the body,” and they shall not be disappointed. For we “look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

Finally, Christ will be the source of the believer’s life through eternity. The union between Christ and his members shall never be dissolved. He will for ever be the fountain from which their happiness flows. “He that hath the Son, hath life.” “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” How emphatically may it then be said, that Christ is the believer’s life. He is indeed “all in all.” And they who have received the Lord Jesus, possess every thing which they can really need. They are complete in him; for “of God, he is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” “All things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs: and they are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

a. a.

answer to prayer long deferred

Half a century past, the writer was accustomed to frequent places of worship where the houses were situated in a grove, or rather in the midst of the trees of a dense forest, and far from any human habitation. Although the meeting-houses, as they were then called, were frequently unfurnished—a mere shell without ceiling—yet there was a solemnity in these places of worship

which was better adapted to promote devotion, than all the most splendid achievements of architecture. No sombre light let in through painted windows ever affected my mind like the solemn shade and stillness of the natural growth of the forest.

On a certain occasion, when the Lord's supper was about to be solemnized in one of these humble churches, I went early, that I might avoid the conversation and dust of the multitude on the road, and might have an opportunity of solitary meditation under the venerable trees which encompassed the house of prayer. I thought surely that I should be first on the ground; but I was mistaken. I saw an elderly gentleman, who had just secured his horse to a bough of a tree, coming towards the house to meet me; and upon his nearing me, I recognized an old acquaintance, at whose house I had lodged in my journeyings more than once. He had formerly been an elder in a Presbyterian church of some note, but had removed into a neighborhood where there were then scarcely any Presbyterians. Travelling ministers, however, often called upon him and preached in his house, or at some place in his vicinity. As I believed him to be a very pious man, well informed and zealous for the truth, I was pleased to meet with him and hold communion with him.

After some general remarks, we got upon the subject of the efficacy of prayer; and as I was young, and he was aged and experienced, I was glad to throw the burden of the conversation on him, and he was not unwilling to speak on a subject which seemed to lie near his heart. In the course of conversation, he related to me a piece of his own experience. He said that his oldest son, who was a lawyer of some eminence, had as unblemished a moral character as any man in the land; and yet, though respectful to religion, he never had manifested any serious concern about his own salvation. "But," said he, "I have had such nearness to God, and such liberty in prayer for his conversion, that I believe those prayers will be answered in due time, whether I live to see it or not. Indeed" said he, "on one occasion I am persuaded that God gave me an assurance that my prayer in his behalf would be answered."

This, I confess, appeared to me somewhat like enthusiasm, but I made no reply; and soon our conversation was terminated by the gathering of the people. I thought, however, that I would remember this matter, and from time to time make inquiry respecting the person whose conversion was so confidently expected by his father. Soon after this, the old elder was gathered to his fathers, and died in faith and peace. But residing far from his abode, I know not the particular exercises of his mind as he approached the borders of the other world. For some years I forgot the conversation, and made no inquiry; but some person who was acquainted with the family, informed me that after his father's death, this son fell into habits of intemperance; that, in fact, he became a mere sot, remaining at home and stupefying himself with alcoholic drinks every day. Such a case appeared to me nearly hopeless. I had seldom known a man thus brought under the power of strong drink to recover himself. I now thought that the good old father had been deluded by a lively imagination. And for many years every report respecting the son seemed to render the case more hopeless.

But behold the truth and faithfulness of a prayer-hearing God. See an example of the efficacy of fervent and importunate prayer, though the answer was long deferred. This man, after continuing in intemperate habits until the age of seventy or more, has recently been completely reclaimed, and not only delivered from that vice, but soundly converted to God. He not only gives evidence of a change, but appears to be eminent in the practice of piety. If now living, and I have not heard of

his decease, he must be about eighty years of age. How wonderful are the ways of God. His faithfulness never faileth; it reacheth unto the clouds. "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Habakkuk 2:3.

Let pious parents learn never to give over praying for their unconverted children, however hopeless the case may seem to be, for God will in faithfulness hear their supplications, and answer them sooner or later in one way or another.

a. a.

why halt between two opinions?

Between truth and error, light and darkness, there is a perpetual conflict. Every human soul experiences something of this. Evidence is always on the side of truth; but by the mind blinded by prejudice and passion the evidence of truth is not seen, or not perceived with sufficient clearness to give it efficacy. A mind under the influence of depraved dispositions is incapable of judging impartially of the nature and evidence of truth; it is strongly biassed by inclination to sinful indulgence; and by a fixed aversion to every thing which tends to restrain the evil desires of the corrupt heart. Yet some rays of light will at times dart into such a soul, and awaken serious reflection; and conscience cannot be easy when the obligation of duty is felt, and the course pursued is seen to be a series of transgressions of God's holy law. Conscience asserts the rightful authority of God, and testifies against known sin.

The sinner is brought to a pause. The thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity, are awful. He begins to think of a reformation, the necessity of which he cannot doubt; but some darling lust puts in its plea and solicits indulgence. The deceitful heart promises, that if now indulged, it will consent to forsake the beloved sin at some future time—perhaps it promises never to solicit for indulgence again. "This once only" has been the plea which has often decided the eternal destiny of an immortal soul.

When the truth is heard from the pulpit, the sinner is often brought to a stand. He is convinced that his course of life is wrong, and that if persisted in, it must end in ruin. For a moment he hesitates—halts between two opinions—between truth and error, between duty and transgression, between the choice of life or death; but too often the pause is momentary, the hesitation which is painful is brought abruptly to a close.

The young man just entering on the path of sinful indulgence, whose conscience is not yet seared, and who has some knowledge of the truth, has to pass through many a tremendous struggle with his own conscience before he can go on in his sinful course without opposition. Often is he brought to halt between two opinions. Often does he resolve to break the chains of iniquity which begin to entwine around him; but these resolutions are like the cords on Samson's arms—under the power of the next temptation, they are like tow before the fire. Repeated efforts proving ineffectual, the vanquished soul gives itself up a willing captive to Satan. All serious opposition ceases. And now the sinner begins to justify his course by error and infidelity. He becomes ingenious in finding out arguments in favor of his licentious course. Hereafter there is no more halting between two opinions; he is carried down the strong current, until he plunges into the abyss

of perdition.

The prophet addressed the idolatrous Israelites with the question, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The object of Elijah was to bring them to a decision, one way or the other. Nothing is more unreasonable than hesitation in a matter so important, and where the duty and interest of those addressed were so manifest. But still they are left to choose. If they are willing to serve God, well; if not, choose whom ye will serve. Only halt no longer. God hates this perpetual vacillation. "I would thou wert cold or hot," says Christ. "So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Sinner, make up your mind. You are left at perfect liberty. There is no constraint, no coercion. God will have none but willing servants. But know, that if you make a wrong choice, if your mind adopt a wrong purpose, and determine to follow an evil course, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

a. a.

preparation for death

You are placed in solemn circumstances. Eternity rolls its boundless waves just before you. Every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour lessens the distance between you and the unchangeable state to which you are hastening. The precise moment of your entrance into this untried, unknown world is hidden from you. Death often comes and knocks at the door at a time when least expected. At a time when men think not they receive the awful summons. And often they are hurried away, little time being allowed for preparation. Many, while they know they must die at some time, never in their lives think seriously of the matter. When the summons reaches them, they are taken by surprise. It is practically a new subject; they are alarmed, and filled with consternation. They cling to hope as long as there is a ray of hope that they may be spared a little longer. But when it is announced to the unhappy sufferer that there is no hope of recovery—that the physician has given him up, O what a poignant anguish pierces the soul! Who can describe the horror by which the guilty sinner is overwhelmed?

Are you prepared for death? Some one is perhaps ready to say, "I am no worse than my neighbors. I have never done any thing very bad. I have tried to live a good life; I hope that I shall find favor of the Lord when I come to die." And is this all the ground of hope you have? Are you willing to appear before the judgment-seat with no better righteousness than this? Though you may have lived a decent moral life, yet you have failed to love God with all your heart. His service you have habitually neglected. The offers of mercy made in the gospel you have rejected. Unless you obtain a better preparation, your soul will be lost, and your misery will be great. And though you may be in no worse a condition than many of your neighbors, yet it will be small alleviation, when enduring the torments of the damned, that many others are in the same condemnation. No doubt they that perish will have company enough, but this will be no alleviation, but perhaps an aggravation of their misery. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." The Judge is at the door. Be ye therefore ready.

a. a.

the cross

Whence came the tree from which the cross was made? What has become of the particles of which it was composed? What hands were employed in preparing this instrument of a cruel death? To such questions no answer can be given, and none is needed. The cross was a common mode of punishment among several nations, and among the Romans was reserved for the punishment of slaves and the vilest malefactors. It was never made use of by the Jews. If they had had the power of life and death in their hands when Christ suffered, the punishment for the offence alleged against him would have been stoning. But by the ordering of divine Providence, our Lord was put to death in that way which was accursed, according to the Jewish law; for it was written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

The death of Christ on the cross may well be reckoned mysterious, for it was at the same time a cursed and a blessed death. Christ was "made a curse for us," that he might deliver us from the curse of the law. And yet Christ's death on the cross is the most blessed event which ever occurred in the world; for on the cross the price of our redemption was paid. Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He died, "the just for the unjust," to bring us unto God. This led Paul to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The cross is a centre in which many lines of truth meet. The cross is an incomprehensible mystery. That God should be manifest in the flesh, is the great "mystery of godliness." That the Prince of life should be crucified, was an event which caused the angels to stoop from their celestial thrones, that they might gaze upon it. The prophets who predicted these events were perplexed at their own prophecies, "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ."

The truths which are exhibited in a clear and strong light by the crucifixion of Christ, are such as these:

1. The infinite evil of sin, which in order to its pardon required such a sacrifice.
2. The holiness and justice of God, which would not suffer sin to pass without full evidence of the divine disapprobation, and his inflexible purpose to visit it with condign punishment.
3. The wisdom of God, in contriving a method of salvation by which his own glory would be promoted in the eternal salvation of hell-deserving sinners; and this wisdom is chiefly manifest in the incarnation of the Son of God, by which the divine and human natures are united in one person.
4. But the most wonderful exhibition of the cross is the mercy of God, the love of God to sinners—such love as never could have been conceived of, had it not been manifest by the gift of his own Son: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

a. a.

the gospel no failure

The first sermon preached after the institution of the Christian church was the means of converting three thousand souls, and some of these stained with the crimson guilt of having participated in the crucifixion of Christ. Surely there was no failure here. Soon afterwards five thousand more were added to the church in Jerusalem. And not long afterwards a large number of the priests

became obedient to the faith.

The power of the gospel was manifest in the conversion of the people of Samaria, under the preaching of Philip the evangelist. And at Antioch a glorious work of grace was wrought through the preaching of the gospel. So also at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, and even at Rome. Glorious indeed was the success of the gospel when first promulgated. It was to the world as "life from the dead." It shed a marvellous light over those who had all their lives been walking in darkness, and dwelling in the region and shadow of death.

We behold the triumph of the gospel in the conversion of the man who was its most bitter and determined opposer. Saul of Tarsus, who had wasted the church by a cruel persecution, dragging both men and women to prison and death, and whose burning zeal led him to extend the persecution to a foreign city, was arrested by the persecuted Saviour, and made a chosen vessel to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to many heathen nations, and was the honored instrument of founding many famous churches. He did not find the gospel a failure. No; he found it to be the power of God unto salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. And in his days the joyful sound had gone out through all the world.

Some good people are dreaming of a new dispensation, as though the present were ineffectual for the conversion of the world. To such we would say, Do you expect another gospel to be revealed? Can you conceive of any better means for the conviction and conversion of sinners than the truths which we already have in the gospel? And can you conceive of a more powerful efficiency than that of the Holy Spirit? If not, then discourage not the hearts and the hopes of God's people, but preach the gospel to every creature, and pray incessantly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

a. a.

christ standing and knocking at the door

We add a well-known signature to this beautiful and striking testimony.—Eds.

An aged professor was gratified to see that the American Tract Society had resolved to bring out from their press another of the precious works of dear Mr. Flavel. The volumes of this excellent author already published are a rich treasure in many houses; they are replete with evangelical doctrine and spiritual instruction. But the writer has special reasons for esteeming the work now published.

When a young man, he resided for some time in a part of the country where the gospel was seldom preached, and we were doomed for the most part to silent Sabbaths. Once a month, it is true, there was preaching at the distance of five miles; but the minister, though zealous, was very illiterate, and very little benefit we thought could be derived from his ranting vociferation; therefore we seldom attended. Indeed the family, with one exception, were little sensible of their need of religion. The writer confesses, to his shame, that he was ignorant of the nature of religion, and consequently did not feel its necessity. He thought that religion consisted in becoming good; and this, he was persuaded, he could do whenever he should so determine. And he therefore felt no concern about the matter.

But there was an old, infirm lady who, though she had once lived in affluence, was now, through the profligacy of a bad husband, reduced to poverty and dependence, and occupied the situation

of a superintendent of the nursery in the family in which the writer was a teacher. This old lady possessed a large folio, containing all the published works of Flavel, and greatly delighted in reading his writings; but having weak eyes, she was able to read but little at a time, and would often request other members of the family to read to her. Sometimes this favor was asked of the writer, who through courtesy complied, though the subjects were in no wise congenial to his taste.

One of these vacant Sabbaths, when we were at a loss how to dispose of the lingering hours, she brought her book into the parlor, and requested me to read to the family, and pointed out the part which she wished read. It was a part of the discourse on the text, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," etc. I took the book with reluctance, and read until I came to the word "stand," on which the author expatiates on the long-suffering and patience of Christ in waiting so long on sinners, while they pay no attention to his calls. This discourse impressed my mind in a manner it never had been before; and I was so affected with the truth that I was unable to proceed, but making an apology, closed the book and sought a place of retirement, where I wept profusely. And this was the commencement of impressions which were never entirely effaced. From this time secret prayer, before neglected, was frequently engaged in; and although I had no idea that I was converted until months after these first impressions, yet from this time my views in regard to religion were entirely changed. I now found a pleasure in reading out of Flavel to the good old lady, and even borrowed the book to peruse it alone; so that my first practical knowledge of the nature and evidences of true religion were derived from this excellent author. This pious woman, who had a fine understanding, and had received a good education, often spoke to me on the subject, and related her own experience, yet I never disclosed any thing of my feelings to her. But before she died, she had the opportunity of learning that I had made a public profession of religion, in which I understood she greatly rejoiced.

You may well suppose, therefore, Messrs. Editors, that I was gratified in observing that you had published a book from which I received my first religious impressions, which have continued for no less than threescore years. No doubt this attachment to an author, and esteem for his writings, may be accounted for without the supposition of any extraordinary intrinsic excellence; but now, when I impartially judge of Flavel's writings, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that they are among the very best of the many valuable writings of the Puritans.

a. a.

fixedness of purpose

"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." Men are often the subject of strong impressions, and have their feelings strongly excited, when they are far from a fixed and deliberate purpose to devote themselves unreservedly to the service of God. Whatever vicissitudes of feeling and fluctuation of hope the real Christian may experience, his purpose never wavers. He may be strongly tempted, and carnal desires may plead against his course, and his self-denial may be painful, like plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand; but still his determination is fixed that he will serve the Lord. Yea, when by some powerful temptation he is overcome, and is betrayed into sin, though he may for a season be in despair, yet his purpose is, that if he perish, he will perish seeking mercy and trying to serve the Lord. Fixedness of purpose is a much better evidence of genuine piety than the most elevated feelings of joy; and this is an evidence which the Christian possesses in his darkest hours of discouragement. Our sensible feelings are much more

connected with the state of the nervous system than is commonly supposed; but the steady, fixed purpose of the will is a good evidence that the heart has been renewed. Our purpose may be stronger at one time than another, but it is always fixed.

The following case occurs to the writer. A careless and profane young man was awakened, and professed to be converted. His zeal was ardent, and his confidence strong. He relinquished a lucrative business that he might commence a course of education for the holy ministry. After a while his zeal began to cool, and his prospect of success in preparing for the ministry being somewhat uncertain, he began to regret that he had commenced such a course. And worse than this, he began to repent that he had left the world, and had relinquished a profitable business for the sake of religion. In a conversation which the writer had with him, he acknowledged that he often hesitated whether he should continue to seek God, or go back to the world. This confession struck the writer with surprise, as he had before entertained a very favorable opinion of this man, and he could not reconcile such wavering with sincerity. After some time, the young man suddenly relinquished his studies, gave up his religious profession, and plunged into more than his former dissipation. He became openly profane, and it is believed avowed his disbelief in the reality of religion. The change in his course affected the pious with grief, and furnished occasion of triumph to the enemies of vital piety. But his course was short. Though possessed of a strong and healthy constitution, he was seized with an inflammatory fever, and died in horror and despair.

a. a.

love of the truth

I think it is John Newton who somewhere says that he never knew any person who appeared to be actuated by a sincere love of the truth, who did not come right after a while, however far off he might be when he began to feel this motive operating. The case of the Rev. Thomas Scott is a remarkable illustration of this remark. When he commenced his correspondence with Mr. Newton, he was a Socinian, and was solicitous to engage his correspondent in a controversy on the points of difference. Mr. Newton, however, while he avoided controversy, still entertained and expressed the hope that Mr. Scott would come to a right belief, because he thought he perceived in him a sincere desire to know the truth.

It seems to me that this is one of the first lessons which they learn who are taught of God. The Holy Spirit, when he would lead any one to the saving knowledge of the truth, produces in him a spirit of humble docility. The soul led by the Spirit thirsts for the knowledge of the truth. This is a very different thing from ardent attachment to particular opinions which have been imbibed from education, or from the connection with a particular sect. Such attachment cleaves to error as tenaciously as to truth. A man may be willing to lay down his life in defence of his opinions, and yet may be destitute of the love of truth. The genuine love of truth makes its possessor willing to relinquish his most cherished opinions as soon as it shall be satisfactorily demonstrated that they are not true. The love of the truth renders a man not only earnest in the pursuit of the beloved object, but impartial in his judgment of evidence. He fears deception, and admits new opinions only after the evidence has been thoroughly sifted and weighed.

This disposition is commonly accompanied with a deep sense of our ignorance and liableness to error. The lover of truth cannot be satisfied with mere plausible appearances, he must have solid

ground to rest upon; he therefore digs deep until he comes to a rock. And as the Holy Bible is the treasure of divine truth, he searches the Scriptures daily to find out what God has revealed. But conscious of his liableness to be misled by ignorance or prejudice in interpreting the oracles of God, he is incessant in his prayers for divine illumination. Such a one trusts little to his own reason or human authority; he wants to hear what saith the Lord. And they who search for truth as for hid treasure shall not be disappointed. There is a gracious promise that if we seek, we shall find. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

a. a.

the peace of god

There are three words, pregnant with precious and important meaning, commonly used by the apostles in their salutations and benedictions, grace, mercy, and peace. These words include every thing which man needs or can desire. Peace is the legacy which Christ gave to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." And after his resurrection, the first time he met with his disciples when assembled together, he said, "Peace be unto you."

He gives peace not as the world giveth. He is the Prince of peace, and his gospel is the "gospel of peace." It is called "the peace of God," because he is its author. It is a sweet and gentle stream which flows from the fountain of life beneath his throne. Happy is he who has received this heavenly gift; it will, in the midst of external storms and troubles, preserve his mind in a tranquil state. It is independent of external circumstances. It is most exquisitely enjoyed in times of affliction and persecution. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but these things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." It is a fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace." It includes reconciliation with God. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Peace of conscience is a fruit of reconciliation with God. The blood which reconciles, when sprinkled on the conscience, produces a sweet peace which can be obtained in no other way. If the atonement of Christ satisfies the law which condemned us, and we are assured that this atonement is accepted for us, conscience, which before condemned, as being the echo of the law, is now pacified. The peace of God also includes freedom from jarring, discordant passions of the mind. The wicked, however prosperous externally, can have no true peace within. Their ambition and pride and avarice, and love of ease and carnal indulgence, can never be harmonized. One may be the master-passion, but the others will arise and create disturbance and turmoil within.

The only passion which effectually harmonizes the discordant passions of human nature, is the love of God. Wherever this is introduced, it will not only be predominant, but bring all other desires into willing subjection. The peace of God is not a mere negative blessing, consisting in exemption from the misery of discord; it is a positive enjoyment of the purest, sweetest kind. It is a foretaste of the bliss of heaven. Nothing on earth is so delightful. It is therefore said to "pass understanding." No one could have thought man's miserable soul could possess such enjoyment in this world. But why is so little known of it in the experience of professing Christians? I leave every one to answer for himself.

a. a.

unsearchable riches of christ

Ephesians 3:8

It is recorded of Christ, that “though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.” But this poverty related only to external condition and earthly goods. He was indeed poor in the riches of this world. He was born in the most abject poverty. He lived poor; for he said to one who expressed a desire to be his follower, probably from a hope of worldly benefit, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” He had neither house nor home; and sometimes was a hungered for want of food, while laboring in Jerusalem, from morning to night. No one in that city seems to have invited him to a night’s lodging; for when he had spent the day in preaching in the temple, and healing the sick who resorted to him, it was his custom in the evening to retire to the mount of Olives. And when journeying—which was always on foot—he was sometimes refused the privilege of lodging in a village by the way. When a prophecy respecting him as king was to be fulfilled by his riding on the foal of an ass, the animal must be borrowed; and when tribute was demanded of him, he was not in possession of so much money as half a shekel, and therefore sent Peter to the sea to catch a fish, which he knew had the sum necessary for the two in its mouth. Indeed, the owner of heaven and earth, in his voluntary humiliation, was content to live upon the charitable contributions of the pious women who accompanied him from Galilee. And when dying, he had nothing to leave for the sustenance of his bereaved mother, but committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, who did possess a home, to which he immediately took her. And when dead, he had no sepulchre of his own where his body might rest, but his lifeless corpse was laid in the tomb of another—a rich man, who graciously gave up for its use a new tomb prepared for himself. But though poor in this world’s goods, he was even then rich—rich in divine power, for whenever it was necessary, he could provide food for thousands of hungry people. He was rich in the possession of every divine perfection, for the fulness of the Godhead “dwelt in him bodily;” his riches, as being infinite, were indeed unsearchable.

But the riches of Christ which Paul preached among the Gentiles, were the riches of grace. Who can fathom the depth of the love of Christ? Surely it “passeth knowledge;” it hath a depth, and height, and length, and breadth, which an angel’s mind cannot compass. If we would trace this stream to its source, we must go back before the foundation of the world. This fountain of divine mercy is hidden in the depths of eternity; yea, more, in the unsearchable depths of the infinite mind of God. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”

Christ is not only rich in his divine attributes and love, but in his mediatorial character and possessions. The richest creature ever formed was the human nature of Christ, which he has assumed into intimate personal union with his divine nature. This human nature is enriched with knowledge and sublime properties, which, though finite, as every creature must be, yet far surpass all the richest endowments of the highest angel or archangel who stands in the immediate presence of God. Here is an object to call forth the wonder and adoration of the innumerable hosts who encircle the throne of the great I AM.

This divine mediatorial Person is the foundation of the whole plan of redemption. As God-man, he was born, and lived, and taught, and died, and rose again; and now “ever liveth to make

intercession" for all who have by faith committed their souls into his hands. And in this character of Mediator he has become heir to a glorious inheritance; and of this inestimable riches he has made every true believer a co-heir, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." There are unsearchable riches for the Gentiles, and also for the Jew; for he makes no difference. All genuine disciples will have their allotment in the celestial Canaan. "It is a broad land of wealth unknown." And these inestimable, inexhaustible riches are freely offered to all. O who will consent to make known these glad tidings to the hundreds of millions of Gentiles now on the earth, and spend their lives in preaching to them the unsearchable riches of Christ?

a. a.

what i desire

Spiritual knowledge, that view of divine truth which arises from the illumination of the Holy Spirit. With this, a lively exercise of faith, not merely in the way of assenting to the truth, but confiding in the promises; a holy susceptibility of heart, so that every thought of Christ may be a warm emotion of love and delight; godly fear—a profound veneration, yea, adoration of the divine majesty; deep humility, not only a feeling of littleness and weakness and ignorance, but of unworthiness and ill desert, together with contrition of spirit, a godly sorrow that works repentance; a devotional spirit, a constant breathing after God, the living God; fervent ejaculations in the midst of business and company; good-will to all men; brotherly love; tender compassion for the afflicted, and "charity, which is the bond of perfectness;" inward peace—peace with God, peace of conscience, tranquillity of mind, a peaceable temper; courage in opposing spiritual foes, and in aggressive assaults on the kingdom of darkness; a spirit of wise enterprise in doing good; promptitude in seizing on opportunities of being useful; constancy and perseverance in well-doing—bringing forth much fruit, and continuing to bear fruit even in old age; assurance of pardon and acceptance, with a good hope, entering into that within the veil; patience under suffering, and the salutary benefits of sanctified affliction; a grateful temper, ever disposed to give thanks, and to praise the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; contentment with an obscure and humble condition in the world, without envy of the rich and great.

Let these things be in me and abound, and I ask no more. Let the worldlings have the world, and make the most of it. I will never envy their prosperity, for it is but for a moment, and then, like a passing scene in a drama, disappears for ever. Their feet stand on slippery places, and in due time their steps will slide, and all their music, their mirth, and their wine will cease for ever. And when they sink, they will rise no more. They plunge into a horrible abyss, where no ray of hope ever enters. Oh, their end, their dreadful end!

Give me my place and portion with the humble poor; lift upon me, O God, the light of thy reconciled face, and scatter the dismal gloom with which guilt and unbelief envelops the soul. Speak to my troubled conscience the word "peace," and darkness shall be light, the weeping of the night converted into the joy of the morning.

Lights and shades alternate during our earthly pilgrimage. But often the nights are long and wintry; we long for the genial, reviving warmth of spring. Our spirits seek to be regaled by the sweet odors of the fragrant flowers, and with the joyful singing of birds. Oh for a serene, unclouded sky. But see that dark, deep valley. See how many descend into the sides of the pit, but none ever return. Most

are driven away—they are suddenly cast down. They were not aware of their nearness to the brink—they were not prepared for this sudden, awful change. O the blindness of man! How deep his sleep of carnal security! Will nothing awaken him?

My desire is to meditate on my latter end until I become wise unto salvation; to stand ready with my lamp trimmed and my loins girded, and thus to wait for the coming of my Lord. Soon I shall need earthly blessings, and even means of grace, no more. O what scenes will soon burst on my astonished vision! Lord Jesus, come quickly.

a. a.

a short conversation on fasting and prayer

Yesterday a pious young minister of the Baptist denomination called upon me, and said he wished I would write a short article for the Messenger on the duty of fasting. He observed, that among Christians of our day he feared this duty was much neglected.

I referred him to a valuable discourse of the late venerable Doctor Miller on that subject, published some years since in the National Preacher, which he said he had not seen. I told him that I was not in favor of periodical fasts once a week or once a month; that there were times when we ought not to fast: as our blessed Saviour said to the disciples of John, in answer to their question, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast.”

To this my young friend assented, and observed, that soon after his conversion he determined to fast one day in the week; but after practising this for some time, he found that it was degenerating into a formal observance, and he gave up the practice. He remarked that it was evident from one declaration of our Lord, that there were cases of obstinate evils from which deliverance was not obtained without adding fasting to our prayers. The reference was to Matthew 17:21 : “Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

Fasting has made a part of all religions, true and false, and is much practised among the heathen, the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Romanists, and the oriental Christians. And because the practice has been turned to superstition, Protestants have too much neglected this duty. But eminently devout men in all ages have found fasting an auxiliary to devotion and to the mortification of sin.

Some professors neglect it altogether, under the false notion that literal fasting is not enjoined, but only penitence and abstaining from sin. There are, however, degrees of fasting, both as to the time of abstinence from food, and whether the abstinence be total or partial. The Ninevites, when brought to repentance by the preaching of Jonah, tasted neither bread nor water for three whole days. This was a severe fast. Daniel fasted for three full weeks; but this was not a total abstinence, for he says, “I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth.” And Peter’s fast, when he saw the vision of the sheet let down, was only until the ninth hour, that is, three o’clock of our day.

External fasting, without corresponding internal penitence and humiliation, is hypocrisy, and such fasting is severely reprov'd by the prophet. See Isaiah 63:1-19. And God says, “Therefore also

now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments.” And our Lord warns us against ostentation in our fasting: “Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

One special occasion on which the apostles and their companions were accustomed to fast, was when ministers were to be ordained and sent forth. Thus we read in Acts 13:2, “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” And again, Acts 14:23, “And when they had ordained elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord.” Is this practice now followed by those who ordain? As fasting renders some persons sick, so that it hinders their devotion, such should adopt partial abstinence; for the Lord will have mercy, and not sacrifice. But its causing pain is one end of fasting, that we may “afflict our souls.”

a. a.

a disciple

A disciple is a learner, but a learner supposes a teacher. The church is properly a universal school, where Christ is the great teacher. The word of God contains all the lessons which are inculcated in this school. But as Christ is the sum and substance of the word, he is not only the teacher, but the subject of the lesson taught; according to that saying of his, “This is eternal life, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Or that of Paul, “Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.” Do you ask how we can gain access to Christ, to become his disciples? “Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ from above. Or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach.”

A genuine disciple is not only taught out of the word, but by the Spirit also. External teaching, however correct, is not sufficient; man needs internal illumination by the Spirit. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Not that this divine instructor teaches any thing different from the word. No; He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the Spirit of truth, and will guide the disciples into all truth. He “reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”

But what are some of the lessons learned by the disciple in this school? 1. The worth of his soul, and the value of time. 2. Veneration for the holy Scriptures as the infallible rule to guide our faith and practice. 3. Our ruined and condemned state—“children of wrath, even as others,” “dead in trespasses and sins,” “without hope and without God in the world.” 4. He convinces the human heart, or rather, gives the soul a glimpse of the indwelling sin, by which it is convinced of total depravity. Oh, what a host of evils; what a fountain of impurity; what a mass of corruption! The heart is found to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. There is found nothing in it

truly good.

What can be done? Where shall the sinner fly for relief? Whither, but to the house of mercy—to the city of refuge? There stands One with wounded hands widely extended, who invites the perishing sinner to come to him for safety. The guilty soul hesitates—fears this invitation cannot be for one so unworthy. But no other door is open, and the kind, entreating voice is still heard, Come—“and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.” It ventures—trembling, it advances—it throws itself into the arms of divine mercy, and is graciously received, without merit, without upbraiding; becomes a son or daughter by adoption, and if a son, then an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. It learns to prize Christ above all persons and above all treasures. “To you who believe, he is precious.” It values him above all price as a teacher and as a ruler, as well as an atoning priest. It learns to roll all its burdens on the Lord, and learns to live out of itself, by desiring vital supplies from Christ, day by day, as says a disciple, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Again, the disciple is taught the beauty of holiness. Moral or spiritual beauty is the glory of heaven. External glory is nothing; but moral, divine excellence is the glory of God, comprehending all his divine perfections. To view this excellence, is the beatific vision in which the happiness of heaven consists. Oh, glorious state! Oh, blessed abode!

Finally, the disciple learns to know the reality and sweetness of communion with God. While many are contented to worship in the outward court, he desires to penetrate into the holy of holies, where he can hear the words of the divine oracle, and see the resplendent face of Immanuel. The apostle teaches that the most holy place is a type of heaven; and surely nothing on earth is more like heaven than intimate communion with God.

a. a.

a word to the young

The ravages of death in the removal of the venerated Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, as noticed in another column, make it proper that we should say that the spiritual articles with the signature “A. A.,” and some others, which for some years have adorned the columns of the Messenger, were from his pen. He knew the Messenger visits nearly two hundred thousand families, and almost every month he sent those families his message of love in reference to their salvation. We have a melancholy pleasure in now inserting the last appeal written by him for our columns. It is the affectionate counsel of a Christian of fourscore years to those entering upon life.

Eds.

Beloved youth, when I, who am old, look upon your condition, I cannot but pity you. I do not envy your gayety and pleasure. The cup which you hold in your hand is inebriating, it is poisoned. The pleasures which you are seeking are “the pleasures of sin,” which are short-lived, unsatisfactory, and leave a sting behind. Many are cut down like the flower of the field in the midst of their earthly career. Oh how many are hurried away in an unprepared state. Many others, when the season of youthful gayety and thoughtlessness is past, are visited with sore afflictions, in the suffering of which all their former pleasures are forgotten, and often imbittered by the reflection that they were

sinful pleasures, or were mixed with sin. Remorse for the sins of youth is an unwelcome visitant, but one which cannot easily be shaken off. When afflictions are sanctified they become real blessings. But many suffer who, instead of being made better, are made worse by all their sufferings. They become impatient, and murmur at the dispensations of God towards them, as though they were punished more than their sins deserved.

Oh, young man, permit me to call your attention to your soul's salvation. This you cannot but know is your great, your highest interest. And why do you neglect it? Why do you put far off the evil day? Your continuance on earth is altogether uncertain. Prepare, I beseech you, to meet your God. "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." You will lose nothing, but be great gainers, by giving your hearts to God in the days of your youth. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

A good conscience, and a lively hope of everlasting life, are the purest sources of joy upon earth. When affliction falls on the pious—and they are not exempt—there is a gracious promise that it will be for their good; yea, that it will work out for them an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Let the summons of death come when it will, they are ready. The day of death to such is far better than the day of their birth.

Young man, as you have but one short life to live upon earth, have you no desire that it should be occupied in doing good? Are you willing, at the last account, which all must give, to be in the class of those who have lived to no good purpose, who have done nothing for the benefit of their race? You say that you intend to be religious hereafter. What a delusion! Evil habits will grow with your age, sinful desires will not be lessened but increased by indulgence. Old age, if you are permitted to reach it, will find you a hardened sinner; your conscience seared, and all your habits of iniquity confirmed. Oh, could you hear the wailings of a multitude of souls now in hell, methinks their lamentation would be that they procrastinated attention to the salvation of their souls. Why will you run the dangerous risk? Consider that eternal life and eternal death are now set before you; and God calls on you to choose which you will have.

a. a.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION

In comparison with salvation, all other subjects are trivial. To waste time in the pursuit of wealth, or in the chase of sensual pleasure, while our salvation is not secure, is more than folly—it is madness. What, would you agree to dwell in the dark dungeon of despair for ever and ever, for the sake of living a few years upon earth in a sumptuous house? Would you consent to endure the sting of the never-dying worm, and the torment of unquenchable fire, to all eternity, for the sake of gratifying your appetites and senses for a moment? No man would deliberately make such a determination; yet such is the language which many speak by their conduct. The world is pursued daily, at the risk of salvation.

The resolution of attending to the concerns of the soul hereafter, answers no other purpose than to lull the conscience asleep. Where have we known a person, by virtue of these flattering resolutions, change his conduct? The next day is like the one that preceded it. Every succeeding year passes by like those that went before. No convenient time for repentance and reformation ever comes. Youth soon runs out in the giddy circle of pleasure and amusement. Middle age is

completely occupied with cares and business; and old age, if it ever arrives, finds the heart hardened, the habits fixed, and the conscience seared. Death overtakes the unfortunate wretch. He dies as he lived, either goaded by guilt, or benumbed with stupidity. He dies, and sinks to hell, where there are no amusements to entertain, no business to engage, no error to becloud the mind. To fall into the hands of the living God, as an avenging Judge, is dreadful beyond conception: to be eternally miserable, overwhelms the thoughts, and we turn away from it with instinctive horror.

Can you reconcile yourself to such sufferings? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? Only try the torment of fire for a moment, and you will soon be convinced that the pains of hell are not to be supported with patience, if they are comparable to fire; but they are worse. Remorse and despair are worse than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, heated seven times. No flames are equal to the raging of unrepented sin; no strokes of any enemy like the taunts of infernal spirits. If you had to endure this punishment only for a limited time, the hope of deliverance might help you to bear up under the dreadful weight of sorrow; but although many support themselves by such a hope here, the miserable in hell have no such alleviation. The darkness which surrounds them is thick and horrible. No ray of light ever penetrates it. No gleam of hope ever mitigates the raging anguish of the lost soul. Consider also, that although your sins may not be openly flagrant, yet, as you have heard the gospel, and enjoyed many calls and warnings, and also many strivings of the Spirit, these will exceedingly aggravate your misery, and make your hell hotter than that of the miserable inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The more comfortable you are in your worldly circumstances, the more miserable will your condition be. To be cast out from among affectionate friends, to keep company with monsters of depravity: from fine houses, pleasant gardens, fertile farms, and downy beds, to be cast into a lake of fire! from well-furnished tables, and generous wines and cordials, to be eternally famished with burning thirst, and no gratification ever obtained—no, not so much as a drop of water to cool the tongue; this is hell indeed! Suppose you were doomed to suffer the torment which a sinner in hell must eternally endure, for one hour in this world, would not the prospect of this doleful hour mar all your pleasures? In the midst of mirth, would it not make your heart sad; and would it not be ever present in your thoughts? You would be unable to compose yourself to sleep, or to betake yourself to your necessary business. You would consider yourself as an unfortunate wretch, and would perhaps regret that you had ever been born. Your friends would sympathize with you, and all around would look upon you with compassion.

But if, from an hour, the term of your punishment should be enlarged to a year, what would you do; how would you feel? Suppose you could endure the pain of a fiery furnace for a year without dying or losing your sensibility, and you knew that this was your certain doom, could you be at ease; could you contain yourself? Would you not disregard all pursuits and enjoyments which the world could propose; and would you not take up a continual lamentation over your unhappy case? Would you not call upon all to pity you, as the most miserable wretch that ever was born? And would you consider the wealth of a prince, the honor of a conqueror, or the pleasure of an epicure, any compensation for such dreadful sufferings? Would you not despise all these things, and say, "The more I enjoy these earthly delights, and the more I forget the misery which is coming upon me, the more intolerable will be my anguish when it arrives?" Should we be thus affected with an hour's or year's continuation of such sufferings as must be endured in hell, and shall we be indifferent to these same torments when their duration will be without end? O God, what kind of

infatuated beings are we? Surely man, of all creatures, is the most stupid in those things which relate to his salvation. Eternal punishment! Eternal fire! Everlasting destruction! What awful sounds are these! Who can fully understand their import?

I extend my views forward to the day of judgment; but this great day, instead of bringing these sufferings to an end, is the date of their beginning in all their terror. What shall be endured before, is nothing to what comes after. The fire will then be kindled around both soul and body, which will never cease to burn. The sufferings of the soul in a separate state, will be like the anticipations of a criminal who is conscious of guilt, while confined in a prison before the day of trial. They shall then go away into everlasting punishment. Only put yourself for a moment in the place of one of those who are commanded by the Judge to depart, under the vengeance of an everlasting curse. The feeling mind recoils from such suppositions with such repulsive violence, that it is almost impossible to induce men to fix their thoughts steadily on such subjects. But try, for once, the experiment. Overcome your natural reluctance, and imagine yourself to be in the company that will be driven off, by the command of the Judge, from the awful tribunal, into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. May I venture to suggest a few reflections which would probably arise in your mind in such a situation.

“Well, the scene is ended—I now know, I feel the misery of my situation! Hope, my last comforter, is eternally fled. Despair has full possession; all is lost, eternally lost! All that I now have is a miserable, accursed existence! O that I could sink into nothing, and thus escape the wrath of my avenging enemy! But I wish in vain; exist I must. Hell is my portion! I already feel its overwhelming horrors! I am tortured with agonies, and rent with pangs which no words can describe. All passions assist in increasing my misery. I see others glorious and happy, but the sight greatly enhances my woe. I feel my envy and malice raging against them, and against their God and Saviour; but my wrath is impotent; it recoils upon myself, and inflicts new wounds on my tormented soul. Was this the price at which I purchased the world and its pleasures? O wretch and fool that I was! We are commanded to go away. Ah, whither can we go? Is there any secure or even obscure retreat for us? No, no. We sink in flames. We go into everlasting misery! We go to be companions of devils! We plunge into the dark abyss, never to rise again! And these bodies, our old companions in sin, must be also tormented. They are made strong and incorruptible, to bear their part in the unquenchable fire!”

But we cannot describe the anguish and despair of a lost sinner. The mere possibility of falling into such a state of indescribable anguish ought to fill us with trembling; and so it would, were not our minds blinded by the god of this world. Now, reader, do you feel no concern about your salvation; or have you some method of easing your mind under these thoughts? I beseech you to consider well what the nature of that resource is.

The first thought which occurs, by way of relief to your mind, is, perhaps, that these things cannot be so—that such torments will never be inflicted by a good and merciful God. This ground appears to many very plausible, and they rest upon it with the greater confidence, because it has the appearance of honoring the character of God, at the same time that it promises safety to themselves. But before you lean on this prop, look well, I beseech you, to its foundation. Consider, that before you can derive any rational comfort from this consideration, you must be able to demonstrate that the tremendous denunciations of God's word against sinners are false, or that he

will forfeit his veracity, and never execute his own threatenings. Wretched indeed is that subterfuge, the safety of which depends on proving the God of truth a liar. No, sinner, God will not deny himself for the sake of your ease; he will not suffer his word to fall to the ground to enable you to realize your vain and impious hopes. "He will by no means clear the guilty. Surely, O God, thou wilt slay the wicked. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone; this shall be the portion of their cup."

If you have imbibed the pernicious heresy of those false teachers who tell you that there is no future punishment for transgressors, even if they should die in the commission of the most atrocious crimes; if you believe these men who dare contradict the plain declarations of God's word, your delusion will afford you only a temporary relief. It will be like shutting your eyes when borne by an irresistible torrent towards a frightful cataract. Your own conscience, if it has not lost all sensibility, will intimate to you, too plainly to be misunderstood, that there is punishment reserved for the wicked in the world to come. Lean not, then, I beseech you, on this broken reed, which will not only fail to support you, but will pierce you to the heart.

But it is more probable that you seek relief from the apprehension of the wrath to come, in a vague hope of the mercy of God, of which so much is said in Scripture. The mercy of God is indeed a sure refuge for sinners, but it is never extended to the impenitent, who refuse to forsake their evil ways. If you will repent and believe the gospel, then will the Lord most graciously and freely forgive all your sins; but if you depend on the mercy of God to save you from hell, without being saved from sin, you trust to that which has no existence. God will not show mercy to obstinate rebels. The whole tenor of his word assures us of the certainty of this truth.

But perhaps you expect and intend to turn from your sinful ways hereafter, and thus bring yourself within the influence of God's pardoning mercy. Well, if you should become a true penitent, and humble believer in Jesus, you will be saved; but before you cry peace to yourself from this expectation, I beg you to consider that your continuance on earth is uncertain. What is your life? It is a vapor. We have ocular demonstration that death comes upon many very unexpectedly; and although they had entertained the same hope of future repentance, we have awful reason to fear that it was never realized. They died as they lived, and went to meet their Judge with the guilt of all their heinous sins upon their heads. And very often men are taken suddenly away, and have not a moment allowed for that last hope of the sinner, a death-bed repentance. And in other cases, reason is bewildered, and the feelings are stupefied; so that the person who lived carelessly has no bands in his death. And when it is otherwise, and alarm seizes the guilty person, no help or comfort can be obtained, and he dies in fearful horror and despair.

But if you should live for scores of years, you will never see the day when there will not be as many obstructions to your turning to God as there are now, and as many inducements to cleave to the present world. Do you see men commonly forsaking the courses to which they have long been habituated? Or do you observe that disinclination to piety becomes less by increase of years? You may live to be old and gray-headed, and yet remain unconverted, and go down to hell with a double curse on your head. There is no greater nor more dangerous delusion among men, than the procrastination of their conversion. While thousands lose their souls in consequence of it, not one ever puts his resolution into practice, unless some other influence than his own former purposes operates on him. Reader, awake! Eternity is just before you; heaven or hell will soon be

your abode. For the first, you know you are not prepared. If you were admitted to that holy place, the exercises and employments of the inhabitants would be no way in accordance with the state of your heart. You love not the service and worship of God here, and death will make no reformation in the sinner's heart. Then you must be excluded from heaven by the necessity of the case, unless you acquire new principles and a new taste. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

What you intend to do, do quickly, for the time is short. While you are halting between two opinions, the door of mercy may be shut for ever. Seize the present moment; break off your sins by repentance; renounce all confidence in your own good deeds or righteousness, and trust alone in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed." Cry mightily to him for mercy, and for the Holy Spirit to sanctify you and aid you in every duty.

Search the Scriptures daily. Attend on the preaching of the word. Make one among the company who surround the throne of grace in social prayer. Avoid ensnaring company and dissipating amusements. Forsake all known sin, and see that you perform those external duties which have hitherto been neglected. If you have wronged or injured any, make restitution, or give satisfaction, as far as is in your power. Abandon all quarrels and strife with your neighbors, and promote piety and good order in your own house, by reading the Scriptures, and calling upon God, and requiring all within your gates to observe with reverence the Lord's day.

But never think that external duties, or attendance on means and ordinances, however exact, is an evidence that your soul is saved. Never rest satisfied with your spiritual state, until you have evidence in a heart-felt sense of the burden of your sins, that you have in truth fled for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ, apprehended and received by faith, is the only safe sanctuary for a soul pursued by the demands of a broken law.

O man, flee to this dear refuge, before the storm, which is black and lowering, overtake you. "Lay hold on eternal life." "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." See, the door of reconciliation is open. Jesus invites you to come to him for rest, and promises that he will not cast you out; yea, complains that you will not come unto him, that you may have life. Others are entering in at the strait gate—why do you delay? Instead of losing by the change, even in this world, you will gain a hundred-fold. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

AN AMIABLE YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN

"One thing thou lackest." Mark 10:21.

The history of this young man is given by three of the evangelists, Matthew 19:1-30, Mark 10:1-52, Luke 18:1-43, in nearly the same words. It is therefore doubtless worthy of our marked attention.

This youth possessed many things, and yet was deficient in one. He was rich; he was possessed of power, for Luke calls him "a ruler;" he was remarkable for his morality. Few young men in our day could compare with him in this respect. When our Saviour, to try him, mentioned several of the commandments of the second table, in which our duty to our fellow-men is enjoined, this young man was able to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up." And our Lord did not deny the truth of his assertion; yea, he admitted it, for Mark says, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him." He was pleased with the purity and blamelessness of his external conduct.

Yet this youth had no proper knowledge of the state of his own heart. His obedience was only like that of Paul when a Pharisee, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

This young ruler, however, was not ashamed to accost Christ in the most respectful manner. He came, regardless of the sneers of his compeers, and kneeling, said, “Good Master.” He came to him as a serious inquirer. The question which he asked was the most important that he could ask, or that any man ever asked: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” He was convinced that something was still needful, but he knew not what. He had heard of the teachings of Christ, and he was impelled by the serious impressions on his mind to break through every difficulty, and to inquire of the Master, believing that he could tell him what to do to secure this object of infinite value.

And evidently, he was confident that he was willing to do whatever should be prescribed. Oh, deceitful heart; how little did he know of its true state! But Jesus knew, and in a moment brought him to a fair test. He knew that, notwithstanding all his fair professions, amiable character, and courteous demeanor, he was an idolater in his heart, and worshipped mammon with supreme affection. He therefore said, Go, sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.

O what a test for a lover of riches! See, the young man’s countenance changes; he remains silent. His heart is undergoing an evident conflict. Heaven and earth, with all their charms, are before him. For a moment, perhaps, he hesitates; for he sincerely wishes to possess eternal life—but, O hard condition! to give away all his riches, to which his heart was wedded! No, no; he cannot do it.

See, he turns his back on the Saviour; he turns his back on all the treasures of heaven. He goes away sorrowful indeed, very sorrowful to lose the opportunity of securing eternal happiness, but deliberately resolved not to relinquish his hold of this world. He will have his “good things” in this life, whatever may become of him in the next. Here is a picture of the true state of thousands—of thousands of well-instructed, moral, and amiable youth.

But was not this a hard test? Was it not more than is required of others? Not at all. All may not, in fact, be put to this test; but every true disciple has already passed this ordeal, and has renounced the world as a portion—as an object of supreme affection. And every true Christian, however much of this world he may possess, would instantly resign it all at the command of Christ. It is the characteristic of every genuine disciple, that, for the sake of Christ, he has been made willing to forsake father, mother, wife and children, house and lands, yea, life itself.

It is true, this test, if made practical in our churches, would detect the hypocrisy of a multitude of professors; or rather, their want of supreme love to Christ is already but too evident, from the ardor with which they pursue the world, and from their unwillingness to part with even a small portion of their wealth to promote the cause of Christ.

This young man possessed many excellent qualities and advantages, and lacked but one thing; yet that was the main thing—the one thing needful: a heart to love God supremely—a heart to prefer heavenly treasures to earthly riches. Though his character and conduct were so correct and amiable, yet his heart was not right in the sight of God. He went away sorrowful.

But did he ever come back with a better mind? We do not read that he ever did. His sorrow was not that of true repentance, repentance unto life, but “the sorrow of the world, which worketh death;” a sorrow which probably he has bitterly felt for eighteen centuries, and which will never cease.

What good can his riches do him now? They only furnish fuel to the flame in which he is tormented. Let young men look at this. Let the lovers of riches look at this.

Although neither the future course of this rich young man in this world, nor his final destiny, is given in the Scriptures, the probability is, that having turned his back on the Saviour and on the heavenly inheritance, he relinquished all thought about his salvation from this time, and abandoned himself to the enjoyment of his idolized riches. Men who have for a time been under serious concern about the salvation of their souls, and afterwards turn back to the world, because they find the terms of salvation too difficult, commonly become more careless and more hardened than others. “Their last state is worse than the first.”

But though we have no record of the end of this rich young man, we have, from the lips of the Saviour himself, an affecting account of the end of another rich man, who lived in splendor and pleasure on earth, but neglected piety and charity. The transition, in his case, from a sumptuous table, and from being clothed in purple and fine linen, to the torments of hell, is as great as the imagination can conceive. When he began to experience the keen anguish of future misery, O how bitter was his cry! “Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.” But it was too late to pray. He had enjoyed his good things here, and torment awaited him in the world of woe.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

That a just God will render to every man according to his character and works, is a dictate of reason. Conscience also intimates to every man, when he sins, that he deserves to be punished; and when we see or hear of great crimes committed by others, such as murders, perjuries, robbery, or treachery, we feel something within us demanding that such should receive condign punishment. But we see that the wicked are not always punished in this world according to their evil deeds; it seems reasonable, therefore, to expect that there will be a judgment after death.

We are not left, however, to the mere dictates of reason on this subject: God, in his word, has revealed in the clearest manner that there will be a day of reckoning at the end of the world. This day is appointed, and will certainly come. It is not so certain that we shall ever see the sun rise again, as it is that we shall see the day of judgment. The Lord Jesus Christ is also appointed to act as Judge on that day: “because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.” Acts 17:31. “For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

When this awful day will arrive is a profound secret, not revealed to any creature in the universe. But we know that it will come suddenly and unexpectedly on those who shall then be on the earth. As it was in the days of Noah and of Lot, so will it be in the day of judgment. Men will be pursuing their common worldly business and amusements, without apprehension of danger, when the sound of the last trump shall be heard—for the trumpet shall sound—and the Son of man shall be

seen coming in the clouds of heaven.

The race of man shall not cease from the earth until that day comes. There will then be a generation of living inhabitants, probably very numerous, in the world. These will never die as other men, but they will undergo a change equivalent to death and a resurrection; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shall be changed. But all they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of God, and shall come forth, great and small. No sooner shall the trumpet sound, than the scattered dust of unnumbered millions shall resume its proper place in every man. No matter where it lies, or how widely it may have been scattered, one word of the Almighty God is sufficient to bring it to its place, and animate it with new life. The multitude which will then start up into life cannot be conceived, it will be so great. There will stand Adam and all his posterity; there will stand those who lived before the flood, and those who have lived since; there will be seen the ancient patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the inspired prophets and apostles; there will appear kings, emperors, nobles, and their subjects; the learned philosopher and the ignorant multitude; ministers and their congregations, parents and their children, masters and their servants—all, all coming forward to the grand tribunal. Not one of our whole race will be absent from this great assembly. There, reader, shall you and I stand, trembling or rejoicing.

It is useless to inquire where room can be found for so great a multitude to stand, for this will be a day of miracles. All the wonders ever exhibited before will be nothing to the wonders of that day. Indeed, all that is natural will end on that day, and every thing will be miraculous. The sun will no longer rise and set, the moon no longer give her light, and the stars shall no longer appear in the firmament. Heaven will appear to have come down to earth, for the King of kings and Lord of heaven will be visible to all, with all his own glory and that of his Father. And all the holy angels will appear in attendance, standing round his throne, ready to execute his orders, whether of justice or of mercy.

When all things are prepared—when the Judge has taken his seat on the tribunal, and all men are brought before him, the judicial process will begin; “and the books will be opened.” What books these are, except one, which is “the book of life,” we are not informed; but we may be sure that one is the book of God’s law, and another the record of human actions which is in the “book of” God’s “remembrance.” It is not necessary to think of more. These contain all that is necessary for conducting the trial of every man. The one contains the law, and the other the testimony. But every thing will be conducted with the most perfect equity. Every man will be judged for his own deeds, and according to that knowledge of the law which he had opportunity of acquiring. The omniscience of the Judge will enable him to estimate with perfect exactness all the circumstances of every action; every thing which aggravates guilt, and every thing which palliates it, will have due consideration. They who lived under the patriarchal dispensation, will be judged according to the light and advantages then enjoyed; they who lived under the Mosaical economy, will be judged by the law of Moses; and they who enjoyed the clear light of the gospel, will be dealt with in a manner accordant to their advantages; while they who enjoyed no external revelation, will be judged by that law written on the hearts of all men.

The things which shall be brought under the eye of the Judge, and exhibited to the view of the universe, are, all deeds done in the body—whatsoever a man hath done, whether good or bad. Every secret thing. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether

it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14. Every idle word. "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matthew 12:36. The thoughts of the heart shall also be made manifest. Every unholy desire; every proud, envious, or malicious thought; every secret purpose of iniquity; every unhallowed temper; every rebellious and discontented and ungrateful feeling towards God and his government, will be brought into judgment.

And the inquiry will extend not only to positive acts, but also to omissions of duty. Great as is the number of the acts of wickedness, the catalogue of omissions will be greater, and not less criminal. The first sin of this sort which will claim the attention of the Judge, will be the omission to entertain and cherish right sentiments towards God. No more heavy charge will be brought against any individual on that day, than that he neglected to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. This is the total violation of the first and greatest command, and the fountain of all other iniquities. The neglect to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ when he was offered to us a complete Saviour in the gospel, will, to the unfruitful hearers of the word, be an accusation of the highest kind. The heinousness and enormity of unbelief which now affects the consciences of men so little, will on that day appear in a glaring light. It will not be strange if it should call forth reproaches upon the unhappy culprit, from devils who never had a Saviour provided, and from heathen who never had a Saviour offered to them. In that account which our Lord has given of the process of the judgment, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the neglect of kindness to the saints, by visiting, comforting, and aiding them, is the only thing mentioned. Whatever else, then, may be noticed, we are sure this will not be forgotten. The whole passage is so solemn and interesting, that it deserves our deepest attention: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matthew 25:31-46.

And let it be well considered, that most of the sins which are mentioned in the discourses of Christ as the ground of condemnation, are sins of omission. The slothful servant, who prepares not

himself, is the wicked servant, who will be cast into outer darkness. The man who wrapped his talent in a napkin and buried it, is condemned out of his own mouth. For “to him that knoweth to do good,” of any kind, “and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.

Many who prided themselves in their inoffensive lives and harmless behavior, will find, when the books are opened, a catalogue of omissions which will startle them with horror, and overwhelm them with confusion. And as actions externally good will then be examined by One who has a full view of the motives from which they proceeded, and the end which the agent had in view, is it not certain that many religious actions will then appear to have been mere hypocrisy? that many actions, apparently just and benevolent, were mere efforts of pride and selfishness? and that a life civil and blameless in the eyes of men, was a mere cloak which covered a heart full of unclean lusts? Our most intimate friends here will be astonished when they see our secret iniquities and wicked motives exposed to view. Crimes the most detestable will be found in the skirts of those who passed through life without suspicion. O how many secret murders, perjuries, thefts, blasphemies, and adulteries, will then be brought to light! How much injustice, fraud, cruelty, oppression, pride, malice, revenge! The cries of the injured, the widow, and the orphan, always enter into the ears of the Lord, and he now comes to avenge them. Cruel persecutors of God's church and people, though clothed in purple, and almost adored when living in the world, will now be brought to a severe account. The blood of the martyred saints from beneath the altar has been long crying out, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Revelation 6:10. And now the day of retribution has arrived.

What will be the length of time occupied with the judgment we know not. It is called a day, but it will differ exceedingly from all other days; and in its duration, probably, as well as in other respects. Our wisdom is to attend to what is revealed, and to repress a vain curiosity in regard to other matters. We may rest assured that the whole process will be wisely conducted, and that complete justice will be done. The Judge of all the earth will do right. He will not condemn the innocent, nor clear the guilty. And his judgment will be most impartial. There will be no respecting of persons. The king and the beggar will stand upon equal ground, and will be judged by the same rule. Those who in this world were reviled and slandered, and had no opportunity of clearing up their character, will then be vindicated, and lies and reproaches will have effect no more.

But here a serious difficulty occurs. It may be said, “If the law of God is the rule of judgment, and if all sins are brought into judgment, then certainly every human being must be condemned; ‘for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.’ According to this view, none can be saved.” To remove this difficulty, let it be remembered, that besides the book of the law, there is another book which will be produced there, written from the foundation of the world. This is called the book of life. This contains the names—and they shall never be blotted out—of all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These he has undertaken to present to God without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. They will appear on that day clothed with the righteousness of the Redeemer. The Judge on the throne is their covenanted Surety. He answers to every accusation made against them. But notwithstanding “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;” notwithstanding none can “lay any thing to the charge of God's elect;” yet they also shall be brought into judgment. When all things are prepared, and the whole assembly is collected before the august tribunal, a separation will be made of the great congregation into two parts, the righteous, and the wicked. The former will be placed on the right hand of the Judge, and

with them he will commence. But no sooner shall their numerous sins be brought to view, than it will be made to appear that they are pardoned through the blood of Christ. When the books are opened, a long account will appear against them; but on the other hand, it will be seen that the whole is freely forgiven through the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. But a most exact account will be taken of all their good works; and they will be mentioned to their honor, and rewarded as though no imperfection had cleaved to them. The least act of kindness done to any of Christ's followers will be magnified and rewarded as if done to Christ himself. Even the giving a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward. Persons in the lowest state, servants and slaves, who performed their duty faithfully, shall not be forgotten in that day, for "whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Ephesians 6:8. But they who suffered persecution and death for righteousness' sake, will be most highly distinguished, and most signally rewarded. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." Matthew 5:11-12. They also who have labored much in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, will receive a reward proportioned to their works of faith and labors of love. But none who have done good shall fail of their reward. Every one shall receive according to what he hath done; and every one will be satisfied; for the lowest place in glory is a situation too dazzling for our present conceptions, and the whole is a matter of pure grace. These works, considered in themselves, deserve no reward. But it is the will of God that every holy desire, every good word and work, in the members of Christ's body, should receive a mark of his favor, to the honor and glory of him who is their Head, and who died for their salvation.

When the gracious sentence, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," is pronounced, the righteous shall be caught up to the Lord, and shall be seated by his side, and be united with him in the remaining transactions of that great day; for it is written, "The saints shall judge the world," and, "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?"

The case of the righteous being disposed of, then will come the awful transaction of pronouncing sentence on the wicked. They will, indeed, have anticipated the sentence. By this time they will be certain of their doom; but the scene itself will far exceed all apprehensions before entertained. To behold the face of inflexible justice turned towards them—to hear the irreversible sentence of condemnation, and that too from the mouth of the benevolent Son of God—to feel in the inmost soul the justice of the sentence—to be as certain of everlasting damnation as they are of existence—are things concerning which we can speak now, but of which we can form but very feeble conceptions, compared with the dreadful reality. In all his existence there will probably be no moment in which the sinner's anguish will be so poignant as in this, when the Judge shall say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41. Every word in this tremendous denunciation will pierce through the soul with more insufferable pain than ten thousand daggers. It is reasonable to think that every person against whom it is pronounced, will endure as much misery at that moment as in the nature of things is possible. And if this were all, the prospect would be appalling; but to be doomed to endless misery in fire, with the devil and his angels!—who can bear the thought without horror and dismay? Yet, as sure as God is true, will this sentence be executed on every impenitent sinner. Men may reason and cavil now, but then every mouth shall be stopped. That the cry of despair and horror will be heard

through the great multitude, is certain—such a great and bitter cry as was never heard before. But it is all in vain; repentance comes too late. The day of grace is for ever past. The gospel dispensation is ended. This is the consummation of all things. No change in condition can ever be expected. They that are saved, have their salvation secured by the oath and promise of God; and they who are lost, have their damnation sealed for ever and ever by a judicial sentence which can never be revoked. And from this sentence there is no appeal. There is no higher tribunal to which the cause may be transferred. Neither can any resistance be made to the execution of the sentence. They who are now bold and daring in their blasphemies and rebellion, will then find that they are in the hands of a sin-avenging God. It will belong to the holy angels, who are mighty in power, to execute the sentence of the Judge. “So shall it be,” said our blessed Saviour, “at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 13:49-50. And it will be as impossible to escape as to resist. The rocks and mountains will not cover them. They cannot cease to exist. Go where they will, God is there to execute deserved wrath upon them. They will therefore be obliged “to go away into everlasting punishment.” Matthew 25:46.

The devil and his angels will also be judged on that day; but of the particular nature of the trial we are not informed. All that we know is, that “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude 1:6. They are now miserable, but their cup is not full; therefore they cried out when they saw Jesus, “Art thou come to torment us before the time?” Matthew 8:29. At the breaking up of this great assembly, the present system of the world will be destroyed. For “the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” 2 Peter 3:7.

Reader, deeply fix in your mind the certainty and importance of the transactions of this last, great day. Meditate upon it as a reality in which you have a momentous interest. Let every other day, as it passes, put you in mind of this in which all others will end. Consider also that it draws near. Every moment bears us on towards the great tribunal. Mockers may say, Where is the promise of his coming? “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works therein, shall be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:10.

O reader, whoever thou art, let me entreat you to inquire without delay, whether you are prepared for the scrutiny and judgment of this coming day. Have you made your peace with God? Have you repented of all your sins? Are you in union with Christ by faith? Have you any clear scriptural evidence that your sins are pardoned? What says conscience to these inquiries? Be assured, if your own heart condemns you, God, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things, will much more condemn you. But your situation is not like that of them whose day of grace is ended. You are yet in the place of reconciliation. You have yet a little time before you—God only knows how much. Now, then, hear the voice of warning—hear the voice of mercy. Now “strive to enter in at the strait gate”. Now forsake your sins, and live. Accept the offered grace—“lay hold on eternal life.”

Let no consideration induce you to delay your conversion. The importance of salvation—the uncertainty of life—the danger of provoking the Holy Spirit to abandon you—the example of

thousands who have perished by procrastination—should urge you to lose no time, but to fall in with the gracious invitation of the gospel. But if you will refuse, then prepare to meet an angry God. Harden yourself against the terrors of the Almighty; summon all your fortitude to hear your dreadful doom from the Judge of quick and dead. But I forbear—there is no fortitude or patience in hell.

Reader, art thou advanced in years? Let thy gray hairs and pains and wrinkles admonish thee that thou art near to judgment; for what if death intervene, yet after death all preparation is impossible. Just as death finds us, so will judgment. “In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.” Ecclesiastes 11:3. Consider also that the number of your sins is in proportion to the number of your days. Long life will prove a dreadful curse to those who die in their sins.

But if thou art in youth, or in the vigor of manhood, remember that thy life is a vapor; that most men do not live out half their days; and that of those who shall appear before the judgment-seat, comparatively few will have finished their course of threescore years and ten. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” Ecclesiastes 12:1. “Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.” James 5:9. Others have been suddenly taken away from your side. They also intended to make preparation hereafter; but while they were pleasing themselves with the prospect of many years, and were saying, “Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years,” God said, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Be ye therefore ready also, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” “Behold, the axe is laid at the root of the tree” and now perhaps thou art spared, on account of the prayer of some kind intercessor, for one year. This, for aught thou knowest, may be thy last year. If so, it behooves you to make good use of your time and privileges. Let the idea of the judgment be ever before your mind. There you must appear—there you must stand and render up your account—there you must be filled with overwhelming shame and terror—there you must hear the awful final sentence, which will fix your doom irreversibly, unless by a speedy repentance, and by faith in Jesus Christ, you flee from the wrath to come.

May God, of his infinite mercy, cause the truths which you have read in this tract to sink deeply into your mind; and by the light of his Holy Spirit lead you to just views of your own condition, and to saving views of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer of lost sinners. Amen.

THE MISERY OF THE LOST

The soul of man is susceptible of an intense degree of unhappiness. Even in this world much misery is endured; but in the world to come, hope is a stranger, and there are no alleviating circumstances.

The misery of the damned has by theologians been divided into that of loss and that of sense: the one produced by the loss of good possessed or once attainable, the other arising from the positive infliction of punishment. But though this distinction has a foundation as it relates to the cause of the sinner's misery, yet, as it regards the feeling itself, there is no reason for making any distinction. All misery is felt according to its nature and intensity, and therefore is pain of sense, or sensible pain, whatever may be its cause. So the question whether the fire of hell is a material fire, is of no importance; for if I feel a pang of misery at any moment, it matters nothing whether it is produced by a material or immaterial, by a privative or positive cause.

Under the general name of misery, many species of suffering are included; all, however, agreeing in this, that the sensation is painful. The feeling of fear is a very painful emotion, but in its nature very different from remorse. Excessive pain, in our present state, may be experienced through the nerves of sensation; but even here these sufferings differ, not only in degree, but in kind. The headache, toothache, and lumbago, are all severe pains, but they are not the same; and these bodily pains differ exceedingly from the feelings of remorse, or despair.

Our capacity of pain seems to bear an exact proportion to our susceptibility of pleasure. Indeed, the same faculties and affections which are the sources of our happiness when the objects suited to them are possessed, become the causes of our misery when deprived of those objects. By the same faculty we perceive the beauties and the deformities of objects; the same moral sense is the instrument of the most exalted and soul-satisfying pleasure, and of the most intolerable anguish of which the soul is capable. Every affection and appetite affords pleasure when duly exercised on its proper object; but deprived of this, becomes a source of intense pain.

Though the nature of future misery to all lost souls is the same, yet the degree may differ to an extent which no man can estimate. Some divines have maintained that the future happiness of the righteous will be equal, as eternal life is the free gift of God; but none, I believe, have ever held that the punishment of the lost will be equal. The Scriptures abundantly teach that every man will be judged according to the deeds done in the body; and as the sins of different individuals are immensely different in guilt, justice demands that their punishment should be proportioned to the demerit of the sinner. Our Saviour most explicitly teaches this doctrine when he says, "That servant who knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not his master's will, and yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

The guilt of sin is not measured merely or principally by the external act, but by the light and advantages enjoyed by some above others. The difference between sins against light and sins of ignorance, is a matter concerning which common-sense gives a judgment consonant with the rule laid down by our Lord. It does not appear that the cities of Galilee, where Christ spent most of his time, and where he wrought most of his beneficent miracles, were remarkable for external acts of immorality; and yet their sins were greater than those of cities proverbial for their wickedness, and consequently their punishment would be greater. His words should never be forgotten: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell; for if the mighty works which had been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day: therefore I say unto thee, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for this city."

These are words of awful import, and are as applicable to neglecters of the gospel and impenitent sinners now, as to those devoted cities. Many, because their external conduct is decent and moral, persuade themselves that their punishment will be light; but in view of the words cited above, it will be far more tolerable for the vilest of the heathen than for them, if they continue in their impenitence and neglect of the great salvation. Certainly gospel-neglecters, however decent in their external behavior, will sink very deep into the abyss of misery. Among these, however, there

will be a great difference. Some, alas, who sinned malignantly against light, will sink to the lowest gulf in hell.

To describe the extreme misery of lost souls is painful, both to the writer and the reader. If we should give way to our sympathies and compassionate feelings, we should not only exclude this awful subject from our discourses, but from our creed. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that it occasions a conflict to reconcile our reason to the reality of such intense and interminable sufferings as are described in the word of God; and plausible arguments, derived from the goodness of God, might be constructed against the doctrine of so great future misery; but all such arguments would operate equally against the existence of sin and misery in this world, which, alas, are known too well to be facts which none can deny, and of which every individual is a witness.

When God speaks, reason and feeling should be silent. He knows what justice demands, and what can be done consistently with his attributes; but man is of yesterday, and knows nothing. Suppose a child five or six years old should undertake to sit in judgment on the acts of government, and to decide whether its penal laws were just or unjust, and whether capital punishments ought to be inflicted on murderers, or whether a war was just and necessary, who would expect a correct judgment from an infant? But such a child is better qualified to decide on the most complicated schemes of human policy, than man to judge of the propriety of the divine administration.

Impenitent men are apt to harden themselves against the awful denunciations of divine wrath contained in the Bible, and to cherish unkind feelings towards the ministers who bring out plainly and authoritatively the doctrine of the New Testament on this subject. And it cannot be denied, that some preachers denounce the terrors of the law against transgressors in a style and manner adapted rather to irritate than to convince. They speak almost as if they took pleasure in these awful threatenings, and as if they had nothing to fear for themselves. No doubt many a zealous preacher has passed sentence on himself, and has actually suffered those torments which he denounced against others.

I am therefore disposed to present this subject in a light which cannot give offence. Instead of representing the danger to which others are exposed, I will make the case my own. It behooves me to "tremble at the word of the Lord," as much as others; and as I am a sinner, and therefore naturally subject to the penalty of the law, and liable to be misled by the deceitfulness of my heart to cherish false hopes, I will endeavor to realize to myself the feelings which I shall experience, if it should be my unhappy lot to die out of the favor of God.

It would seem that the first moment after death must be one of unparalleled misery. My first reflection would be,

"I am lost for ever—all hope of happiness or relief is gone from my miserable soul. The blackness of darkness is round about me; no ray of light dawns on my wretched soul. Despair, fell despair has now seized upon me, and must blacken every prospect to all eternity. While in the world, I could contrive to turn away my thoughts from the disagreeable subject; but now, my misery, like a heavy burden, presses on me, and is ever present—go where I will, do what I will.

"While in the body, and engaged in secular pursuits, I entertained a secret hope that there might be some mistake respecting the extreme misery of the damned, or that there might possibly be

some way of escape not revealed; but now all these idle notions have fled like a dream when one awakes. I find hell to be no fable, but an awful reality. I find that the preachers, so far from exaggerating the misery of the lost, had no adequate conception of the wretchedness of a soul cast off from God for ever, and doomed to dwell in everlasting burnings. Oh horrible, horrible! I am then undone—for ever undone! In all former distresses I could cry for mercy; but now I have passed beyond the reach of mercy!

“For the sake of momentary enjoyments, and worthless riches and honors, I have bartered away my soul. Accursed folly! What benefit can I now derive from those earthly pleasures and possessions? they only serve as fuel to the flames which consume me. O for one drop of water to cool my tongue. But for this I beg in vain. The time for prayer and for mercy has gone by, and my soul is lost, lost, lost! and through eternity I must expect no deliverance, no relief, nor even the slightest mitigation of my misery. Woe, woe, woe is me! It had been infinitely better for me never to have been born!

“If I had not enjoyed the offers of the gospel, if pardon and reconciliation had not been within my reach, and often urged upon me, my anguish would not be so excruciating. But this it is which wrings my heart with unspeakable anguish, that I might have escaped all this misery. Had it not been for my own sin and folly, I might ere now have been in heaven. Others who heard the same sermons, and belonged to the same family, are now in Abraham's bosom, while I am tormented in this flame. Oh that I could cease to be; but to fly from existence is impossible.

“Here I am surrounded by wretches as miserable as myself, but their company rather aggravates than mitigates my soul's anguish. I am reproached and cursed by all who were ever led by my counsel or example into the ways of iniquity. They dreadfully scowl upon me.

“And the fiends of the pit, who were my seducers, now combine to taunt me with my folly. They never had the offers of mercy. The merits of a dying Saviour were never offered to them. They seem to entertain a malignant pleasure—if pleasure it can be called—in witnessing my extreme misery. O wretched man, whither can I flee? Is there no possible escape from this prison of despair? Can no one ever pass the gulf which separates this dismal abode from the regions of the blessed? None—none!

“Oh, if there could be a suicide of the soul, how happy should I be to escape from existence, and to plunge into the gulf of annihilation, which once seemed horrible to my apprehension, but now desirable. This would be an oblivion of all my misery. But in vain do I seek to die. Death flies from me. And here I see those deluded souls who, by doing violence to their own lives, vainly dreamed that they were escaping from misery; but alas, from a burden which with faith and patience might have been borne, they have leaped into a fiery furnace. They are now convinced of the dreadful sin and folly of suicide, but they cannot repeat the act here.

“May I hope that time will lessen the horrors and anguish of my wretched soul? Will my heart, so susceptible of the emotions of bitter anguish, by degrees become less sensible to these piercing pains, and be more able to bear up under this overwhelming weight of misery? This question can only be solved by experience: let me ask some one who has been suffering for thousands of years.

“Here comes Cain the first murderer, who is known still by having upon him the stain of a brother’s blood. Suppose I speak to him. Tell me, fellow-prisoner, who hast long endured the pains of this infernal prison, whether by long continuance these miseries become more tolerable? But why do I ask? the wretched fratricide is evidently writhing in keenest anguish. He is too miserable to speak, and too full of malignity to gratify any one. His guilty stain—the blood-spot—has not been burnt out by the fiercest fires of hell. No; see, he defies the Almighty. He blasphemes the God of heaven. He asks for no mitigation of his punishment now. His malignant, fiery spirit feeds on despair, and challenges his Avenger to do his worst.

“Oh, then, I see there is a progression in wickedness even in hell. This is the most appalling prospect of all—an endless progression in sin, and consequently an increase, instead of a diminution of misery, through the endless ages of eternity.”

Another awful point in the existence of the damned, will be the day of judgment. Great as is the misery of a lost soul when separated from the body, this is probably small when compared with the exceeding weight of misery which shall overtake it at the day of judgment. I must then endeavor to imagine what will be my feelings if I should be found on the left hand on that dreadful day.

As here a large portion of our pleasures and pains are experienced through the body, I know no reason why it should not be so in the future world. Certainly the disembodied spirit is capable of none of these pains or pleasures. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the bodies of the damned will be so constructed as to be inlets to excruciating pains, as the bodies of the saints will be instruments of refined, celestial pleasures. The person of the man is not complete without the body, and therefore the final sentence of condemnation will not be denounced until the body—the selfsame body—is raised from the dead, and reunited to the soul; that having been partners in transgression, they may be associated in enduring the condign punishment of the deeds done in the body.

The state of the lost soul before the judgment, may be compared to that of a criminal confined in prison waiting for his trial. Let me then imagine myself to have died unreconciled and impenitent. At an unexpected time the sound of the last trumpet will be heard; and as it is the last trumpet, so it will be the loudest. The departed spirits confined in prison shall hear it, and their bodies, long crumbled to dust, shall hear it; and I shall certainly hear that awful, deeply penetrating sound, and I shall come forth, coerced by an irresistible power, I shall again be clothed with a body; but O, what sort of a body!

Among millions of millions I am forced to appear. O what terrible majesty in the Judge, now coming with all his holy angels—now seated on his great white throne. Awful moment! The books are opened. There all my crimes of thought, word, and deed, are recorded—sins of omission as well as commission. O for a hiding-place under the rocks or caves! But no; I must appear—I must hear my sentence of condemnation and banishment. The misery of an age seems condensed into this moment. The tremendous sentence comes forth, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Imagination fails—I can write no more; experience must teach the rest.

The misery of the eternally lost cannot be adequately conceived, much less expressed. It cannot be exaggerated by any description; and this will be manifest if we consider what they know they

have lost.

All the good things which they enjoyed in this life they must leave behind. All their riches, honors, and sensual pleasures are left at death; and for these there will be no substitute in eternity. The vicious cravings of the immortal soul will continue, but there will be no longer any objects to gratify them; for want of which, like some venomous creatures when wounded, they will turn and prey upon themselves.

A soul with its active powers and passions, must be miserable if deprived of all objects suited to its gratification. We know scarcely any misery on earth more intolerable than a human being perishing for lack of bread or water. Hunger and thirst, if not seasonably gratified, are the sources of most excruciating pain. Now the soul can never lose its desire of happiness; how miserable, then, must it be when this insatiable desire meets with nothing to gratify it. It is strongly represented by our Saviour in the case of the rich man in hell, who cried for one drop of water, and said, "I am tormented in this flame." The soul of the sinner will be its own chief tormentor. It is possible that all the torment experienced in hell will be the natural consequence of sin.

Malignant passions are in their very nature attended with misery; for as benevolent affections are beatific, so malevolent feelings are accompanied with misery. Here these malignant passions are held under restraint; and while we are in the body, there are instinctive natural affections which counteract the malevolent feelings which exist in the depraved heart; but in eternity all restraint will be removed, and the native wickedness of the heart will act itself out: there are no natural affections there—all will be unmixed malice, envy, and wickedness. Let any moral agent who is totally depraved be abandoned to himself, and he must be miserable. His own passions will become his everlasting tormentors. He will carry a hell in his own bosom.

But of all feelings of misery, none is so intolerable as remorse. The conscience, or moral faculty, as it is the principal source of the most pure and sublime enjoyment to the righteous; so it is, to the lost, the scorpion which will for ever sting the soul with inexpressible anguish. The consciousness of having done wrong, of having sinned against God, and of being the cause of our own destruction, is a kind of hell as dreadful as any of which we can conceive. The lost soul will for ever have the conviction clearly impressed that it is its own destroyer, and that heaven with all its joys has been lost by its own sinful folly and neglect.

And the bitterest ingredient of all in the cup of misery is despair—black despair. Oh, if there was the most distant hope of release at some future period, it would mitigate the anguish of the suffering sinner. But despair admits of no alleviation.

Men may here dream of a deliverance from hell after a long time of suffering, but the delusion will vanish as soon as they enter eternity. They will then find that the word of God, which denounced eternal destruction on impenitent sinners, was not a vain threat; that God will not spare the guilty, but will punish them with everlasting destruction.

O my soul, consider now how you will be able to endure such misery as must be experienced by all the lost, but especially by those who enjoyed the light of the gospel. Canst thou fortify thyself against all this misery? Wilt thou be able to endure it with patience? Only imagine your condition millions of ages hence. Still writhing in anguish—still belching out horrid blasphemies—still covered with the blackness of darkness—still without a ray of hope. Not a moment's ease during

this long period. O my soul, will you not make one vigorous effort to escape so great misery? Will you not strive to flee from the wrath to come? Life, eternal life, is still within your reach. Lay hold on the prize. Press on to the kingdom. Take refuge in the cross, and you will be safe.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

with a summary view of the doctrine, and its momentous import

It shall be our endeavor to set before our readers a plain exposition of this great Christian doctrine as taught in the holy Scriptures, and as generally held by sound Protestants.

We commence with some remarks on the scriptural meaning of the word “justification,” as a mistake here may spread darkness over the whole discussion.

The common acceptation of the word “to justify,” in the Bible, is, to acquit from all charge, to declare the person to stand right in the eye of the law. It is the very opposite of “condemnation.” And in this sense is the word commonly used among us. To “justify” is not, therefore, to infuse a principle of justice into the soul. It does not produce an inherent change of moral character. The import of this word is entirely distinct from that of “sanctification;” and this distinction must be carefully kept in view, if we would avoid error and confusion in the investigation of the subject.

That the word is commonly used in this declarative or forensic sense in the holy Scriptures, might be evinced by an induction of numerous passages; let a few, however, suffice. God is said to be “justified” when he speaks; that is, he appears to be just. Christ is declared to be “justified in the Spirit;” his true character was manifested and vindicated. “If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.” Deuteronomy 25:1. Here we have the true import of the word as a forensic term, and standing in direct opposition to condemnation. And in Exodus 23:7, it is said, “For I will not justify the wicked;” that is, I will not pronounce the wicked to be just. And in Proverbs 17:15, “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.” But to render a wicked man inherently righteous, is so far from being an abomination to the Lord, that even to be the instrument of such a change is followed by a great reward.

In the same sense is the word employed, Isaiah 5:23, where transgressors are characterized as those who “justify the wicked for reward.” Solomon, in his dedicatory prayer, 1 Kings 8:32, says, “Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.” Thus also is the word used by Paul: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?” “By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” “Being justified by faith—freely by his grace.” And in Romans 4:5, God is said to “justify the ungodly.”

Let it be distinctly borne in mind, that a state of justification is the very opposite of a state of condemnation, and there can be no material mistake respecting the true import of the word. He who is condemned is considered as a transgressor of the law, whose sins are still imputed to him; he who is justified is viewed as having, though not of his own, that which satisfies the law—he has the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin, but to whom he “imputes

righteousness without works.”

The only method of obtaining the favor of God which reason and conscience dictate, is doing the will of God. Moral agents, put on probation, if they persevere in obedience during the period of their trial, are “justified,” and confirmed in a state of integrity and happiness.

When an accountable creature, or a race of accountable creatures, fails in obedience, the penalty of the law, whatever it may be, is incurred, and must be endured. Both justice and truth require the infliction of the punishment deserved, and threatened to transgressors. The justification of a sinner appears, therefore, at first sight, to be a thing impossible, in consistence with the divine attributes. To devise a plan by which sinners may be saved, and yet the law be maintained and justice satisfied, was beyond the wisdom of any creature; but what finite wisdom could not accomplish, the wisdom of God has found out; and to reveal this plan of salvation, and the terms on which the condemned creature may be made a partaker of it, is the great design of divine revelation. This is the mystery into which angels desire to look. It is the “good news” which the gospel announces. It will be a theme of adoration and grateful praise in heaven through eternal ages; and all who shall arrive at heaven by this method of salvation, will sing a song peculiar to themselves, in which no others of the heavenly host can join, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

To understand how God can be just, and justify the ungodly, let us contemplate the acknowledged circumstances of the case. God is a holy being, and his law is like himself, “holy, just, and good.” This law cannot be set aside or changed, in mercy to the offender, without reflecting dishonor on the Lawgiver. Better there were no law, than that its claims should be disregarded. Better that all creatures should cease to exist, than that any dishonor should be cast on the truth or justice of God. If the infliction of the penalty incurred was not a righteous act, such a penalty never would have been annexed to the law. All hope of escape founded on the idea that the law of God may be set aside, or its demands relaxed, must be vain; and all such hopes are impious, as they are founded on the supposition that God will “deny himself.” Does not every transgressor, then, appear to be shut up to death?

Some may be ready to reply, that God is merciful as well as just, and the sinner may hope in his mercy; and that to insist upon the rigid execution of law in all cases, would expunge mercy from the divine attributes. It will also be alleged, that to represent the supreme Ruler as inflexible in his justice, and requiring the utmost farthing of what is due from his frail creatures, is to exhibit him in an unamiable light.

This view of the subject seems plausible, and falls in with the prevalent opinions and feelings of men. But it ought to be considered, that if mercy be so essential to God that he cannot but exercise it unless he show himself severe and unamiable, then there is an end of justice. There can be no place for it in the dispensations of a merciful God. But “a God all mercy is a God unjust.”

And let it be considered again, that upon these principles there was no need of a Mediator to expiate our sins, and propitiate an offended God. To the sinner God may indeed appear lovely, as divested of his righteousness, and equally good to the transgressor and the obedient subject; just as the criminal condemned by human laws would esteem that judge amiable who pardoned his crimes, while upright citizens might view it to be inconsistent with his character as a righteous

judge. But the inquiry should be, how would the divine character appear to intelligent and impartial spectators, if sin should go unpunished; how would this be viewed by the “holy angels?” And surely, with the word of God in our hands, we cannot hesitate to believe that God is just and holy, and that he “will by no means clear the guilty.”

But do not the Scriptures represent God as a merciful being; and are not all invited to take refuge under the wings of his mercy? Yes; this is undoubtedly true. No attribute is more frequently and emphatically ascribed to God than mercy, and by no other is his infinite and divine perfection more gloriously manifested. Throughout the holy Scriptures we have set before us a God both just and merciful. Those attributes, therefore, as they exist in God, must be harmonious, and the exercise of the one must somehow be consistent with that of the other. Let us, therefore, endeavor to discover how they may be harmonized, how the great Creator can be at the same time both “a just God and a Saviour.”

One remark, before we proceed farther, seems necessary to prevent mistakes. There exists not the same necessity for the exercise of mercy as of justice. God is obliged by the rectitude of his nature to be always and in all cases just; but he is not bound in all cases where there are miserable sinners to exercise mercy. The example of the fallen angels settles this question. Such an idea of mercy would destroy every idea of justice. There could remain no place for its exercise. Mercy, from its very nature, is free. To suppose any binding obligation to show mercy destroys its nature; it would then be confounded with justice. The true ground of distinction between justice and mercy is, that while the first is obligatory, the last is free, and may be bestowed or withheld at the pleasure of him who exercises it.

The true principle on which justice and mercy may be reconciled is, that the claims of justice must be satisfied in order to make way for the exercise of mercy. If no plan could have been devised by which the demands of the law—which are the same as the claims of justice—could be satisfied, then had the exercise of mercy been impossible in the government of a righteous God. But herein has the infinite wisdom of God been gloriously displayed by the plan of redemption: “Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” According to this glorious plan, justice and mercy are both manifested in the most conspicuous manner in the obedience of Christ unto death. In the cross these divine attributes not only harmonize, but shine forth with brighter rays than anywhere else. Let it not be forgotten, that the difficulty in the way of the exercise of mercy to sinners required to be overcome, was nothing else than the demands of inflexible justice, and the truth of God pledged in annexing the penalty of death to the law. No plan of reconciliation or justification which does not provide for the removal of this difficulty is admissible or possible. I wish this point to be clearly understood, and indelibly fixed in the memory of the reader, for otherwise he will be in danger of being misled by false theories.

Let us then take an accurate survey of the condition of a sinful man under the righteous government of God. We take for granted that the demands of the law of God are neither annihilated nor diminished in consequence of his transgression. Fallen man is as much under obligation to love God with all the heart, mind, and strength, as innocent man. It is a dictate of reason, that the obligation of no law is removed by transgressing it. Neither does the fact that the sinner has fallen under the condemnation of the law, free him from the obligation to obey it. Although some have held this opinion to prop up a rotten system, nothing can be conceived more

absurd. This supposes the enduring the penalty of the law to be a full equivalent for perfect obedience. According to this, the man who had stood in the pillory for perjury as long as the penalty of the law required, would be as deserving of esteem and of a reward as the man who had completely obeyed the laws of his country. Then let it be distinctly kept in mind, that on a transgressor the law has a double demand: first, the original requisition of perfect obedience; and secondly, a demand that the penalty, according to the demerit of the offence, be endured. And before he can be justified according to this law, both these demands must be met and satisfied.

A mistake on this point has led many astray in regard to the nature of a sinner's justification. They have maintained that nothing else was necessary but that the Surety endure the penalty of the law, or make atonement for sin; and that nothing more is included in justification than the forgiveness of our sins. But if this were all, justification would leave the person in the same relation to the law in which Adam stood when created; that is, he would be free from the penalty, but would have no title to the reward of a righteous person. But the very word "justify" expresses much more. Strictly speaking, and excluding the merits of Christ, pardon and justification are incompatible; for the first supposes the person to have been a transgressor, the last that he has a righteousness fully answering the demands of the law; but when a sinner is justified by faith in Christ, while he receives remission of sins through his blood, he is accounted righteous by reason of the perfect obedience unto death of his Surety rendered in his behalf.

Those who deny the necessity of the active obedience of Christ as included in the meritorious ground of a sinner's justification, are driven to the necessity of maintaining that the person must acquire a title to eternal life by his own obedience; and they suppose that this doctrine is inculcated in all those texts which speak of believers being rewarded "according to their works;" whereas, if eternal life was granted only in consequence of Christ's obedience, they allege all would share alike, and there would not be different degrees of glory among the saints in heaven. But this is to confound the title to eternal life with the degree of happiness to be enjoyed. As to the title, all do stand upon a perfect equality. Heaven is as sure to the weakest believer as to the strongest; to the man who lived only to perform one good work, as to him that abounded in good works through a long life. But it does not follow from this that the happiness and glory of all believers shall be equal. All, it is reasonable to believe, will not have the same capacity of heavenly happiness; and it is meet that they who have labored most and suffered most, should enjoy most hereafter. This furnishes a good reason for what we find clearly taught by our Lord and his apostles, that in the day of judgment the good works of the righteous will be brought into public view, as well that they may furnish a measure of their respective rewards, as that they may furnish conclusive evidence of the sincerity of their profession.

Although the active obedience of Christ, as well as his sufferings and death, are necessary to a justifying righteousness, yet there is no necessity nor propriety in curiously endeavoring to separate the parts of our Saviour's finished work. As has been well remarked by a profound theologian, "In his sufferings he obeyed, and in his obedience he suffered." His mediatorial work, like his robe, cannot be divided into separate parts. Still, we can conceive of a distinction between that which was necessary to satisfy the precept, and that which was required to satisfy the penalty of the law. And if there were any uncertainty whether all the acts of Christ's obedience were strictly vicarious, yet it would be our safe course to exclude nothing which God has not excluded. When the apostle says, "by his obedience many are constituted righteous," no man has a right to limit the

word, which is left in the holy Scriptures without limitation.

Having seen that in order to a sinner's justification, the law demands a righteousness which shall answer both its precept and its penalty, let us next inquire, Has Jesus Christ the Mediator provided such a righteousness? And here it is comfortable to the convinced sinner to learn that "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." That "He of God is made unto us righteousness," and is called "The Lord our righteousness." And that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

But why may not a sinner be justified by his own righteousness? For the best reason in the world: because he has none which will answer the law's demand. All will admit that the external obedience of an unrenewed man, whether to the moral or ceremonial law, cannot be a righteousness that a holy God can accept as the ground of his justification. Such a righteousness is indeed well described by the prophet as "filthy rags." That which has no particle of real holiness in it surely cannot answer the demands of that holy law which requires "truth in the inward parts," and perfect rectitude in every thought and desire. It is therefore universally agreed among Protestants that "dead works," or mere external obedience, can justify no one.

Still it is contended by some that the "new obedience" of a sanctified soul may, by a gracious God, be received as a justifying righteousness. Others, to be more conformable to the language of Scripture, ascribe our justification to the single grace of faith or act of believing. But we will now show that no works of ours, nor any holiness wrought in us, is the ground of our justification.

The arguments from which it is evident that our justification is not on account of inherent holiness, or good works proceeding from faith, are these:

Justification is a sentence according to law; but the law demands a perfect righteousness: the imperfect, though sincere obedience of the believer, is not a ground on which God, as a righteous Judge, can pronounce the sinner justified. Even if the believer could attain to perfection in this life—which none ever did—this would not answer for a perfect righteousness; for when a man stands in judgment before God, he must answer for the whole of his life, and not a part only. The believer cannot be justified by his evangelical obedience, because this follows his acceptance with God, and cannot therefore be its cause. The ungodly are the persons whom God justifies; therefore they are not justified by their own obedience, for they remain ungodly up to the very moment when they are justified.

The justification of the sinner, according to the apostle Paul, excludes boasting; but if a man is justified by his own works, of whatever kind, he has a ground of glorying; therefore justification is not by "works of righteousness which we have done."

Again, justification is entirely gratuitous, and therefore not by works of any kind. "Being justified freely by his grace." Now between works and grace there is, according to Paul, an irreconcilable opposition as it relates to the ground of a sinner's acceptance. "And if by grace, it is then no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."

It detracts from the honor of Christ and the merit of his mediatorial work to ascribe justification, in whole or in part, to man's obedience. If it had been consistent with God's perfections to accept of an imperfect obedience from the creature, where was the need of a divine Mediator? Did Christ the Son of God come into the world and die on the cross merely to render the imperfect obedience of the sinner acceptable? This supposition is not honorable to the divine Redeemer, neither is it in accordance with holy Scripture. There all is ascribed to Christ's redemption—to his blood—to his righteousness—to his obedience. Christ is the foundation—the corner-stone—the way, the truth, and the life—the alpha and omega—the beginning and end of our salvation. He that glories, must glory in the Lord. The everlasting song of the redeemed will be, "Not unto us, but unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

And what says the experience of the children of God? Are they willing to trust for salvation to such a broken reed as their own obedience; and are they disposed to detract any thing from the glory of the Redeemer in their salvation? Is there one among them who would wish to put in a claim for any part of the honor of this work?

But what need is there to argue a point which is so explicitly and positively decided by the pen of inspiration? "Therefore," says Paul, "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." And as if to cut off all pretence that he meant the ceremonial law of Moses, he immediately adds, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now Paul tells us in another place what law produced in him the knowledge of sin, namely, the law contained in the ten commandments; "for," says he, "I had not known sin, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." And this is given as a reason by the apostle why there could be no justification by the law; for if a man was only convicted of one sin by the law, it is evident that justification to him by that law is as impossible as if he had violated every precept. As justification and condemnation are opposite states in relation to the law, he who is condemned, if it were only for one sin, and that the smallest, never can be justified by a broken law. For one sin incurs the penalty; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

Some dream of a new and milder law under the gospel by which believers are justified; but there is none such—there can be none such. The Scriptures never mention any other moral law than the law requiring perfect love, and which is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. To this our Saviour continually appeals as universally binding—as intended originally to give life to those who obeyed it, and as the perfect rule which all should follow. The apostles refer to no other law, as might be proved by numerous testimonies. Indeed, the very supposition of a change in the moral law is monstrous; it would imply a change in the Lawgiver, which is nothing less than blasphemy.

God does, it is true, accept from his people an obedience mingled with defects and imperfections, but not as their justifying righteousness; it is for Christ's sake, and because they are already "accepted in the Beloved." "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," they are adopted into the number of sons and daughters; and having his righteousness imputed to them, or set down to their account, there is no condemnation to them. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" It is said of believers, that "they are passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation."

But we are said to be justified by faith: how is this to be understood? This doctrine stands out prominently in the New Testament, and the Reformers considered it the cardinal point, or the centre of the Christian religion. Luther, as far as doctrine was concerned, commenced the Reformation by restoring this doctrine to its proper place; and all true reformers ever since have placed justification by faith at the foundation of their system, and made it the burden of their preaching; and the neglect of this doctrine, or a disposition to explain it away, or not to maintain it in its simple and obvious meaning, is an evidence of a corrupt system of theology, and marks a deviation from the truth in other particulars. This doctrine is as essential in the system of divine truth, as the centre of gravity in bodies; in both cases these points must be firmly supported, or the system falls.

But we return to the important question, How does faith justify a sinner? Certainly not on account of any merit in the act of faith. They who maintain this, fall into no less an error than substituting an act of our minds for Christ and his righteousness. Faith may, in a certain sense, be called a work; but it is not as a work that it justifies, or it would never have been, as it is, placed in strong contrast with works. Though faith be an act of obedience to the law of God, it is not as such that it justifies. Hear what Paul teaches on this point: "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." To interpret this last phrase as though Paul intended to teach that the act of believing was the righteousness by which the ungodly are justified, would be to make him most palpably contradict himself; for that construction would not only make faith a work in the affair of justification, but a substitute for all other works; whereas the apostle, in this passage, says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly;" that is, who performs no works as a righteousness by which he expects to obtain the favor of God; but in regard to works, is considered, when justified, as an ungodly person—one who has no goodness of his own to plead, "but believeth." Here faith must be considered as a mere instrument, or organ, by which Christ is received.

But why is it said to be "counted for righteousness?" For no other reason but because it is that act of the soul by which Christ, who is the Lord our righteousness, is apprehended, appreciated, and appropriated. A reprieve is obtained by a great price from the king; the benevolent person who procured it offers it to the condemned criminal, who eagerly stretches out his hand to receive it. If his acceptance were made the condition of his deliverance, the case would be a striking parallel to the offer of pardon and the divine favor to a sinner. The blessings of the gospel are suspended on the act of believing. This is, in fact, the cordial reception of the blessing. But who would think of ascribing merit to the mere act of receiving a pardon by a condemned criminal? As little reason is there for considering the act of faith by which we receive Christ's righteousness as either meritorious, or as standing in the place of a perfect righteousness, and accepted as such, though manifestly very far short of being all that the law demands.

But how can the righteousness of the Redeemer be available to the justification of the sinner? To this I reply, that from eternity Christ undertook, in the covenant of redemption, to satisfy law and justice for all who were given to him by the Father in that covenant—all who should believe on him. When incarnate, he bore their sins, and for them fulfilled all righteousness—did all that was required as a satisfaction to law and justice. "As by the disobedience of one many were made

sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made," constituted, "righteous." "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Now if the union, by covenant between the first Adam and his posterity, was so close that by his fatal transgression they all died, why may there not be formed a union as intimate between Christ and his people? This is the very principle on which the apostle argues in the fifth of Romans. But the children of God are, "by nature, children of wrath, even as others." They, in their natural condition, are under the curse of the law; for we read that "Christ was made a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law." They continue aliens from the commonwealth of Israel until, by the gracious intercession of their Redeemer, the Holy Spirit is sent to bring them to Christ. On their part, faith is the act by which they receive Christ. This consummates the spiritual union between him as the head, and them as the members. This union is of such a nature that, in law, whatever the Surety has done or suffered, can be set down to their account; or, as the apostle's phrase is, "righteousness is imputed to them." By having this perfect righteousness reckoned to them, they are instantly and completely justified. God is now reconciled to them through the death of his Son. All their sins are freely pardoned, and they are adopted as sons, and immediately made heirs of eternal life. Here then we see how faith justifies as an instrument of union and reception, and in what sense it is "counted for righteousness." We also see how a contrast can be set up between faith and works—between grace and debt.

But although faith alone justifies, and justifies not as a work, yet it is a working faith which justifies. It is the fruitful principle of sanctification, and of all evangelical obedience or good works. And as there is a "dead" as well as a living faith, and many have been deceived by glorying in the former, while they were destitute of the latter, we should guard this point with especial care. The doctrine of justification by faith without works, is very liable to be perverted and abused by carnal men, who vainly dream of being saved in, not from their sins. This corrupt leaven began to ferment in the church in the days of the apostles. James wrote his epistle with a view to detect and expose this dangerous error. He seems, at first view, expressly to contradict what the apostle Paul had taught; for he says, "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." But when the context is impartially considered, the appearance of contradiction vanishes, and we find his doctrine harmonious with that of Paul; for he is speaking of a mere nominal "dead faith," which manifested itself by no good works. No man was ever justified by such a faith. He is not speaking of that justification which takes place when a sinner first believes—the only foundation of which is the merit of Christ—but he is speaking of that justification arising from the evangelical works of believers, by which their faith is proved to be genuine, and their profession is evidenced to be sincere; and with which acts of obedience God is also well pleased, for he will not "forget the works of faith and labors of love" of his own dear children. The instances which he gives, especially that of Abraham, show his meaning plainly enough. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" But Abraham was in covenant with God, and of course justified, a long time before he performed this act; but this proved his sincerity and the strength of his faith. By that extraordinary act of obedience in which Abraham, without hesitation or reluctance, offered up his only and well-beloved son at the command of God, he met the approbation of his Maker; and this approbation was publicly expressed, which expression of divine favor is, by James, without much departure from the usual signification of the word, termed "justification," and is of the same kind with that public approbation of the good works of the righteous which will take place at the day of judgment, which is also called

justification by our Lord. "For," says he, "by thy words thou shalt be justified." Matthew 12:37. Many, however, in reconciling James with Paul, choose to interpret the word justify, as used by James, to signify the manifestation of the sincerity of our profession of faith in the sight of men; to which I make no objection, as this interpretation doubtless accords with truth, but I consider what I before stated as the precise meaning of this apostle.

As the word justification is borrowed from the proceedings of courts of justice, and is therefore said to be a forensic term, I will, by way of illustration and practical application of the subject, suppose the case of a convicted sinner arraigned before the tribunal of God, to be tried for the actions of his whole life. The Judge being omniscient and infinitely just, can neither be deceived nor biassed. The rule of judgment must be his own perfect law: no other standard of right can be admitted or conceived of in this court. The demands of this law are perfect obedience in heart and life: all deviations from the law, even in thought and desire, as well as in word and deed, are marked as sins. If any man had uniformly done all that the law required, he might be adjudged to the possession of eternal life on account of his own obedience; that is, he would be justified by his own works. The language of the law is, "He that doeth these things, shall live in them." "This do, and thou shalt live." "The law was given unto life."

But the person arraigned is conscious that he is a sinner, and therefore cannot possibly be justified in this way. While his conviction is partial, and his knowledge of sin indistinct, he very naturally makes efforts at amendment and reformation. His ignorance of the extent and spirituality of the law leads him to hope that he can make, by future obedience, a compensation for the past. But increasing light convinces him that these hopes are utterly fallacious, for he finds that no future obedience, however perfect, would have any effect to cancel the debt already contracted; and he now finds, by sad experience, that he cannot keep the law perfectly for one moment.

Under this conviction we suppose him to stand arraigned before the heart-searching Judge, and when confronted with the law and a list of his sins—of omission as well as commission—of thought, word, and deed, with all their aggravations—what plea can he offer, what defence can he make? Alas, he attempts nothing of the kind. His mouth is stopped. He stands speechless before his Judge. Or rather, he acknowledges every thing. He admits every charge to be true. He joins in his own condemnation, and justifies God for the sentence which he is convinced that justice requires him to pronounce. He sees no way of escape, for all his vain refuges in which he once trusted are now swept away. And he expects nothing else but that he shall be sent away into everlasting punishment. But under this awful conviction he brings no complaint against the law which condemns him, nor against his righteous Judge. He takes all the blame and guilt to himself, and fully "accepts the punishment of his sins," as a just award. His language is like that of David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

He has, indeed, heard of a proclamation of mercy; but though it excites a vague, trembling hope that relief is possible, yet he sees not how it is possible for him to escape from the grasp of inflexible justice in which he is held, for now he dares not even ask that the law which condemns him should be either set aside, suspended, or relaxed. Any thing of this kind his enlightened conscience correctly judges to be altogether out of the question. No doubt this is an awful moment in the existence of the sinner, and he is ready to give himself up for lost.

But behold, an Advocate rises in the court, and offers to undertake his cause. And it is One who has the ear of the Judge, and who appears in the sinner's own nature. It is the incarnate Son of God, who says to the convicted sinner, "Commit your cause to me with confidence, and I will bring you off victorious. However deep your guilt, however multiplied your transgressions, a full and free pardon will be sure the moment you trust yourself into my hands." And then, to encourage confidence in his ability, he shows that he has rendered an infinitely meritorious obedience to this very law, and has in his own body endured the curse which it denounces upon transgressors; and that he has acquired the right to obtain the redemption of all to whom this righteousness shall be applied.

The convinced sinner sees, with joy and astonishment, that there is a way in which all his grievous sins can be pardoned, and he be restored to the favor of a justly offended God. Now he believes with all his heart. Now he accepts the kind offer of the Saviour to be his advocate. Now he commits himself, and all his soul's concerns, into the hands of a faithful Redeemer. Now his burden of grief is removed, and he rejoices in the riches of grace in Christ Jesus; and his heart, hitherto so insensible, melts into love and gratitude. And now, though he may have confidence that his sins are all blotted out, and shall never rise in remembrance against him, yet his heart breaks with ingenuous relents, and godly sorrow gushes out in a flood.

He can now look up with humble confidence to his Judge, and plead the perfect righteousness of his Surety. He sees that God is propitiated by the meritorious sacrifice of his own Son, and feels that a blessed reconciliation has taken place between him and his God. For, on the part of God, his anger is appeased. He is well pleased with his own dear Son, and with all who stand robed in his perfect righteousness: and as to his own enmity against God and his government, he finds that it is slain by a view of the cross; and already he begins to experience something of the sweet spirit of adoption, and the hope which maketh not ashamed springs up in his breast never more to leave him, but to be, in all temptations, troubles, and storms, as "an anchor to his soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil."

Thus is the sinner actually justified by faith in Christ Jesus. There is no longer any legal condemnation to him, for though he sin—and there is no man that liveth, and sinneth not—his Advocate ever lives to intercede for him, and to plead, for his pardon, the complete atonement which he has made. And a soul once justified never can fall again under the condemnation of the law, unless Christ should cease to intercede, or should no longer apply to his benefit his own perfect righteousness. Clouds and darkness may often obscure his evidences of sonship, and his comfort may be greatly interrupted through his own remaining unbelief, and the temptations of the adversary; but none shall be able to pluck him out of the hands of his heavenly Father, nor out of the hands of his ever-faithful Shepherd.

After this account of the gospel method of a sinner's gratuitous justification, will any still bring forward the old stale objection, that by this plan we are overthrowing the obligation of the moral law, and undermining the foundations of morality and good works? If there be any such objectors, let Paul answer them: "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; nay, we establish the law." "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid; how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Some did, indeed, slanderously report of the apostle and his fellow-teachers, that they said, "Let us do evil, that good may come." Concerning all who would

say this, Paul declares that “their damnation is just.”

And what does uniform experience testify in regard to the lives of those who maintain this doctrine? Are they more loose in their lives than others? Have they not, in all ages, rather been the humble, self denying, faithful imitators of Christ? So far are they from pleading any exemption from the law as a rule of life, or taking occasion to indulge in sin because grace abounds, that they “delight in the law of God after the inner man”—hunger and thirst after righteousness—and feel the remainder of sin dwelling in them to be their greatest burden and sorest affliction, which causes them to groan, and to exclaim with Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Justifying faith works by love, and love is the very spring and essence of all holy obedience. Gratitude impels the reconciled sinner to be zealous for good works. “The love of Christ constraineth him.” He feels that being “bought with a price,” he is “not his own,” and should “glorify God in his body and spirit, which are God’s.”

summary of the doctrine of justification

The Scripture doctrine of justification may be briefly summed up in the following particulars.

1. It is God that justifies.
2. Justification is wholly gratuitous, without merit and without any works of our own as its ground.
3. The merit of Christ, as Mediator, expressed in Scripture by his righteousness, his obedience, his blood, his death, his life, his sacrifice, is the true and only meritorious ground of a sinner’s pardon and acceptance.
4. The justification of the ungodly includes the remission of sins, by which often it is expressed in Scripture; but it also includes their acceptance as righteous, for the sake of Christ’s perfect righteousness reckoned to their account.
5. Justification is by faith, as the instrument of union to Christ, and the reception of his righteousness.
6. The faith which justifies is always a living, operative, fruitful faith. No one is justified by a faith which is alone, or unattended with good works.
7. Justification and sanctification, though inseparably connected, and equally necessary to salvation, are nevertheless distinct blessings of the new covenant; and the latter is the only certain evidence of the possession of the former.
8. Justification takes place at the moment of believing, and is as perfect at once as it can ever be, and there can be no place for a second justification in the sight of God, and in relation to his law; but there is a manifestation of the genuineness of our faith and sincerity of our profession, both in this world and at the day of judgment, which is also sometimes called justification.
9. No plan of justification which does not make a complete provision for the satisfaction of all the demands of law and justice, is honorable to God or agreeable to Scripture. By this single test may all erroneous theories of justification be tried and condemned.

The importance of the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, is not exceeded by that of any other in the whole circle of divine truth. Without justification it is evident that no man can be saved. It is then a vital subject. Eternal life is involved in it. For let it be considered, that there is here no middle ground. He that is not in a state of justification must be in a state of condemnation; and if he continues in that state, he must perish for ever. One unpardoned sin will sink the soul to hell. What then must be the condition of sinners who are pressed down with the guilt of innumerable transgressions?

O reader, let me entreat you to apply this truth to your own case. You are, at this moment, either in a state of condemnation or justification. You are now either reconciled to God, and his adopted child, or his wrath abideth on you. If the latter, how can you be at ease? How can you sleep quietly in your bed? How can you partake, with any pleasure, of your daily food? Alas, your condition is far more dangerous, far more deplorable, than any words are capable of describing. And now, while the moments pass, you are approaching nearer and nearer to the lake of fire.

And are you determined to take no warning, to listen to no advice? Will you shut your eyes against a danger so imminent and so dreadful? How will you regret this carelessness, when perhaps the day of mercy is ended. Those words of our Saviour to Jerusalem are most touching: "O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." In a little time your eternal destiny will be immutably fixed. There is a limit beyond which the call of mercy and the strivings of the Spirit do not reach. When once the sinner has passed that awful boundary, his soul is completely lost; his hopes are extinguished; the blackness of darkness for ever lies before him. His sins will cluster round him like so many ghosts, to torment him. The fire which can never be quenched already is enkindled, and the worm which never dies begins to gnaw his vitals. O wretched creature! how dearly didst thou buy a little mirth and ease in the world; how little profit hast thou now in all thy worldly riches and honors! They cannot purchase for thee one moment's relief, one drop of water for thy scorched tongue.

"Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we would persuade men." If you were now actually beyond the reach of mercy, it would be no kindness to disturb you; but while there is life, there is hope. The sound of mercy is still heard, the door of hope is open, salvation is yet attainable. But there is no time to be lost. The least delay may be ruinous. Escape for your life. Flee from the coming wrath; seek safety in the house of refuge; press into the ark; flee to the altar, and seize on its blood-sprinkled horns. This very day may be the accepted time, and the day of your salvation.

SINNERS WELCOME TO COME TO JESUS CHRIST

Our blessed Lord knew how prone convinced sinners are to unbelief as it regards the reception which he is disposed to give them if they come to him, and therefore he graciously uttered, and has left on record this precious encouragement, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." No, though your sins are very great, the kind Redeemer will not cast you out; even if that were true which you sometimes think, that you are the greatest sinner who ever lived upon earth, he will not cast you out. "His blood cleanseth from all sin." It is as easy for him to save a great as a small sinner. No one was ever saved because his sins were small; no one was ever rejected on account of the greatness of his sins. Where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound. If your guilt is very enormous, the greater honor will redound to that Deliverer who plucks such a brand from the burning. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red

like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But is there not one sin which never has pardon, neither in this world nor in that which is to come? There is; but no one who has committed that sin ever desires to come to Christ; and even that sin would not be unpardonable, if the sinner who is burdened with its guilt should come to him. It is not unpardonable because the blood of Christ has not adequate efficacy to remove it, but because the miserable blasphemer is abandoned by the Spirit of God to his own malignity, and therefore never does nor can desire to believe on Christ.

Christ will not cast you off because you have long continued to sin against God, though it be even to gray hairs and the decrepitude of old age. It is indeed a wicked thing to continue one day in rebellion against the King of heaven; and no one can calculate the debt of guilt incurred by spending a long life in continued acts of transgression. But however long you may have continued in rebellion, and however black and long the catalogue of your sins, yet if you will now turn to God by a sincere repentance, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall not be cast out. He that cannot lie hath declared, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." I heard a preacher declare from the pulpit that there was no example in the Bible of any one being converted in old age; but he was undoubtedly under a mistake. Was not Manasseh, one of the wickedest men who ever lived, brought to repentance in old age? The ages of those converted on the day of Pentecost and at other times are not given. It is enough for us to know that the aged no more than the young are excluded from the free invitations of the blessed Saviour. He invites all the laboring and heavy-laden, and of course those who are burdened with the infirmities of declining years as well as of unnumbered sins.

Aged sinner, you are not excluded from mercy by any word of God in the whole book of divine revelation. God has set before you an open door which no man has a right or power to shut. If you should be shut out, it will be by your own unbelief, and not for want of a warrant to come. Enter, then, without delay or hesitation. None can less afford to delay than the aged sinner. Now is the time. Now or never. You have, as it were, one foot already in the grave. Your opportunities will soon be over. Strive, then, I entreat you, to enter in at the strait gate.

But do you ask whether a man may not outlive his day of grace, and be given over to judicial blindness before life is ended? Undoubtedly he may; but as I said before, such a one, I believe, is never found inquiring what he must do to be saved. The devil often tempts aged sinners, and others too, to believe that it is now too late for them to repent; that the time of their visitation is gone by, and that there is no hope for them. And many miserable souls are long held entangled in this snare. He may even quote Scripture to prove that there is a boundary which, when passed, all hope of salvation is to be relinquished. But as long as we are in the body we have the overtures of mercy made to us by the authority of God, and whether we be young or old, "he that cometh," Christ has declared, shall not be cast out. Take him at his word. Venture on him. If you stay away you must perish, and you can but perish if you go. But see, the golden sceptre is held out. This affords full assurance that if you draw near and touch it you shall live.

Some are convinced that there is salvation in no other but Christ the Lord, yet they hesitate to come because they feel themselves to be so vile and unworthy. They cannot be persuaded that so great and holy a being as the Son of God will look with favor on creatures so abominably polluted and stained with iniquity. Such feelings as these very naturally arise in the minds of persons made

sensible of the sinful defilement of their nature; but they are most unreasonable when we take into view the character of Jesus Christ, and the errand on which he came into the world. If he had become incarnate and had died on the cross only for the benefit of the pure and righteous, then this excuse for not coming to him would have some validity; but when we know that he bears the character of a Saviour of sinners, and that his name was called Jesus by the angel who announced his birth, because he should save his people from their sins; when we consider his repeated declaration, that he came to seek and save the lost—not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and that he exhibits himself as the Physician, not of the whole, but the sick, we must pronounce this objection most unreasonable.

If you were not a sinful, polluted, helpless, and miserable creature, this Saviour would not be suited to you, and you would not be comprehended in his gracious invitations to the children of men. But the deeper you are sunk in sin and misery, the greater reason you have for coming to one who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. If you were covered with leprosy, and a fountain was opened for washing away every sort of uncleanness, would you stay away because you were so polluted? Or if deadly sick, would you refuse to apply to the physician? The awakened, convinced sinner is the very one to whom Jesus especially directs his attention. And it is a preposterous thing for such to delay coming, under the delusive hope of making themselves fit. This they never can do, and if they could they would not need a Saviour. What, will you wash yourselves in a muddy pool to prepare for being cleansed in a pure fountain?

But some one may be ready to say, “All admit that none ever come to Christ until they experience conviction of sin, but I have no conviction, or none worth mentioning. My mind is so blind that I can perceive nothing clearly, and my heart is so hard that what I do see to be true I cannot feel. O if I could experience some tender relenting—if I could get this adamant heart broken into contrition—if I could even feel pungent pain or alarm on account of my sins, my case would not appear so hopeless. But how can I come to Christ with this blind and stupid heart?”

Now, my friend, I beg you to consider that this blindness and unyielding hardness is the very core of your iniquity, and to be convinced that you are thus blind and stupid is true conviction of sin. If you had those feelings which you so much covet, they would not answer the end of conviction, which is, to show you how sinful and helpless your condition is. But if you felt as you wish to feel, you would not think your heart so wicked as you now see it to be. And the truth is, that you are now in a better situation to come to Christ than you would be if you had less conviction of the hardness and stubbornness of your heart. The use of conviction is to show your need of a Saviour, and to set clearly before your mind your utterly helpless and hopeless condition in yourself, and that a holy God would be perfectly just in leaving you to your own fruitless efforts, and in punishing you for ever for your sins.

“Let not conscience make you linger,

Nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness he requireth

Is to feel your need of him.”

Take words, therefore, and go immediately and fall down before him, and say, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." Confess the righteousness of the sentence which condemns you, and accept the punishment of your sins as just. Cry with Peter, when sinking in the sea, "Lord, save; I perish." Or with the blind man, "O thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Or with the Syrophenician woman, "Lord, help me." Or with the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Say, like the royal penitent,

"My lips with shame my sins confess

Against thy law, against thy grace.

Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,

I am condemned, but thou art clear.

Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,

Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,

Would light on some sweet promise there,

Some sure support against despair."

But here is another poor soul, more bowed down than any which we have considered. It is an awakened backslider. This man verily thought that he was a true Christian, and under that impression applied for admittance into the church, and was received, and for a season seemed to run well; but by the snares and baits of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and insidious lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, was by degrees seduced from the paths of piety. After a while the profession of religion was laid aside as an inconvenient thing; since which time, until lately, he has been sinking deeper and deeper into the spirit of the world which lies in wickedness. But recently, by a sore visitation of affliction, his conscience has been awakened to a consideration of his woful state, and he inquires with the most earnest solicitude whether there is any ground of hope for such a backslider, who has sinned much more egregiously since he made a profession of religion than he ever did before. Now to such a one I feel authorized to say, Christ invites even backsliders like you to come and be saved. I find no clause excluding the returning backslider, guilty as he is in the sight of God. He says in regard to this man as well as others, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

There is indeed mention made in Scripture of some backsliders who turn back unto perdition, and never can be renewed again unto repentance; these never come to Christ, and never truly desire to come. For them nothing remains "but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to devour the adversaries."

But we read in Jeremiah of the Lord calling upon his backsliding Israel to return, Jeremiah 3:12; and in Hosea, God says, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Hosea 14:4. This is a most gracious and encouraging promise, and we find in fact that God has received great backsliders upon their repentance, and has freely pardoned their enormous sins. I believe that the deplorable backslidings of David, and his subsequent pardon and restoration, were left on record

that convinced backsliders might not despair of mercy. And our Lord intimates that Peter, when recovered from his shameful fall, should make it his business “to strengthen his brethren.” Some of this class may perhaps allege that they are afraid that they never were truly of the number of the Israel of God. That perhaps is a question which you will never be able to solve in this life. But as to the point in hand it matters not; if you will now come to Christ, you will be received. Come, and he will in no wise cast you out.

It is commonly said that men are forward to believe whatever is connected with their own interest. This in common cases is true; but it is also true, that when some very great and unexpected good news is brought to us, we find it very difficult to credit it. It seems too good to be true. When Jacob’s sons returned to their father after Joseph had made himself known to them, and informed him that his son Joseph was alive and governor of all Egypt, the old man could not believe the report until he lifted up his eyes and saw the wagons which had been sent to convey him to Egypt. So the convinced sinner finds it very hard to believe that a free and full salvation is offered to him, and that Christ stands ready to receive him, and not only to pardon all his sins, but give him a sure title to the heavenly inheritance. It seems a thing almost impossible that he should be thus highly favored, and therefore, when he should with humble confidence lay hold on eternal life, he stands parleying, hesitating, and demurring. He is prone to think that there must be some mistake in the business, and that this good news cannot be true, at least in relation to himself. But when the truth stands out clearly revealed, he begins to understand what he never did before, the absolute and perfect freeness of salvation, and how it is that Christ receives the coming sinner just as he is, in all his guilt and vileness. Then, indeed, he cannot but rejoice and wonder at the suitableness of the plan of salvation to his character and necessities; that it comes down to his wretched and helpless circumstances, and takes him out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and sets his feet on a rock, establishes his goings, and puts a new song into his mouth, even praise unto God.

Since awakened, convicted sinners are so prone to unbelief on this point, it will not be a superfluous labor to offer some cogent reasons to convince such that Christ will not cast off any who come to him, whatever may have been their former character or sins.

And I would first mention, that all who come are drawn by the Father. “No man,” says Christ, “can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him.” Those who do truly come are such as were given to him by the Father. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” Now this drawing of the Father is the fruit of his everlasting love. “We love him, because he first loved us.” And surely Christ will not cast out those whom the Father has loved and given to him, and effectually drawn by his grace.

But you may. be ready to reply, “How shall I know that I am of the number given by the Father to the Son?” I answer, that you need no other or better evidence of it than your being willing to come. Surely you know that you did not make yourself willing. If you have come to Christ, or are willing to come, I am sure that you will ascribe it entirely to the grace of God. Others, as good by nature and practice as you, remain in love with the world and under the power of sin. Why is this? You must say with Paul, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” The choice did not commence with you, but with him. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” And as Christ concurs with the Father in this drawing, for he says, “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me,” he surely will not cast out the poor penitent whom he has drawn to his feet. No, no; never. “Him that cometh he will

in no wise cast out.”

Again, Christ redeemed, by the shedding of his precious blood, every soul that comes to him, and the impelling motive which induced him to die for sinners was love, unspeakable love: “who loved us, and gave himself for us.” Can any one then think or suspect that when Christ sees the travail of his soul coming to him, he will cast them out? It would be like blasphemy to say that he would. No; he delights to see the fruit of his painful sufferings even unto death. It was predicted, in connection with the impressive description of his sufferings and death, that he should “see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.”

Again, the Holy Spirit is the agent in convincing men of sin and bringing them to Christ; and this Holy Spirit is sent by the Son as well as the Father to accomplish this work; and when it is effected, when the soul is made willing to bow his neck to the easy yoke of Christ, will he cast him out? Impossible.

But the honor and glory of the Redeemer is concerned in this matter. God is not glorified in any transaction upon earth so much as in the conversion of a sinner. There is joy in heaven at the repentance of one sinner, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. And every redeemed and renewed soul is a jewel in the mediatorial crown.

We may learn the willingness of Jesus Christ to receive sinners, not only by his frequent gracious declarations, but by his conduct in regard to such as applied to him. Christ’s personal ministry was confined to the people of Israel, and when he sent out the twelve, and afterwards the seventy, their commission was restricted within the same limits. Yet when a woman of Canaan came to implore his aid, he did not reject her, though she was descended from an accursed race. At first, indeed, he seemed to give her a repulse, but it was intended only to bring more clearly to view the strength of her faith. And his address to her in the end is truly remarkable: “O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt.” And when the centurion, another pagan, applied to him to come and heal his child, he did not reject his suit because he was a heathen, but said of him, “Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

When the vilest sinners, as publicans and harlots, came penitently to his feet, he rejected none of them, although his gracious attention to such greatly injured his reputation in the view of the scribes and Pharisees. His condescending behavior towards that woman who was notorious as a sinner, is in the highest degree touching. He was dining in the house of a Pharisee, and this infamous but penitent woman, urged by the strength of her feelings, found her way into the house, and while he was reclining on a couch at dinner, she came up behind him and wept such a flood of tears on his feet, that she is said to have washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. This led the Pharisee to entertain a suspicion that Christ could not be a teacher sent from God, or he would have known the infamous character of this woman. Jesus knowing his thoughts, uttered the beautiful parable of the two debtors, and then making the application to the case of the penitent woman, said, “Wherefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven.”

When our blessed Lord was hanging on the cross, he was applied to by one of the malefactors crucified with him. This man being one of the two selected from all the prisoners in Jerusalem for public execution on this occasion, was no doubt deeply stained with the guilt of enormous crimes;

but was his suit denied? O no; the response was full of mercy: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Who can fathom the freeness and riches of the grace of Christ? It is indeed "unsearchable riches."

Paul may with propriety be here introduced. According to his own acknowledgment, he was a murderer and a blasphemer, but he obtained mercy, and was made an apostle, a chief instrument in propagating that gospel which he once attempted to destroy, among the Gentiles. Many of the first converts from among the heathen were notorious for the foulest and vilest crimes, for the apostle in writing to the Corinthians, after giving a black list of crimes which exclude the persons guilty of them from the kingdom of heaven, says, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

But perhaps no example of the extent of divine mercy and its sovereign freedom can equal the pardon extended to the very persons who had imbrued their hands in Christ's own blood. The blood which they shed procured their salvation. And Christ seems to have had special compassion for the bloody city of Jerusalem. Before his death he wept over it and lamented its doom; and after his resurrection, when he met his disciples in a body, he gave direction that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, Peter charges the sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus upon the consciences of those whom he addressed, saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Did Peter tell them that as they had committed this enormous crime, Christ would not pardon them? By no means. He calls upon them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. And these greatest of sinners were that very day received into the church, and continued steadfast in their attachment to Christ and profession of his name.

Innumerable instances since that day have occurred of the repentance of the greatest sinners, and no true penitent has ever been rejected. If one instance could be produced of any sinner being rejected who ever came to Christ, this might create some doubt in the soul agonized with a sense of guilt. But as there is no such example, the trembling sinner, feeling that he is justly exposed to the wrath of God, need not hesitate nor delay to come at once to Christ, with the assurance that however vile and guilty he may be, he shall meet a welcome reception. O sinner, you are welcome to come to Jesus Christ.

All difficulty as to Christ's willingness to receive returning sinners being, as it is hoped, removed, the only thing which remains to be considered is, what is to be understood by coming to Christ, and what are the steps which the sinner must take to come. It is too obvious to need any remark, that a mere bodily approach is not the thing intended. Many of Christ's bitterest enemies were often near his person, as Judas when he betrayed him with a kiss, the soldiers that bound him, that smote him, that scourged him, that nailed him to the cross; but this kind of approach to Christ did those who came near him no good. The coming to Christ of which we have been treating, is the act of the anxious mind which seeks salvation from the burden of sin, and apprehending that Christ is the only Redeemer, trusts in him. Christ is exhibited in the gospel as the only Mediator by whom we can be reconciled to God, and offers to do for the sinner whatever is requisite to save him from the

curse of the law, and from the blindness and pollution of sin itself; and coming to him is the same as receiving him in that character, or as sustaining those offices which relate to salvation.

There is but one step to be taken, strictly speaking, in coming to Christ, and that is believing in him with all the heart. We are not required to repent and do good works before we come, but to come to him to give us repentance unto life, and to create us anew to good works. But though the act of coming is a single act, yet there are some things which are experienced before this act can be rationally performed. No unawakened, careless sinner, remaining in that state, will come; for the "whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The sinner who knows nothing of Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures, cannot come until he is instructed in regard to the character of Christ. Faith therefore comes by hearing the word. A soul perverted by erroneous opinions respecting the fundamental doctrines of religion, cannot come until he is delivered from these errors. That man who believes Christ to be the promised Messiah, but thinks that he is no more than a good man and a prophet, cannot come to Christ until this fundamental error be removed. The soul that truly comes to Christ must be persuaded that he is indeed the Son of God, and possessed of divine perfections.

The soul convinced of its sins first seeks Christ as he is an atoning Priest. That which it wants is the pardon of sin, and reconciliation with an offended God. Christ, as the great High-priest, has offered up himself as an atoning sacrifice for sin; and as a priest he has entered into the holy place made without hands, there to sprinkle, as it were, his life-giving blood, and to intercede for all who come unto him. When in this character he is apprehended by the seeking sinner, confidence in him is produced. It is seen now how God can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly who believes in Christ. It is seen that God having accepted Christ's atoning sacrifice, can receive the guilty sinner into favor and adopt the rebel as a child. These views, accompanied by this trust in the Lord Jesus as having made a complete atonement for our sins, is the act of coming to Christ. But as the soul that is regenerated feels sin itself to be a burden, it looks to Christ for a deliverance from all the disorders of the depraved mind. He is therefore received and trusted, to deliver the soul from the deep stains of iniquity, and by the light of his truth to guide it in the right way.

Let it be remembered that this coming to Christ is not a solitary act of the believing soul; it is one which must be continually repeated. The justified sinner is every moment dependent on his Saviour, without whom he can do nothing. As he is at first justified by faith, so he lives by faith, walks by faith, and by faith overcomes all his enemies, and brings forth the fruits of holiness and peace.

But some will be ready to say, "There is no coming to Christ unless we are drawn, and why then are we blamed for not coming?"

This is not the language of the truly convinced sinner, for he sees and feels that he is guilty of the damning sin of unbelief, and that he deserves to be punished for this sin above all others; for it is this which seals the guilt of all others upon his soul. Dead in sin, it is certain that he will perform no holy action, but he is still a rational and accountable being. The law of God does not lose its authority to command because we have become sinful. It will never do to plead sin as an excuse for sin, or to attempt to justify sinful acts by pleading that we have an evil heart. This instead of being a valid apology, is the very ground of our condemnation. If you feel that your heart is thus blinded and depraved, this conviction of your miserable, sinful state should humble you deeply in

the dust, and induce you to cry more earnestly to God for his life-giving Spirit. Often, however, when Christ sends forth his gracious invitation to believe, he enables the soul by the energy of his Spirit accompanying the call to come and receive his grace. He accompanies his word with a quickening efficacy, and “the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live.” Our whole dependence is on the influence of the Holy Spirit. “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase.”

Let us now review the truths which have been inculcated.

1. Christ is an able and willing Saviour, who will in no wise cast out any soul that comes to him.
2. The grace of God, through Christ, is perfectly free; that is, he requires no qualification or merit in those who come. They are invited to apply to him in all their guilt and pollution, that they may from his gracious hands receive pardon and renovation.
3. There is no obstacle in the way of any sinner’s coming but what exists in himself. The door of mercy cannot be set wider open than it is; the invitations of Christ could not be more kind and full.
4. The whole blame of the sinner’s ruin who refuses to come to Christ, will lie at his own door. The only obstacle is his own perverseness and unwillingness. Christ was willing to give life to his greatest enemies if they would come to him; for he complains, “Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.”
5. The conversion of a single soul is the work of God only. The same power which caused light to shine out of darkness, must shine into our hearts. Creation is a work proper to God only, but conversion is a “new creation,” and requires power as really divine as that by which the worlds were formed.
6. God has directed the gospel to be preached to every creature without discrimination; and every one who hears it has a divine warrant to receive it; and if he does, he has the faithfulness of God pledged for his everlasting salvation.
7. As the efficacy of the word depends on the energy of the Holy Spirit, all Christians should be incessant and fervent in their supplications for this Spirit of grace to be poured out, that sinners may be converted.
8. We have encouragement to hope that the time is coming, and perhaps drawing near, when conversions will be multiplied far beyond the experience of former ages; when the Jews shall, as a nation, obtain mercy of the Lord, and when all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Amen.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT;

or,

THE UNIVERSALIST REFUTED

No benevolent being delights in the suffering of others, for its own sake; but it is one of the clearest dictates of reason, that sin should be visited with punishment. Men may differ widely in opinion as to what sin is, in regard to many particulars, but every one sees and feels the propriety of

punishing crimes, which he acknowledges to be such, in proportion to their evil. Indeed, it would be difficult to give a definition of sin which does not involve this idea; and a better definition of moral evil could not easily be given, than that it is that which deserves punishment. None are found, therefore, who, while they acknowledge a difference between virtue and vice, deny that the latter deserves punishment. And as all sinful acts are not of equal malignity or turpitude, it will be agreed by all, that, in justice, every one ought to receive according to his deeds; and that he whose sins are less, should not suffer equally with him whose sins are greater.

Whether the end of punishment is always the good of the sufferer, is disputed. On this point it may here be observed, that that intuitive perception, which exists in every mind, of the connection between sin and punishment, has no respect whatever to the good of the guilty person. Punishment, according to the clearest and simplest idea of its nature, is some pain or loss to the person who endures it. Suffering which brings no injury to the sufferer, can scarcely be called punishment in a strict sense. In our intuitive, original judgment of the connection between sin and punishment, we regard nothing but the nature of the crime, the demerit of the act. No man needs to know more, or think of more, in determining that punishment is deserved, than that a crime has been committed. We may conclude, or rather conjecture, that the reason why we are so constituted as to be under the necessity of forming such a judgment, is because sin obstructs the general good, or is injurious to others, as we see that this is its tendency; but this enters not into our original conception. It is a clear dictate of the human mind, that if there be a crime, some punishment is due to it; and when the sin contemplated is atrocious, there is not merely a dispassionate judgment that it ought to be punished, but an earnest demand, an indignant feeling, a vehement desire that the guilty perpetrator of the act should suffer condign punishment. These are the genuine feelings of nature, experienced by all men, in all countries, and in all ages; and no one is conscious that when they rise in his breast, they are excited by a regard to the welfare of the guilty person. The truth is, his welfare is so far from being regarded, that as far as he is considered as deserving of punishment, we do not consult his felicity; but on the contrary, our judgment is, that his happiness ought to be lessened, or taken away, to the extent of his guilt.

Although we are so constituted as to perceive and feel that sin deserves punishment according to its evil, yet we have no precise standard of the degree of punishment which any sin deserves. Reason cannot tell how much pain is due to any particular offence: its clear perception goes no further than to the general proposition that it ought to be punished according to its desert, whatever that may be. Yet it has appeared exceedingly evident to most men, that although some degree of punishment follows sinful actions in this life, men do not receive here a full retribution for their crimes; since very often great transgressors are prosperous, and some of them die in the commission of atrocious sins. This has furnished the strongest of all the arguments which reason can discover, for a future state of existence. Indeed, admitting the fact that men are not rewarded and punished here according to their respective deserts, the conclusion is inevitable, if God be just. But some moral deists who could not deny the difference between virtue and vice, and that the former ought to be rewarded and the latter punished, held that virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment: that is, that good men, in the performance of good actions, and in the consequences which naturally follow them, have their reward; and that wicked men, in the remorse which attends the commission of sin and in its effects, suffer all the punishment which they deserve. Therefore they maintained that there is no future existence to be expected or feared.

This theory, however grateful it may be to the wishes of wicked men, as freeing them from all apprehension of a future judgment, has found but few abettors. The reason is, that the evidence against its truth is obvious. All men must see that crimes are not punished in this life according to their demerit.

But in our times and in our country, a new phenomenon has appeared in the religious world. A sect has risen up calling themselves Universalists, who profess to receive the Bible as the word of God, and yet utterly deny all future punishment. From early times there have been a few persons, among whom were some men of learning, who entertained the opinion that the punishment of the wicked in a future world would not be strictly eternal, or without end; but they all held that the impenitent would certainly suffer condign punishment after death. This scheme was defended on various principles, by different persons; and the arguments of the same persons were not commonly consistent with one another. At one time, they asserted that it would be unjust in the Ruler of the universe to make his creatures eternally miserable on account of the sins committed here in the course of a short life. But again, not satisfied with this ground, they resorted to the mercy and goodness of God as revealed in the gospel, and endeavored to prove that as God loved all his creatures equally, and that as Christ died equally for all, all would certainly be saved—if not here, yet, without doubt, hereafter. These topics of argument were popular, and many would have been the converts to this system, had it not been for a number of plain and stubborn texts of Scripture, which these men, with all their critical efforts, found to be rather intractable. Most people, too, feared to trust their eternal salvation on the criticisms of fallible men. They did not know but that at last it might be found, that the words everlasting and eternal might mean endless punishment. Moreover, it was demonstrated by the defenders of the orthodox doctrine, that the two grand topics of argument used by the Universalists, were perfectly incompatible with each other; for if, in the nature of things, it was unjust to punish men with eternal misery, there was no need for a Saviour to come into the world and die to prevent the Almighty from doing an act of flagrant injustice. Upon this principle, universal salvation would have occurred in due time as a matter of course; and therefore the death of Christ was unnecessary, and there was no occasion for mercy or pardon. But if they built their argument on the principle of God's mercy and Christ's death, and ascribe the salvation of all men to free grace, then it was manifest that had not this mediatorial scheme intervened, men must have, perished for ever; for there is no mercy or grace in redeeming from misery to which men were never exposed. This therefore, which was the principal argument, could not be employed without recognizing the justice of condemning men to endless punishment for their sins. But if that was the punishment to which men were condemned by the law, no reason could be assigned why rejecters of the gospel might not be left to suffer what was before due to them. Upon this ground, there was no presumption against the plain, literal interpretation of those texts which seem to represent future punishment to be eternal. And that which perplexed the subject still more, was the fact that no punishment mentioned in the Scriptures was so great as that threatened against those who refused to believe the gospel; whereas, according to this theory, the penalty of the law ought to be endless punishment, and the misery actually inflicted on those redeemed from the curse of the law ought to be something very different. Indeed, it was difficult to explain why they should suffer in the future world at all, if Christ died for them so as to free them from the curse of the law; especially, it was almost incredible that they should suffer so long as the phrases used in Scripture, limit them as they would, must import. It was also a perplexing point to determine whether those severe sufferings for ages of ages, were

penal, expiatory, or merely castigatory. If they maintained the first, how could they reconcile it with their cardinal position, that Christ redeemed all men from the curse of the law? If, after all, sinners might be left to suffer part of the penalty, why not all? But if the sufferings of the wicked in a future world are held to be expiatory, then they are saved independently of Christ, or their expiation must be added to his; both of which suppositions are derogatory to the Saviour, and inconsistent with the radical principle of their system, that all are saved by grace, through the merit of Christ. And finally, if the punishment which sinners endure in hell is merely castigatory, why is it so long and so tremendously severe? This idea, however, is manifestly repugnant to the whole tenor of Scripture, which uniformly represents the sufferings of the damned as destructive, and never as salutary.

But even on the supposition that the punishment due to each sin was limited, and as short as any one might choose to make it; yet the punishment of the sinner might be justly without end, because, being a moral agent still, and under obligations to obey his Creator, from which he never can be released, he may be continually contracting new guilt; so that if one should suppose that the punishment of one sin was momentary, yet if the sinner in hell is every moment committing fresh sin, it does not appear how he can ever be released. There is no way by which this conclusion can be evaded but by supposing that men and devils in hell are incapable of sinning, or that the sins which they commit there do not incur any additional punishment. But neither of these positions can be maintained. That men whose nature is sinful, and who by long custom have formed inveterate habits of sinning, when removed to another world should cease to commit sin, is an unreasonable supposition; and to suppose that sin, in a future state, does not incur the curse of the law, or the displeasure of God, is equally unreasonable. God, from the holiness of his nature, must hate sin wherever it appears, and he always acts agreeably to his nature. To suppose men in hell to be divested of their moral agency, would be to suppose them in such a condition as scarcely to be capable of suffering for their sins. No doubt the devil sinned when he tempted our first parents, and in all his other temptations; otherwise he could not be called a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, and the father of lies. Indeed, no one who believes that there is a devil, doubts that he is continually sinning and rebelling against God; and I think it can scarcely be doubted that he will suffer punishment for these sins. Then what reason can be assigned why the reprobate from among men will not continue to sin in another world, and to heap up fresh wrath upon their guilty souls?

Other formidable difficulties encumber this scheme of universal salvation. It was not easy to understand how the inmates of this prison were to be released: whether by a due course of law they should come out after having suffered the full demand of justice, and after having paid the last farthing, as the Scriptures speak; or whether the offers of the gospel should follow them there, and they should not be delivered until they cordially embrace the terms of salvation. Each of these plans has its peculiar difficulties. According to the first, Christ and his merits are completely set aside, and the sinner gets to heaven upon the strict principles of retributive justice; just as, among us, the convict comes out of the penitentiary and enjoys his liberty and the rights of a citizen when he has served out his time, in pursuance of the sentence of the law. But if the sinner comes out of hell by believing the gospel, then the gospel must be preached in hell—but by whom does not appear. And its efficacy there must depend on the Holy Spirit, or on the freewill of the creature. If the former, the Holy Spirit—I tremble to write it—must be poured out in hell—if the latter, it remains to be shown that severe pain will make men willing to believe. But if it depend on our freewill, and

this may resist for ages of ages, why not for ever? It may happen then, after all, according to this theory, that some sinners, by their obstinacy, will never be saved. And if efficacious grace rescues them, what reason can be assigned why that grace did not operate effectually in this world to prevent them from going to that infernal prison.

But the difficulties do not end here. Suppose the prison doors thrown open, and the law to make no further demands, how is the miserable sinner to be fitted for the pure and blessed society of heaven? Whatever hell may be in other respects, surely it is no school of virtue—no place to acquire holy habits, and relish for the praises of the heavenly hosts; unless ages of blasphemy should be thought to prepare a sinner for the exalted hallelujahs of heaven, or the society of devils to qualify for the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; since it is true for ever, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and it is demonstrable that there can be no enjoyment in that pure and blessed place for those whose minds are full of malignant passions. Universalists must therefore make it a part of their system to have the soul purified by regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Or will they cast indignity on the office and work of the Holy Spirit, as before on that of the Redeemer, by maintaining that his peculiar work can be performed by the fire of hell? It is very remarkable that the holy Scriptures shed a clear light on the path which leads to future misery, but not a solitary ray on the way of escape from that dismal place. Yet, if this is a doctrine of the Scriptures, it is marvellous that they have never mentioned the case of any one saved from hell, nor left us a single hint respecting the method of passing the wide gulf which separates the two places. When the rich man in torment begged Abraham for a drop of water, we surely might have expected some word of encouragement to the poor sufferer, if that venerable patriarch had known any thing of a passage from hell to heaven. But no; he seems to preclude all hope of the kind. “Between us and you,” says he, “there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.” Call this discourse a parable, or what you will, it matters not: no word is spoken respecting a way of escape from torment. Nor is there, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, one word to inform us of the method of being delivered from hell and prepared for heaven for those who once go away into everlasting punishment.

There was still another defect in this scheme which, I doubt not, has had practically more efficacy in exploding it than all the rest. It cannot be concealed, and perhaps will not be denied, that the primary motive which has led men to Universalism, is the desire of removing from the minds of worldly and wicked men the dreadful apprehension of endless torments. I say worldly and wicked men, for the true Christian does not need this doctrine for his consolation. He is safe without it. Therefore the humble and devoted Christian is not commonly, if ever, the advocate of this system. It was a doctrine invented for the lawless and disobedient—a doctrine to bring comfort, not to penitent believers, but to impenitent sinners, who are not willing to forsake their sins. Now, it is manifest that the old scheme of Universalism, which admitted not only of future punishment, but of a duration of punishment which might, in some sense, be called everlasting, did but half answer the purpose contemplated. When the abandoned profligate, the murderer, the robber, the debauchee, the defrauder of the orphan and widow, and every description of ungodly men, saw eternity approaching, supposing that they firmly believed their own tenets, the prospect before them was appalling. What, to lie for ages of ages in fire; or in torment comparable to fire! The thought was intolerable. This subject brings to recollection a fact which occurred more than thirty

years ago. A popular preacher of universal salvation thought it necessary to guard his doctrine against the common objection that its tendency was to encourage wicked men to continue in sin, whereupon he undertook to represent to his hearers how long future punishment might possibly last. And he took the illustration so often used by preachers who wish to give some faint idea of eternity, of a bird taking one grain of sand from the earth every thousand or million years until the whole was taken away, and bringing it back, grain by grain, after the same intervals: "so long," said he, "may some atrocious and obstinate sinners have to suffer in hell." A young man who had become a convert to this flesh-pleasing doctrine, upon hearing this representation, was struck with horror. No idea of a duration so long had ever before entered his mind, and he began to be seriously concerned how he should escape from sufferings so tremendous. And it is said that his conviction of danger was only removed by a believing application to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, as might be expected, he was no longer an advocate for the salvation of impenitent sinners.

The reader, I think, will now be able to understand why Universalists in this country—or at least some of them—have forsaken their old ground, and are now endeavoring to build on an entirely new foundation. They certainly avoid the last-mentioned difficulty of their predecessors. They now have made their doctrine palatable enough to the worst of sinners. There is no danger that the new doctrine, by its terrors, will drive any poor sinner to seek refuge in a crucified Saviour. They preach no appalling doctrine of burning torments in hell for ages of ages. According to the new theory, all that the most enormous sinner has to fear or suffer is confined to this world. Even if he should die blaspheming; by his own hand, as Judas; or in the act of giving command to commit complicated murder, as Herod, it matters not, all is safe: there is no judgment after death, no casting of soul and body into hell, except what takes place here; for as to hell itself, what is it, they ask, when critically explained, but the valley of Hinnom, outside of Jerusalem? Sinners, if this doctrine be true, may dismiss all their foreboding apprehensions. They may, indeed, "eat, drink, and be merry;" and if they will only make up their minds to bear the inconvenience which sin may bring upon them here—and few are restrained from the indulgence of revenge, ambition, avarice, and lust by this consideration—they may give full swing to their corrupt inclinations, and be just as wicked as they please. And indeed, if there be no future reckoning, the principal source of uneasiness to the sinner here will be removed, namely, the fear of judgment to come. This is indeed a glorious doctrine for impenitent sinners. They may even set their Maker at defiance, for they have nothing to fear from him after this life. Nothing which they can do will either retard or hinder their eternal happiness.

I was perhaps wrong in calling this a new doctrine. It is as old as the fall of man, and was distinctly preached in the garden of Eden, when the tempter said to the woman, Thou shalt not surely die; and it has had a willing reception in the minds of many abandoned profligates and hardened apostates from the truth; but I do suppose they never anticipated the time when it should be gravely preached to them from the Bible, as the very essence of the gospel. In this respect, then, it may be called new; for surely no sect before our times, who professed to receive the Scripture in whole or in part, whether in the church or among heretics, ever held and taught such a doctrine as this.

What I propose further in this tract is, to show that this doctrine has not the shadow of evidence from the word of God to support it.

But here, I confess, I feel a difficulty in the very commencement. What, am I called upon to prove that doctrine false, which maintains that the New Testament teaches that the impenitent sinner will not be punished for his crimes after death? Why, it would be almost as reasonable to be required to refute the assertion that there were neither words nor letters in the Bible, or to demonstrate that he spoke falsely who should declare that there was no such book in existence. Some things are so manifest, that it would be ridiculous to attempt their proof by reasoning. In fact, reasoning and argument are not intended for truths so plain that he that runs may read them. Who would undertake to refute the fool who should insist upon it that the sun did not shine at noonday? Much like this, it seems to me, is the task I have taken upon myself. When I first heard of men who professed to believe the Scriptures, and at the same time denied all future punishment, I knew not how to believe it. But since that time I have had evidence enough of their existence, and have had the humiliation to be convinced that many follow their pernicious ways. But it may be asked, Why do these deceivers connect their doctrine with the Bible? Would it not be much easier to take the ground of infidelity at once, and depend upon reason for support, instead of Scripture? It would seem so at first view, but this ground has been heretofore occupied without success. Infidelity is out of fashion, and as most people have a veneration for the Bible, they wish to avail themselves of these common sentiments in favor of the Scriptures; and by this means they get a handle for working on the credulity and prejudice of unstable souls, who are ever gaping after something new and strange in religion; “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” By the perversion of the sacred Scriptures, also, they are able to promise their followers not only exemption from future misery, but positive felicity in heaven, which they could not do on the principles of infidelity.

Let us see, then, in what way the advocates of the complete and unconditional salvation of impenitent sinners attempt to defend their doctrine. The texts relied on are such as these:

1. “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall come and worship before him”—“all nations whom he hath made shall come and worship before him, and glorify his name.” Now, this text has nothing to do with the subject, more or less. It is obviously a prophecy of the universal spread of the gospel in the millennium, or glorious latter days of the church. This is a kind of universalism in which we rejoice to believe; for it is predicted by Him who cannot lie, that the earth shall in those latter days be full of the glory of God. Then, indeed, shall “the ends of the earth turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations come and worship before him.” But I ask, What has this to do with the future salvation of those who never turn unto the Lord, nor render him any worship, but die in their sins? Whether the language of this prophecy is to be taken in its most unlimited signification, is a matter of no consequence. If not one unconverted sinner should, in those blessed times of gospel grace, be found upon earth, that will have no effect on the condition of those who continue in their obstinate rebellion until death. The text asserts nothing respecting past times, nor any times that may intervene before the blessed era of universal grace shall commence.

2. “The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.” This, I find, is a favorite text with the advocates of the doctrine under consideration. They have caught at the words recompensed in the earth, as if they furnished a proof that the sinner received in this world a full retribution for his crimes. But they must be very short-sighted critics, or must be confident that their followers have no discernment at all, or they would never have selected this

passage of Scripture as the corner-stone of their fabric. The plain meaning of the wise man in this text is, that in the righteous dispensations of divine Providence, the righteous man shall receive some recompense for his good deeds, and much more will the wicked and the sinner be visited, even here, more or less, with divine judgments, by which a holy God testifies his displeasure against their evil ways. But does the text assert that their whole recompense shall be received in this world? It does not. And if it did, it would contradict the whole tenor of Scripture. But these pretended critics, in their haste to prove that the wicked sinners receive their whole recompense in the earth, forget to notice that the words are spoken primarily of the righteous, and therefore if the bare use of the word recompense proves that the wicked receive all their punishment here, then the righteous, as they receive their full recompense here, must expect no felicity hereafter. And so we have got round to the conclusion of the atheist or moral deist, that there is neither good nor evil beyond the grave. And let them escape from this conclusion if they can. But this is not all. Their interpretation of this text utterly sets aside the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is, according to this, no manner of need that Christ should die to atone for sin, or rescue the sinner from its punishment, for he bears the whole himself in the earth. He has his full recompense, and what need of a Saviour to interfere in his behalf?

3. A third text alleged in proof of the non-existence of future punishment is, "The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Now it is plain, if this text furnishes conclusive proof that there will be no punishment of sin in the future world, it is equally as strong to prove that there is no punishment of sin in this world; and so it overthrows their fundamental principle, that sin is recompensed here. If sin deserves punishment, it is no how inconsistent with God's goodness to inflict it; and it is as little incompatible with this amiable attribute to inflict deserved punishment in the future world as in the present. All that it is requisite to be assured of is, that the pain inflicted is just. Manifestly, then, nothing can be inferred from this and similar texts unless we will draw conclusions in direct opposition to plain facts, and also to principles acknowledged by those who use the argument. Declamation concerning the goodness and tender mercy of God may beguile the simple, but will have no effect on those who know that the name of Jehovah, as given by himself, is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth—but will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6-7.

4. Another text adduced in favor of the salvation of all without future punishment is, that Christ "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But what has this to do with the question, whether the impenitent sinner shall be punished in a future state? And who before ever thought that in order to subdue an enemy, and put him under one's feet, it was requisite that he must be made completely and everlastingly happy? The apostle Paul, in this chapter, is treating of the resurrection of the bodies of believers to immortality and glory, and says nothing of the unbelieving and impenitent. But even if we should admit that by the all made alive in Christ the whole of mankind should be understood, the only consequence that can legitimately be derived from the words is, that all men will be raised from the dead by the power of Christ; a doctrine clearly taught in other parts of Scripture. But because all men shall be raised from the dead, that they may be judged according to the deeds done in the body, it does by no means follow that they shall all be received into heaven; for some will rise, as our Saviour declares, unto the resurrection of damnation.

5. The only other text which I shall now consider, is, that “all things shall be reconciled to God.” There are many texts in the Bible in which general expressions of this sort are used; but it is very evident that they are not always intended to embrace every individual of the human family. If we should interpret them without limitation or qualification, wherever they are found, we should inevitably be involved in contradictions and absurdities. According to this mode of interpretation, it might be proved as easily that all men will be lost, as that all will be saved. Every good interpreter of the Bible feels the necessity of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and deducing such a meaning from each passage as shall not be repugnant to the plain dictates of the Spirit in other places. Because it is said that the whole world lieth in wickedness, we do not so understand the apostle as if he meant to teach that every man in the world was lying in wickedness, and that there was no Christian sanctified in part; but this is spoken of the greater number of men, or rather, of the heathen nations, who are commonly called the world in the New Testament.

But we will now adduce texts of Scripture sufficient to convince all candid inquirers, that the doctrine of Universalists is in utter contradiction to the word of God.

1. Our blessed Saviour says, “Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The same awful truth is repeated in Luke: “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.” Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5. Here the casting into hell comes after the death of the body, and must therefore mean future punishment beyond the grave. The truth is so plain, that argument or comment seems to be superfluous: it cannot be made more evident. Feeling, however, a curiosity to know what gloss these deniers of all future punishment could put on a text so plain, we turned to a pamphlet written by one of their most popular preachers, and found that by being cast into hell, he understands, being thrown into the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. The body, indeed, after being killed, might have been cast into this valley, but how the soul could be punished in this valley he has not explained; nor has he assigned any reason why being cast into this valley is so much more fearful than having the body killed by men. Such an interpretation is too absurd to require refutation.

2. “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:29. These are also the words of Him who is Truth itself, and they teach as clearly as words can teach, that after the bodies of the wicked have lain for a time in the grave, they will come forth unto the resurrection of damnation. Is not this future punishment? What evasion can the most perverse ingenuity find here? They tell us that by graves we are not to understand literal graves, and that the death here spoken of is a moral, not a natural death. Well, then, what is the import of the passage? What, according to this interpretation, is the meaning of the resurrection to damnation?

3. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.” Matthew 25:1-46. Is there no reference to future punishment in these solemn declarations of our Lord? If not, then there is no reference to the future blessedness of the righteous. If ten thousand persons were set to read this portion of Scripture, and each to declare what he believed to be the plain import of the words, can

it be believed that there would be found one individual who would doubt whether or not future punishment was threatened here? Certainly not, unless he had been perverted by the false glosses of Universalist teachers. One of them, whose words are now before me, calls this a parable: "It is supposed," says he, "to furnish an argument in favor of endless happiness on the one hand, and ceaseless perdition on the other. But is there any thing said in the parable about either endless happiness or ceaseless misery? No; there is not." What unblushing assurance must the man possess, who could allow himself to utter and print such a declaration. With such all reasoning is useless; and if Scripture testimony of the clearest and most solemn kind can be set aside by a positive denial of the plain, common meaning of the words, surely it is vain to cite Scripture in proof of any position. But these opposers of the truth, when a text is too evidently against their doctrine, and when they are not satisfied with their own attempts at perverting its meaning, do not scruple to call its authenticity in question. Thus, in regard to this text, the writer already referred to, after denominating the whole passage a parable, and denying that it contains the doctrine of endless happiness and ceaseless misery, apparently dissatisfied with his own exposition, says, "If Mark, Luke, and John believed that Christ taught the awful doctrine of endless woe and misery to any part of the human race, why did none of them record the parable? But neither the parable of the tares, nor any part of the 30th chapter of Matthew is to be found in either of the other evangelists. If they had known any thing about these parables, and believed that they contained proof of so awful a doctrine as that of ceaseless perdition, would they have passed them over in silence?" Here the disregard to the authority of Scripture is manifest. Is not the clear testimony of one inspired apostle sufficient to establish a doctrine? A great part of what is read in the gospel of John is not recorded by any of the other evangelists; must it on this account be rejected? And if the passage does not teach the doctrine of future punishment, why are they so solicitous to get rid of it?

4. Our Lord, in the explanation of the parable of the tares, says, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:40-43. And in the parable of the net cast into the sea, in the same chapter, our Lord, in the application, says, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:47-50. In these passages the punishment threatened is to be inflicted by the ministry of angels at the end of the world, and must, of course, be future punishment. And as this tremendous punishment of being cast into a furnace of fire is threatened to all workers of iniquity, it must be endured after the resurrection. There is here no need of exposition. Every word is as plain as it is terrible. There is no room for plausible evasion. The Universalist may say, as in the former case, that there is no account of this in the other evangelists. If that was an argument of any force, we might as well lay aside the Bible; but one "thus saith the Lord" is enough: the testimony of one inspired apostle will satisfy every one who believes in the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. But although these parables are not repeated by the other evangelists, the same doctrine of future punishment is inculcated with equal clearness by them all, as will appear by the following testimonies.

5. Mark 9:1-50, records a discourse of Christ, in which the certainty and perpetuity of future punishment are taught as explicitly and strongly as they can be in words. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And to give emphasis to this awful declaration, our Lord repeats it three several times. Surely it becomes us to tremble at the word of the Lord, and to obey his voice, by denying ourselves and repenting of our sins, rather than to invent such glosses as would make him speak in a way totally unworthy of a divine teacher.

6. Our next testimony for future punishment shall be taken from the gospel of Luke, Luke 16:19-31. Here we have set before us the different conditions of men in the state after death, in the case of two persons—the rich man and Lazarus. It matters not whether this be considered the history of real personages, or a parable; the doctrine inculcated is the same. If the plainest words can teach any thing, we are here taught that to some the state after death is a state of misery—hopeless, excruciating misery. The man here spoken of is expressly said to be dead and buried; and what our Lord testifies that he suffered, was after his death and burial. "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." The dreadful nature of his suffering is strongly described in the words which he is represented as employing in his address to Abraham: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." And the hopelessness of his miserable condition may be learned from Abraham's answer: "Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." If this discourse of our Lord does not teach that there is misery to some men after death, then we may give up all hope of learning any thing from his plainest and most pointed discourses.

7. The evangelist John also records clear and frequent testimonies of this doctrine. We have already cited one testimony from him. We give another: "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. Here there is no room for any doubt on account of the import of particular terms. That the life here spoken of is life in a future state, cannot be denied, for it is expressly called everlasting life; and it is expressly asserted that unbelievers shall not partake of this life. Now if they are deprived of life in the future world, they are deprived of happiness; there is no medium between life and death, happiness and misery. Unbelievers must therefore be miserable in the future world. And this seems to be asserted strongly in the last words quoted: "And the wrath of God abideth on him." These words do not merely signify that the final unbeliever is under wrath while in this world, but that this is an abiding state. It is the contrast to the possession of eternal life. While the wicked are in this world, they are indeed under a sentence of wrath, but the execution of this wrath is reserved for a future state. The greatest sinners and most obstinate unbelievers live in ease and pleasure here, and do not suffer the wrath under the sentence of which they lie. But it will abide upon them, and the vials of this divine wrath will be poured out upon them to all eternity.

8. "I said, therefore, that ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go, ye cannot come." John 8:21. With this may be connected several other testimonies in which it is clearly implied that the wicked cannot escape future punishment: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" "For what is a

man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Luke 13:24; Hebrews 2:3; Matthew 16:26.

9. "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." Matthew 12:31-32; 1 John 5:16. But if there is no future punishment, then this sin must be forgiven; or forgiveness is of no consequence to obtain future happiness.

10. "But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matthew 26:24. But if there will be no future punishment, Judas will fare as well as the greatest saint. Indeed, his case was more eligible than that of any of the apostles; for they lived in the midst of persecution, while he was enjoying pleasure. How, then, could it have been good for him never to have been born? According to Universalists, he has an eternity of bliss before him, and therefore, if he had suffered a thousand ages of years, it would be an infinite benefit to be born.

11. Let us now attend to a few testimonies from the apostle Paul. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. Here the just rules of interpretation require us to consider death, as it stands in contrast with eternal life, to be eternal death.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction." Php_3:18-19. This destruction, which comes at the end of the sinner's course, cannot be natural death; for to this all are subject, the friends as well as the enemies of the cross. It is certainly a destruction which is peculiar to the wicked, and as it is their end, must be future punishment, or the second death.

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." Romans 2:3-12. The apostle is here laying down the principles on which the whole world will be judged at the last day; and can there be a doubt in any mind that the wicked are here threatened with future punishment? "When the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. The punishment here threatened is of the nature of vengeance—taking vengeance: it is to be inflicted on all who obey not the gospel when the Lord shall come; that is, at the day of

judgment. The duration of the punishment is everlasting. In whatever sense this word is understood, the argument is equally conclusive in favor of future punishment. No testimony can be made more direct and explicit to prove future punishment than these words of Paul. We should be at a loss, if required to frame a declaration which should fully express the doctrine of the future punishment of the wicked, to invent one more clear and positive.

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:26-27, Hebrews 10:30-31. Perhaps we have adduced more texts than are necessary; for if one were to rise from the dead and testify that there was a dreadful hell, these Universalists would not believe him. They will not believe Moses and the prophets; yea, they refuse to give credit to the repeated declarations of Christ himself and his inspired apostles. It is to be feared that some of them are of the number whom God hath given up “to believe a lie” in just judgment, because they were unwilling to obey the truth. In regard to such our labor will be altogether in vain; but there are many others who have been induced to lend a favorable ear to this flesh-pleasing doctrine, who have yet some respect for the holy Scriptures, and whose consciences are not yet seared as with a hot iron. To pluck some of these as brands from the burning, may be practicable. But our chief hope is to secure those from falling into the snare of the devil who are exposed to this soul-destroying heresy.

The legitimate and practical consequences of this doctrine are of such an appalling nature, that if the propagators of it were not reckless of consequences, they would pause in their course, and hesitate about casting around them firebrands, arrows, and death. Greater mischief cannot be done to men, than by disseminating among them such erroneous opinions as remove from their minds those salutary restraints which preserve them from giving indulgence to sin, or such as lull them into a false security, and persuade them to neglect attention to that preparation which is necessary to fit them for death and judgment. And if any opinion is dangerous above all others to the best interests of men, it is the one which I have refuted in this tract. Among the many evil consequences of this doctrine I would mention the following.

1. It does violence to the holy Scriptures, and perverts the plain and obvious meaning of numerous passages which speak of the future punishment of impenitent sinners. And if in one case we may thus set aside the express and repeated declarations of God, to accommodate the doctrine to our own reason and inclinations, the volume of inspiration is dishonored and rendered useless; for upon these principles we may reject every fundamental truth of the Bible. If the doctrine of future punishment is not taught in the Bible, neither is the doctrine of future happiness; for they are commonly inculcated in the same passages, and in similar language.

2. If it be true that sin is not punished in the future world, then it would follow that God exercises no moral government over the world; for in the present life the wicked often live at ease and are prosperous, while the virtuous are afflicted. This doctrine goes far to annihilate all difference between virtue and vice, for we must judge of these according to the treatment which they respectively receive from the supreme Ruler; but if there be no future punishment, there is no strong mark of disapprobation set on vice. A doctrine which involves such a consequence as this,

must be false and dangerous.

3. If this doctrine should become general, human society could not exist. Like atheism, to which it is near akin, its malignant tendency is not fully seen while society at large is under the influence of a contrary belief. But take away from the minds of all men the fear of judgment and eternity, and this world becomes a scene of violence—an aceldama. All confidence among men would be destroyed; all the bonds of civil society would be severed. Do not say that vice might be coerced by the civil law—a vain hope. Where the whole mass is corrupt, laws are useless. What means of ascertaining the truth in courts of justice will remain, without which justice cannot be administered, if no man fears the consequences of perjury? Suppose a man who has no fear of judgment, to be solemnly called upon to declare the truth in a case where his own honor and interest, or that of some friend, is at stake; what is there to prevent him from perjuring himself? Or if he can gratify secret malice by swearing against the life of an enemy, what shall restrain him? He may reason with himself thus: “I know this is a wicked act, but it will serve my purpose, it will enable me to gratify my revenge; I have nothing to fear. Detection here is impossible, and hereafter I am sure of heaven, do as I will.” What security should we have that our food and medicine would not be mingled with poison in every house? The men who propagate such doctrines, are manifestly pursuing a course destructive to the peace and good order of society. I would fully as soon have an atheist to bear witness against me on oath, or to sit in judgment as a juror, as one of these new-fangled Universalists.

4. If there is no future punishment, the wicked, who are driven away in their wickedness, are happier than the righteous who are preserved to suffer. The wicked antediluvians who perished in the flood, had a better portion and a richer reward than Noah; for they all escaped the troubles of life and went to heaven, while Noah and his family were subjected to innumerable hardships for some hundreds of years. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were better off, though they were destroyed by fire from heaven, than righteous Lot, who escaped; for they were released at once from all pain and sorrow, but his afflictions were many. The wicked Canaanites were too bad to live upon earth, and therefore God enjoined it on Joshua to extirpate them; but not too bad to be admitted at once to heaven without any repentance or sanctification! Their lot was, therefore, greatly preferable to that of the Israelites, who endured many toils and sufferings. Upon this theory, Judas was rather benefited than injured by his base and ungrateful crime of betraying his Lord, and by his suicide. Indeed, if there be no future punishment, and the next world be better than this, not only will suicide be innocent and beneficial, but there can be no great harm in murder. It only ushers a fellow-creature into superior bliss a little earlier than if he were left to die a natural death.

5. Upon the supposition that this doctrine is true, repentance is useless; neither is there any need of sanctification. Heaven is the sinner's right, without any condition or preparation. How the ungodly will be pleased with the place and its exercises, is another question. Whether dying will take away their disrelish for devotional exercises, is not explained. But there is no need of undergoing the sorrows of repentance for sin. This the Universalist acknowledges. A writer before referred to declares, that “there is not the least occasion for solicitude about salvation, neither is it in our power to promote or hinder it.” We did suppose that the advocates of this doctrine would have pleaded for repentance, which is nothing else but a turning from sin to God, as useful to prevent evil in this life; but we find that in this we mistook their views, for the same writer asserts,

concerning the evils which sin produce here, that “these consequences are inevitable, and cannot be escaped, even by repentance.” What these men can preach, or why they should preach at all, we do not see.

6. Upon this theory there is no need of religion of any kind; no connection exists between religion and salvation—between the man who loves and serves God, and him who hates him and despises his service. Atheism is as good as piety; idolatry and heresy as safe as a way to heaven as truth and righteousness. The one thing needful is, to be fully persuaded that nothing is needful. If men are only informed that there will be no future reckoning, no condemnation of the wicked, no future punishment, they need know nothing else; and whether they believe it or not, all are in the safe way to heaven! We presume that the principal preaching of Universalists is on the single point, that the wicked have nothing to fear on account of their sins; for why should they disturb their hearers about believing or doing other things? But the benefits of this system will, in the future world, be as fully enjoyed by those who oppose the doctrine, as by those who believe and preach it.

7. This doctrine encourages men to continue in sin, by removing all fear of future judgment and punishment. In this respect its tendency is as bad as atheism itself, for the most impious denial of a divine Being cannot promise more to its foolish votaries than exemption from judgment and future punishment. This species of Universalism is fraught with the very worst poison of atheism. It tells the sinner, that, let him act as wickedly as he will, or as he can, there is no fear of future misery. Indeed, it is in some respects worse than atheism, for it not only promises exemption from punishment, but the reward of eternal happiness to the impenitent sinner. It says to the atrocious murderer and cruel assassin, “You need fear no evil hereafter; though you should die in the commission of the foulest deeds, heaven, with all its glory and happiness, is yours.” Is not this shocking to every honest mind? And what must the effect be on profane, cruel, and abandoned profligates? How pernicious its influence in the hour of temptation! Suppose an inexperienced youth in a place of trust to have imbibed this doctrine. An opportunity occurs of defrauding his employer of a vast sum of money, with the prospect of escaping detection. Well, what shall hinder him from enriching himself at once? If the belief of a future judgment were now to rise in his mind, he would be ready, like Joseph, to say, “How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?” But having no apprehension of any judgment to come, and sure of heaven, let him do what he will, he is led into temptation, and is deprived of every consideration which would lead him to resist it. Even the faint hope that there is no future punishment, has a powerful effect in leading corrupt men to commit atrocious crimes, although this hope is contrary to all that they have ever been taught; but who can calculate the influence of a persuasion that there is no future punishment for the greatest crimes, derived from men who pretend to be preachers of the gospel? Doubtless a large portion of the most abominable crimes that ever were perpetrated, owe their existence to a secret belief or hope of the truth of the very doctrine which Universalists preach.

8. It is a horrible consequence of this doctrine, that it puts it in the power of the sinner to set God himself at defiance with impunity. The malignant, ungrateful wretch, instead of praising, may blaspheme the great Jehovah every day of his life, and may die with horrid blasphemies on his lips, and yet he shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness! Indeed, as all the punishment of sin is supposed to be in this life, when a sinner commits some horrible crime in the last moments of his life, as in a late case where a man first shot an innocent person, and then blew out his own brains, where or how will he receive his due punishment? His death is but the pang of a moment,

and if there be no retribution for such crimes in the government of God, it cannot be believed that he is a righteous moral Governor.

9. But how are sinners prepared for the enjoyment of the pure and elevated pleasures of heaven? The Scriptures everywhere teach the necessity of a change of heart, before sinners can enjoy the kingdom of God; and this is not an arbitrary appointment, but arises from the nature of the case. Reason and experience assure us that there must be a congruity between the state of the mind and those objects from which it derives its pleasure. Where no such suitableness exists, there is a natural incapacity for that particular species of pleasure. This is a fact so evident and so well understood, that it stands in no need of illustration. How then, we ask, can men of depraved habits, all whose moral sensibilities have been blunted by a long course of sinning, relish the pure and sublime joys of heaven without a change? Such men cannot endure the mention, much less the participation of holy exercises while here; nothing is so much the object of their detestation as spiritual religion. And there is no ground for the opinion, that death can make any radical change in the moral character and feelings. The wicked, therefore, who die in impenitence, never can go to heaven; and if admitted, they could have no real enjoyment themselves, while they would disturb the harmony and interrupt the felicity of that high and holy place.

10. This doctrine renders totally unnecessary the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ. For if the sinner be fully recompensed for his sin here, what need of a Saviour to die for those sins, the punishment of which he himself endures in this world?

But if the Universalist should choose to rest his doctrine on the ground that sinners would have suffered hereafter if Christ had not atoned for their sins, I would ask how long they would have suffered? Or in other words, what is the original penalty of the law of God? Now, if it can be shown that any future punishment in the Scriptures is threatened, it will be easy to show that the rejecters of the gospel, or impenitent sinners, will suffer that punishment; for what can be plainer than that the heaviest penalties, and those most clearly and repeatedly expressed in the word of God, are those denounced by Christ against them who refuse to believe his doctrine? If, then, men were exposed to any future punishment before Christ came, it is most evident that the impenitent are still exposed to the same, and greater. Therefore the Universalist doctrine cannot rest on this ground. And it is clear as any thing can be, that, according to this system, there was no need of a Saviour. Christ came without an errand, and shed his blood for no purpose, which is blasphemy.

In conclusion, I would solemnly warn all who may cast their eyes on these pages, to beware of this pernicious doctrine, and not to encourage those who go about the country preaching this soul-destroying error. Only suppose for a moment that their doctrine is false, and in what a deplorable condition are their disciples! How dreadful their mistake! These deceivers endeavor to seduce men from the doctrine of Christ by a great show of philanthropy and benevolence. They call the doctrine of endless punishment cruel and unmerciful, and rail against pious and orthodox ministers who hold it and preach it, as monsters of cruelty. This is a cheap way of showing benevolence. It is just that sort of philanthropy which an unfaithful watchman would exhibit, who should pertinaciously insist that there was no danger near, even when the enemy was in sight, and boast of his kindness because he would not suffer the citizens to be awakened from their sleep. The belief that many millions of our race are living in misery, and that all of the hundreds of millions now on earth will, in a short time, be cut off by death, is no evidence of a want of philanthropy.

Benevolence does not consist in holding and teaching that men are liable to little or no misery, but in active exertions to relieve them from that evil which they suffer, and to arouse them to flee from the misery which impends. Which then, I ask, are the friends of men; they who endeavor to lull them into a fatal security in regard to the future, or those who faithfully warn them of their danger? Are they to be reckoned the truly benevolent, whose doctrine tends to encourage men in sin, and to induce them to think that repentance and reformation are useless; or they who labor to bring their fellow-creatures to forsake sin, and live piously and justly? Suppose the latter even to be mistaken, their error is on the safe side, and will hurt nobody; but if the Universalist should be in error, what imagination can conceive the dreadful consequences of his mistake? They say that the doctrine of endless punishment is "cruel and unmerciful;" but this is not true, unless it is unjust—and this they cannot prove. It is customary with them to appeal to the tender feelings and sympathies of their hearers, and to conclude that if a parent would not inflict such a punishment on his children, much less will God on his creatures. But this is a false method of reasoning. An amiable child shudders at seeing a criminal suffer the just punishment of the law, but this is no argument against the punishment of the guilty.

It would be easy to persuade a set of convicted felons that the law which condemned them was cruel and unmerciful, because they are deeply interested persons, and do not take into consideration the important ends to be answered to the public by their punishment. Thus wicked men are easily brought to believe that the penalties threatened in the Scriptures are cruel and unmerciful; but such opinions ought to have no weight with the candid and impartial inquirer after truth. All comparisons on this subject fail; for neither parents nor civil rulers, nor any other beings in the universe, except the supreme Ruler, are under obligations to punish sin according to its merit. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." No other is capable of estimating the evil of sin, and of inflicting punishment in exact proportion to its evil. If reasoning from the sympathies of our nature, and especially from the tender feelings of parents, were of real force, it would be as conclusive against the judgments of God on individuals and communities in this world, as against future punishment. For what benevolent parent would subject his children to the innumerable forms of evil and suffering which are everywhere witnessed in our world? How many perish by shipwreck, by pestilence, by earthquakes, by oppression, by war, and by persecution! But because a kind earthly father could not endure to see his children suffer such things, must we conclude that it is an unrighteous thing in the Governor of the universe to recompense the wicked by such judgments? Or will these men deny that God has any thing to do in bringing these evils upon men?

How is it possible that reasonable men, with the Bible in their hands, can believe in the doctrine of Universalists? If they would only listen to the dictates of conscience, they never could think that there was no future punishment for sinners of the deepest dye. The very heathen, as many of them as believe in a future state, hold the doctrine of future punishment for the crimes of a wicked life. There never before was a sect of heretics who altogether denied the doctrine of future punishment. Even the Mohammedans maintain the doctrine of eternal punishment. Most Unitarians, however they may hesitate about everlasting punishment, teach the doctrine of future punishment. The maintenance of a tenet so absurd and dangerous seems to have been reserved for these last times, and is even now almost entirely confined to these United States. It seems to be the most desperate effort of the father of lies. As we said before, this doctrine had its origin in

paradise, and was the very doctrine by which the grand adversary murdered our whole race; but never, until recently, could any number of men be found of sufficient hardihood to avow it as the main article of their creed. It contains within itself the virulent poison of all other errors and heresies; yea, it leaves in the distance every form of infidelity. Atheism, black and blasphemous as it is, is not so dangerous as this doctrine; for it as completely removes all restraint from the sinner as atheism, assuring the vilest sinners that they have nothing to fear hereafter; and not only so, but promising them the rich reward of eternal life. The prevalence of this soul-destroying error, in some parts of our land, is truly alarming. Every patriot, as well as every Christian, is bound to use his best endeavors to check the progress of an error fraught with so many dreadful consequences.

THE POOR MAN'S GUIDE AND FRIEND

written for a series of tracts in large type and simple style

My little book I make for the poor rather than the rich, first, because our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preached the gospel especially to the poor. Matthew 11:5. Secondly, because God commonly chooses his people from among the poor of this world, to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. James 2:5. And thirdly, because the poor have less time and opportunity to learn those things which belong to their peace than others.

In some parts of the country, the people have pastors to watch over them and visit them; and if their teachers are faithful, they will, as often as they can, come to the dwellings of the poor with such lessons of instruction as they need. But there are other places, in which the people are as sheep without a shepherd. They have no one to guide them in religion, and perhaps seldom have the opportunity of hearing a gospel sermon. Now for the sake of such I write, especially for the poor. Let no man be ashamed of honest poverty. Our blessed Lord, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. None are poorer in this world's goods than he was; for he was born in a stable, and had a manger or trough for his cradle. And when grown up to be a man, he could say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

When I say that this little book is for the poor man, I do not mean to pass by the woman: no; I consider her as perhaps more likely to profit by what I may write than the other sex. "In Christ there is neither male nor female." All partake of the same sinful nature, and all are children of wrath. All need the atoning blood of Christ, and no other foundation can be laid than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Let, I pray you, this little book come into your house, and be read, and taken care of. Let it be considered a friend, for the feelings of the writer, be assured, are of a friendly kind; and though he cannot go with his book, he will accompany it with his prayers. And he wishes to speak to every one into whose hands it may fall, as if he were present. By this he desires to converse with the reader. And if it should happen to fall into the hands of some who cannot read, let them get the aid of their neighbors to read it to them. Join me in this short prayer for the blessing of God on the truth it contains.

a prayer

O Lord, our Almighty Creator, kind Preserver, bountiful Benefactor, and merciful Redeemer, be graciously pleased to send light into our dark minds by the reading of this little book. So far as it contains a correct statement of truth, may it be made the means of leading our poor souls in the way of duty and of salvation, which we humbly ask, not on account of any worthiness in ourselves, but only for the sake of Christ, thy beloved Son and our Mediator. Amen.

first visit

Friends, I perceive that you are poor, and have many troubles and difficulties to distress and disturb you. While others have more than heart can wish, and spend their days in ease and pleasure, your lot is to labor hard, and to eat your bread with the sweat of your brow. And often, with all your toil, you are scarcely able to obtain food and raiment. In the day of calamity, when sickness comes upon you, or on the mother of your children, you are brought into great trouble. The children cry for bread when, alas, there is none in the house, and no money to buy a single loaf. At the same time, the very dogs of your rich neighbor have more food than they can devour. The thought of your poverty, and the abounding wealth of others, is apt to stir up a feeling of discontent and envy in your hearts. But this is wrong. God gives to whom he will, and withholds from whom he will. Besides, though the rich man has his good things in this world, he is in great danger of having nothing but evil in the world to come. I assure you, the rich man is not to be envied. He also has his vexatious cares and troubles in this life, as well as the poor; yea, often, while the laboring poor enjoy robust health, he is pining with disease. And while the poor man's sleep is sweet after his labor, the rich man is prevented from sleeping by care and anxiety for fear of losing his wealth. While the poor man has a keen relish for his coarse and homely fare, the rich man turns away in disgust from a table loaded with dainties; so that the rich man has not so much the advantage of the poor man as he seems to have. And the poor man has this in his favor, that there are fewer hinderances in his way to heaven than stand in the path of the rich man. Our Lord has told us that riches so stop the way to heaven, to those who possess them, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." This single consideration should make you contented with your condition. Not that it is a matter of course for a poor man to get to heaven. Alas, no; "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" but "wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat."

I have not found a more alarming text than this within the lids of the Bible. Those words, few there be that find it, should continue to sound in our ears until we have clean escaped from the "wrath to come," and have found refuge in the house of God's mercy. The poor man can no more enter heaven, without becoming a new creature, than the rich. Our Lord's words are, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Some poor people who are great sufferers in this world, think that their many troubles here will somehow be an atonement for the sins which they have committed, so that they hope to escape punishment in the world to come.

When I was itinerating in the mountains of Virginia, I spent a few days at the house of an aged widow. She was not poor, but she seemed to have more trouble than the poorest people I met with. From morning to night she was bustling and running hither and thither, and calling to the servants, and scolding at such a rate that I wondered that she did not weary herself to death. And this was not the course of one day only, but of every day. But let me say to her credit that I was

never treated more kindly by any body, and she was particularly kind to ministers of the gospel.

I took the liberty one day of saying to her mildly, "Why do you trouble yourself so much about the things of this world? You are now aged, and must very soon leave all these concerns; better turn your attention to the necessary preparation for another world."

She burst out a crying, and said, "I cannot help it. I am a lone widow, and no man on the place to take the management; and if I did not scuffle as you see me doing, every thing would soon go to wreck and ruin."

"Madam," said I, "I approve of your industry and energy in managing your affairs; but I think that some portion of your time and attention should be given to the concerns of your soul, which is undoubtedly 'the one thing needful.' "

Upon this her feelings became more violent, and in a crying tone she said, "I do not think that any poor creature ever suffered more than I have done. My husband died, and left me to take care of seven young children; and ever since I have been toiling and striving to keep things together, and to bring up my family in a Christian way; but I have had one trouble after another, so that my poor heart has often been almost broke. And I hope," said she, "that my Maker will consider what I have suffered in this world, and that he will not be so hard as to make me miserable in the world to come. I am sure I have suffered enough already."

"Dear madam," said I, "your worldly sorrows will never atone for one of your sins. The Bible teaches that godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life, but the sorrow of the world worketh death." She now became more composed, and listened with apparent seriousness to what I judged it proper to say.

This brings to my recollection a scene which I witnessed a few days afterwards, in the most out-of-the-way place I ever was in. It was at the foot of the Blue Ridge, on the head of Smith's river, a branch of the Roanoke. This settlement is completely shut out from the rest of the world by high and steep mountains, and there was only one road by which a horse or wagon could go in or come out. The women rarely or never come out, and retain all the fashions of dress which were customary in the time of their grandmothers. Here I found a man who had been eighteen years an elder in the Presbyterian church, but had never had any true religion until within a few months of the time I visited the place. Two zealous ministers had found their way into this cove, and spent a week in preaching to the people. Among other fruits of their labors was the conversion of this elder, now nearly threescore years of age; and I do not know that I ever met with a young convert who seemed to have such a flow of tender feeling. He could not speak of his own wonderful conversion, after having been a professor in the church for nearly forty years, and an elder for eighteen years, without a flood of tears. He went about from house to house, and warned the people of their danger; and he seemed to feel that it was especially his duty to go to professors, many of whom he feared were asleep in their sins, shielded from conviction by the profession which they had made.

But to come to the point. This old man, but young Christian, had got hold of a Tract, which in those days was a rare thing in that country. Having read it himself, he could not rest until all his neighbors had heard it. It was, I think, on Saturday afternoon, a number of persons, by his invitation, assembled in the log-house in which he dwelt. Though I was present, he did not ask me

to read the Tract, but chose to do this himself. And seldom have I anywhere seen so many tears shed by the same number of persons. When he came to any thing of an affecting nature, he would stop to weep, and in the midst of his tears would give a fervent exhortation to the young people present. And what do you think this Tract was? Why, "Gregory's Legacy to a Daughter," which thousands have read without a tear.

I have related the foregoing anecdote for two reasons. First, to show the importance of faithful ministers occasionally leaving their flocks and going into the dark corners, where the gospel is seldom heard. I could relate many facts to prove the benefit of such a course. In a single fortnight they may do more good than in the whole year besides. The other reason is, to show the value of Tracts in the distant and dark settlements of our country. Because those little messengers are often undervalued near great cities and in old settlements, we must not suppose that they will not be valued where books are scarce, and where the gospel is seldom heard.

And now, my friends, it is time that you and I should rest for a while. Let this pass for my first visit. You see that I am a plain-spoken man, and do not stick very close to any one subject. Put the little book on the shelf till another opportunity, which I hope will be soon.

second visit

I see, friends, that you have hard work to make out to live in the world. This has been a hard winter, and your children have suffered for want of good shoes and warm clothing. But now the spring comes on apace, and the grass begins to spring, and the early flowers to peep out of the ground. Now the sun rises high in the heavens, the days begin sensibly to lengthen, and the warm breezes to blow.

I always rejoice in the return of spring, on account of the poor; for though it is a time of labor, to the industrious poor it is a time of enjoyment. The ploughman relishes his homely fare, when in the evening he returns to his cottage; and the sleep of the laboring man is sweet. In the morning he rises with the first appearance of dawn, and is soon seen following his plough, or sowing his grain, or clearing up his new ground. If peace and temperance are guests there, the cottager has as much contentment as the rich: he relishes his food as well, he enjoys his sleep as sweetly, and experiences as much pleasure from the cheerfulness and affection and innocent prattle of his little ones. The rich man often is obliged, on account of diseases contracted by idleness and luxury, to live on brown bread and lie on a hard bed; his physician forbids him the use of the dainties with which his table is loaded, and he must undergo voluntary labor to exercise his diseased frame; while the poor man, who is industrious, enjoys robust health, and has no experience of those miserable feelings which arise from a diseased stomach and deranged nerves. He scarcely ever reflects that he has a stomach, except when he is hungry; and as to nerves, he is happily innocent of any knowledge of those sensitive chords.

The great curse of poverty is vice. Brutal anger and rudeness, sullen discontent, and rankling envy and hatred, are sufficient to bring misery into a paradise. And when you add to bad passions, which naturally spring up in the human bosom, the complicated evils of intemperance, you have some idea of the real miseries which are found in many cottages of the poor. Filth, disorder, and want, render them the seats of almost uninterrupted wretchedness. And soon disease will follow in the train of the evils mentioned—often chronic disease, painful and loathsome, and remediless.

The whole mass has become corrupt; and the malady is often aggravated instead of being cured by quack medicines.

The poetical idea of a cottage can seldom be realized; yet sometimes there is an approximation to it.

When settled first as a pastor, I observed coming regularly to church a tall, neat, but plainly dressed young woman, whose manners were exceedingly retiring and reserved. She seemed to shun every opportunity of acquaintance; for as soon as the service was over she would be off, and on her way home. I learned, however, from a female friend of hers, that she was a girl of uncommon intelligence, and very considerable reading, and above all, that she was in reality what she appeared to be, eminently pious.

I was told that one reason of her shyness was continual mortification on account of the foolish and eccentric conduct of her father, who was a talkative and opinionated old man. In early life he had appeared very zealous in religion, and began study with his pastor, with a view to the ministry; but he had not steadiness to persevere, and having got a little smattering of learning, he became exceedingly vain and boastful. He had, indeed, an extraordinary memory for words, and would repeat whole chapters of the Bible verbatim. But he was not contented with the common creed, and adopted many strange notions, which he brought out and defended on all occasions. Sometimes, indeed, he would hold forth in public, and professed to have a divine call to make known the truths which he said had been made known to him; and the only thing which prevented him from often speaking in public was, that he could get no audience to remain to hear him. Besides this amiable and accomplished daughter, he had one son, who, though industrious in cultivating the farm, had much of his father's vain-glorious disposition. In all religious excitements this young man became very conspicuous, and by his ostentatious display produced disgust in almost every mind. The mother of this young woman was also still living, but being infirm and somewhat melancholy, she seldom left the house even to attend church.

On account of these circumstances, Eusebia generally appeared alone, and seldom was any one invited to the house, which stood in a recluse spot.

It was evident, however, that disease was secretly undermining her constitution, and after a while she was no longer able to come to church; her seat became vacant. As the pastor of the church, I felt it to be my duty to visit her; but knowing the extreme sensibility of her feelings, I thought it prudent to use the mediation of her female friend before mentioned. After a considerable struggle, she consented to see me in company with her friend.

I was struck, on entering the cottage, with the perfect neatness and cleanliness of every article of furniture. Every curtain and bed-cover was purely white, and wove and spun with her own hands. She was unable to sit up, but lay reclined on a low bed in a small room adjoining the one which we first entered. Though distant always before, she now expressed strong satisfaction in seeing me, and said she had often derived much comfort from my preaching, but could never, until now, summon confidence enough to speak to me.

"I have," said she, "been kept back by foolish feelings of diffidence, with which I now find much pride has been mingled. But I am persuaded that I am soon to leave the world. I am desirous of availing myself of the instruction and advice of one who is invested with the office of a teacher."

I asked her respecting her spiritual condition, and her views of death and eternity.

She said, that “during the few years which she had been a member of the church, darkness and doubt had hung over her mind in an almost perpetual cloud; that she had been looking for something in her own heart which she could never find. She heard others speak of their ardent love to Christ, and of their overflowing joys; but her heart remained cold and insensible. At some rare times,” said she, “I experienced a little reviving, and felt a degree of tenderness, being able to weep freely, which gave me some relief. But on cool reflection, I attributed those melting frames to the peculiar state of my body; for on examination I could not find that my views of divine truth were at all brighter than before. And,” said she, “thus I continued until I heard you preach from the text, ‘By grace are ye saved,’ etc., when you told us, if we wanted solid comfort, we must look out of ourselves, and away from ourselves, to Christ and his perfect work.

“At that moment I seemed first fully to apprehend the freeness of divine grace. My crushed heart was encouraged and comforted. Christ appeared to me in a new light; and though some dark clouds have passed over my mind since, and some doubts have occasionally risen, they have been transient. And through the blessing of divine grace, I remain from day to day in a state of sweet composure. My sense of unworthiness and sinfulness is as great as before, but I have learned no longer to look for comfort to any thing in myself, but only to Christ. I see a sufficiency in him for every want, and I am enabled to confide in him. He is my all and in all; my Prophet, Priest, and King. He of God is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and what more do I want?

“Considering how naturally timid I am, I feel astonished at my own confidence and composure of mind. I hope, my dear pastor, there is no mistake in this matter; I hope that I am not embracing a delusion for the reality of God’s faithfulness in his promises.”

I told her that there could be no mistake in trusting every thing into the hands of Christ; that the stronger our confidence in him the better, and the less danger of deception.

Though her frame was emaciated, there was a heavenly calmness and sweet serenity in her countenance. Not having been accustomed to such scenes, my own feelings were unusual. I could think of little else when absent from her, than the sweet and heavenly appearance of her countenance; and being urged to come often, I did not fail to avail myself of the privilege of sitting by her bedside and receiving edification from the gracious words which proceeded from her lips. Often have I wished, while beholding her countenance lighted up with pure and spiritual hope and joy, and beaming with the feelings of benevolence, that some infidels whom I know could have witnessed this scene; it would have been more effectual to convince them of the blessed reality of religion than a thousand logical arguments.

She continued in the same calm and comfortable state unto her death. A few days before her end, I visited her, and on my taking leave, anticipating her departure, she clasped my hand in hers and said,

“My dear pastor, before I see you again, I shall be gone from this world of sorrow and sin. I thank you for all your kind attention to an unworthy creature. I go to meet my Saviour—my best friend—Him who shed his blood for my salvation—I go to dwell with saints and angels in heaven for ever. Farewell—I shall see your face no more in this world.”

Being a young pastor, the scene made a deep and lasting impression on my mind.

As I expected, the next tidings which I heard from Eusebia was a summons to attend her funeral. "Oh let me die the death of the righteous," for they have hope in their end. They are blessed, "and their works do follow them."

The foregoing narrative will furnish us with some profitable reflections.

1. We see that no situation in life is exempt from trouble. Piety in a cottage, with almost perfect seclusion from the world, with books, a few select friends, and access to the means of grace, would seem to furnish as complete an idea of happiness as we can readily conceive. All these advantages were fully enjoyed by this pious female, but still there was a worm gnawing at the root. Every rose has its thorn. Her affliction arose from a too exquisite sensibility, and too anxious a solicitude for the reputation of a parent. A corroding feeling of mortification depressed her spirits and undermined her health, and brought her to an untimely grave.

2. Some of the most perfect specimens of genuine piety are to be found far from the view of the gay and busy world, and often little noticed even by the majority of the members of the church. It flourishes and brings forth its precious fruit in the shade of retirement, observed only by a few select friends, and by that august Being who, though his throne be in the heavens, and eternity his dwelling-place, yet looks down with complacency on every humble, contrite spirit; yea, condescends to dwell with them.

"The humble spirit and contrite,

Is an abode of his delight:

The humble souls my words revive,

I bid the mourning sinner live."

3. We learn from the facts related above the superlative excellence of true religion. What else could produce such a dying scene as this? The deathbed was undoubtedly rendered the happiest on which this pious woman ever lay. There was here no sting, no terror, no pain; all was peace and joyful hope, and sweet and heavenly serenity. Could a fiction, a cunningly devised fable, produce such effects? Who can believe it?

If the mere prospect of heaven can afford such happiness, what must heaven itself be? If one drop, a mere foretaste, can so disarm pain, and fill the soul with divine consolations, who can conceive of the views of never-ending bliss which flow from the throne of God?

And to whom do we owe these high hopes and brilliant prospects? Not to ourselves, not to man, not to any creature; but to the eternal Son of God, to the beloved Redeemer, to Jesus, who knows by experience the miseries of death as a curse. He bore the curse, that his people might be exempt—the sting pierced his inmost soul, and henceforth lost its venom. He drank the bitter cup which sin had mingled, that it might for ever pass from us.

"Jesus can make a dying bed

Feel soft as downy pillows are,

While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.”

THE NEW SETTLEMENT

a true story

About a hundred years ago, four young married men left Pennsylvania to seek their fortune in New Virginia, then the most distant frontier, and still exposed to the invasion of the savages. But the country was inviting, the land fertile and well watered. They took up land in the same neighborhood. They did not consider the evil of bringing up families where there was no gospel preached, no public worship on the Sabbath, and no school for their children.

Indeed, there is some reason to think that one of them, at least, sought a dwelling in the wilderness to get far away from the sound of faithful preaching; for the great revival which occurred a little before, had prevailed in that part of Pennsylvania where he lived, and probably he had for a while been under serious impressions, but had shaken them all off. This man cherished a hatred to vital piety, which is seldom found so strong in any as in those who have once been somewhat concerned for their salvation. The last state of apostates is worse than the first.

One day a shoemaker came directly from this aged man's house to my father's to make winter shoes for the children; for in those days, and in that new country, both shoemakers and tailors were itinerant. This man was piously disposed, and very fond of reading pious books and sermons, and commonly had some in his wallet with his tools, which he was accustomed to read to the family where he was at work. On coming into the house he appeared somewhat agitated, and immediately told what had occurred at the house of this aged man. Being well acquainted, as he was passing through his yard, he stepped in to say “how do ye” to the family, and to warm himself; and while sitting by the fire he said to the old gentleman, “I have with me one of the most delightful books I ever saw.” The old gentleman, who was fond of reading, asked him what it was. He answered, “Whitefield's Sermons,” which had been recently published. In a moment the wrath of the master of the house was kindled to fury. His eyes flashed, and his countenance was inflamed. He rose to his feet, and with a threatening gesture said, “You're a liar, so you are; you're a liar.” The shoemaker, alarmed lest he should receive a stroke, stepped out of the house, and pursued his way through the fields; but the old farmer went out after him, and stood in the yard, and hallooed at the top of his voice, as long as he could hear him, “You're a liar, you're a liar.”

This event, which occurred long after the settlement of these four men, is here related to show the violent antipathy which one of them cherished towards good men and evangelical preachers.

But to return. Each of these men secured land of the very best quality, and as the country around became settled, their land every year increased in value. But they had no preaching for their families, nor schools for their children. The boys of each of them were taught to work, but as they grew up to manhood, they spent much of their time in hunting deer; and in the autumn a whole company would go out into the neighboring mountains to hunt bears, where they would remain encamped in the woods until they had taken as many as they wanted.

As these young men had received no religious instruction, they were under no restraint, except from the presence of their fathers, which was thrown off as soon as they got out of their sight.

In a new country there are many occasions on which the people come together to help one another, such as house-raising, corn-huskings, log-rolling, etc. These, to the young men, were seasons of athletic sports, which frequently ended in bloody battles. Or, if prevented from seeking revenge at the time by the presence of superiors, they would harbor vindictive feelings until a fit occasion for venting them would occur. Thus the worst passions were generated and cherished. And as to religion, they knew nothing of it, except that it was intended to be a restraint on them, and therefore they hated it, and every one who professed it.

At length, when the country became more thickly settled, itinerant preachers visited these destitute settlements. The first who visited this new country was the celebrated evangelist William Robinson, who penetrated into every part of the country where little knots of Presbyterians were settled, that he might preach the gospel where Christ had not been yet named. This being then the remotest settlement of white people towards the west, he here ended his journey in that direction, and crossing the Blue Ridge, pursued his course to North Carolina. In every other place where this devoted servant of Christ preached, I have found seals of his ministry, except in this neighborhood. Whether these men attended his ministry, is not certain. One of them, whose temper has already been described, in all probability did not; but the writer recollects hearing another of them speak of Mr. Robinson's visit as though he had heard him. And it is probable that some of the female members of these families derived saving benefit from the gospel at this time, for it is known that some of them were pious and exemplary even to extreme old age.

These merciful visits of evangelical preachers to new settlements are generally attended with a blessing to some precious souls. The writer, when young, was employed in preaching to people in such a situation, and he has never seen anywhere congregations which so interested him, and which appeared to be so much interested themselves. On the morning of the Sabbath, long before the time of meeting, you might see companies coming out of the woods by narrow paths, some on horseback, and not unfrequently two or three on one horse, and more on foot, all eagerly pressing on to the place of preaching, which was commonly a tent, as it was called, in a grove or forest. When the preacher appeared, all eyes would be fixed upon him, and the congregation, old and young, would seem to catch every thought, and drink in the word as a thirsty man drinks from a cool spring. Every word of divine truth, in such circumstances, seemed to take effect. Old Christians, long deprived of the public means of grace, would weep for joy, and hardly know how to contain themselves; and often the younger part of the assembly, who had scarcely ever heard a sermon before, would be affected to tears at hearing of the love of God, of the sufferings of Christ, of heaven, and of hell. Sometimes, under an impressive discourse, the whole congregation would be moved like the trees of the forest under a mighty wind, and would, as though all partook of one feeling, be melted into tears. Preaching to people in such circumstances is truly delightful. The pleasure, to a benevolent mind, is far greater than feeding a famished multitude with the bread that perishes. True, these impressions are, in many cases, transient; but they are salutary, and leave on the mind an impression favorable to religion, and lodge convictions of the necessity of a change deep in the conscience. But, as was said, preaching to those who are not gospel-hardened, is commonly attended with a saving effect on some hearers; an arrow is made to transfix the mind of some careless sinner, and the wound is not healed until application is made of the balm of Gilead.

But whosoever else might be benefited, our four farmers and their sons received no profit. They continued as irreligious and worldly-minded as before, after all these evangelical visits. When it

was proposed to erect a meeting-house, they were, though the wealthiest in the neighborhood, the most lukewarm and backward in promoting the object, and their contributions, grudgingly given, were smaller than those of some poor men. They were, however, very forward in getting up a dancing-school, and setting on foot balls for the young people. They, it is true, had never been taught this fascinating art, but they said they felt the want of it, and were determined that their children should have the opportunity of rubbing off that rusticity and awkwardness which they would be sure to contract, unless they had some means of this kind to polish their manners, and give them ease in company. These arguments prevailed with some not very consistent professors of religion, and especially with such as were well off in the world.

When the new settlement became more populous, the want of regular preaching on the Sabbath began to be felt by serious people who had once enjoyed gospel privileges, and some measures were taken to get ministers from the north to come and preach for them; and these efforts were not unsuccessful, for one and another were sent by some northern presbytery; but the people were solicitous to get a minister to abide with them constantly, and several attempts were made which proved unsuccessful, either because they could not raise a sufficient salary, or because these itinerant preachers were unwilling to settle in a country so new and so little improved.

But preachers make a great mistake when they wait for society to be formed, before they will cast in their lot among a people; for it is exceedingly important that there should be a good seasoning of religion in the mass while it is assuming a fixed form. Pious and able ministers are, therefore, more needed while society is in a forming state, than at any other period.

For the want of regular worship on the Sabbath, the young people could not be controlled; they would run about, and spend the day unprofitably. In one neighborhood, where there was a cluster of warmhearted, pious people, they met at each others' houses on the Sabbath, and sung and prayed; and if any of them had met with a good evangelical sermon, it was read at these meetings. But the young men could not be persuaded to attend these prayer-meetings. They said, "Get a good preacher, and we shall be pleased to attend." But in the neighborhood of the four families which had settled together, there was no kind of worship attempted; and their young men were noted through the country for their profanity and for their ferocity. Wherever they went, they picked quarrels with other young men; which disputes were commonly decided by bloody battles with the fist.

Affairs went on thus until, at length, a young man from the north, who had come on as a teacher, obtained license to preach, and agreed to give one half his time to this settlement. These four families, however, which were the wealthiest in the neighborhood, manifested no anxiety to have a minister; and when he came, they soon pretended to take offence at something which he said, or which they had heard that he had said, and in consequence absented themselves from his ministry. Their families, however, attended, and they paid a moderate sum to aid in supporting the preacher. A great exertion was now made to put up a meeting-house; and by getting the members of the congregation to furnish the materials, and to do much of the work, a shell of a frame building sufficient to hold several hundred people, was erected and covered, and the floor laid down. These dissipated young men were sure to be at meeting, but they seldom came into the house; but would sit at a distance under some large trees, and spend the time in cursing and abusing the minister and all good people. They were accustomed also to carry a flask of whiskey in their pockets, and

sometimes would carry it in large reeds used as walking-canes, and while the minister was preaching, they would be drinking at the spring.

One day, while they were amusing themselves outside the house, a stone, thrown by one of them, hit the side of the house, and made a startling noise. On which one of the elders came out and reproved them sharply, and directed his discourse especially to one who was the least wicked of them all, in the public opinion. This young man had not thrown the stone, and being exasperated that he should be thus reproved, as soon as the congregation was dismissed, he went into the house and in great anger swore that the thing was not done by him, and that he would not suffer himself to be thus falsely accused. He then, in the presence of the minister and elders, and of such of the people as had not left the house, swore by his Maker that he would never enter that house while he lived. Everybody was shocked at the daring impiety of this young man, and great surprise was expressed too, as he had been considered of a more quiet, sober turn than any of the others. The minister was indeed horror-struck.

It was a custom, brought by the Scotch-Irish people from the north of Ireland, that when any person died they held a wake; that is, all the neighbors, and especially the young people, sat up all night with the corpse. The house would commonly be crowded with people, who sat on boards or benches placed for the purpose. This custom was intended, doubtless, to prevent the sad feeling of loneliness in the family of the deceased, and to express sympathy with them in their affliction. But many evils attended such meetings. One was, that it became customary to carry about several times during the night stewed whiskey or hot punch, made very sweet, and many drank to excess. Other evil consequences, any one may see, would naturally be produced by such promiscuous meetings of both sexes. No religious exercises were ever permitted at these wakes, and the wildest and most irreligious were fond of attending them.

Another evil custom brought from Ireland, now obsolete, it is to be hoped, was the presenting strong drink to every man, woman, and child who came to a funeral. A person would stand without and meet the people as they arrived, and urge them to drink out of a bottle or jug which he held in his hand, and to refuse was counted disrespectful to the family.

But to return to the thread of my story. The young man who had behaved so impiously in the meeting-house, a few weeks after was about to go to a wake, where the wife of one of the four farmers lay a corpse; and his family understood that he was going directly to the place, not a mile off. But next morning one of his cousins, who had been sitting up at the wake, called to learn why he had not been there; and was informed that he had set out to go soon after dark. The young man, fearing some accident had happened, stepped to the barn, and there, on the barn floor, lay the unhappy man weltering in his blood, and stiff in death. He had gone up to the hay-loft to throw down some hay for his horses; his foot had slipped, and being a heavy man, he fell head foremost on the hard floor, and his brains were dashed out. The wretched young man's oath was verified, that "while he lived he would never enter that church again." For, the next time he came, it was a corpse, to be laid in the silent grave. The minister preached on the occasion an alarming discourse, which for a time made an awful impression on the young man's companions. But this soon wore off, and they became, if possible, worse than before.

One of the three concerned in disturbing the worship of God, was a handsome young man of robust health, who had just brought home a beautiful woman for his wife. Being fond of sporting,

and being invited by a man who had recently come to the settlement, to go out with him a hunting, he went; but never returned alive. The gun of this man, while they were passing through a thick wood, went off, and shot him through the body. Whether the act was accidental or designed, will never be known till the judgment-day. There were suspicious circumstances attending the case. The man, after his companion was shot, instead of coming and declaring what had happened, went and shut himself up in his own house, and would suffer no one to come in for some time. A court of inquiry was held, but nothing positive could be proved. One man, however, swore, that riding with this man at a certain time, in a certain lane, he declared that he would be revenged on the deceased for some offence received.

A circumstance which renders this testimony remarkable, is, that this man whose gun had killed the deceased, a few months afterwards, riding along the public way, in this same lane, was thrown from his horse, and fell across a sharp rock, and broke his spine about the middle. He was a man of giant size and strength. His lower parts remained immovable, and his agony was great for a number of weeks, when he died miserably.

The third of these young men came to an early, but not a violent death, yet more shocking than either of the others; for he not only died impenitent, but with every expression of hardened impiety. When the minister came to see him, he would have nothing to say to him. And when he asked him whether he should pray for him, he said that he might pray if he chose, but he wanted none of his prayers.

Verily there is a God that ruleth upon the earth, and though he often forbears to punish impious conduct in this life, yet sometimes he does seem to follow the open contempt of his worship with a signal manifestation of his displeasure. This has been a matter of observation in all ages of the world.

Other people have now come in the place of those four wealthy families. Scarcely a descendant of any of them is now to be found in the fertile region which their fathers possessed. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

THE COLPORTEUR AND COTTAGER

a dialogue

Colporteur. Well, friends, I am glad to meet so many of you together, as I have some choice books: shall I have the pleasure of showing them to you?

Cottager. You need not trouble yourself to unpack your books, as we have other use for our money than to buy such things as we can well do without.

Colp. I have read in a very old and very good book, that for "the soul to be without knowledge is not good." If we labor so hard to get bread to support the body, we ought not to grudge some little expense to feed the mind, which is our better part.

Cott. I never had any learning, and yet I have got along as well as my neighbors who can read; and more than that, I think that learning makes some people do things which they never could do, if they had never learned to read and write. There is Billy Hinds, who was reckoned the best scholar in all these parts, and now he is in the state prison for forgery, and his poor wife and children are near starvation.

Colp. You ought to consider that a good thing may be abused. It would never do to throw away every thing which has by some been put to a bad use. It is true, Billy Hinds never could have committed the crime for which he is suffering in prison, if he had not been able to write; but neither could he have committed the crime if he had been destitute of eyes or hands. Would you say, then, that it would be better if men were without eyes and hands?

Cott. Well, I will agree that learning is needful for some persons: but I cannot see that it would be of any service to me, or my children. We are poor people, and must make our living by hard labor; and we have no time to spend in reading books if we knew how to read, which no one in my family does except my wife, and her learning is of no use to her; for the good woman has not the leaf of a book to read, ever since the children tore up her Testament.

Colp. I am glad to find that you have one reader in your house, and I hope that your wife will not be suffered to be without a book to read after this day. Here is a cheap Bible; and here is a New Testament with fine large print. Come, gratify your wife with a present this morning.

Cott. Well, I believe I may as well take one; but do both these books contain the same reading?

Colp. The Bible contains all that is in the New Testament, word for word, and much more which, every man ought to know. It contains an account of the creation of the world and of man, and an account of his sin and fall, by which death came into the world and all our woes; and many other interesting histories.

Cott. I think, then, I will take the Bible; for though I cannot read myself, I have a cousin who often spends Sunday at my house, who is a very good reader. He often brings a book or a newspaper in his pocket; and my boys are fond of listening to him.

Colp. And do you intend to bring up your boys without schooling? I hope not. If you deprive them of this advantage, I do not know how you will be able to answer for it. Learning is more valuable than all riches, for a man's property often, as we say, makes to itself wings; but whatever knowledge any one acquires, nobody can deprive him of it. A while ago you said that poor laborers had no time for reading; but they all have one day in the week which ought not to be spent at work or in any amusement, nor in idleness, but in the service of our Creator; for when he made man he gave him only six days for his own work, and set apart the seventh for himself. You know the commandments, I presume, which God gave for the regulation of our conduct?

Cott. I told you that I had no learning. I know what is right and what wrong. I see that we ought not to murder, rob, or steal, nor do any thing to hurt our fellow-creature, but I never saw there was any harm in working on Sunday; yet as people say this is wrong, we commonly spend the day in hunting or fishing, or in visiting our neighbors.

Colp. If our Creator has set apart one day of the week for his own worship and service, we ought certainly to obey his commandments.

Cott. But I should like to know how any man can be sure that he ever made such a law. Doctor Hilder says “we may do what we please on Sunday, and ‘the better the day the better the deed.’ ” And as for religion, he says it is all priestcraft or kingcraft, brought in to keep ignorant people in subjection, and to draw money out of their pockets.

Colp. I am truly sorry that you have among you men who utter such irreligious sentiments, and unsettle the minds of ignorant people; but this shows how necessary it is that every man should be able to read the Bible, that he may learn from the book of God what he requires of man. You cannot deny that the Almighty ought to be obeyed, and if he has forbidden working and sporting on the Sabbath, these things ought not to be done. Our own conscience tells us, that whatever God commands should be obeyed; and nothing is more reasonable than that a certain portion of our time should be devoted to reading the word of God, and to his worship, both in public and private. What, have we received our very being from God, with all our faculties, together with food and raiment, and light and air, and other innumerable blessings, and shall we be so ungrateful as to refuse to acknowledge the goodness of God in these things? Shall we refuse to spend one seventh part of our time in his service, and in praising and worshipping his holy name? Besides, we are all sinners—we cannot deny it—“we have done many things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone many things which we ought to have done.” Now it is all-important that we understand in what way we may hope for the pardon of our sins. Permit me, friend, to ask you on what ground you look for forgiveness?

Cott. Why, sir, you seem to take me for a very bad man. I believe that I can appeal to all who know me, that I am not worse than most of my neighbors—I defy my worst enemy to charge me with any dishonesty. I shall fare as well as others, and that’s enough.

Colp. Pardon me, friend, that is not enough; if your neighbors were all sick with a mortal disease, such as the plague or cholera, would it satisfy you to think you were in no worse condition than others; and especially, if there was found out a method of cure, which you might use? You make entirely too light of this matter. It is the most important subject in the world: and this shows how necessary it is that men should become acquainted with what God has said in his holy word, for there we find the only method of obtaining pardon; and without pardon there can be no salvation for a sinner; he has nothing before him but fiery indignation. Old as you are, it would be well worth your while to learn to read.

Lately one of our colporteurs met with a man in Western Virginia who could not read, and he gave him a Tract, entitled “The Dairyman’s Daughter,” and he read a part of it to him, and the man would not rest until he heard the whole, and immediately applied himself to learn to read; and when after some months the colporteur came that way, this poor man cordially embraced him, and thanked him for the Tract which he had given him, and said that but for that he never should have learned to read, and better than all, he said that by means of that Tract he hoped he had found peace with God.

Cott. I feel that I am too old to attempt any thing of this sort—but I begin to feel some concern about my boys, who are growing up without learning. But what can I do? we have no schools near us.

Colp. I know that families living in this sparsely settled region are badly off for schools; but I will tell you of a plan that some benevolent persons have formed for the benefit of such destitute parts of the country: it is to send a teacher to instruct the children for a few hours for two or three days in the week, and then to pass on to another settlement similarly situated. Is there any house here where the children could meet, and any place where the teacher could board and lodge, while in the neighborhood?

Cott. Widow Oakland has the largest house of any among us, and she has a small family, only a son and daughter, neither of whom have been to school; and I think it probable that she would receive the teacher as a boarder, and could thus pay for the schooling of her children.

Colp. Very well—no more need be said at present. I will consult our friends, and see what can be done.

But here are several of your neighbors; shall I not have the pleasure of selling them some of my books? Come, old gentleman, I guess you can read. Look at these excellent works and select such as you like.

Old Man. I have heard what you just now said in praise of the Bible, and I like your sentiments very well. I have never been without that blessed book in my house since I was a housekeeper; and I don't care if I never have another book, for I think if we pay attention to that, it will guide us in the right way, and if we do not listen to the word of God, we shall not be likely to attend to the words of man.

Colp. I agree with you, that the Bible does contain all that is necessary for faith and practice; and if we diligently follow its directions, we shall be guided in the way in which we ought to go; but I think you a little misapprehend our object in circulating the writings of good men. It is not to teach any thing different from what we read in the Bible; it is to explain and enforce the truths there inculcated. To the Bible we always appeal for the truth of every thing taught in our books: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them." For want of such helps, many persons never come to a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches. Even ministers, who make the Bible their constant study, need commentaries, which explain the sacred text; and much more do common people need some helps of this kind; and they need "line upon line" to stir them up to the diligent performance of their known duties. As you have had the Bible in your house for many years, and I suppose have read it often, permit me to ask you, what in your opinion is the method of salvation which it teaches?

Old Man. Why, sir, I would have you to know that I am not the ignoramus you take me to be. The Bible tells us that the way to be saved is to keep the commandments. It says, "Do this and live." "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Colp. I see that you are somewhat acquainted with the Bible, and have learnt correctly what is required of us by our Maker; but I wish to know whether you have so kept the commandments that you can depend on your own obedience for acceptance with a holy God? As for myself, if I had no other dependence but my own obedience, I should entertain no hope of salvation—I should be in black despair. And if I read the Scriptures right, "by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

If men could be saved by their own obedience, then I do not see why the Son of God came into the world; or why it was necessary for Christ to die on the cross. You seem to me to have fallen into the very error of the Jews, in the time of Paul, who, “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God.” But as I have not time to argue this point with you now, I will give you a Tract on the subject of a sinner’s justification. Read it carefully, and I think you will be convinced that you have been in a dangerous error hitherto. Not but that we must love and obey God still, but our pardon and justification is entirely of free grace. And at any rate, I think that you need some help to enable you to come to a saving knowledge of what the Bible teaches.

Permit me, my friend, again to ask you what your opinion is of regeneration?

Cott. Regeneration? I don’t exactly know what you mean.

Colp. Conversion, or the new birth.

Cott. Oh, yes—yes. I believe you are something of a Methodist. I would have you to know that I don’t hold to any such nonsensical doctrine. I believe that if we do as well as we can, a merciful God will not require impossibilities of us. We are poor, frail creatures—but God is merciful.

As to this new birth of which you speak, I know nothing about it, and do not wish to know. Two of my neighbors—no better than they should be—went last summer to a great meeting, and they both professed, as I have heard, to be converted, as they call it; and it produced a great talk through the neighborhood. And when they came home, to be sure, they put on a very demure, long face, and sighed and groaned and exhorted their old companions; and we were all glad to see a reformation, if it would only last. Well, to make a long story short, the boldest of the two held out a month, and then he swore a great oath and said he neither could nor would play the hypocrite any longer; and he is now more profane than ever. The other, a sly kind of man, still wore the mask, and was very devout and zealous; but within a week he has been clearly detected in stealing a quantity of yarn from a poor woman, and in several other disgraceful acts. If such conversions as these are what you speak of, I want to know no more about them, for I hate hypocrisy.

Colp. My good sir, you seem to have read your Bible to little purpose, if you have not learned from that holy book, that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” and “except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Cott. I don’t believe that such things apply to us in this Christian country. In the beginning, when the people were Jews or pagans, they were required to undergo a change, but not so with those who have been born and baptized in a Christian land.

Colp. Men are now born in sin as much as they ever were; and unless this sinful nature be removed, they never can be admitted into heaven; and if they could be admitted to that holy place, they could have no enjoyment in the presence of a God of infinite holiness, and in the society of holy angels who stand around the throne of God. Common-sense teaches you that you cannot be happy in exercises and employments for which you have neither taste nor relish. Men who do not love to think of God now, and take no pleasure in praying to him and praising him, would be entirely out of their element in heaven. Well, we know that most men do take no delight in these

religious exercises, and it is evident therefore that they have no fitness for heaven. There must be an inward change in us before we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. I have here several small books which clearly prove from the word of God the necessity of being born again. Do take one of them and read it with care, and if you do not like it, when I return this way I will take it back, and return you your money.

Cott. That indeed is fair. I will take one; for if I do not read I know my wife will be glad to see it, for she is for ever borrowing old books, and spends much. But what can you say respecting the two men of whom I spoke to you, who professed to be converted, and are now worse than before?

Colp. I would say, that they never experienced the new birth. They probably got alarmed at the great meeting, and some injudicious guides persuaded them that they were converted; or rather, I would say that the devil put this into their minds, for every instance of counterfeit conversion helps him to maintain his power over the souls of men. You know that men who make counterfeit money are very injurious to society, for they impose upon the people a worthless currency for the genuine, and destroy their confidence in the true currency; just so spurious religion, like counterfeit coin, imposes on the people and destroys their confidence in true religion. But because we discover some money to be counterfeit, it would not do to infer that there was no genuine money in the country. No; if there was not some good money, we may be sure there would be no counterfeits.

I wonder that you should judge of all professors of religion by those two deceived men. You certainly know some men who have for years maintained a consistent Christian character; these ought not to be put in the same class with those whose conduct shows that they never had any religious principle, but were for a few days and weeks under a violent excitement, and when this wore off they were the same as before; or rather, they were worse, for nothing hardens the heart and sears the conscience more than a spurious conversion. You profess to be an honest man, and nobody doubts it; but the two men who were condemned for robbing McGruder's store were thought to be honest men before their villany was discovered. Would it be a fair inference, because these men professed honesty, that all others who made that profession, or maintained that character, were also dishonest? Now, if this conclusion would not be correct in regard to honesty, neither is it in regard to religion.

Cott. If your doctrine be true, then a man has nothing to do to obtain salvation. He cannot change his own heart, he is therefore not to be blamed.

Colp. Man is not excusable for not having a new heart and a right spirit. This is the essence of what the holy law of God requires of us all; and just so far as we fall short of it, just so far are we counted sinners in the sight of God. If a man is not to be blamed for a hard, a proud, a selfish, and impenitent heart, what can he be blamed for? This is the very core of his iniquity. This is the "evil heart of unbelief" of which the Scriptures speak. Why cannot a sinner change his own heart? Only because it is so entirely wicked, so entirely destitute of all love to God and holiness. And can this be any excuse? Why, it is the main thing for which he is now condemned, and for which he will be publicly condemned at the judgment, unless God give him forgiveness and repentance unto life. I do therefore beseech you all, my dear friends, to lay aside excuses and seriously engage in seeking God while he may be found, and calling upon him while he is near.

The colporteur was now about to return his books into his pack and proceed on his journey, when a collier, who had stood listening to the conversation, came forward and said,

Collier. Friend, I hope you will not go yet awhile. I wish to hear more about these matters. You have touched upon a subject which has been on my mind for months. I have been a very thoughtless, and if I must tell the whole truth, a very wicked man. I never had any education, and fell into bad company, and soon was equal to the worst of them in sin and folly. But of late the thought of the sins of my youth troubles me much; often I am so troubled when I lie down at night, that I cannot sleep. And often I ask myself the question, What will become of me when I die? A few nights ago, while I was tending my coal-pit, I looked up and beheld the moon and stars shining very bright, and the thought came into my mind, Above all these, and beyond the sky, there is a brighter world than this. That is the place they call heaven; but how can such a sinful creature as I am ever get to heaven? Well, I thought I must try hereafter to please God, and quit sinning. I determined that I would begin to amend my ways and lead a new life.

But after a while the thought came into my mind that I was going to judgment, and if I could live without sinning all the rest of my life, how should I be able to answer for the ten thousand sins already committed? these would sink me to hell. I thought there could be no mercy for me. Ever since, all has looked dark before me, and I would have given the world for some one to tell me what I should do; and when I heard you talk to my neighbors, I thought you were the man I wanted to see; and now, my dear friend, do tell me if there is any salvation for such a sinner as I am.

Colp. I feel thankful that Providence has brought me this way; if for no other reason, that I might give some counsel to one who seems to be groping in darkness, and yet anxiously desires to know the way of life. And I do not think, friend, that I can answer your question better than by telling you a bit of my own experience. I was once as wicked as ever you were, and worse, because I ran counter to the instructions of a pious mother, who often took me into a private place, when a child, and kneeled down and prayed for me.

I followed the sea, and there I had all sorts of bad examples, which I too readily imitated. But when I was leaving home on a long voyage, my mother, when she put up my clothes, slipped a small volume into the bottom of my trunk. When I opened the book I found that it was on religion, and I shut it up and laid it by, resolved never to read a page in it. But our vessel was wrecked, and by and by I returned to the book, and before I had proceeded half through it I became deeply interested. I found that it described my case exactly, and showed it to be very bad; and convinced me that I was a wretched sinner against God, and was now lying under his wrath and curse. I could think of nothing else. My comrades saw that I was growing serious, and tried their best to laugh me out of my religious whims, as they called them. They swore they would take the book and burn it, if I did not give over reading it. But their opposition had no effect to remove my concern. I felt myself to be a lost and perishing sinner, and I cared nothing for the ridicule of them or of the whole world. I was like a man sinking in deep water, who needed some one to throw him a rope.

As I proceeded in reading, I found that the author not only pointed out the mortal disease which had seized upon me, but also described an all-sufficient remedy. He showed me that no righteousness of mine could be of any avail; that God, viewing the wretched condition of the world, had so loved it as to give his well-beloved Son to be our Redeemer, to die in our place, to make an

atonement for our sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. The glorious gospel the author opened up, and what surprised me above measure, he showed that the greatest sinner might, on this plan, obtain salvation as readily as the least. I had often heard the word grace, but never before did I know its meaning. I had, until now, supposed that I must bring some price in my hand, or undergo some preparation, before I could come to Christ; but now I found that I was warranted by the word of God to come at once, and receive salvation as a free gift, without money and without price. When the light of this truth broke in first on my mind, I was so full of joy that I seemed as one that dreamed. It seemed to be too good and too favorable to be true. I asked myself, Do I understand the author; or may not he be mistaken? I turned again to the book, and found that the meaning could not be mistaken, for the same doctrine was taught over and over again; and that the author was correct, I clearly saw from the many plain passages of Scripture which he brought to prove his doctrine. Indeed, the whole scheme of salvation inculcated was precisely what is found in the Bible.

Collier. And do you still enjoy the same comfortable assurance which you had at first?

Colp. No, I cannot say that my joy is as full as it was when I first believed, but I think I understand the gospel plan better. At first I was too much disposed to live upon joyful frames, but now I live more by faith.

Collier. And do you think that there is mercy for such a poor, miserable, ignorant sinner as I am? I am afraid that glorious Saviour would drive me from his presence if he should see me coming. Oh yes, I am too vile, too ignorant to be saved.

Colp. Do not talk in this strain. Would you make God a liar? Has he said, and will he not make it good? Has he not invited the weary and heavy-laden to come to him? Has he not declared that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance? To seek and save the lost?

Collier. What you tell me is indeed good news. I had pretty much given up all hope of salvation; but now I begin to see that it is possible, and even this is a relief. But how shall I obtain a part in this salvation?

Colp. Only believe. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "All things are possible to him that believeth." Christ stands with open arms ready to receive you. Cast your soul confidently on his almighty arm. Trust in him.

Collier. I do not clearly know what you would have me to do. I desire to be saved, and I am willing to be saved by Christ; is that the thing?

Colp. Suppose you owed ten thousand pounds and had nothing to pay, and some prince should offer to pay the debt for you if you would rely upon him. The favor is so great that at first you might hesitate. You might doubt his ability or his sincerity in making the offer, but this would be very base and ungrateful; yet this is the way in which Christ is dishonored, even by those who are seeking salvation.

Collier. I understand what is required, but I am afraid that I have it not in me to comply. Do tell me how to believe.

Colp. Faith is the gift of God, and unless the Holy Spirit enlightens your mind and renews your heart, you will for ever remain in unbelief. To believe in Christ is most reasonable, and is the duty of all who hear the gospel; but such is the blindness and perverseness which sin has brought on the heart, that no man ever cometh to Christ unless the Father draw him. The Holy Spirit is now evidently striving with you. It is he that has opened your eyes to see your sins; cherish his influences, and in answer to your prayer, humbly trusting in the merits of Christ, he will enable you to believe to the saving of your soul. The man with the withered hand might have cavilled as sinners do now; but he hesitated not, he made the effort, and in making it found the vigor of his arm restored; so in thousands of cases, while men have renounced their sins and cried for mercy, they have been enabled by the divine Spirit to believe, and receive Christ as he is offered in the gospel.

Collier. Oh that I could believe. Lord, help me.

Colp. You seem to be in the very case of the man mentioned in the gospel who brought his lunatic son to Christ to be healed, and said, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Collier. Yes, that is my case. Lord, help me to believe. Lord, give me faith. If thou wilt thou canst make me whole.

Colp. Friend, let me ask you a few plain questions, that it may appear whether or not you believe. And first, do you feel and acknowledge that you are a great sinner, and unable to help yourself?

Collier. I do. I am a great sinner—a vile, ungrateful wretch—the worst perhaps out of hell.

Colp. Do you see that sin, your own sin, is hateful, and deserving of God's wrath and curse?

Collier. I am as much convinced that I deserve to be sent to hell, as that I am now a living man. Indeed, I do not see how a holy God can do otherwise than send me to hell.

Colp. Here you go too far. Were it not for the atonement of Christ, God could not do otherwise, consistently with justice, than send every sinner to hell. Do you believe that the death of Christ is a sufficient atonement for your sins?

Collier. I cannot deny it. O yes, it is a glorious sacrifice—it is of infinite value—that precious blood which he shed cleanseth from all sin. Oh, if I had an interest in this blood I should be safe.

Colp. Well, you have it—it is yours—you do believe, and therefore your sins are pardoned.

Collier. I am not satisfied of that. I am afraid something is wanting. I heard you speak of the great joy which you felt when you believed; should not I experience the same, if my faith were of the right kind?

Colp. There are degrees of faith. There is faith as a grain of mustard-seed, and a strong faith like Abraham's, "who against hope believed in hope." Now, most commonly, in our day, the first exercises of faith are feeble and obscure; but by proper culture, it becomes stronger every day. Let me ask you whether you do not approve the gospel method of salvation by grace, and whether

you do not renounce all dependence on your own works and merits?

Collier. As to my works, I have none—none good, and I see no fault in the plan of redemption. It is a glorious plan. My soul rejoices in it. It brings glory to God, and salvation to the sinner. And I want no other Saviour than Christ; O give me Christ, and I want no more.

Colp. And what think you of the people of God, the true disciples of Christ?

Collier. It is my misfortune to know very few true Christians, but I am sure, if I should become acquainted with such, I should esteem them the excellent of the earth. And I do feel at this moment a tender compassion for sinners. O that I could take them in my arms and bring them to Christ! I desire the salvation of the whole world.

Colp. Friend, my time is out; I have an appointment for a prayer-meeting this evening many miles off. Here's a New Testament, which I give to you.

Collier. Why, sir, I do not know a letter in the book.

Colp. I want that you should learn. Begin with the first chapter of John. Your wife can aid you, and you will soon be able to read for yourself the wonderful works of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ. Farewell.

THE COLPORTEUR AND FARMER

a dialogue

Farmer. Well, friend, you seem to be weary; will you step into the house and rest yourself?

Colporteur. I will, and would thank you for a drink of cold water.

Far. Will you not take a little something with it? I have some good old whiskey.

Colp. No, my friend, I have seen so much evil from drinking whiskey and such like liquors, that I have resolved never to take any intoxicating drink.

Far. I guess you belong to a Temperance Society.

Colp. I profess to be a Christian, and I feel myself bound to prevent evil and do good to the utmost of my power; and I am of opinion that few things have occasioned more vice and misery than strong drink. It has rendered thousands of families wretched, and brought many a promising man to a drunkard's grave. Besides, it has burdened the country with taxes to support prisons, poor-houses, and hospitals, which are principally filled by persons brought there by strong drink.

Far. To drink to excess is bad, but a little will hurt nobody. I have taken a little every day for twenty years, and am nothing the worse for it. I think it does me good, and I cannot do without it now any more than I can do without my tobacco.

Colp. How old may you be, friend?

Far. If I live I shall be four and forty the tenth day of next June.

Colp. Well, sir, I will tell you what I know and have seen. Many moderate drinkers continue to be sober men until they reach the age of fifty or fifty-five, and then become sots the remainder of their

days.

Far. How can that be accounted for?

Colp. I will tell you. While the vigor of their constitution remains, the spirit which they are accustomed to take every day does not affect them; but at the turn of life, when their strength is weakened, they cannot bear the same quantity which they took before, and they become drunkards by taking just the same quantity they had been used to take for twenty years. But I believe moderate drinkers never lessen the quantity of whiskey or rum which they put into their grog. Do you not find, friend, that you require that your daily drink should be somewhat stronger the longer you continue at it?

Far. Well, I must confess that what you say is true; and it accounts for what appeared strange to me here in our neighborhood. Two men that were thought to be very religious—now I don't pretend to any religion myself—but we all did believe that J. M—— and W. B—— were good men, if there were any in the land: one of them was an elder in the Presbyterian church, and the other a deacon in the Baptist church, and no one ever suspected that they drank too much; but about the same time they were both had under dealings for intoxication, and both are now suspended from their societies. And as you say, this came upon them just at the turn of life, when, as we may say, old age begins.

Colp. Is there any appearance of a reformation since they have been dealt with by their churches?

Far. Far from it. They drink harder since than before, and though they both helped to turn many a one out for drunkenness, they are both greatly offended that the same measure has been dealt to them which they measured to others.

Colp. Mark me now. There is scarcely the shadow of hope for such. Men who drink by spells may sometimes be reclaimed; but when did you ever see a sot who takes too much every day in the year, turn to be a sober man? What you say of these two neighbors is true of many thousands in our land; they drink, without being intoxicated, for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, and then, to the grief and astonishment of all their friends, become sots. But I will tell you another reason why some men and some whole families become drunkards about the turn of life. About that time the spirits are apt to flag, and men commonly leave off active business. Now these two things go together. Men who have lived an active, bustling life, when they retire from business and expect to enjoy themselves at home, are almost sure to become low-spirited, and feeling restless and uneasy they take to the bottle and find a temporary relief; and so they go on, from bad to worse, until they are drunk all the time.

Far. Really, friend, you alarm me by what you say. I have never before felt that I was in any danger of becoming a drunkard; but I must think my two neighbors had as good a right and better to feel sure than I have. And so much of what you say I know to be true, that I really begin to fear for myself. Now, suppose I should wish to quit drinking whiskey, would you advise me to taper off by degrees, or to break off at once?

Colp. By all means at once. I believe no one ever was successful on the other plan. Be resolute, keep in view your danger and the ruin which you would bring on your family if you should become a drunkard, and determine never to taste another drop unless as a medicine; and there is danger

in taking spirits even as a medicine, to those who have been much addicted to its use.

Far. Did you not say that some whole families are more in danger of falling under the influence of this evil habit than others? How do you account for that?

Colp. Upon the principle already stated, that some whole families are at a certain age very apt to become somewhat melancholy, hypped as we say, and then they are very apt to take to drink. It is a sad remedy, but it answers for the moment. I recollect a case of this kind: a very respectable and apparently religious man, who had served in the legislature of the state, and was a magistrate, and as well informed as any man who had not received a liberal education. He was in easy, or rather affluent circumstances, had a large family around him, sons and daughters, the oldest of whom were well educated and very promising. This gentleman had, as was common with almost every body, been accustomed to take one or two drinks of grog before dinner, but was never suspected of intoxication, until at about the age of fifty or fifty-five he became almost at once a drunkard of the worst kind; that is, he was when in liquor as raving a madman as ever was in bedlam. I need not tell you of the mortification and distress of his wife and children. The former did not live long to suffer the overwhelming calamity which had come on the family. Whether this was the cause of her disease and death is what I do not know. Many said it was. The family being among the first in the society where they lived, and possessing wealth and uncommon talents, were struck down to the dust; for perhaps they had been accustomed, as we say, to carry their heads a little too high. The church also in which he was an officer felt the stroke most keenly. He had been a leading man in all religious concerns, and was liberal in the support and propagation of the gospel. None were pleased but the enemies of religion, and even some of them seemed to feel badly about it; but the confirmed infidel scoffed louder than ever, and said, "Here is one of your saints: they are all alike; and all their religion is nothing but hypocrisy." The calamity had, I think, a good effect on the children. Not one of them would taste ardent spirits, at a time when it was commonly used by all classes, and their pride was evidently brought down.

Far. Well, was he ever reclaimed?

Colp. If he was, it was on his death-bed. I have heard that he was truly penitent; but of the reality of such repentance there must always be great reason to doubt.

Far. Did all his children continue to be temperate?

Colp. I was going to tell about his oldest son, to show the truth of what I said about families having sometimes a something that led to drunkenness. I was conversing one day with a sensible old gentleman who had been long the friend and companion of the person described above. I asked him how he could account for his falling so suddenly into the open practice of this vice. He said it was "owing to a kind of melancholy or miserable depression to which at a certain age the family are subject; and you'll see," said he, "that the oldest son, when he arrives at that age, will become a drunkard too."

I was, I confess, shocked at the very supposition, as he was a pattern of sobriety, and from his youth had drunk nothing stronger than water or household beer. I said it was impossible that this man should take to drink, especially as he appeared to be a consistent Christian, and devout and pious in all his conduct at home and abroad.

“Very true, very true,” said the shrewd old gentleman, “but not more so than his father, and you’ll see that he will go the same way.”

Some years afterwards, when I had forgotten this conversation, the gentleman of whom he spoke, having retired from active business to enjoy the repose which he supposed he needed, fell into a state of depression which alarmed his friends. A more miserable man I never saw; and then I began to fear that the word of the old gentleman would come true. He had every thing about him that heart could wish, but still he was miserable. He was so restless that he could not contain himself many minutes in any position.

Far. Well, did he take to the bottle at last?

Colp. No; blessed be God, he had grace given him to resist the most powerful temptations. His physician prescribed old Madeira as the best remedy. He tried it, but it increased his malady. Some recommended brown stout; some, old whiskey; and some, a gill of French brandy every morning in a quart of new milk. But his aversion to the use of spirits prevented him from trying any of these remedies. The only thing which he did find any relief from was the pipe. It was curious to see a man who had detested the use of tobacco in every form all his life before, now sitting and puffing at the pipe by the hour. Indeed, he became so attached to it that he smoked as he rode on horseback, lighting his pipe from a tinder-box.

Far. And did he ever get well again?

Colp. Yes; but not until he returned to an active life. He engaged in a business which required him to be much on horseback, and was himself again, except that a tinge of melancholy remained.

Far. One thing I would ask, as you seem to have studied much on this subject, why is it that strong drink kills many stout young men in a few years; while others who drink hard, and are scarcely ever sober, live as long as other men?

Colp. The same question I once asked a very wise man on the following occasion. I had gone to a public meeting of the people, I think on a court-day, and while conversing with this man, there came up one of the tallest men I ever saw, and he was as straight as an Indian. I recollected as soon as he came near that I had known him some years before, but I soon saw that he had lost all recollection of me. He spoke to the gentleman who was talking with me, but his speech was so thick that I could scarcely understand a word he said. His face was pale and much bloated, and the black under his eyes looked as if he had been bruised. But what surprised me most, not only his hands but his whole flesh trembled in a remarkable manner. When he had passed by us, the sage with whom I was conversing said, “There is one of our finest young men destroyed with accursed alcohol.”

“With what?” said I, not knowing then the meaning of the word.

“With ardent spirits,” said he. “A more promising young man we had not in this community, and now you see he has the premonitory symptoms of a most horrible death by delirium tremens.”

“What?” said I, being again at a loss for his meaning.

"It may," said he, "be called in English the trembling madness. Of all horrible scenes that ever I witnessed," added he, "the worst was the death of a near relation of mine with this dreadful disease, brought on by drinking. I hope I shall never have my feelings so harrowed again; and the awful and terrific impressions made on my imagination I am afraid will never be removed. He was a stout, strong man, a little turned of thirty years of age. It took four men to hold him, and after seeming to sleep a few moments, he would start up, his eyes staring like fire-balls, and would scream with a voice of such agony as I had never conceived; and throwing himself back he would exclaim with horror, 'Hell-fire, hell-fire; keep them off; keep them off me; they have come to drag me down to the lake of fire.' Then he broke forth in the most horrid blasphemies which the tongue could utter; soon after which he fell into one convulsion fit after another until he expired, with the most frightful contortions of countenance I ever beheld.

"And," said he, "the man who passed us just now, though walking abroad, is very near a death of the same kind. I have observed this fell disease in all its stages, and know all its symptoms. That large, strong man who spoke to me is the son of an old friend who himself came to the drunkard's grave. His sons were early initiated into the practice of dram-drinking in the morning, and grog-drinking at noon, and toddy-drinking at dinner. This is the youngest and the last of the family. The others have already finished their mad career, and you will hear that this one has followed them in a few weeks."

I asked if he had a family.

"Yes," said he, "as amiable and affectionate a wife as any man in the land, a lady of the first family in the county; but her heart is already broken. She is never seen abroad; and when her nearest friends visit her she makes a great exertion to assume an air of cheerfulness, and never alludes in the most distant manner to the intemperate habits of her husband. But when left alone with her four sweet little children about her knee, she weeps almost perpetually. One of her two little daughters the other day, looking up into her mother's face, said in the most tender, affecting tone, 'Dear mother, what ails you? why do you cry so?' She made no answer; but clasped the dear little girl to her bosom, foreseeing that in a little time she would be fatherless."

But, said I, how comes it that this hale young man is killed so soon by this poison, and here is old John Tarry, who has been a hard drinker for forty years, and yet seems likely to live a long time yet?

"O," said he, "that is easily explained. The human constitution can by slow degrees be accommodated to almost any poison, so that the dose which would produce certain death in another will not destroy it. For example, there is a lady in my immediate vicinity who swallows as much morphine every day, and several times in the day, as would kill you or me without a doubt. And you have heard of a certain queen of England who fortified herself against poison by gradually increasing the dose until it had little effect on her constitution. So it is with alcohol; taken by degrees, the constitution becomes hardened against its deleterious effects."

I begged him to tell me what the poison was which he mentioned as being taken by the lady in his neighborhood. He smiled, and said he thought that every body knew that morphine was a purified extract of opium.

Far. Well, friend, I must confess that what you have said brings me to a pause. I never saw the danger of moderate drinking as I do now. And were it not for one thing, I think I could muster up resolution to leave off the practice. But I have some neighbors with whom I am in the habit of spending a social hour. Now if I should quit drinking altogether these men would ridicule me beyond measure, and I can bear any thing better than to be laughed at.

Colp. Never mind the jeers and scoffs of such men. I dare say many that have joined your club have already become drunkards, and the rest, if they continue to drink, will probably go the same way. Act the part of a reasonable man. The wise man says, "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the foolish pass on and are punished." These very men, in their serious moments, will secretly approve your course, however in self-defence they may ridicule you. And who knows but your example, when you explain the reasons of it, may have a happy influence on them, to induce them to leave off a practice which leads so many to ruin. And rest assured, that the trial which you fear will soon be over. Your old companions, if they cannot be persuaded to follow your example, will soon cut your society and trouble you no more.

Far. Well, a thought has come into my mind that I will not break off abruptly, but will taper off by degrees, and thus the thing will scarcely be noticed.

Colp. I tell you, friend, this will not do. I never yet knew any one weaned from the use of strong drink in this way. I have known fond mothers attempt to wean their children in this gradual way: it never succeeded. The difficulty was as great at the last as the first. There is no safety or certainty here but in total abstinence. All that is wanted is a strong resolution to deny yourself, and moral courage to meet the jeers of your old comrades.

Far. I feel much inclined to follow your advice, but I cannot conveniently begin just now, for I have an appointment to meet some persons on public business, and it has ever been our custom at these meetings to treat each other in turn, and it so happens that this will be expected of me at our next meeting; and I never can endure to have it said that I was too niggardly to do my part, and be as free with my money as another. But after this meeting is over I am resolved to begin a new course.

Colp. Now, my dear sir, if you will listen to the advice of a stranger who sincerely desires your welfare, you will not postpone putting your resolution into practice at once. Delays are dangerous, and in nothing more dangerous than reforming what is amiss in our own conduct, especially where inveterate habit is to be overcome. No, sir, if instead of treating your friends whom you expect to meet, you frankly inform them of your change of view, and of your purpose to relinquish all use of intoxicating liquors, you will have no difficulty; and that they may have no reason to attribute your course to stinginess, you can propose to them to spend the money commonly given for drink, in the purchase of useful books for the poor, or in schooling some poor child.

Far. What you say has weight. I will think of it; and I know nothing would better please my wife, for she has a mortal hatred of drunkards, and often wishes that there was not a drop of whiskey in the land; for two of her brothers have already gone down to the drunkard's grave, as you call it.

But come, friend, let us go into the house; it must be near our dinner-time; and you seem to have travelled far this morning with that heavy pack. But what do you carry? What notions to suit the women? they are always glad to see the pedlar coming, and are sure to have a little cash laid up

to buy some trifles.

Colp. I carry nothing but books and tracts.

Far. Very good. We often buy cheap books to amuse us in the long winter nights. Have you any novels or funny stories in your collection?

Colp. No, friend; my books are of a very different kind; they are all religious books, calculated to make men wise unto salvation. We have certain evidence that many have been savingly benefited by the books and tracts we circulate. Come, make a trial of one or two, and if you become interested in them you will not care for fictitious narratives and funny stories any more. Here is "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul;" also "Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted," "Baxter's Call to the Unconverted," and this one with cuts is "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress." Now, if you will take the whole of these, you shall have them for one dollar and eight cents.

Far. I am afraid we shall not be amused by these religious books, and that they will lie on the shelf unopened, and we shall have nothing for our money.

Colp. Well, I will tell you what I will do. You may keep these books until I return in the winter; when if, on examination, you do not think proper to buy them, I will take them back; but I beg that you will not neglect to peruse them. On the Lord's day, when you have no preaching near, you might read a portion out of one of them to your family, in the place of a sermon.

Far. Your proposal is not only fair, but generous. I will keep the books until you return, and will read so much as to find whether they suit me; and if you should never return, I suppose the books will be mine.

Colp. Yes, if you will promise to lend them to any of your neighbors who may wish to peruse them.

Far. Well, that is fair enough; and if I should not want to read them, my wife will, for she often borrows religious books.

THE COLPORTEUR AND AGED MAN

a dialogue

Colporteur. You seem, friend, to have lived long in the world, and must have had much experience of the trials incident to mortals in this vale of sorrow.

Aged Man. Yes, yes; I have been spared long upon earth; most of my early friends and acquaintances are gone, and most of my own family also. I have buried two wives, and have lost five children out of seven, so that I seem to be left almost alone in the world. I am become a stranger in the place where I have always lived. The former generation to which I belonged have gone and left me alone, like an old dead tree in the midst of a field; and a new generation have sprung up, who appear as strangers to me, though they are the children of my old neighbors; and often when my own grandchildren come to see me, I am under the necessity of asking their names, so forgetful have I become.

Colp. I hope, sir, that you enjoy comfortable health in your advanced age. You seem not to be afflicted with any painful disease, if one may judge from your healthy appearance.

Aged Man. Appearances in my case are deceitful. I am at this moment free from distressing illness, but no day of my life passes in which I do not experience the growing infirmities of age; and I have seasons of excruciating pain, which if it should continue long, would bring me to my end; but, thank God, these spells are commonly of short continuance.

Colp. It does not seem desirable, from what I have observed, for persons to live to extreme old age: very few pass the age of seventy-five without experiencing manifold infirmities of body, and in most cases a great decay of the mental faculties; and this often happens when there is no decline in the health. Where the aged are prepared for death, I see no reason why they should be solicitous to have their days protracted.

Aged Man. Very true, very true: after a certain age, there is very little pleasure to be enjoyed, and there are many troubles to be endured; but how long a man shall live is not left to his option. He must patiently wait until his change cometh. But in regard to preparation for death, I do not know any thing which deserves to be so called, but an upright, well-spent life; at any rate, that is all my dependence.

Colp. That must indeed be a good life to embolden a man to be willing to meet his almighty Judge. For my part, when I look back upon my past life, I see so many glaring defects, so many sinful acts, so many omissions of what ought to have been done, and especially such a want of purity in my motives, even when my actions were externally correct, that I should dread the scrutiny of the omniscient eye of God; knowing from his own word that "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity." If, therefore, my own good works were my only ground of hope, I should utterly despair.

Aged Man. Really, sir, I do not understand you. To my reason, nothing can be more evident, than that our beneficent Creator will deal with men according to their behavior. And if we do as well as we can, and act honestly, uprightly, and charitably, He is not so unjust as to require more of us than we, poor frail creatures, are able to perform. I do not see, therefore, why you, or any other honest man, should be afraid to meet your Judge. I should be very unwilling to entertain an opinion so derogatory to his character, as that he would not be satisfied with such obedience as his creatures are able to render to him?

Colp. I find that we agree in the general principle that God will deal with men according to their real character and conduct; and if these are in exact conformity with his law and will, undoubtedly we have nothing to fear, "The Judge of all the earth will do right." He will never condemn the innocent—but he has declared that he will not clear the guilty. The only question before us is, whether, indeed, we have complied with the will of God. You seem to have low ideas of what the law of God requires of man. Let us understand one another on this point, and we shall not be likely to differ in other things. Now, I know of no other way to determine this point but to have recourse to the word of God, where the requisitions of his law are clearly expressed, and where the duties of man, in all the relations of life, are plainly inculcated. Here I find it written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Now if any man has perfectly complied with this requisition, I admit that he may appear with confidence before his Judge, and claim justification on the footing of his own obedience. But if a man seeks justification by his own obedience, he should see to it that there is no flaw in it; for it is written, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the law of God." And, "he who

offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." Now this is a judgment which I cannot stand; for I am conscious of guilt. I have often done the things which I ought not to have done, and left undone those which I ought to have done. And instead of loving God with all my heart from the earliest dawn of reason, much of my life has been spent in almost total forgetfulness of God. My youthful prime was devoted to pleasure, and I may say, to sin and folly; so that, even now, I am often constrained to cry out, "Remember not against me the sins of my youth and my transgressions." Yet I cannot say that I ran to greater excesses than the majority of my companions, and at the time I thought little of the evil of my ways; but since it pleased God to open my eyes to understand the extent of his law and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, I have mourned over my misspent life. Even now I dare not plead any work which I have ever performed as a ground of acceptance before God; for I know that if he should enter into judgment with me, there is imperfection enough in my very best performances to subject me to condemnation.

Aged Man. I must confess that you astonish me with your doctrine. I am sure there are very few who think as you do. I know, indeed, that Methodists, and some others of an enthusiastic turn, insist on what they call the new birth, but I thought all sensible men rejected such notions with scorn. I sat for years under the ministry of old Mr. Sadler, who was reckoned by all to be a learned and able divine, and he never preached any of these new-fangled doctrines, but always insisted on moral honesty, and charity to the poor. His favorite text, which he often quoted, was, "What, O man, does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" I have often heard him say, that if a good life was not the way to heaven, he knew not what was. And as to our slips and defects, he said that our Maker was not so severe as to mark every fault, and that Christ would make up for all our deficiencies.

Colp. I am not surprised to hear these sentiments. I believe they are held by many nominal Christians, and some reputable ministers know no other method of salvation. In fact it is the system of nature. Every man, without instruction, naturally adopts such opinions; but though I once knew no better, and foolishly rested on my own good works when in reality I had none, yet now I am as well persuaded as I can be of any thing, that this is a false and sandy foundation, and whoever builds upon it will experience a fatal overthrow. This scheme goes on the supposition that man is not in a fallen, ruined state; it supposes also that God will not be strict in requiring obedience to his own law, but that men may fail of their duty in the most essential respect, and never serve God at all from pure motives, and yet incur no penalty. His threatening against all and every transgression, according to these sentiments, is a mere empty sound at which nobody need be alarmed, as there is no danger that it will ever be executed. Besides, if men may be saved by their own imperfect works, the whole Christian system is superfluous, and Christ has died in vain; for as to calling upon him to eke out the defects of our own righteousness, it is so derogatory to the Saviour that I wonder that any one should defend the opinion. The truth is, if our imperfect works can be, in any degree, a safe foundation for our hopes of acceptance with God, they can accomplish the whole work as well as a part. The Deist has as good a religion as this; indeed, he has the very same: it is a system which supersedes all necessity of the mediatorial scheme, and derives no hope nor comfort from the atonement and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. However well satisfied men may remain while they rely on their own works, if ever their consciences are awakened and their minds enlightened to apprehend their real condition under the law, every vestige of hope will be swept from under them. It is a religion which can never heal

a wounded spirit, or give solid peace to the soul troubled with a deep conviction of sin. Nor will it be likely to remove our fears when death approaches; and certainly at the judgment it will be found utterly to fail all those who have no better righteousness than their own.

Aged Man. You seem to me to forget that God is merciful as well as just, and that he has promised freely to pardon all our sins, provided we sincerely repent of them. His merit covers all our defects, and his intercession recommends us unto God. You see that I do not exclude Christ from my religion, as you seem to suggest, but find an important place for the blessed Redeemer, as the ground of all my hopes of pardon.

Colp. I am gratified to learn that you make so much of the Saviour, and at last find so much need of his merit; but these sentiments which you have now uttered never can be made to harmonize with those which you expressed a while ago. If the former theory of salvation be true, there is no room for a Mediator, no room for his expiatory work. Either then you must renounce the expectation of being accepted on account of your honest and upright life; or if you cleave to this as the foundation of your hope, then you have no place for the Saviour and his righteousness. The two plans are perfectly incompatible. "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work." The Scriptures, however, positively and repeatedly declare, that salvation is by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, but the gift of God. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Aged Man. As you admit that God is merciful, why may not I hope to be accepted as well as you? Will his mercy be confined, as some teach, to a few favorites, while all the rest of mankind, do what they can, must be reprobated? That is a doctrine which my soul abhors. I never will believe that God is partial. I am persuaded that he loves all his creatures, and never created any body to be damned. His mercy is free to all, and the door of hope is open to all.

Colp. My aged friend, I do not hold any of the opinions which you so strongly disapprove, as you have expressed them. But I have often observed, that precious truth, by a little misrepresentation, may be made to appear exceeding odious and repulsive. I never in my life heard an opposer of the gospel give a fair and impartial statement of the truth which he endeavored to overthrow. And often truth is so intermingled with error in the statements which men make of their opinions, that it is very difficult to oppose the one without seeming to reject the truth implicated with it. This, I must be permitted to say, is the case in regard to the sentiments just now uttered. But I have found religious controversy so very unprofitable, that I have resolved as far as possible to avoid it. In all cases, however, I feel it to be my duty to give my humble testimony in favor of plain, important, scriptural truth. There are many deep things in religion which I do not pretend to explain, and some things in God's dealings with men which are to me inscrutable: I leave all such things to wiser heads. I find that my best course is, to speculate but little, and to receive with humility and simplicity of heart whatever God has revealed, whether I can explain it or not. Objections may be offered to demonstrated truths, which no man can answer. But do we reject such truths on this account? By no means. We attribute the difficulty to the weakness of the human understanding. There are things relating to the purposes of God, the fall of man, the doctrine of atonement, and supernatural grace, which are beyond my comprehension; but finding things as incomprehensible

and inexplicable in my own nature, and in every thing around me, I am prepared to expect profound mysteries in religion. And when, on account of these, men find fault and cavil, I always think of the words of Paul, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Nothing, I am persuaded, is more requisite to the study of divine truth than a humble, docile disposition. To enter the kingdom of heaven, we must be converted, and become as little children. There are many truths which the proud, self-confident disputer of this world never can receive. They are repugnant to all his feelings; and when this is the fact, the voice of reason and Scripture is lost, and the force of argument is unfelt. I have long observed that the creed of many is dictated by their feelings rather than their judgment. If any doctrine be advanced which is repugnant to their feelings, they instantly, I was going to say instinctively, reject it without any impartial inquiry into its authority and evidence. Even the plain and repeated declarations of God's word will not overcome their opposition to such truths.

As, then, I do not mean to enter into any abstruse disquisitions of theological points, for which indeed I am incompetent, I will simply state the clear doctrine of Scripture on two essential questions. First, How is sinful man to find acceptance with God? Secondly, How can man be cleansed from the pollution of sin? It seems to me that an answer to these two questions will embrace all that is essential in religion; for, as far as I can see, there are only two obstacles in the way of any sinner's getting to heaven. The first is, the condemnation under which by nature he lies; for we are all by nature children of wrath, and the whole world is guilty before God. The second obstacle is man's corrupt nature, which disqualifies him for the enjoyment of the holy happiness of heaven. The great object of the holy Scriptures is to teach sinful man a way by which these two grand obstacles may be removed. And we are there taught over and over again, and in almost every possible form, that no man can obtain justification or salvation by the deeds of the law, or by any works of righteousness which he can perform; but that salvation from beginning to end is by grace, that is, of mere favor, on the ground, not of our own merit, but the merit of Christ. And as justification is the commencement of salvation, the doctrine of justification by faith is the prominent doctrine of the New Testament; and it is evident that it is not from any merit in the act of faith which is the ground of acceptance, but it is the object which faith apprehends, and on which it relies, even the merit and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. And it must never be forgotten, that the faith which justifies is never a dead, but always a living, operative faith, which "works by love, and purifies the heart."

The second great hinderance to salvation, our depravity of nature, is removed by regeneration and sanctification. This is a real, spiritual renovation of man's corrupt nature, inculcated in Scripture by many striking metaphors, and its necessity insisted on in the most decisive and peremptory manner: "Except a man be born again"—"Except ye be converted"—"Except ye repent"—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The efficient agent in this change is the Holy Spirit; the instrument, the word. These are truths so plainly taught in the Scriptures, that respecting them there should be no dispute.

Aged Man. What you say may be very true, for what I know; but if so, there are few that will be saved. The people around here know nothing of the great change which you speak of, except a small number of weak enthusiasts, who are trying to be "righteous overmuch." Now, friend, I will change the conversation. I am too old to think of making an entire change in my way of living; and I

am contented to take my chance for future happiness with the majority of my neighbors: and so, good morning to you, sir.

Colp. Before you go, I beg you to hear one word more from one who has no other motive for addressing you but love to your soul. You have here a comfortable house and a good farm, which you have obtained by your own industry. Suppose, now, that some friend should come to you and say, "I have been examining the recorded deed which you received when you bought this land, and I find it to be defective; and there are persons interested who begin to suspect the existence of a flaw." What would you do? Would you say, I am too old to trouble myself about this matter; I will take my chance with many others whose titles to their lands may be as defective as mine? No, sir; you would not sleep until you had carefully examined your deed, and not trusting to your own judgment, you would consult some one learned in the law, and would not rest until the flaw was rectified, and every ground of suspicion of the validity of your title removed. This would be acting like a reasonable man, who, when he had a great interest at stake, would not be reluctant to give himself some trouble to have every thing made safe.

But is your farm of more value to you than your soul? Would the loss of your farm be greater and more irreparable than the loss of your soul for ever? The Saviour said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Now, my dear sir, I do not ask you to adopt my sentiments. I wish you honestly and earnestly to examine for yourself. Your age furnishes an argument in favor of an immediate attention to this concern, for two reasons: first, because you cannot expect in the course of nature to remain long here; therefore, whatever is done must be done quickly. The young and robust may hope for a life of many years to come, but you are certainly near your journey's end. And another reason is, that the loss of the soul to an aged man is greater and more terrible than to a young person, because he has committed so many more sins, and lived so much longer in impenitence and the rejection of the gospel. If your state is good, it cannot hurt you to examine into it, but must afford great consolation in the near prospect of death; but if it should be found, on impartial examination, not to be safe, it would be of infinite importance to know it before the day of grace is past. Such a discovery would, indeed, give you some pain and anxiety, but this would be salutary, and might lead to an application to Christ, the Saviour of lost sinners, for pardon and grace.

Do consider, friend, I beseech you, whether it would be wise for you to suffer now the pangs of conviction of sin and of the new birth, or to be tormented in hell for ever. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. The door of mercy is still open. The gracious invitations of the gospel are still addressed to you. God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, and says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Christ says, "Ye will not come unto me, that you may have life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Though you are far advanced in years, it may not be too late. The laborers that entered the vineyard at the eleventh hour were employed, and received the same reward as the others. Turn not your thoughts away from this subject, I entreat you. Let not the example of your careless neighbors influence you to neglect your salvation. They, for aught you know, may experience true religion when your head is laid under the clods of the valley. Let there be no delay in attending to this great concern.

Aged Man. I own that what you say is reasonable, and I begin to feel that I have too long neglected to attend to religion; but if I should wish to become religious, I know not where to begin.

Colp. I hope, sir, you have a Bible. This is the guide-book to heaven.

Aged Man. I must confess that I have not. When I began housekeeping my wife brought a Bible with her, but the children used it as a reading-book at school, and it got used up.

Colp. Here, sir, is a Bible which you can have at a very cheap rate; and here are some other small books and tracts, which have been the means of guiding many inquiring souls in the way of life. "Alleine's Alarm," "Baxter's Call," and "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." And here for a few cents you may have "James' Anxious Inquirer." And here are some tracts well suited to your case. I will leave these books with you, and as I expect in a few weeks to return this way, if after perusing them you should not wish to retain them, I will take them back again.

Aged Man. What you propose is reasonable; but at all events I must have the Bible. I am ashamed not to have one in the house. But I wish to ask you one question. Do you get any profit from the sale of these books, or do the Society who publish them make any thing by them?

Colp. I have no profit whatever on the sale of these books. I receive so much a year for my services, and that is all, though I could make much more at my trade, but I have a desire to be useful to my fellow-creatures. And the American Tract Society do not make a cent by their millions of publications. Their agents and secretaries, who devote their whole time to the work, receive a bare support; and the books are sold at what they cost, and thousands are given away every year.

THE COLPORTEUR AND ROMAN-CATHOLIC

dialogue i

Colporteur. Can I sell you a Bible or Testament this morning? they are very cheap.

Roman-catholic. We do not approve of your Bibles. They are not correct; and our priests warn us against them.

Colp. Do they furnish you with such as are correct? Have you a Bible in the house?

Rom. No; our priest says the common people have no need of the Bible; they do not know how to interpret it; and reading it would do them more harm than good. He says that whatever is necessary he will teach us; and if we believe as the church believes it is enough.

Colp. But may not a priest be a bad man? Is it not possible that he may not know the truth, and therefore cannot lead you in the right way? Is it wise to venture your salvation upon the fidelity of a fallible man?

Rom. The thing which you suppose is possible; priests are but men, and some of them frail men; but we can do no better than commit our souls to their keeping. If we should offend them they might refuse to give us absolution.

Colp. We never read that Christ or his apostles ever forbade the people to read the Scriptures; on the contrary, they exhorted men to search the Scriptures, and blamed them for not knowing what was written in them. "All Scripture" is said to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The law, under the old dispensation, was read in the hearing of all the people every

seventh year; and in the synagogues the law and the prophets were read every Sabbath-day. Timothy is said to have known the Scriptures from his childhood, and the Bible contains instructions and exhortations addressed to all sorts of men. If the priest should be ignorant, or negligent, the people must perish for lack of knowledge, if they are not permitted to read the Scriptures. You speak of absolution. You do not really believe that any sinful man has power to forgive sin. The thing is incredible. Man can only declare the terms on which God will grant forgiveness; but he cannot tell when those conditions are complied with. Suppose a man to confess his sins to the priest in hypocrisy, still regarding iniquity in his heart, can the priest forgive him? certainly not. He can only pronounce the true penitent forgiven. The priest's absolution of an impenitent sinner cannot avail. But, friend, you have now arrived at mature age, and have from your infancy been under the instruction of your priests, do tell me what you have learned about the way of salvation? How shall a sinful man obtain the favor of God; and what is necessary to prepare him for heaven?

Rom. Why, sir, we must lead a good life, and when we commit sin—and what man is there that sinneth not?—we must confess our sins to the priest and obtain absolution, and then submit to the penances which he lays upon us; and as to preparation for heaven, we must make satisfaction for our venial offences while we live; or if that is not done, we must suffer the fires of purgatory until we are prepared for heaven. Besides, when we are near to death, we have a sacrament intended for the express purpose of preparing the soul for death. This sacrament is called extreme unction, and consists in anointing the sick with consecrated oil, by which grace is communicated to the departing soul. Thus you see our religion contains all that is needful to gain the favor of God and preparation for heaven.

Colp. Now, my friend, be not offended at my plainness, when I tell you that this is not the religion of the Bible. If your priest has taught you this system as the way of salvation revealed in the Bible, he has deceived you; and as your salvation is at stake, you ought, like the Bereans, to examine for yourself, “whether these things are so.” Acts 17:11. The religion inculcated in the Bible is essentially different from this. It is a method of saving sinners by grace, without the merit of good works. Pardon is freely granted to every penitent believer, only for the sake of the obedience of Christ unto death. His blood is the only sacrifice which atones for sin. We never read in the New Testament of sinners being directed to make satisfaction for their own sins. Justification is declared to be by faith, and not by the works of the law; so that God is said to justify, not the righteous, but the ungodly who believeth in Jesus. Our works and merit have no part in the business. Indeed, the sinner is justified before he begins to perform any works that are truly good; and even these could never be the ground of justification, because they are all imperfect. I know that your Douay Bible has the phrase *do penance—unless you do penance—*but unless by penance you understand sincere repentance, the translation is evidently wrong, as every scholar must confess. Where in all the New Testament do you find any such thing commanded, or ever once spoken of, as is now called penance? But as to repentance, the best preachers in your church allow, that repentance of the heart is the essence of all true penance. And the Scriptures speak of nothing else, except the evidence which we must give of our sincerity, namely, “works meet for repentance.”

And this leads me to remark, that according to the teaching of the New Testament, a thorough change of heart is necessary to our entering the kingdom of heaven. Your priest, no doubt, has

taught you that you were regenerated in infant baptism, and that no other conversion is needed. But in the Bible there is no such doctrine. If all who have received infant baptism were truly regenerated, they would show the evidence of the change in their conduct and conversation. They would lead holy lives. But in many such persons we see no such thing. They give no evidence of a holy nature. But “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Your outward ceremonies, and sacraments as you call them, cannot prepare you for heaven. The Jews gloried in their circumcision; but the apostle Paul in many places teaches, that this and other ceremonies profited nothing. “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing but faith which worketh by love—the new creature.” True religion is spiritual, has its seat in the heart, and does not consist in meats or drinks, that is, in outward ceremonies, but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. What Paul says about the real Jew is equally true in regard to the Christian, for true religion has ever been the same. He says, “He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly,” that is, only by complying with external ceremonies; “but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, and not of the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

And as to purgatory, it is entirely a human invention. There is not one word in the whole Bible that makes the least mention of any such place. Besides, the whole doctrine of making satisfaction for our own sins is unscriptural, and is highly derogatory to the sacrifice of Christ, as though that was insufficient. This doctrine too has introduced the most shameful abuses, through the cunning and avarice of the priests, who have found it to be a gold-mine, certainly a most successful device for drawing money from the people, by working on their tender feelings of compassion. Ask your priest to put his finger on a single text in the Bible which speaks of purgatory, and if I cannot show that it is misinterpreted I will give up the point.

And again, you say that by the sacrament of “extreme unction,” as you call it, the dying are prepared for their change. But if the dying person be impenitent, will anointing him with oil save him? But the Scriptures speak of no such sacrament. The custom of anointing with oil was anciently a very common remedy in sickness; and when the disciples were sent forth to heal the sick, they were commanded by the Lord to anoint them with oil, as a sign of healing. And James directs the sick to send for the elders of the church, who should pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. But this ceremony or remedy was not used to prepare the dying for death; it was used to preserve them from death, by the miraculous healing power which attended it.

And here I think we have the true reason why the priests do not encourage the people to read the Bible. It is, that they fear lest they should discover that the religion which they teach is not taken from the Bible. And if you go to tradition, you will find nothing like a prohibition of reading the holy Scriptures in all the writings of the Christian fathers for many centuries. It was always the undisputed privilege of men, women, and children, of every rank, who could read, to read the sacred Scriptures. Nay, it was always considered an incumbent duty, which no Christian was at liberty to neglect. I must think, therefore, that in taking away the holy Scriptures from the people, the priests are guilty of an enormous crime. They have taken away the key of knowledge. They have shut up the fountain of life, which God had opened for all mankind. There is nothing in the whole Romish system which strikes me as more impious, or more unreasonable. This single thing is enough to convince any unprejudiced man that their religion is not true Christianity: if it were, they would be glad to appeal to the Bible for proof of all their doctrines and all their practices;

whereas, if a person acquainted with the Scriptures should be brought into a Romish chapel, and should carefully attend to all the ceremonies in celebrating mass, he would be ready to think that he had been introduced into a heathen temple, rather than a Christian church.

Rom. You have your way of thinking, and I have mine, and we are not likely to convince one another. We live in a free country, where every man has an equal right with others to form his own opinions, and be of what religion he pleases. Yet, though I believe firmly in the old mother church, as being the only true church, and the only safe way to heaven, yet I must confess I never could see the reason why the Scriptures are kept from us.

dialogue ii

Rom. I do not like any of your novelties in religion. I am for following the good old way. Yours is a new religion, only about three hundred years old; but ours is more than eighteen hundred years old. Ours has come down in a right line from Christ and his apostles; yours began with Luther and Calvin.

Colp. Did you never hear, friend, that Paul predicted that there would be a great falling away before the end of the world? Suppose now that apostasy to have taken place; and suppose some pious men, by reading the Scriptures, to have discovered that the church was become corrupt, and should endeavor to bring the people back to the religion inculcated by Christ and his apostles; which ought to be called the good old way, the errors and corruptions of an apostate church, or the doctrines and worship of the New Testament restored? Certainly the latter. Now this is precisely the case. Your church has evidently departed from the Scriptures; and we are endeavoring to bring the people back to the true religion, which by degrees was forsaken by the whole Roman-catholic church. Popery then is the novelty, and Protestantism the old religion of the Bible. I have here a book with this very title, "Popery a Novelty;" and the thing is proved by undoubted testimonies, that a large part of the Romish religion has sprung up long since the times of the apostles.

Rom. I never can believe that Christ would leave his church to apostatize; for he has promised that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Colp. Certainly the church of God will never become extinct. If it becomes corrupt, it will be reformed and restored to its primitive purity; and God is accomplishing something of this kind now. He has put it into the hearts of many to search the Scriptures; and they have found that the Romish church, and also the Oriental churches, have become very degenerate. Still, there has been a seed to serve Him. In the midst of corruption, a few faithful souls have been found who have testified against the errors and sins of the times. And in sequestered valleys a people have lived who continued to profess the true doctrines of Christianity. These have been long and cruelly persecuted, but not exterminated. These held the same doctrines as the Reformers whom God raised up in these latter ages. The Jewish church fell away to idolatry in the time of Elijah, so that he thought that he alone was left of the worshippers of the true God; but God informed him that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

A similar defection took place in the time of Manasseh and Amon; in which time the Scriptures were unknown among the people, as we learn from the fact, that the book of Moses was found among the rubbish, and the pious young king Josiah, when he heard it read, rent his clothes, and

expressed the utmost grief, because the prescriptions of the divine law had not been obeyed for a long time. As it was then, so it is now with the Romish church. The Scriptures, though not lost, are kept back from the people by their priests and prelates. They are kept in ignorance, and have no opportunity of judging whether what their friends teach them is agreeable to Scripture or not. Now certainly this is not a safe condition to rest in.

But my object in seeking this conversation was not to enter into any dispute, but to have a serious discourse about vital piety. If your religion is right, it brings those who receive it to love God supremely, and to love their fellow-men. The question then which I would propose for your consideration is a personal one. It is simply the question which our Saviour, after his resurrection, propounded to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" I put it to your conscience, do you feel a sincere love to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Rom. To be sure I do. Do you take me for a heathen or a reprobate, that you ask me, a Christian man, such a question?

Colp. I mean no offence. But a mere profession of love with the lips is easily made. Christ said of some that had a high opinion of themselves, "I know you, that you have not the love of God in you." And he also said to his disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Do you then obey from the heart all the commandments of God? One of these commandments is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them." Now, it is a notorious fact, that in all your churches you have images, and that you bow down to them and worship them.

Rom. I have the ten commandments in my catechism at home, but there is no command forbidding us to worship images. You Protestants must have invented this to impose on the ignorant.

Colp. Here is a plain evidence of the craft and dishonesty of your priests. They have left out almost the whole of the second commandment of the Decalogue, and have made one commandment out of the first two; and that they might make out the number ten, they have divided the tenth into two.

Rom. I never can believe that any of our priests would change the word of God, or leave out any of the commandments of God. If you could convince me of the truth of what you say, it would go further to shake my faith in their honesty than all that you have yet said. But it cannot be. Here is a catechism which has the ten commandments, and there is no prohibition of worshipping images. The first is, "Thou shalt not have any other gods before me." And the second commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." I wonder at the effrontery of men, that in the face of day will make so heinous a charge against our priests. They certainly break the commandment that says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

Colp. I admit that the charge is a grievous one, and if it is not true, I will consent to be considered a false accuser. You admit that the Douay translation of the Bible is correct; it was made by Romish priests, and is the version in use among you, as far as you have liberty to read the Bible. Then, friend, I have a copy in my leather bag, and you shall read for yourself, and compare what is there

written with the commandments which you have in your manual; for though they have omitted the second commandment in the catechisms and manuals, which are put into the hands of the people, they have not had the impious audacity to strike it out of the Bible.

Rom. [Reads the commandments out of the Douay Bible.] This, I confess, surprises me not a little. This is a thing I never heard of before. I must get my confessor to explain how this comes. Surely there must be some good reason for this, or it would never have been done.

Colp. My dear sir, the thing admits of no explanation, and needs none. You see with your own eyes that one of the commandments has been omitted, or so mutilated, that you never knew till this moment that God had given such a commandment, and this furnishes the strongest reason why the people should have the Bible in their own hands, and not trust implicitly to the priest. And it shows clearly enough why the priests are so reluctant to let the people have the Bible to read. It is a fear lest they should see the contrast between the Romish religion and that of the Bible. Remember the words of our Saviour, "He that breaketh one of the least of these commandments and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."

But what I wish, as I said, is not to dispute, but to come to the vitals of religion. A man may profess the true religion, and yet have no experience of its vital power. The essence of all true piety is in the affections and purposes of the heart. God looketh on the heart, while man can only look on the outward appearance. You and I must soon stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; and if we are then found to have built our hopes on a false foundation, it will be too late to remedy the evil. Our Saviour expressly and solemnly declares, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Let me ask you, friend, have you good reason to think that you have ever been truly converted? You talk of your penances, and of the priest's absolution, but believe me, no human priest ever had power on earth to forgive sins; and be assured, that without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you must perish. "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him."

Rom. You preach very well, but I am not going to forsake mother church, and Mary the mother of God, and all the saints, for the heresy of Luther, Zuingle, and such like.

Colp. I do not wish you to have any thing to do with Luther and Calvin: what I bring before you is not taken from them, nor from any other man; it is from the holy Scriptures—from the words of Christ himself, and from Paul and the other apostles. They all agree in this, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and this holiness does not belong to our nature, for we are "by nature, children of wrath," and "dead in sin." We must come to Christ by faith, that we may have life. And as to the Virgin Mary, I admit that she was a blessed saint; but no mere creature should be worshipped. Show me one text of Scripture which commands us to worship her or any other saint or angel, and I will join your church; but there is none such. Almost all your religion is the invention of men—mere will-worship. Even your adoration of the cross, and making the sign of the cross so often, is superstitious. There is not one word in the Bible, from beginning to end, which gives the least encouragement to any such thing. Your religious ceremonies were for the most part borrowed from the Pagans, as some writers have clearly demonstrated.

dialogue iii

Rom. Well, friend, I see you are still travelling about with your pack of books. I have been thinking much about our last conversation respecting the love of Christ, and what you call the new birth, and have come to the conclusion that the religion of Protestants is mere enthusiasm. Who would give any credit to a man who should profess to have experienced a new or heavenly birth? The thing is foolish and absurd, and this shows how dangerous it is to leave every one to interpret the Scriptures for himself. Ignorant and conceited people catch up certain words of Scripture by the mere sound, and put a meaning upon them which they were never intended to bear by the inspired writer.

Colp. Then you do not believe any change of heart necessary to fit a man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. I thought your authors did hold that the sinful heart must be renewed before it can go to heaven, but insisted that all who were properly baptized were regenerated, or received grace at the moment of their infant baptism. This you before acknowledged. And what is there more foolish or absurd in supposing the Spirit of God to renew the soul of an adult under the preaching of the word, than the regeneration of a child by infant baptism? If the Spirit of God operates at all on the minds of men in these latter days, there is no reason why he may not operate on the minds of poor lost sinners, to bring them to repentance. If it were not so, there would be no hope of salvation for any sinner; for even if the priest could give him absolution, as you think, an unholy soul never could be received into heaven; and if admitted there, never could enjoy the holy pleasures of the place. Verily there must be a new birth, by which is meant nothing else but a sincere conversion, or a true repentance, by which a sinner obtains new views, experiences new affections, forms new purposes, enjoys new hopes and pleasures, and immediately begins to live a new life. And as you acknowledge that many of your people lead a profane and wicked life, these, even if they were regenerated in their baptism, have lost the grace then received, and need to be renewed again to repentance. You recollect that in a former conversation, you said that the reason why all baptized persons did not give evidence of a renewed heart was, that they through negligence and sin lost the grace then received; and if they needed regeneration in infancy, when they had no sin but original sin to be removed, how much more do they need renovation now, when they have added to their original sin so many actual transgressions, and have formed evil habits and dispositions of the most inveterate kind? As to enthusiasm, I am no friend to it. But you have no right to charge it upon Protestants, and especially for professing a change of heart, which you cannot deny to be necessary.

But if you are disposed to cavil, I think we had better close the conversation and say no more. My earnest wish has been to quit disputing, and to converse about the vital parts of true religion; and therefore I proposed the subject of the love of God, concerning which there can be no dispute, as all must allow that this is necessary; and I asked you what you believed to be the evidence that a man did love Christ, and whether you possessed such evidence. But you seem unwilling to come to the point; and I have no right to compel you to answer. But, my dear sir, it is your own concern. Your eternal interests are at stake, and time is fast rolling away. Soon, both you and I must appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, to answer for the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or bad. And I am persuaded that no absolution by a priest will avail any thing to the impenitent sinner on that day. Whether he be called Papist or Protestant will then be of no account; but the point of great, yea, of infinite importance will be, whether he is robed in the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ, and whether he has become a new creature, and has

exercised that faith which works by love and purifies the heart.

As I may possibly not see you again, I solemnly warn you of the danger which, in my opinion, hangs over you; for though it is not my place to judge any man, yet when we think a fellow-creature is exposed to misery, charity requires that we should warn them, whether they will hear or forbear. I cannot be uncharitable in supposing that you are an unconverted man, as you do not profess to have experienced any such change, and, indeed, do not believe in its reality. But as I feel a real love for your soul, I would affectionately entreat you to look well into this matter, and do not trust so implicitly to the teaching of your priests. They may mislead you to your ruin. Christ said of the scribes and Pharisees, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Do, friend, take this New Testament and compare it with your own, and you will find that they agree in all important points. You will find that a change of heart is no enthusiastic notion, but clearly taught in your own Bible.

Rom. You are mistaken, sir, in supposing I possess a Testament. I wish I had one which our priest will approve.

Colp. I am sorry to part with you; but do take this book. You need say nothing about it to the priest, lest he take it from you and burn it. But lest he should extort the secret from you at confession, I only lend you the book till I come again. And may God bless the reading of it to your soul.

dialogue iv

Colp. Well, friend, have you read any in the Bible which I left with you when I was last here, and will you let me know what you think of the book?

Rom. To be sure, we all agree that the Bible is a good book—the best of all books, and was given by inspiration of God. No good Catholic disputes that; and I must confess that I have taken much interest in reading many things both in the Old and New Testaments.

Colp. What right then has the priest to deprive you of the benefit of reading the word of God, which St. Paul says "is able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus?" And from this same passage we learn that children were allowed in old times to read the holy Scriptures, for the apostle says, "from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures." And in all the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there is not one word forbidding or discouraging any one from reading the word of God, but frequent exhortations to "search the Scriptures;" and the errors of some are attributed to their ignorance of the Scriptures. Of all the errors of Romanism, this practical one of denying the Scriptures to the people is the most unreasonable and the most injurious. In this free country, I wonder that any man who has the spirit of independence in him can submit to such tyranny, attended with effects so disastrous. That must be a fearful superstition which binds a man's conscience to relinquish such a privilege, when his own judgment is convinced that the thing is right and good.

Rom. You have now touched upon the key which will explain what at first sight seems to be a paradox. The truth is, that we must not be governed by our own private judgment, but by the decisions of the church. No scripture is of private interpretation. No man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion. And here is the true ground why the Bible is not put into the hands of the people. They are not competent to judge of its doctrines and precepts, and their reading the

Scriptures can therefore be of no use to the common people, and might fill their minds with notions contrary to the established doctrines of the church. See among Protestants the sad effects of leaving people to form their own opinions from reading the Scriptures. You are cut up into innumerable sects and parties, all professing to take their tenets from the Bible.

Colp. I see how the matter stands. You are under an intolerable yoke of slavery; for no slavery on earth is so dreadful as that which binds fast the understanding and conscience of men. Why did our Creator endow us with rational minds, if we are not permitted to exercise them in searching for and judging of truth? And how deplorable the condition of those who are secretly convinced that certain things would be both right and beneficial, but dare not follow the dictates of their own reason and conscience, because a set of domineering priests have undertaken to judge for them. This is a bondage to which I never could submit. I never will pin my faith to another man's sleeve. Suppose he is mistaken or designedly misleads you, will he be answerable for the loss of your soul, or for the injury which your spiritual interests may sustain? No; every man must bear his own burden. Every man must account for the improvement of his own talents and opportunities of knowing the truth. Christ addressed himself to the understandings and consciences of the people, and called upon them to judge of the truth of what he said. Paul addressed the Corinthians as rational men, saying, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." Upon this principle it is perfectly useless for me to endeavor to convince you of the truth; for if you should see the truth ever so clearly, you dare not profess it, or act in accordance with it. You must believe what the church tells you to believe, however absurd or impossible the thing may be; and you can only know what the church requires you to believe from the priest. And if he should happen to be an ignorant or hypocritical man, you will of course be led astray, perhaps to your eternal undoing. It would be just as reasonable to shut your own eyes, and blindly follow the lead of others, when you have the right and the ability to see and choose your own path. And the only text that can be adduced which has the semblance of proving that all men may not read the Scriptures, is the one referred to by you, that "no prophecy is of any private interpretation." But this text is, in my opinion, altogether perverted when thus applied. I am confident that that is not its true meaning. It implies nothing contrary to the right of private judgment or interpretation; but warns every one not to pervert an obscure prophecy by interpreting it according to his own pleasure or fancy, contrary to the design of God in uttering it. The prophecy, we are told in the next verse, was spoken by "holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" and God will fulfil it, not according to our false glosses, but in its real import. What could be more absurd than for the apostles to address long epistles to the people, if they were not allowed to judge of the meaning of those epistles? I am sure you must admit that you are abused by your spiritual guides, and deprived of most important rights and privileges.

But, my friend, I have no desire to dispute with you, or any other man. I am not fond of controversy. It seldom does any good, and often increases the prejudices of those whom we wish to convince. All I aim at in what I have said is, what you will acknowledge to be right, namely, to give the subject a fair examination; and I do not see how you can do this, without the Scriptures as your guide; for if you are inclined to give implicit credit to every thing your priest tells you, then there is an end of all inquiry. But if you wish to be sure that what he teaches you is right, or if not, that you may know in what he errs, then you must refer to the Bible, as you believe that to be the word of God.

One thing, the importance of which you cannot deny, I would earnestly request of you, which is, that you accompany your examination with earnest prayer for divine direction. I have the opinion that no one ever sincerely sought divine direction who was not directed essentially in the right way. Indeed, it is a divine promise, "Seek, and ye shall find." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." And seek not merely to have your understanding convinced, but pray that the truth may, by the power of the Spirit, have its due effect on your heart. I should think it a small matter to be able to persuade you to become a Protestant; my heart's desire is that you become a true Christian, whether you become a Protestant or not. If your heart is truly renewed, and your faith fixed on the blessed Redeemer, whom your creed holds to be both God and man in one person—if your trust for salvation shall be in his atoning sacrifice and prevalent intercession, I shall be satisfied. My chief aim is to bring my fellow-sinners to that Saviour in whom I trust I have found redemption for my own soul. I would rather by far see you an humble Christian in the Catholic church than a zealous Protestant of any denomination, without giving evidence of being actuated by the Spirit of Christ; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," says Paul, "he is none of his." I am far from thinking that all Protestants are in a safe state, or that all Roman-catholics will be lost. I believe that every one, of whatever nation or religious denomination, who truly repents of his sins, and sincerely believes in Christ, will be saved; and that all who are destitute of cordial faith and repentance must be lost.

The point then which above all others I wish to press upon your attention is, the religion of the heart, a saving interest in the blessings of the covenant of grace. If your heart be right in the sight of God, then you will be led in the right way in your external conduct. Without vital piety, consisting in supreme love to God and love to our neighbor, it matters little what profession we make, or in what connection we stand. My dear fellow-sinner, I exhort and beseech you, by the love of God, and by the tender compassions of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you turn not away from the consideration of this subject. Look back on your past life, from your infancy up to this day, and consider how many sins you have committed. Deceive not yourself, I entreat you, with the notion that the priest has forgiven them. No, no; he has no such power. If you have not sincerely repented of them all, and been washed in the blood of Jesus, applied by faith, the guilt of all these sins lies heavy on your soul. Listen then to the word of friendly exhortation. Look not unto man, but unto God for pardon. He is able and willing "to take away all iniquity, and to receive you graciously," if you will come unto him in the new and living way which he has ordained. Christ stands and knocks for admittance into your heart. Christ, as suspended on the cross, cries unto sinners, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." Christ invites the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him and find rest. He says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Behold, the fountain of life is open, and the water of life is freely offered. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Seek," therefore, "the Lord, while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Lay to heart these solemn, tender exhortations from the word of God, and let your heart bend in humble submission to the will of God. Behold, he waits to be gracious.

Rom. I find that you are disposed to refer to the Bible for the proof of all your doctrines; but we maintain that many things which Christ and his apostles ordered in the church can be learned only by tradition. It is a matter of no consequence whether a law is written or not, provided we know it emanates from the proper authority. And we know that the Christian church existed before any book of the New Testament was published. It is certain, then, that the primitive churches were first instructed by oral communication, and not by the Scriptures; and what they thus received, they handed down to their successors. And our learned men say that the church might have existed, flourished, and continued unto this time, without any of the books of the New Testament. For it was easy for one generation to teach the next generation what had been communicated to them by the apostles, and thus the original revelations and institutions would be handed down from age to age.

Colp. What you say is true, that an oral, or spoken law, if it can be proved to have been uttered by the lawgiver, is as binding as a written law; but such is the uncertainty of oral tradition, that it is impossible to know what is true and what false which comes down to us along this muddy stream, especially as it had to pass through many dark periods, when the learning and information of the people were at a very low ebb. It is impossible for doctrines and rules of conduct to be transmitted through a period of eighteen hundred years, without being grievously corrupted. In the beginning of the world, the revelations made to the first man were soon entirely lost or corrupted. Whatever knowledge existed after the flood, was preserved by frequent divine communications.

I would ask any of your most learned priests to furnish a single discourse of Christ, or any one of the apostles, not recorded in the New Testament; yea, let them produce one single sentence from any inspired man which we can be sure was uttered by him. Now, if they cannot furnish the very words spoken by Christ or his apostles, they ought not to pretend that they are in possession of a portion of the word of God which was never committed to writing. And if we go up near to the times of the apostles, when it might be thought that many things would have come down by tradition to men living in the second and third centuries, yet we find by the writings of that age which remain, that the most learned doctors of the church knew nothing of the sayings and doings of Christ and his apostles, but what they read in the New Testament; or if some real facts did float down this stream, they were mingled with so much that was false, that it was impossible to distinguish the true facts from the lying legends.

When the early fathers, as Iræneus, Tertullian, etc., appeal to tradition to prove the doctrine and usages of the church, they did not refer to doctrines and facts not in the New Testament, but to those which were commonly known and believed by all Christians; for when these fathers mention the things handed down by tradition, they are found to be the articles of the early creeds which were drawn up for the use of the new converts.

Rom. But if they had these things recorded in Scripture, why appeal to tradition?

Colp. Because they were contending with heretics who denied the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and did not receive the Scriptures as a true account of the Christian religion. Against such they appealed to the universal tradition of all the churches, all of which, in every part of the world, had received the same leading facts and doctrines.

Rom. In regard to the books of the New Testament, you are, after all, obliged to resort to tradition; for how do you know that the gospels and the epistles were really written by the evangelists and apostles, but by tradition?

Colp. This, I know, is an argument greatly boasted of by your writers; but if it were granted, that it is by the testimony of the early church that we know what books are canonical, it would go but a very little way to establish the Romish doctrine of tradition as a rule of faith. The fact that certain books were received as inspired by the universal church, is one of so public a nature, that it could easily be transmitted by written testimony of the successive ages; but this does not prove that a revelation distinct from that in the New Testament could be safely handed down in this way.

We know by tradition that Cicero delivered many orations, which were committed to writing, and have reached our times; and that Livy wrote a history of Roman affairs, a part of which has come down to us. That these authors did write these books has come down by an uncontradicted tradition, and on this ground is credible. But suppose some one should pretend that other orations of Cicero, which were never committed to writing, and other histories which Livy recited, but never wrote, had come down to us by tradition, every man of sense would laugh at such a pretension. You see, friend, the vast difference between receiving by tradition a single fact in relation to the author of a book, and receiving a revelation—an unwritten word of God. It may be admitted that a ceremonial institution, such as baptism or the Lord's supper, might be handed down by tradition; but so prone are men to add to and alter such institutions, and to invent others, that if we had no written record we should be at a loss to know what had been instituted. Just so is it now with respect to the sacraments.

In the New Testament we read of no more than two ordinances of this kind, but in the Romish church there are seven; and such changes have been made in the two which were instituted by Christ, that they can scarcely be recognized as the same. The existence of these seven sacraments, as they are called, in the Roman-catholic church, shows how uncertain is tradition; and in regard to a multitude of other ceremonies, they may be traced up, not to the apostles, but to a heathen origin. The holy water, the incense, the altar, the sacerdotal vestments, the holy days, and dedication of churches to saints and angels, are all borrowed manifestly from the pagan ritual, as has been demonstrated by learned men.

Rom. You are now going off in a strain in which my limited information does not permit me to follow you. Whether what you say is true or not I cannot judge. I only wish that our learned bishop, or even father Benedict were here—they would soon put an end to your boasting. But one thing I must say, that our church is infallible; it cannot err in matters of faith. The decision of popes and councils is sufficient to satisfy the mind of any reasonable man.

Colp. If you could prove what you now say, all your other arguments are superfluous. Even tradition is of no use. All that is necessary is to hear the pope; for if he is infallible, he can decide every question of doctrine. An inspired man needs to bring no far-fetched arguments, or to resort to tradition for proof of any thing. All you have to do is to get the pope to open his mouth and utter his decree, or to send his bull to the whole church. But how is it possible that you can believe the pope to be infallible, when it is notorious that some of the popes have been among the wickedest of men. They have, in a number of instances, acknowledged themselves to be in error. They have, in numerous instances, contradicted one another, and reversed each other's decrees. They have

contradicted the plain declarations of Scripture; and as to councils, we are sure that any number of fallible men met together, cannot by merely assembling become infallible. The acts or canons of the councils have often been contradictory to one another; so that we are sure infallibility does not reside in them. The truth is, the claim to infallibility is ridiculous. There is no infallible tribunal upon earth, but the word of God. This is infallible, for “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

dialogue vi

Rom. I never wished for learning so much as I do now. I find that a man may have the right side, and yet not be able to maintain his cause for want of learning. There is one point, however, on which a child may confute a Protestant, because the Scriptures are plain and express on the subject. I lately heard our priest lecture on it, and he made it to my mind clear as the light at noon.

Colp. Pray let me know to what you refer?

Rom. Why, that Peter was the prince of the apostles, and had the whole church built on him, and the popes of Rome are the regular successors of Peter, and inherit his authority. Now, according to this, which can be clearly established, all the churches in the world should be subject to the pope; for he has the keys—he has the power of binding and loosing—and the church founded on this rock, Peter, can never fail, and therefore can never fall into fatal error; for if that was possible, then would the promise of Christ fail, who declared that the gates of hell should never prevail against the church. The whole passage is found in Matthew 16:18-19 : “And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Our doctor says, as long as this text stands in the Bible the Catholic church cannot be overthrown; yea, he went so far as to say, that no Protestant had been able, even plausibly, to interpret this text to suit their scheme. He told us of several weak attempts to rescue the text from the hands of the Catholics, the mention of which caused a smile in his audience. He said that the name Peter, in Greek, signified a rock, and that our Saviour gave him this name when he called him to be an apostle, because he knew that he would make him the foundation-stone of the church which he was about to establish in the world.

Colp. I wonder that any one should presume to maintain that one of the apostles was set up as a superior to the rest, who has ever read the reproof which Christ gave to the disciples for contending which should be the greatest. “And there was also a strife among them which of them should be the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” Luke 22:24-26. Christ says nothing about any superiority of Peter over the other apostles. Indeed, as Peter spoke in the name of his brethren, in the noble confession which he made, what Christ addresses to him in reply should be understood as applying to them all. And this is found to be correct from consulting the parallel passage in John 20:21, where the same power is expressly given to them all which is here given to Peter. “And Jesus said unto them, As my Father hath sent me, so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they

are retained.” Here the power granted by the risen Saviour is the same to all. If Peter was to have a preëminence over the rest, now was the time to declare it, that all might understand that he was chief. But such a superiority is neither given here nor anywhere else. Neither did Peter ever claim such superiority, nor was it ever in fact conceded to him, as the whole history of the apostles shows.

But if Peter had been constituted the pope over the other apostles, that does not prove that the same preëminence belongs to those falsely called his successors. The bishops of Rome were no successors of Peter. We never read in the New Testament that he had even visited Rome. He was the apostle of the circumcision, and Antioch seems to have been his head-quarters, and Asia Minor the field of his labors. But let us admit, in accordance with ancient tradition, that Peter visited Rome toward the close of his life, and that he governed the church there while he lived, and that he suffered martyrdom in that famous city; what does this prove in regard to the men who have been placed as bishops in that see ever since? Surely nothing. The bishops of Rome acquired their authority, not from being successors of Peter, but because this was the metropolis of the empire. We find that bishops, after ambition began to work, assumed authority from the dignity of the city where they resided. But why should the bishop of Rome, now when the glory of the city has departed for ever, claim not only a superiority, but an arbitrary authority over all other bishops? The claim is full of arrogance. If any church had a right to preëminence it was Jerusalem, the mother church; and if the bishops of any church had any peculiar claims as successors of Peter, the bishops of Antioch ought to have the preëminence.

dialogue vii

Rom. There is one point where we Catholics have a great advantage over you Protestants, and that is in regard to the holy sacrament. In the eucharist you profess to have nothing but the naked bread and wine, whereas we have the real body and blood of Christ, which we take into our mouths for the nourishment of our souls; and when the priest celebrates mass, the body and blood of Christ are as truly present and offered as a present sacrifice for our sins, as when he was crucified on Golgotha.

Colp. On this point I admit that there is a great difference between us; and if all that you say was the truth, we should be in great error; but on the other hand, if your doctrine of transubstantiation is false and unscriptural, you will be convicted of the grossest idolatry in worshipping a wafer for a god; and if this doctrine is false, your mass, which your priests offer up with so much solemnity, is a vain offering, and is calculated to bring dishonor on the real sacrifice of Christ on the cross—“the one offering” by which the sins of his people are purged.

Rom. How can you, a Bible man, and so great a stickler for going according to the very letter of the Scriptures, pretend that the doctrine of transubstantiation is unscriptural? Does not our Lord say expressly, when he held the bread in his hand, “This is my body?” Now, every one knows that the bread could not be his body without being changed into his body. We insist on the literal interpretation of the words. No doubt this is a great mystery, and so is the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God; but a true faith embraces all mysteries, and the greater the mystery the greater the miracle, and the more worthy of God, with whom all things are possible.

Colp. Surely you will not say that every thing in the Bible must be taken literally. When it is said that God is a rock, a shield, a sun, a tower, or a consuming fire, we cannot take these words in any other than a metaphorical or figurative sense. So when Christ says, "I am the vine," would any one be so insane as to say that the phrase must be taken literally? In this very passage it is said, "This cup is the new testament," or covenant, "in my blood;" but taken literally it would make no sense, for a cup is not a covenant. The question to be decided is, whether the words "this is my body" should be taken literally or metaphorically. And I will assign such reasons against the literal interpretation as I think sufficient to convince any impartial man. They are these.

First, there is no apparent change in the bread, or wafer, after the priest's benediction. To the eyes of every one it is still the same; to the feeling, to the smell, to the taste, it is bread, and nothing but bread. Take a piece of the same loaf not consecrated, compare them together, there is no difference perceptible by any of the senses. Now, in all miracles the appeal is made to our senses. The water is changed visibly into blood in Egypt. The water at the marriage feast in Cana is changed into wine, which the master of the feast judged to be good, better than what they had drunk before. When the loaves and fishes were multiplied, the abundance produced is visible to all, and is eaten by the whole multitude. When the dead were raised, the person no longer appeared to be dead, but came forth and spoke and acted; and so of all miracles. If the bread in the Lord's supper were changed into flesh, and the wine into blood, instead of seeing the bread and wine remaining the same, we should see a piece of flesh dripping with blood. We have no conception of any substance but by its qualities. When these remain evidently the same, according to the testimony of all our senses, there can be no change in the substance. Besides, if we are to disbelieve our senses in this case, which is never required in any other case, the doctrine will overthrow itself; for how do we know that there is any such word in the New Testament? You may say, Here it is in plain letters. But how am I to know that those letters are written there? I see them, it is true, and I can run my hand over them, and they seem to be such as you say they are; but I see this consecrated wafer as plainly as I see the letters in the book, and I can examine it by more of my senses; and it is precisely, after consecration, what it was before.

Rom. I think there is something profane in your reasoning on such a sacred subject. There is no room for reasoning. What God says must be true, though all our senses and our reason should judge the contrary. Christ positively said, "This is my body," and it is our duty to believe his declaration. God is omnipotent, and can change any substance into another; and he can do this while to all appearance it remains the same. All we need is an implicit faith in the word of God.

Colp. You evidently take for granted what should be proved, namely, that those words must be taken literally. Surely this is not self-evident. Of a thousand intelligent readers who had never seen a New Testament, I doubt whether one would ever dream that Christ, when he held up the bread, meant that that piece of bread was his body literally. No; he would naturally suppose that the words were used figuratively, and signified that the bread resembled his broken body, or represented his broken body.

But this brings me to my second reason against a literal interpretation, and that is, that unless Christ had two bodies, it was literally impossible that the piece of bread which he held in his hand was his body; for there was his real, living body present to the view. There was his whole body, and no part had been severed from it; therefore it was impossible for this bread to be his real body.

According to this monstrous doctrine, one living body of Christ, visible and palpable, yet living, held another body in its hand, and distributed it to be eaten, while this real, living body remained entire and undivided. Can you believe this? or how do you explain it?

Rom. It is an awful mystery; I do not pretend to explain it.

Colp. It is much more than a mystery; it is an evident impossibility. But I am not done: I will now offer a third conclusive argument against the literal interpretation, which is this. Christ says, "This is my body, which is broken for you." If we take these words literally, then we must believe that Christ was already crucified, before he was crucified. If we take one part of the declaration literally, we must take the whole literally. And can you believe that the body of Christ was already broken for us? Then he must not only have had two bodies, but was twice crucified; for all admit that by his body broken is meant crucified for us. But when was this crucifixion? It must have been while the bread was broken in his hands. Then the living Christ crucified or broke the body, made out of the bread. But no one can believe that Christ was already crucified, or that his body was already broken; therefore the whole sentence must be interpreted metaphorically; and the meaning is, this bread broken is a lively representation of that death which I am shortly to endure. Here is evidently the true meaning. And I believe this with all my heart; and the charge of profaneness and infidelity may be rolled back on yourself, for making Christ declare what was in the first place impossible, and in the next place what was false, namely, that his body was already broken while he sat with his disciples at the sacred supper. What do you say to this?

Rom. I have told you that I receive the whole as an awful mystery; not a fit subject for reasoning, but only for faith. The more wonderful it is, the more readily I assent to it.

Colp. If this be the state of your mind, I do not see that any benefit can arise from continuing the conversation. But I intended to offer one other reason against the doctrine of transubstantiation, which I will briefly mention, and then quit the subject. It is this. The flesh of Christ being a natural substance, in its physical qualities like other human flesh, except that it never had the least stain of impurity, cannot be considered to be adapted to the nourishment of the divine life in the soul. No corporeal substance entering the mouth, and going thence into the stomach, can have any effect on the spiritual life—all that it can do is to nourish the body; and we cannot understand that any benefit could be spiritually derived from such eating of the body of our Lord, but by the internal operation of the Holy Spirit on the mind itself; and this divine efficacy would be as beneficial to the soul, if it accompanied sacramental bread, as if it accompanied the flesh of Christ.

Besides, we are at a loss to understand what becomes of the sacred body of Christ, after it is eaten and digested. Does it become, like other nutritious food, a part of our bodies? The idea is abhorrent; and more so the alternative, that it is rejected with that part of our food which is not incorporated with the human body. But indeed, sir, there are so many repulsive consequences flowing from this doctrine, that it becomes distressing to pursue the subject into all the legitimate conclusions which may be deduced from the literal interpretation. And the rule universally admitted is, that when taking a word or sentence literally leads to absurdity, impossibility, or falsehood, it should be understood figuratively. Indeed, the very idea of devouring the flesh and blood of Christ has something exceedingly repulsive to our feelings.

Rom. You seem to forget that Christ himself, in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, speaks repeatedly of eating his flesh and drinking his blood; yea, makes such eating and drinking absolutely necessary to eternal life.

Colp. No, friend, the forgetfulness is on your side. Christ explains his own words, and already shows that they were misapprehended by the Jews, who understood them literally; for at the close he says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Now these words do most clearly teach, that the eating his flesh, if it were possible, would profit nothing; that all vivifying energy was not from carnal and corporeal eating and drinking, but from the Spirit; and that all which he had spoken was to be understood in a spiritual sense. What other interpretation can be put on his declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life?"

dialogue viii

Rom. You went away the other day before I had time to say all that was in my mind. But I do not care to go back to the subject we were on, about fasting on Friday. I know that you Protestants are not fond of fasting. Our priest called here since you passed, and I told him something of our conversation. He laughed heartily, and observed that a dislike of fasting and other restraints of religion was the true secret of Protestantism. He said there was more of appetite and the love of ease, than of conscience, in what was falsely called a reformation. Luther, he said, being a priest and not being permitted to marry, broke his vow, and tempted a nun to break hers, and so they struck up an impious match. A reformation founded on perjury, he said, was a thing abhorrent to every honest man. He moreover said, Protestantism was downright heresy, no religion at all; or if it might be called religion, it was a system of the devil, to lead men to destruction. They have, said he, no priests rightly consecrated, none who have derived their commission by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles. They therefore have no power to remit the sins of any, and they do not pretend to it. But what is more important than all, they have not the body of Christ to give; but our Lord says, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." And above all, the sacrifice of the mass they utterly reject, and it is by this offering that God is propitiated for the living and the dead. What, said he, would become of your unhappy friends now suffering the torment of fire in purgatory, were it not for the masses which are said for them?

I told him, that from not knowing the Scriptures I was unable to dispute with you, and on that account I wished to obtain a Bible.

He answered, that I had no business to enter into any controversy with these men. "Turn away from them," said he, "or turn them over to me. I will soon dispose of half a dozen of these vagrants, who go about the country deceiving the simple-hearted people."

I confess, however, that I am not perfectly satisfied with this kind of implicit faith; I do want to be able to give a reason for my religious belief. Friend, what is your opinion of the mass?

Colp. My dear sir, it is the most barefaced idolatry that was ever practised. It not only has no foundation in the holy Scriptures, but it is an institution of the most abominable idolatrous worship. It is nothing else than the worship of a piece of bread, under the notion that this bit of bread, by the priest's words, has been changed into the real body of Jesus Christ. The whole superstition of the mass is founded on the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. When they have converted the

sacred elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, then the priest offers it up as a sacrifice, a real sacrifice of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. This is the sacrifice of the mass, which the priests offer for the living and the dead. Well, if Christ be there visibly present, he ought to be worshipped; accordingly they elevate the host, that is, Christ, just formed out of the bread and wine, and that the object of divine worship may be fairly present, they maintain not only the presence of Christ's flesh and blood, but of his soul and divinity; and yet the worshipper sees nothing but the outward appearance of a wafer and some wine in a vial, and this celebration of the mass forms now a principal part of the worship of the priests. And many are hired to say a multitude of masses for the deceased, which they celebrate in private. Now the very wafer which they pretend is the real body of Christ, may be kept until it is corrupted like any other bread: or it may be eaten by mice, or other vermin.

This whole service of the mass, celebrated with so much pomp and ceremony, has no manner of support from the holy Scriptures. Indeed, if a person well acquainted with the New Testament, should be introduced into a popish chapel while the priests were celebrating high mass, he would never suspect that he was in a Christian church. He would be ready to suppose that he was witnessing the worship of some heathen temple.

Rom. What you said about the doctrine of transubstantiation has made a considerable impression on my mind, and I told my father confessor that I could not disbelieve my own senses. I told him that I would not hesitate to believe that it was the real body and blood of Christ, if I could see any appearance of, or change of the bread into flesh. Upon this he solemnly assured me that in more instances than one blood had actually been seen dripping from the host when laid up in the sacred vessel where it was kept. But this rather makes the matter worse; for where there is no appearance of flesh or blood, we must think that no change has taken place. And then a want of right intention in the priest nullifies the sacrament; and who can ever know when the real body is present, since the appearance is the same, whether the change takes place or not?

Colp. Upon speaking of the errors of the Romanists respecting the sacraments, I neglected one, which all must admit to be in direct opposition to the plain words of our Lord; and this is so manifest, that even the most zealous advocates of the church of Rome do not pretend to deny the fact, that there has been a departure from what Christ ordained and practised when he instituted the sacred supper. You will understand me to refer to the universal practice in the Romish church of administering the bread only to the people, and withholding the wine, which is partaken of by the priests alone. Now, our Lord took the cup, and having blessed it, he gave it to his disciples, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many; take, and "drink ye all of it." Matthew 26:27. And Paul, who received his instructions for administering this ordinance immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, makes mention of the wine equally with the bread; for he says, "After the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Now we would ask, what human being has a right to change the ordinances of the Lord? Who has authority to break one of Christ's commandments, and teach men to do the same? Here is an evident usurpation of divine authority. If the pope or a council can do this, then they may change the religion of Christ into something entirely different from the original institution—which in fact they have done. Neither prophets nor apostles ever pretended, without divine direction, to change

the ordinances of the Almighty.

Rom. No doubt there was some weighty reason for this change. I have understood that it was found impracticable to administer the cup, without the risk of spilling some drops when the cup was placed in the hands of aged and paralytic persons. And when the wine was changed into the blood of Christ, it would have been a horrible profanity for a single drop of this precious blood to be suffered to be lost.

Colp. This impious mutilation of a divine ordinance, I find, is closely connected with the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, the unreasonableness of which has already been demonstrated. But I would ask, whether the danger of profaning the blood of Christ was not as great when the supper was first instituted as at present? Why did not the omniscient Saviour foresee this danger and provide against it? The apology for the change is really too ridiculous to deserve a serious consideration.

Rom. Our priests assure us, that by having the cup withheld, we suffer the loss of no real privilege; for the whole body and blood of Christ is contained in every particle of the bread; so that he who partakes of what appears to be bread, receives a whole Christ, just as much as if he partook of the cup also.

Colp. If this were true, it would furnish no apology for violating the plain command of our Lord, and mutilating a sacrament instituted by him. But if the use of the cup is altogether superfluous, why do the priests partake of the wine? Christ never appointed the bread to be a sign of the pouring out of his blood; and there is nothing in the breaking and eating of bread which is suited to represent the shedding of blood, which is strikingly represented by the use of the cup. I would appeal to your own good sense, whether this mutilation of the ordinance of the Lord can be justified. You have brought forward what your priests have told you; but do their apologies satisfy your own mind? Do you not see, that if they may do this, they may, on one pretext or another, set aside all the commandments of God, and pretend to bind the consciences of men by devices and institutions of their own? To them may be applied, in all its force, the rebuke of our Saviour to the Jews, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." I am sure that no mind which is not blinded by prejudice can believe that the priests can be justified in this thing. Now, friend, speak plainly the convictions of your conscience. Do you in your heart believe that they are right in thus violating the command, and going contrary to the example of the Lord Jesus? Come, speak.

Rom. Well, if I must tell the truth, I do not think that there is any warrant for this change; but I do not know what light father Benedict may be able to cast on the subject.

There is another point I would mention. I cannot understand what you Protestants have to bring against our clergy for not marrying. Certainly your own Bible, which you put into my hands, clearly teaches that unmarried men can serve the Lord with less distraction and obstruction than those who have wives. No doubt you remember the passage. Surely then, priests, who should be entirely devoted to the sacred duties of their calling, ought not to encumber themselves with the cares of a family.

Colp. Let him who is able to act on this principle do so, according to that of our Lord, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." And Paul, in the epistle to which you have referred, speaks of

some who had not the gift of continence, and he advises such to marry; for he says, "It is better to marry than to burn." But your system makes no provision for such cases; and yet these are so common, that Paul advises, on a consideration of the whole case, that "every-man should have his own wife, and every woman her own husband."

Besides, what the apostle says about the inconvenience of married persons, has special relation to the times of distress in which they lived. Therefore he prefaces his discourse respecting marriage with these words: "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound to a wife, seek not to be loosed," etc. 1 Corinthians 7:1-40.

We do not maintain that it is the duty of all men to marry, but we believe with Paul, that "marriage is honorable in all." And we believe that any law or canon forbidding a whole class of men to marry, is contrary to the law of God, and is one of the signs given by the apostle Paul to Timothy of those evil times which at a future period would certainly come: "Forbidding," says he, "to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath given to be received with thanksgiving."

Rom. I have always understood that celibacy was a holier state than marriage, and on this principle we encourage young virgins to devote themselves to God, that they may give their hearts entirely to the Lord, and be free from every pollution.

Colp. I am aware that such is the doctrine inculcated in the Romish church; but it is one of the marks of an apostate church, which by its traditions sets aside the laws of God, and counteracts the principles of our nature. If marriage was an unholy state, it would have been forbidden to all men as well as the clergy. And it should not be overlooked, that in the passage where Paul seems to prefer a state of celibacy to a state of marriage, he has no special reference to the clergy. And Paul asserts his own liberty to "lead about a wife," 1 Corinthians 9:5, as well as the other apostles. Evidently then, marriage was not forbidden to the apostles, and in giving the characteristics of those who should be put into the ministry, he seems to take it for granted that the pastors would be married men; for he also gives the character of their wives, and rules for the government of their families. The only restriction he lays upon the bishop in regard to marriage is, that he should be "the husband of one wife," which some interpret to mean, that every bishop must have a wife; but the better interpretation is, that he must not have more than one.

Rom. I think that in one respect an unmarried clergy has a great advantage; the church is not required to support their families, which I believe is felt to be a heavy burden among Protestants.

Colp. This disadvantage is greatly overbalanced by the fact, that marriage connects the clergy by intimate bonds with the rest of society; whereas celibacy cuts off the priesthood from all common interest in the affairs of men, and leads ecclesiastics to form a society entirely distinct from others, whose interests are opposed to those of society in general. The church is thus a separate concern, and the priests use every art and influence to draw into their hallowed circle all the wealth which they possibly can. And when once gained it never can be distributed for the benefit of society, but remains perpetually the property of the church in mortmain, as the lawyers say; and by this means, before the Reformation, a large part of the best landed property in England and Scotland belonged to the church.

But it would require a volume to reveal all the secret licentiousness and unnatural crimes which have been produced by this single cause. And these facts can be established by the testimony of Popish writers, and these witnesses not few but many. But I wish not to enter on this disgusting subject.

dialogue ix

Rom. I see, friend, that you continue, like one of old, to walk up and down through the earth—but observe, I do not say that your object is the same, though our father confessor thinks you are not a whit better than the person referred to. He says you are a troubler of the church, an emissary of the devil, and that the books you circulate are full of deadly poison, calculated to be ruinous to souls, and that already you have seduced some unwary souls by good words and fair pretences. I told him plainly that I could not entirely agree with him. I assured him that you had been a number of times in my house, and that I had never observed any thing in your conduct and conversation but what was becoming a Christian man. And as to your books, I told him that here was one, the Douay Bible, which I was sure he could not say was full of poison. And here, said I, is another, which the colporteur gave to my wife, written, as he says, by a good Catholic. Look at it; it is entitled, “The Imitation of Christ.” And what objection, said I, can you have to this, “A Call to the Unconverted?” I have been perusing it, and find nothing but what every good man must approve. Often, reverend father, you have warned us against sinful practices, and told us to forsake our evil ways. Yes, yes, said he, all this is true; but, John, do you not know that of all the sins which you can commit heresy is the worst, for it shuts the door of mercy, and cuts you off from forgiveness, by separating you from the true and only church, and from the holy sacraments, without which there can be no absolution? He then got very warm, and chided me sharply for having any thing to say to you, and warned me most solemnly never to look into any of your books again, and took his leave rather abruptly.

Colp. I do suppose that the man is conscientious in opposition to me and to the truths which I endeavor to circulate. Paul said, “I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus.” And while dragging men and women to prison, and while assisting in the murder of unoffending Christians, he acted agreeably to the dictates of an erring conscience. I have learned to pity and pray for such as are thus misled by their education, and by the errors which they have drunk in as it were with their mother’s milk. The power of prejudice, especially when it has become inveterate, can hardly ever be removed but by the special operations of the Holy Spirit. I know it by experience. I was as much opposed to evangelical truth as any one I ever met with. I was a self-righteous moralist, and when I heard men preach the necessity of the new birth, and of justification by the righteousness of another, I was often provoked to anger, and felt as if I would be glad to have it in my power to stop the mouths of all who preached such doctrines; and if I had been left to myself, I should have continued under the same delusion. But it pleased God to lead me to see something of the wickedness of my heart and life, and to show me that I was in the broad way to ruin. And my distress increased at such a rate, that if I had not found relief it must have driven me to distraction or despair.

Rom. I should like to know, friend, how you found relief; and my anxiety to know this is not a matter of vain curiosity, but ever since I read that little book, “A Call to the Unconverted,” I have had a strange sound in my ears, and many fearful thoughts starting in my mind. I have striven to banish

these unpleasant thoughts, but my efforts are ineffectual. It is continually running in my mind, “You must be born again”—you must repent, or perish. I would have opened my mind to our priest, but I knew what he would say; and I had no thought of revealing the state of my mind to you until I found, by what you said just now, that you have once experienced distress of the same kind and found relief. Now, dear sir, do tell me how I am to get deliverance from this trouble of mind which has come upon me.

Colp. Yes, friend, I can point you to the effectual and only remedy for a soul wounded with a conviction of its sin and danger. The remedy is most simple, it is only to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” with all your heart. It is to look to a crucified Redeemer, who invites all laboring and heavy-laden sinners to come to him and learn of him, and they shall find rest. “Look unto me,” says he, “all ye ends of the earth, and be saved.” If you are enabled to trust in the righteousness of Christ alone, and to renounce all dependence on your own works and on the absolution of your priests, you will find relief.

Rom. But I cannot think he will receive such a sinner as I am. I once thought that I was in a fair way for heaven, but all my former hopes are fled, and I know not what to do; for I am so vile and unworthy that if I should come to Christ, I am afraid he would cast me off and spurn me from his presence.

Colp. Never, never. He has said, “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Hear what Paul says: “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” Christ says that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; to seek and save the lost. But here, take this little treatise of John Bunyan, “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.”

dialogue x

Colp. I am glad to meet with you. When I last was this way I left you in great trouble of mind. I do not believe you have been out of my thoughts a single day since; and to say the truth, I should not be here now, but for my anxiety to know what issue God had given to your concern of mind.

Rom. Friend, I thank you for the interest you take in my salvation. My trouble of mind continued for some weeks without abatement. I read over the little book which you were so kind as to lend me, but it did not seem to suit my case. Indeed, I was fully persuaded that no one had ever been in my sad condition. I fully believed that I was given over to a reprobate mind. I heard that God had mercy on whom he would have mercy, and whom he would he hardened. I said, Surely I am one whom God has hardened; for my heart felt as hard as any rock—as hard as the nether millstone. If my salvation had depended on it, I could not have shed a tear. And when I attempted to pray I was shut up—I could scarcely speak a word. I spent much time in reading the Bible; but every thing was dark and mysterious except one, and that was that I was a lost sinner—a castaway—a reprobate. Sleep departed from my eyes, or I was frightened with dreams. I almost forgot to eat my daily food, and my business was much neglected.

My wife, a good woman and conscientious Catholic, observed the change in me, and was much concerned about me. I had not revealed to her the cause of my trouble, but she suspected that it was connected with my talking with you and reading your books. And one day she said to me, “John, what ails you? Why are you melancholy, and so restless? We never see a smile on your

face, and you seem to take pleasure in nothing. This has come from your acquaintance with that pedler and his vile books. I never wanted the man to come to the house, for I observed that he had an oily tongue which might easily mislead such simple folks as we are; and as to his tracts and books, I wish they were all this moment in the fire. Oh, John, go to father Benedict; he will give you comfort. Often have I gone to confession with a troubled mind, but father Benedict always had a kind word for me; and if you will go and confess your fault in meddling with those heretical books, you will find relief."

I said, "Mary, I believe you are very sincere in your advice; but I tell you that I will never confess to a priest again as long as I live: I am sure he cannot pardon my sins. How can a poor sinful worm of the dust like ourselves pardon our sins? No, Mary, if I ever find rest it must come in a different way from that."

"Well, John," said she, "if you will not go to confession, throw away those heretical books which have already well-nigh turned your brain."

"Why, my dear wife," said I, "I read scarcely any thing now but the Bible, and do you call God's holy word a heretical book?"

She replied, "It may be good for them to read it who are capable of understanding it; but it is not for such poor simple folks as we are to undertake to interpret the sacred Scriptures; let those who have learning do this, and we will hear what they say."

"But," said I, "what if they tell us wrong? What if they are ignorant of the truth themselves? How can we find out whether what they tell us is true, but by searching the Scriptures to see whether these things are so?"

"Well, John, I can't dispute, but I can believe every thing which father Benedict tells me. And, John, I wish to let you know, that when the father was here he said it was full time that our daughter Susan should come to confession; that in the spring the bishop would come round to administer the sacrament of confirmation, and he wished to have all the young people in his parish ready." I told her to do as she pleased; that I would not advise the girl to go, neither would I hinder her. Accordingly, she talked with Susan, who is distressingly diffident, and the girl was thrown into an agony.

After a severe conflict with her feelings, she agreed to go. But when they came to the priest's residence, they found that he was confined to his room with a severe attack of the sciatica. But calling my wife into the room, he said that there was a young priest in the house just from Ireland, from Maynooth college, a fine, discreet, and learned young man. Let your daughter confess to him. Susan at first refused, but after much coaxing, and some threatening, she went into the confessional, and the mother remained in an adjoining room. In less than a quarter of an hour Susan ran to her mother and burst into tears, and seemed at the same time full of indignation. "What's the matter, Susan?" said the mother. "Oh," said the girl, "I will never go to confession again. The priest asked such questions as I am ashamed to mention to you. I'll never go again." My wife went immediately to father Benedict, who seemed much concerned, and sent for the young priest, and asked him what sort of questions he had asked the young woman. No others, said the young priest, than we are taught by our text-book to ask. What text-book? said father Benedict. "Dens' Theology," answered the young man. The old priest seemed to be confounded,

but said, "Young man, that book will not answer for this country; the people here are wide awake on that subject, and an enemy of the Catholics has extracted many things from that book which greatly shock the feelings of the people. That book has done us much harm already. Several persons brought up in the true church have lately forbidden their wives and daughters to go any more to confession. I know that Dens' Theology is in high repute at Maynooth, and is studied there; but we must denounce it here, or it will throw a mighty obstacle in our way."

Colp. All this is very interesting, but I wish to learn from you how you obtained deliverance from the burden of sin which oppressed you.

Rom. I was about to tell you. One day I was sitting musing on my deplorable state. It was Sunday, and I was alone in a retired spot. The sun was near the horizon, and every thing was still. I opened my Bible and read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Timothy 1:15. The thought struck me, If Jesus Christ can save the chief of sinners, why cannot he save me? Casting my eyes on the book, as I turned over the leaves, they fastened on these words: "For he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." The thought again occurred with more force than before, If he is able to save to the uttermost, why is he not able to save even me? At that moment a ray of hope gleamed on my dark and desolate mind. It seemed to me as if a voice said within me, He is able, he is able to save to the uttermost. My heart was filled with joy; its hardness was melted into tenderness. I fell upon my knees and thanked God that I was out of hell, and that salvation for my soul was possible. If a world had been given me, it could not have produced a joy so great; and yet I perceived nothing but that my case was not desperate, as for a long time I had supposed. Oh, how precious did Christ appear! I felt my heart overflowing with gratitude to him as my Saviour, and I beheld a divine glory in his person: his love in dying for poor sinners affected me beyond expression. I said, Lord Jesus, I will follow thee whithersoever thou leadest me. Though I did not dream that I was a believer, yet I felt happy beyond any thing I ever experienced; and I cannot but believe that at that moment God gave me a new heart. All my views were from this time greatly changed, and my heart went out not only in strong affection to my Saviour, but I felt a wonderful affection for all that I believed to be real Christians, and an unspeakable compassion for poor perishing sinners. I could have gone on my knees to entreat them to forsake their sins and come to Christ, who was "able to save to the uttermost." I could have taken my worst enemy in my arms; my heart was so full of love that it embraced the whole world.

Colp. How long did these joyful feelings last?

Rom. Not long. I turned away my thoughts too much from the blessed Saviour, and began to think what a happy change I had experienced, and some proud thoughts arose in my mind. Soon after this, thick darkness came over me. I thought that all I had experienced was a delusion. My old feelings in some measure returned, and I was sunk very low; but still there seemed to be a voice within me saying, "He is able, he is able." Then thought I, Oh, if he were as willing as he is able, then I should still have hope. And after laboring in the dark a few days, light broke in on my mind clearer than before. I now seemed to see clearly why it was necessary for Christ to die, and that salvation would have been impossible without the shedding of his blood. It was now clearly revealed to my mind that God could be just, and justify my soul on account of Christ's merit. The

plan of redemption appeared more glorious than any thing I had ever contemplated, and ever since I enjoy a settled peace, and entertain a good hope through grace.

Colp. Have you spoken to your wife respecting your new views and comforts?

Rom. I have, and she appears to be brought to a stand. She is dreadfully afraid of incurring the anathema of the priests; and though she now reads the Bible, she seems afraid of being seen with the Scriptures in her hand. But I hope the Spirit of God is at work with her conscience.

And poor Susan receives the truths of the gospel with an astonishing readiness. She spends all her spare time in reading, and she tells me that she prays every day for a new heart. May the Lord hear her supplications, and grant her requests.

Colp. But what will the priest say, when he comes to visit you? Will he not be filled with wrath?

Rom. I care not for his anger. I mean to tell him all my mind, and to declare my intention of leaving the Roman-catholic church. I am now convinced, that though there may be a few pious souls in that communion, the church is in an awful state of apostasy. May God have mercy on the people.

dialogue xi

Rom. My good friend, I never wanted to see any body in my life so much as I have wished to see you these many weeks. I have had sore conflicts since I saw you last. "Without were fightings, and within were fears." But, my dear friend, I must tell you all. I have dishonored my Saviour, and betrayed him, like Judas, to his enemies. My soul has been worse burdened with a load of guilt than ever before. Oh, what a wretch am I! What a heinous sin I have committed! Do pray for me, if peradventure the Lord may give me repentance and forgiveness.

Colp. I beg you to tell me what's the matter? What crime have you committed that has cast you down into such depths of distress?

Rom. I will tell you all. And may the Lord enable you to speak a comfortable word to my poor, wretched soul.

As I expected, the old priest, as soon as he was able to go about, came round to our house, to make an apology for the imprudence of the young priest in the shameful questions which he put to Susan at the confessional. He said the young man, who had but just arrived from Ireland, was deeply mortified at what had happened, and solemnly declared that he had no other motive in proposing the objectionable questions than to do his duty, as he had been instructed at Maynooth. And he went and brought the book and showed the very questions which he had proposed to the young woman. I believe that he is a very pious young man. And, said he, in the old country they have very different notions about these things from what you have here in America. There they think it very necessary to search the secret sins of such as come to confession; and especially to bring young and bashful females to a free confession of their secret sins, who would otherwise be guilty of the dreadful sin of covering over their transgressions, and thus, as it were, lying unto the Lord. And, said he, John, I tell you these squeamish notions which are lately getting into the heads of our young females are all borrowed from the heretics. Formerly, John, I asked such questions and worse of some of the finest ladies in the land, and received their candid and penitent confession. Yes, John, I would have you to know, that your own wife has often been questioned in

this manner, and it never offended her.

Upon this I could no longer restrain my wrath: said I, "It's a lie, you old hypocrite, you vile old lecher; I believe that your whole religion is a vile system of hypocrisy and iniquity; and I will now call Mary, and see whether she will confirm what you say."

Said father Benedict, "You need not do that, for no good Catholic dare tell what is said in confession. If your wife were to affirm or deny what I have told you, she would incur the heaviest excommunication of the church, a crime so flagrant that in other days it would have brought her to the stake." My passion upon this rose higher, and I became very abusive, and, alas, was tempted to use profane language. O Lord, forgive my sin! My conscience is burdened. And I have not told you all. When Mary came in, I asked her whether any such questions had ever been put to her at confession, and she promptly answered, "Never." Upon finding that the old priest had deliberately told a shameful falsehood, to the dishonor of as virtuous a woman as ever lived, I was so incensed that I took him by the shoulders and pushed him out of the house. As soon as my passion cooled I regretted what I had said and done. I went out, like Peter, and wept bitterly. Lately I was one of the happiest men living. All day my heart seemed full of joy and peace, and even in the night, when I awoke, I would be singing the praises of my divine Saviour. But now, for three weeks, no sinner out of hell, I think, had suffered more. Oh, do you think it possible that I can be forgiven?

Colp. Yes; "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." Peter cursed and swore, and three times denied his Master, even in his presence, and he obtained forgiveness; and so may you, if you are penitent as he was.

Rom. But Judas repented, and yet found no forgiveness, though he restored the money which he had taken as the price of betraying his Lord. And often, often it has come powerfully into my mind, "Go and do as he did. There is no pardon for those who have sinned as you have done. The sooner you know the worst of your case the better. Go and hang yourself." If I had not believed that this was a temptation of the devil, I know not what desperate act I might have committed against my own life. Do tell me, my dear friend, what you think. Let me know the worst of my case.

Colp. As I think you have truly repented, I cannot doubt that God hath pardoned your sin, and Christ seems to say to you as he did thrice to Peter, after his sin and repentance, "Lovest thou me?" What answer can you give to this?

Rom. Oh, if my heart does not deceive me, I can say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Colp. Then set your heart at rest. "My little children," says the apostle John, "sin not: but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Rom. Thank God, thank God, for this visit. My heart is relieved. Oh, what a dear Saviour! Christ is more precious to my soul than ever.

dialogue xii

Rom. I am truly glad to see you at this time. I am like to be brought into trouble for my change of religion. My landlord, who has heretofore been very favorable, has sent me word that when the

year is out I must remove. I know that he has been influenced by father Benedict to adopt this measure. Now, friend, I want your advice what course to pursue. I have been able to lay up but little, and I do not see where I shall find another home for myself and little family.

Colp. You need not disturb yourself about what you shall eat, and what you shall drink. Has not our blessed Lord pledged his word, that if we seek first the kingdom of God, all these things shall be added? "Consider," said he, "the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" The world is wide, and there are thousands of better places than this from which you are so reluctant to part. Next month I expect to go to the west as far as Iowa, and I will look out a place for you; and there you will soon be able to procure a farm for yourself, and not be any longer dependent for a home on the will of another. But let me hear how your soul prospers, and how it is with your wife and daughter. Have the rulers of the synagogue excommunicated you, or do they still hope to gain you back?

Rom. I have no doubt that we shall all be excommunicated by "bell, book, and candle," but this requires some time. The bishop must be consulted, and he will not be round here for six months. As to myself I have but little to say that is favorable. I begin to find that I carry about with me a heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." I compare my inner man to a chamber in which filth has been accumulating for years, and into which the light has begun gradually to shine, revealing a degree of loathsome defilement which was never suspected to exist. I am sometimes greatly cast down, and much troubled; but then I speak to myself in the language of David, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Mary finds it very hard to give up the mother church, and her prayers to the blessed Virgin; but has at length come to the conclusion that she will study the Bible, and go by that, for she has lost all confidence in man. Father Benedict, she thought, was free from fault, and she was willing to trust her soul in his hands; but since he told a deliberate falsehood, and stuck to it, she thinks no man can be trusted, but God only. Had it not been for this detection of her father confessor in a known falsehood, I am of opinion that she never could have been induced to leave the old church. But this has broken the strongest tie that held her; and she says, If father Benedict is a false man, what must I think of the herd of priests and Jesuits who go about the country? Still, she makes this excuse for father Benedict, that he was brought up among the Jesuits, and belonged to that society, and I have heard that their doctrine is, that we may tell a lie to answer a good end; as, for example, to save the Catholic church from reproach, or to prevent its being known what secret doctrines are held and taught among them. This no doubt is the true secret of the old priest's conduct. He was afraid that the imprudence of the young priest, in asking a young woman such indelicate questions from Dens' Theology, would get abroad, and he wished to hush the matter up, and so pretended that such questions had been always common, and proposed by himself to the most virtuous matrons in the country. And he calculated that my wife would be afraid to say whether or not such questions had been propounded to her. But she is now on the right track, studying the Bible night and day. Sometimes she reads in the common English Bible, and then she will turn to the Douay Bible and compare them, and I am persuaded that she is incessant in her prayers at a throne of grace.

And as for Susan, she is as happy as the day is long. One of our neighbors lent her a hymn-book, and taught her to sing some of the hymns; and while at her wheel is either singing hymns, or has her New Testament spread out before her, on which she fixes her eye long enough to catch a verse, which she soon has committed to memory. She rejoices in her deliverance from the confessional and from the priests, and says Christ is her Priest, to whom she will confess; that she wants no other, and she reads of no other in the New Testament. Dear girl, she has greatly outstripped her father in the gospel race.

COUNSELS, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND AID

in the

WORK OF THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

The following letter was written just after the Society's formation.

"Princeton, August 31, 1825."

"Dear Sir—... I have no other object in writing but to acknowledge the receipt of your favor, and to express my warm attachment to your institution, and my ardent wishes that it may prosper to the utmost hopes of its founders and friends; and also to express my willingness to aid the Society in any way in my power. If my pen could be serviceable on any subject within the range of my studies, I will not decline the attempt, with the full understanding that nothing which I may write may be circulated as a tract unless it meets the entire approbation of the committee of publication. I would therefore prefer that any thing which I may write may be communicated as anonymous. To some the production of good tracts seems easy, to me it appears the most difficult kind of composition to execute well; but I am so convinced of the efficacy of this mode of diffusing the knowledge of truth, that if I thought myself capable of writing good tracts, I should be willing to spend the remainder of my days in that service. But when I have made some small efforts in that way, I have not succeeded in gaining my own approbation."

"Yours very respectfully,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Rev. Wm. A Hallock,"

"Cor. Sec. Amer. Tract Soc."

"Princeton, February 25, 1826.

"Dear Sir—I hardly know what to say respecting the tract on universal salvation which I have been requested to furnish. I could, I believe, write a volume on that interesting subject, but how to discuss the important matter which it embraces within the limits of a tract, I know not. I wish that such a work might fall into some abler hands, for I am sensible that I possess not the qualifications to produce such a luminous, condensed view of the subject as would answer the purpose of the Tract Society. I will, however, return to the consideration of the subject, and if I can write any thing which shall in any measure satisfy myself, I will transmit the manuscript to you in a few weeks. If you should receive nothing, you may conclude that I have failed in my attempt. If such a communication should be made, it is my sincere and earnest request that, unless it meets the

views of the Committee satisfactorily, it may not be published, but returned to me. I have no feelings that need be in the least consulted in such a case."

"I am with great regard,"

"Your brother and fellow-laborer,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, August 24, 1829."

"Rev. and dear Sir—I take this method of expressing to your Committee my hearty thanks for the seven volumes of the Society's tracts, which through you they were pleased to present me. I did not recollect that I had ever spoken to Mr. R. Brown on the subject of obtaining a set for me. I presume that his purpose of obtaining them for me was suggested by the generosity of his own heart. But I assure you, my dear sir, they are not the less welcome for being unexpected."

"You know the opinion which I entertain of the value of tracts. And I shall now feel myself laid under an additional obligation to promote their circulation; and more than that, if Providence spares my health and life through the ensuing winter, I will make an exertion to add to their number. If I could persuade myself that I was able to write in that peculiar style of point, simplicity, and spirituality, in which tracts should be penned, I would even rob sleep of some of its hours to furnish a greater variety of subjects to the American Tract Society. I have, however, since the reading of the last report of the Society, felt some degree of guilt for my negligence, when I observed, with humble gratitude to God, that the tract on The Day of Judgment had been made a special blessing to so many immortal souls during the last year. I observe in the list of tracts stereotyped the last year, one on The Importance of Salvation. I know not whether it is the same as that published by Professor Maclean in his series; if so, it was written by me many years ago, and was taken out from some old papers, and sent to him, perhaps without any notice of its origin. Of this, however, I am uncertain."

"I feel so much indebted to the Committee for the treasure which they have presented to me, that I intend to volunteer in the service, and write one or two tracts as soon as I can find leisure from my almost incessant occupations."

"In Christian love, I am your brother, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, June 22, 1832."

"Rev. and dear Sir—In answer to yours, received this morning, I would remark, that in this age of excitement, people more than ever need treatises calculated to draw the line of distinction clearly between those exercises of religion which are true, and such as are spurious. It will do professors no harm to have their hope shaken by reading such a book as Edwards on the Affections. The marks of genuine piety laid down in that work are, in my judgment, altogether scriptural; so that those who do not find in themselves what he requires, have no right to esteem themselves converted persons. The great difficulty, I confess, is to apply the tests which he has given: some of them, though perfectly correct, furnish little aid in practice, to the sincere soul engaged in the

examination of its own state; but it is useful for Christians to be well acquainted with the true theory of experimental religion, and I am acquainted with no book in which this is given so fully and so clearly as in the work under consideration. In reading it, I have been so struck with the correctness of the sentiments, and the judicious sobriety and spirituality of the author's remarks, that I have felt ready to determine to introduce it as a class-book in our seminary.... The truth is, that Edwards speaks in Ellerby's abridgment as really as in the original work; the language and structure of the sentences are still his own, and Ellerby has done little else than omit repetitions of the same idea. I am free to acknowledge, however, that my only reason for preferring the abridgment is, that it is by one half Shorter than the original, for I am pleased with President Edwards' repetitions."

"It cannot be denied that this work is not adapted to all sincere Christians, and perhaps ought not immediately to be put into the hands of young converts, unless they have had their minds disciplined by a good education; but your object should be, not only to provide milk for babes, but meat for strong men. Books adapted to every stage and period of the Christian life are needed. Other books will be more read, but few books, in my opinion, will be more useful to those who are capable of understanding and applying what is contained in this treatise; and one Christian who has his mind exercised to nice discrimination on this subject, will probably be useful to a whole society of common professors."

"When I recommend this work, I speak from some experience of its value. I have known private Christians who studied the treatise with untiring assiduity and with undoubted profit. I speak of the original work, from which the abridgment only differs by being shorter. I am with true regard, yours, etc."

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, April 26, 1833."

"Rev. and dear Sir—Agreeably to your request, I have written the following on the subject of circulating bound books. It contains nothing which is not familiar to your thought, but if you are of opinion that it can in any degree subserve the good work in which you labor, you may make what use of it your discretion and that of the Committee may direct."

"I rejoice to learn that the Committee of the American Tract Society are turning their attention specially to the preparation and circulation of small bound volumes. These are as really tracts (treatises) as any of the pamphlets or sheets which are sent forth from the institution. I would be very sorry to say a word which would have the effect of diminishing the zeal and activity of the Committee in the distribution of tracts in the usual form. Let this good work, by which the knowledge of the truth is extended to so many thousands of needy souls, be prosecuted with increasing ardor. The circulation of tracts is clearly marked out as one of God's appointed means for the conversion of the world. The facts from heathen lands, now before the public, are of the most animating description, and are calculated to inspire all the friends of the Society with lively hope and zeal."

"But as the same truths may be circulated in different forms, so the laborers in this field ought wisely to adapt their modes of operation to the circumstances, tastes, and exigencies of the people. And I am persuaded that there are some peculiar advantages in the distribution of small, well-selected treatises in the form of bound volumes. Some are disposed to think lightly of every

thing in the shape of tracts, from the circumstance of their commonness, and from the importunity which has sometimes attended their distribution. I do not mention this as a thing which can be unknown to the Committee, nor do I mean to connect with it the least insinuation that the business of distribution has been unwisely conducted. The feeling to which I have referred, as existing to a considerable extent, is indeed most unreasonable; but if it exists, we should as far as possible contrive means to counteract it. This undervaluing of the cheapest of all vehicles for divine truth, very much resembles the conduct of the Israelites in regard to the manna with which they were so constantly and abundantly supplied. They said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." But the same prejudice does not exist against bound books. These the people are willing to buy at a fair price."

"There can be no doubt that it is right to avail ourselves of this preference, and to provide, for those who wish it, cheap volumes of important religious instruction. It is also a fact, that small tracts in sheets are but in few cases preserved with care. They often perish almost as soon as read, and I know of no method of preventing this waste so effectual as to substitute small bound books. The Society's tracts are now bound in this manner for such as prefer them in that form. And let other treatises be selected for publication, for which purpose there are many excellently adapted."

"I have attentively read over the list of books which the Committee have already put into circulation, and the selection meets with my cordial approbation. Works of a more evangelical and spiritual kind do not exist, and I am gratified to see that they are printed and bound in a neat and handsome style. I am deeply persuaded that great public benefit will arise from the appropriation of a portion of your funds in this way; and that the event will prove, that however expensive it may be in the commencement, it will be wise economy in the end. When I consider how many copies of 'Doddrige's Rise and Progress,' 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted,' 'Alleine's Alarm,' 'Edwards on the Affections,' and such like works, will be circulated through the whole length and breadth of this land, I am filled with pleasing anticipations of the good which your Society will be the means of accomplishing."

"I do sincerely hope that the Committee will persevere in the prosecution of this object, and as their circumstances may permit, increase the number of their publications of this description. I did think it important that a society for the circulation of religious books should be formed, but I do not see why the American Tract Society may not manage this whole concern more economically and successfully than any new society. The success which has already attended your efforts in this way is calculated to inspire you with confidence to go on in the name of the Lord."

"With sincere regard, yours truly,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

In October, 1833, the Committee of the American Tract Society, having invited a meeting of gentlemen, with a special view to raising funds for foreign and Pagan lands, requested Dr. Alexander to be present. To their request he replied:

"Princeton, Oct. 10, 1833."

"Rev. and dear Sir—As my bodily infirmities will prevent my meeting with you, I beg that you will express to the Committee of the American Tract Society my regret at not being able to afford them any effectual aid in the accomplishment of the important object which they have in view, and also

assure them of my cordial good wishes and prayers for the success of their noble enterprise. I am deeply convinced that the time has arrived when the friends of the Redeemer are called upon to make more vigorous exertions than ever before in extending the knowledge of salvation to the ends of the earth. There never was a time when God in his providence had so opened the door of effectual operation among the heathen, in all quarters of the world, as at this time; and they are happy to whom God has committed many talents, and to whom he has given a heart to occupy them for the advancement of his cause and glory.”

“Every person who loves the Lord Jesus should strive, by all lawful means, to acquire something to expend in this holy cause; and no Christian ought, in this day, to think of accumulating property for any other purpose, than for the promotion of Christ’s kingdom. The Master needs now all that his disciples have it in their power to give. The hundreds of millions of the heathen who are perishing for lack of knowledge, call for our exertions and our liberal charities.”

“I was greatly struck with Dr. Morrison’s letter. It appears that at least one-third of the population of the globe read the Chinese character, and that the same books are understood by those whose spoken language is quite different. If we allow two hundred millions of inhabitants to China Proper, we may safely reckon another hundred millions beyond these limits, who are able to read the Chinese language. Hitherto Christians seemed to be shut out from this immense field. This vast empire seemed indeed to be surrounded by an insurmountable barrier. But the brazen wall, it is found, may be passed. Tracts have already found their way into the heart of China, possibly into the very palace of the august emperor. And let it be remembered, that in this conquest tracts must be the pioneers. These can find their way, and accomplish much, where the living preacher cannot go, and where the Bible would not be received. Let no one suppose that the missionary and the Bible supersede the necessity of tracts. The way for the introduction of these appointed means of salvation is often prepared by the circulation of tracts. And these contain the very same truths which are revealed in the Bible, and the same matter which the living preacher proclaims. The truth is God’s instrument for the conversion and sanctification of men, and it matters little how this is conveyed to the mind; if attended by the Holy Spirit, it is able to make men wise unto salvation, whether heard from the lips of a preacher, or read in an evangelical tract. And even where the Bible is possessed, and the gospel constantly preached, tracts may be eminently useful. This daily experience teaches. And surely it is of all methods of communicating religious knowledge the most economical. In thousands of cases you may freely scatter tracts where it would not be expedient to give a Bible.”

“It ought not to be objected that a large portion of the tracts which are circulated are never read, and consequently produce no effect. If one in a thousand is read with profit, there is a rich compensation for all the expense incurred. The husbandman is not discouraged from liberally casting his precious seed into the prepared ground because he knows that much of it will be devoured by the birds, or fall where it cannot be fruitful; neither does he withhold his hand because it is possible that the greater part of it may perish by unpropitious seasons. In the morning he sows his seed, and in the evening he withholds not his hand; not knowing whether this or that will prosper, or whether both may be alike good. Neither should he be deterred from sowing his seed by the threatening appearance of the clouds; but with tears he goeth forth, and with humble trust in Providence, he casts his precious seed into the earth. Let us imitate his diligence, and also his confidence and patience.”

"I sincerely hope and pray that the great Master of assemblies may be remarkably in the midst of your meeting, and that he may graciously grant to all present hearts which will prompt them to devise liberal things. 'Work,' says our Lord, 'while it is called today.' The door which is now so widely opened, may soon be closed if Christians neglect to improve the opportunity."

"I am, with sincere regard,"

"Your brother and fellow-laborer,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, October 26, 1833."

"Rev. and dear Sir—Upon the reception of your note yesterday, informing me of the postponement of the Tract meeting until this evening, I determined to make an effort and be with you; but I had an uncomfortable night, and feel my system so much disordered this morning, that I think it would be imprudent to venture abroad, especially when I should be liable to the excitement of speaking at a public meeting."

"As I wish to manifest my zeal and good will in the Tract cause, to which you have so unreservedly devoted yourself, I would, in addition to what I have before said, respectfully propose the following queries, which probably include the substance of what I would have said, if I had been present."

"1. Ought not the love of Christ and his kingdom to be the governing motive with every Christian?"

"2. Will not this motive, in proportion as it is felt, induce every one to make exertions to advance his kingdom, and thus promote the glory of God in the world?"

"3. Is there any way by which this object can so effectually be accomplished, as by extending the knowledge of the truth throughout the whole earth?"

"4. Is there not a crisis in things of this kind, when much may be done by seasonable and energetic exertions, which, if it be suffered to pass without improvement, may not return for ages; just as if the seasons of seed-time and harvest be neglected, we labor in vain during the remainder of the year?"

"5. Is there not good reason to think that the age in which we live is such a time; that Providence has now furnished the church with such facilities for operation, and opened such a door of usefulness, especially among the heathen nations, that we shall be greatly wanting in duty to our Master, if we do not endeavor to avail ourselves of these opportunities of doing good, which were never so abundantly afforded to any other age?"

"6. Is it not evident that the distribution of evangelical Tracts is one of the most effectual methods of disseminating the truth of God; and has not the blessing which has hitherto attended this enterprise, both in Christian and heathen lands, warranted the conclusion that it is one of God's chosen means for the accomplishment of his purposes and predictions relating to the conversion of the world?"

"7. The prosecution of this object obstructs no other benevolent operation, but is a necessary auxiliary to all others; while then other Societies, as particularly Bible Societies and Missionary

Societies, are engaged in making extraordinary exertions, ought not the Tract Society also to move forward with renewed zeal and enlarged plans of operation?"

"8. Can the genuine disciples of Christ who possess the means of promoting this cause, hold back when so loud a call is addressed to them from almost every quarter of the globe for the bread of life?"

"9. Ought not mercantile enterprises now to be entered on for the very purpose of making gain to be applied to the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom? And should not those whose efforts to increase their property God has signally blessed, make a free-will offering of a portion of their profits to his service?"

"10. Would not the consecration of first-fruits, redemption for the first-born, and tenths laid upon the altar of God, probably bring down a blessing on all their possessions?"

"11. When a contest is going on in our minds between selfishness and benevolence, is it not the part of wisdom to lean to the side of benevolence?"

"12. When was it known that any man was impoverished by giving to the Lord? And if the time should come when men shall become poor by giving all their goods to promote the cause of Christ, will they not become infinitely rich by such a blessed poverty?"

"13. Is not the time for doing any thing in this cause short? Ought we not therefore to work while it is called to-day? Is it not certain that we shall never have another life upon earth? Ought we not, therefore, to do the best we can with the talents committed to us, that when our Lord shall come to reckon with us, he may say, 'Well done, good and faithful servants?' "

"Princeton, May 14, 1834."

"Rev. and dear Sir—I am much gratified to learn from the published abstract, that you have resolved to prosecute effectually the plan of circulating the stereotyped bound volumes of the Society. I greatly rejoice in the prospect of the incalculable good which you will effect in this way, and I only wish you to increase your means by adding such other works to your publications as have stood the test of time and thorough examination. I have several to propose, but at present I confine myself to 'Halyburton's Great Concern.' "

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, March 18, 1835."

"To S. V. S. Wilder, Esq., Rev. James Milnor, D. D., Rev. Mr. Hallock, and Rev. Mr. Eastman."

"Gentlemen—I have perused your circular, addressed to me, with heartfelt satisfaction. I rejoice sincerely in the success with which you are enabled to prosecute the benevolent plan of supplying every family, in several of the southern states, with a copy of one or more of your bound volumes. I have no doubt but the light of eternity will discover that this enterprise has been the means of bringing, through Christ, many sons and daughters to glory. As the destitute cannot be everywhere supplied with living preachers, let the pious dead be sent to speak to them "all the words of this life." Send Baxter, and Flavel, and Alleine, and Edwards, and Bunyan, etc., to preach to them that gospel by which they have long since been guided to heaven. And if every village and remote

settlement had a faithful pastor, what better aid could they have than one of these precious volumes in every family of their respective charges? The truth is, that such books do more good where the gospel is preached than where its sound is seldom heard, because there a taste for such reading has been generated. In every part of the country, therefore, these books will be found exceedingly useful; and there is no room to doubt that the effort should be extended to every state and territory in the Union. I do not, I confess, know of any means in our power by which so much good may immediately be effected; and as human life is short, and men are perishing for lack of knowledge, there should be no delay nor procrastination of this work. Let it be urged forward with a zeal and energy proportioned to the magnitude of the interests at stake. Let agents be found running in all directions bearing in their hands these books, which explain the true and only method of salvation."

"That the general circulation of these books would be desirable, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who believes in the Christian religion."

"In this region I think most would prefer purchasing them, to receiving them as a gratuity. All ministers and members of evangelical churches, I should hope, would help forward the object. If God send down his Holy Spirit, the interest will be excited."

"The work which you propose is great, and no one can tell how long it may take to accomplish it. Exert all your energy, but guard against a collapse of zeal. Determine to do all that you can, but promise not definitely what you will do. Still, the object must be definitely proposed, and all proper motives presented to induce a vigorous coöperation. It is a gratifying consideration that, in all such enterprises, whatever is effected is so much gained for the cause of Christ. One book has often been the means of much good. More than forty years ago I visited a neighborhood shut up by mountains on all sides. The females never left the place. Here an elderly man, who had recently been converted by the labors of a missionary, had received a tract or pamphlet containing the dying advice of a parent to his children. The neighbors came in to hear it read, and during the time of its being read there was scarcely a dry eye in the house, and the man who read it shed abundance of tears, so that frequently his voice was obstructed. At another time, I saw a whole congregation melted into tears by the preacher, whose text was, 'It is a faithful saying,' etc., telling them that he had lately read a tract called 'Poor Joseph' which a woman had put into his hands, and relating its contents."

"I have only two or three suggestions to make. The first is, that if you could find persons that would go about and read your books to the people, the end which you propose would be accomplished; but the truth is, that while many cannot read at all, a large part of those who have been to school are so little accustomed to read, that they can derive but small benefit from a book read by themselves. I have noticed how difficult a work reading is to those unaccustomed to the exercise and they are so much occupied in spelling out the word, that the meaning of the sentence is lost in the painful effort which they are obliged to make. If you suppose there are few readers who would meet with these obstructions, I am persuaded that you misjudge respecting a great multitude in the state of New Jersey. It is a solemn truth, that many of your tracts and books are entirely too elevated for more than one half of the population of this land. You need instructions for such in the simplest language of colloquial intercourse. If pious men and women, that can read well, would spend a few hours every week in reading to these people, the effect would be great: all such

persons are quick in understanding what comes in by the car. 'Faith comes by hearing.' "

"Another suggestion is, that your agents propose to every congregation to purchase a set of your books and bound tracts, to be lent out by the minister. A borrowed book is more commonly read speedily than one which is purchased; a borrowed book, if read at all, must be read soon, as it must be returned. Such a circulating library would do more good than can be calculated, and there is no congregation so poor as not to be able to provide it. In many cases the minister would procure it at his own expense—the pious females of his congregation would quickly defray the expense—often a liberal individual would contribute a sufficient sum. This does not fall in precisely with your plan of giving a volume to every family, but I am sure it would promote that plan. If a person became deeply interested in a book, he or she would not rest until a book of the same kind was constantly at hand."

"My only other suggestion is, that you should send forth more books on the 'evidences of revelation.' Deists and infidels would probably not read them, but young people would be prevented from becoming such. There is often a leaven of infidelity at work in the midst of the most orderly and retired congregations. Unless you can counteract this, the effect of your other tracts will be limited. The British Tract Society are bending their attention strongly to this point. Again, you must have a greater variety in your collection; something to suit different tastes; but all must be spiritual and good."

"I am, with great respect, your friend, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, March 22, 1837."

"Dear Sir—I have now finished the Life of Buchanan, but in a different way from that first contemplated. After mature deliberation, after learning that you wished a volume of about four hundred pages, I resolved to throw aside my own manuscript abridgment, and form a volume from Pearson; omitting only such parts as are little adapted to our institutions, and are of no permanent importance; and also the extended extracts from his sermons. But as much of the volume of Pearson as is retained remains unaltered, except where an introductory or connecting sentence was required. But besides the work of Pearson, I have introduced the most interesting part of Dr. Buchanan's 'Christian Researches,' which has been done at your suggestion, and will render this volume much more valuable for your purpose than the original. The division into parts I have omitted, and arranged the materials into consecutive chapters from one to seventeen."

"The transactions of Dr. Buchanan's life from the time of his arrival in England to his death, I have condensed into a single chapter, and I have subjoined some concluding remarks on the character of Dr. Buchanan, as it appeared to me that Mr. Pearson, for some reason, was not as full on this head as he might have been. This conclusion, however, may be omitted, if it should appear to the Committee superfluous, or if the volume should appear to swell to an inconvenient size."

"I will again request, that in all future editions of the tract on Universalism, my name on the cover may be omitted. I have already seen an abusive article from the Universalist press. I care not for their censure, but I think it will be best that it should be anonymous."

"I am continually gratified with the intelligence of your great success in the volume enterprise. For this I bless God. It is doing good upon a very large scale, and without any drawback. I hope that you will be able to increase the number of your volumes. If I can be of any service to the cause, please to command me.

"Yours truly and respectfully,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"Princeton, April 26, 1836."

"Dear Sir—Since you were here I have been looking over Baxter's 'Treatise on Conversion,' in the seventh volume of his Practical Works. It has in it much that is excellent, written with amazing power and pungency, and ought to accompany his 'Call.' I marked with my pencil such parts as might advantageously be omitted, and upon comparison find that the parts marked out are equal to one-fourth of the work. I think it would be well to get some judicious member of the Publishing Committee to examine this treatise, and if it should be judged expedient to add it to your library, it will give me pleasure to transfer the marks which I have made on the volume here, to another which you may forward for the purpose."

"I intend to pay some attention to this subject, as I have time and opportunity, and when I meet with any work which strikes me favorably will communicate my opinion."

"I am respectfully and truly yours, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

"December 14, 1837."

"... The success of the volume enterprise gladdens my heart every time I think of it, and I sincerely wish that instead of a dozen volumes you had a hundred in circulation. A compendious history of modern Protestant missions would, at this time, be an acceptable present to the public."

"Princeton, February 24, 1838."

"Rev. and dear Sir—Your favor of the 19th inst. is received. I am willing to bestow all the little remainder of my days in that way which will most effectually advance the cause of our blessed Redeemer."

"I will take into consideration your suggestions. Certainly, if I could believe that I should be able to produce a volume fit to be added to those which you have in such extensive circulation, I would without delay address myself to the work; but without any affectation of modesty, my common conviction is, that there are already in print much better books than I could write, and that there are other persons much more competent to supply what is wanted than myself. Almost every thing which I have ever published has been drawn from me by some peculiar circumstances; otherwise I never should have appeared before the public as an author. My 'Letters,' to which you kindly allude, were commenced at the earnest request of some of my old friends in Virginia, and were not expected by me to circulate farther than they would be conveyed by 'The Watchman of the South.' I have now brought them to a close, principally because it is painful to me to be so long before the Christian public. I have therefore no plan for the republication of them in a volume. What Rev. Mr.

Plumer may be disposed to do in relation to them I know not. He has earnestly solicited from me a series of letters on experimental religion, but I have not thought that I could execute such a work as it ought to be done. I consider it one of the most delicate, as well as difficult of all subjects to treat; and I have not been sufficiently abroad in the world to observe all the indications of spurious religion which have been exhibited in our country within the last twenty years; but since I received your letter suggesting that I should think of writing something of a practical nature, the thought has occurred that possibly these objects might be advantageously united; that is, I might write a series of letters or essays, which might be published in a weekly paper, and afterwards, if approved, might be collected into a duodecimo volume for your Society. This plan would have the advantage of subjecting to the impartial examination of your Committee every letter or essay as it came from the press, and suggested improvements and alterations might be made before the book was adopted. But I do not mean to intimate that I have deliberately adopted any purpose of this kind. I merely throw out the idea, that if it should seem to you worthy of any remarks, you may communicate your thoughts when you shall enjoy leisure, which, by the way, I suspect seldom falls to your lot."

"I reflect on no part of my life with more satisfaction than any little agency which I have had in encouraging and promoting the volume circulation by your Society. I do consider the success of this enterprise as intimately connected with the prosperity of vital, scriptural piety in our land; not in any one church, but in all evangelical churches, and beyond them all, by conveying a sound and practical knowledge of the gospel to multitudes who enjoy no public means of grace, or have not attended on them. If I could do any thing more to urge on this blessed work, which has been so auspiciously commenced, I would cordially lend my aid."

"Neither am I indifferent to your more recent enterprise of furnishing tracts in various languages for the instruction and conversion of the heathen. It is a noble enterprise. It is doubtless one important link in the chain of means intended for the conversion of the world. Go on, and prosper. Fear not the want of means. God will supply them as they are needed."

"I am, respectfully and affectionately,"

"Your brother, etc.,"

"A. ALEXANDER."

To a circular letter issued by the Rev. Dr. Milnor, and Rev. Messrs. Hallock, Eastman, and Cook, Secretaries, requesting an opinion on the desirableness of the Society's introducing a Christian library into schools, families, etc., Dr. Alexander replied, January 23, 1840, in substance as follows:

"As the principles of all sound morality are contained in a sincere belief in the fundamental truths of religion, if the prevalence of good morals be essential to the welfare and prosperity of the republic, then the minds of children should be imbued with the essential doctrines of religion in their earliest years. And as parents are often incapable of instructing their children, or neglect to afford them religious instruction, it is exceedingly important, even in a political view, that primary schools should possess such a library as is proposed."

“As far as I am acquainted with the character and contents of the books in the list, I think that the selection is judicious, and will meet with the approbation of all denominations of evangelical Christians; there are, however, several books in the proposed library which I have never read, and concerning which, of course, I can with propriety express no opinion.”

“In many of these authors there is an excellence of spirit and sentiment, which has the effect of causing the attentive reader to forget the mere circumstance of the external dress in which they are exhibited; yet the style is eminently suited to the subject treated, and certainly possesses all the most important characteristics which a cultivated taste would wish for in writings of this description. The style of most of these works is, though not elegant and ornamented, simple, chaste, vigorous, perspicuous, and animated.”

“As these books contain the marrow of the gospel, without inculcating the peculiarities of any particular sect, they cannot but extend the knowledge of gospel truth wherever they are introduced; and where other means of religious instruction are not plentifully enjoyed, they would be a treasure of inestimable value, not only to the rising generation, but to the adult population.”

“It would undoubtedly be the duty of every good man to encourage and promote this enterprise by all the influence which he could exert; and from what I have observed respecting the reception of your volumes, I am persuaded that a ready and cordial coöperation might be calculated on from the pious of all denominations.”

“I am, respectfully and truly,”

“Your brother in Christ,”

“A. ALEXANDER.”

“Princeton, July 4, 1842.”

“Rev. and dear Sir—... The country between the Blue Ridge and the Ohio river is one of great extent, and contains as many utterly destitute settlements as any equal territory in the United States. Part of this field, however, (the great valley,) is one of the finest farming countries in the Union, and is settled by Presbyterians and German Protestants. An agent suited to the latter class, who are almost entirely without books, would be exceedingly important. The Presbyterians are of the Scotch-Irish class, and are steady in their adherence to the confession of faith, and accustomed to read the works of Boston, Flavel, Owen, Baxter, etc. Among these your volumes would sell well, if the people are not already supplied. Between the North mountain, which bounds the great valley on the north-west, and the Ohio, is a mountainous region of nearly two hundred miles in extent, comprehending some rich and compact settlements; but in general the people are strung along narrow intervals hemmed in by inaccessible mountains, where they seldom hear the gospel, and where the stated ministry can never be supported, the inhabitants are so widely separated from each other.”

“Now, my plan would be to assign all west of the Blue Ridge to Mr. —, and if you could place under his supervision three or four colporteurs—there is no country where the services of this class of men are more needed—he could spend the whole year most profitably.”

“I have freely thrown out my thoughts; consider them as mere hints, and then do the best you can.”

"I am truly yours,"

A. ALEXANDER."

October 25, 26, and 27, 1842, a public deliberative meeting of the Board and friends of the American Tract Society was held in the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, and the Rev. Dr. Alexander, who was providentially detained, sent in the following communication, which was read with deep interest:

"After a full survey of all the plans of doing good to the souls of men which are now in operation, it is my deliberate opinion, that with the exception of the preaching of the gospel and circulating the holy Scriptures, there is none which promises to be more efficient, and more extensively useful, in promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of men, than the publication and wide circulation of sound evangelical books and tracts. And if I were to undertake to select a set of volumes which in my judgment it would be most beneficial to circulate, I should undoubtedly make choice of a large proportion of the volumes which have been published by the American Tract Society. No books that were ever written by uninspired men are better adapted to promote true religion among the people, and none were ever more successful in the conversion of sinners and the edification of the people of God, than many of those on your list, and which are now in the course of rapid circulation. Many of these authors have received the approbation and sanction of the judicious and pious for two hundred years, and their value is as highly appreciated now as it ever was. When I reflect on the number of these pious and excellent works which within a few years have been scattered through the length and breadth of this land, I cannot but rejoice and give thanks to God that so much precious seed has been sown, which there is every reason to hope will in due time spring up and bring forth a rich harvest, when the present generation shall have passed away."

"Two millions of volumes and sixty millions of smaller treatises have been put into the hands of our reading population. And the bound volumes possess this advantage over even the preaching of the gospel, that they furnish permanent lessons of instruction. The book may be perused again and again by the same person, and the same book may be read, before it perishes by the lapse of time, by some hundreds of individuals; for many of these precious volumes will be preserved for centuries, and will descend as a valued legacy from father to son, and from the mother to the daughter. There are now, in good preservation, many books which have been in common use for more than two hundred years, and which have been read by some half dozen successive generations, and by many others besides the owners. The writer can well recollect when such books as Alleine's Alarm, Baxter's Saints' Rest and Call to the Unconverted, and the excellent treatises of Owen and Flavel, passed through the hands of most families in the neighborhood. He has known more instances than one, in which aged men of piety made it a practice to borrow such books, and carry them to persons who stood in particular need of them. Let the person who contributes enough to pay the expense of publishing a single volume, reflect that he is providing spiritual nutriment not only for the present generation, but for generations yet to be born. And if, instead of giving circulation to one, he contributes funds sufficient for a hundred or a thousand volumes, who can calculate the amount of good which a Christian in moderate circumstances may accomplish?"

"Princeton, April 10, 1843."

“Rev. and dear Sir—In answer to yours received some time since I would say, that as you suppose, I am well pleased to learn that you are about to add to your volumes ‘Owen on the One Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm.’ It is a work which expresses fairly and strongly the desires and exercises of a truly pious and devout heart. It was that very psalm, as we learn from Orme’s life of the author, which first afforded him consolation after a long season of darkness. I wish it were consistent with the views of all concerned to publish the work entitled ‘Spiritual Mindedness,’ by the same author; and also his treatise on ‘Indwelling Sin’ and ‘On Temptation.’ His work ‘On the Spirit,’ also, is the best on the whole subject that I am acquainted with. The entangled and exuberant style of the author, in all these pieces, has been pruned and rendered more perspicuous by one and another.”

“The tracts which you forwarded to me I read, and found nothing to censure. But I wish to make a single remark on the subject of increasing your number of tracts. It is, that it would be good policy to diminish rather than increase the number, unless such are offered as possess superior excellence. Mere commonplace exhortations need not be multiplied, but when you get a tract of first-rate excellence, it is of more value than can be estimated in gold.”

“I remain, very sincerely, yours, etc.,”

“A. ALEXANDER.”

“Princeton, January 1, 1844.”

... “The Society’s twofold agency, by books and colporteurs, is perhaps better calculated to reach the destitutions of our country than any thing which has ever been put into operation. Often in thinking of the condition of multitudes of people, it has appeared to me their case never could be reached, unless proper teachers were sent to visit them in their houses. I thought of a plan of itinerant readers, as in Ireland; but the colporteur system is the very thing needed, and if you can only procure the right kind of men, the work will go on prosperously.”

“July 1, 1847.”

“Dear Sir—I was from home when your letter arrived, or you might have had an earlier answer. But since I came home, though in the midst of company and bustle, I have scribbled something for the ‘American Messenger.’ ”

“Instruction is the main thing to render a periodical most permanently useful. I know you cannot furnish such a variety as is requisite without the friendly aid of some coadjutors; and as you have been pleased to honor me with the preparation of articles, I intend, Deo volente, to give short biographical sketches of Bible characters. At my time of life I should promise nothing. But I seem to hear the Master say, ‘Work while it is day, for the night cometh.’ If, however, you should prefer short practical, hortatory essays, they will be easier to be composed. Please to send me a bundle of tracts, and any new publications which you have made.”

“Yours truly,”

“A. ALEXANDER.”

“Princeton, December 11, 1849.”

“Rev. and dear Sir—I am glad to learn that the circulation of the American Messenger has reached the amazing number of one hundred and fifty thousand. This devolves a vast weight of responsibility upon the publishers. I do not know that they could render it more effective than they have done, but it has appeared to me, that as it reaches thousands who are ignorant of the true method of salvation, it should more frequently bring into view the fundamental points of Christianity. I am aware that what is not read will not profit, and articles doctrinal and instructive would probably not be read. But as the ‘Messenger’ is the only paper which thousands of families take, it may be supposed that these read every article it contains.”

“I would certainly have furnished more articles than I have done, if I had not believed that your numerous correspondents could supply you with articles better suited to the taste of the publishers than any which could proceed from my pen. Vivacity and originality are not to be expected from aged men. And they have less relish for such composition as pleases the young, and by its point and striking thought engages the attention of most men, than they once had. As, however, I take a pleasure in scribbling when the fit comes upon me, I shall probably, from time to time, give you the offer of some of my lucubrations, and if they should not suit the views of the publishers, no offence will be given to the writer by their not being inserted. All I ask in that case is, that they be sent back, as I may find that I can make some other use of them. Never publish an article of mine unless you really approve it.”

“What I do I must do quickly, for I am admonished that my time of working is coming to a close. My sun will soon go down, and then all my earthly labors must terminate.”

“My prayer is, that the next year may be more prosperous to the cause of truth and piety than any which has preceded it. In God is our help. From God is all our hope. He will do all his pleasure.”

“I am very truly yours, etc.,”

“Rev. R. S. Cook, Sec.” “A. ALEXANDER.”

death of dr. alexander

From the Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the American Tract Society.

“The venerable Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, a Vice-president of this Society, and for three years from 1842 a member of the Publishing Committee, and who was ever a firm friend and counsellor, has rested from his labors. Almost forty years he was professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, sixty years he labored in the ministry, and he died peacefully in his eightieth year, October 22, 1851.”

“While the Secretary in the publishing department was reading with him portions of ‘Flavel’s Method of Grace,’ he said, with a glowing, tender spirit, ‘All this carries me back to past scenes as if they were but yesterday. When I was a thoughtless youth, I passed some time in a family where was a venerable, pious lady, whose sight was dim, but who was greatly attached to Flavel’s works, and often requested me to read them to her. I read to her this very work. I would read till the truths pierced my own heart, and affected me so that I was obliged to stop, when I would excuse myself till the next day. I would then read again, and again be obliged to stop; and those impressions never left me till I found peace in Christ.’ A communication in the Messenger of February, 1851, refers to the sermon on the word ‘Stand’ in Flavel’s Knocking at the Door, as specially blessed to

him. In these works of Flavel was the type of the great practical views of theology from which he never swerved till, on his dying bed, he uttered to his family these memorable words: 'All my theology is reduced to this narrow compass, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' "

"Fired with this glorious theme, he went out, at the age of twenty, as a missionary, through the mountainous regions of Central and Western Virginia, his native state, and preached to the ignorant and perishing, with great power and success, 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God.' In prosecuting these labors, two great principles became fixed in his mind: the value of sound practical books and evangelical writings, and the necessity of going to the destitute and tendering the gospel to them at their homes. He saw both in this Society and its colporteur system, and cheerfully gave his cordial love, counsel, coöperation, and support to the close of his useful life."

"He was the author of seven tracts of the Society's principal series: No. 32, 'The Day of Judgment;' 51, 'Misery of the Lost;' 65, 'The Amiable Youth falling short of Heaven;' 215, 'Importance of Salvation;' 350, 'Future Punishment Endless;' 393, 'Justification by Faith;' and 462, 'Sinners Welcome to Come to Christ.' A few years since, he suggested the desirableness of issuing a series in a very simple style, in large type, and in the form of a little book, for which series he himself wrote the six following: Dialogues with a Farmer, with an Aged Man, and with a Cottager; The Poor Man's Guide and Friend; The New Settlement; and a Dialogue with a Roman-Catholic, eighty-four pages, which is one of the Society's best practical volumes. When he observed how wide a circulation the American Messenger was gaining, he availed himself of the opportunity afforded to speak to multitudes for Christ, most of his articles for the last five years bearing his well-known signature, 'A. A.' "

"But his counsel and encouragement in the issuing of the Society's volumes, exerted a preëminent influence in giving direction and success to its extended operations. As early as 1832, when the Society had issued but about half a dozen of its larger works, he suggested adding Edwards on the Affections, and in May, 1833, cheered the Society by communicating the following views of this enterprise:"

" 'I rejoice to learn that the Committee of the American Tract Society are turning their attention specially to the preparation and circulation of small bound volumes. These are as really tracts (treatises) as any of the pamphlets or sheets which are sent forth from the institution. The Society's tracts are now bound for such as prefer them in that form. And let other treatises be selected for publication, for which purpose there are many excellently adapted. I have attentively read over the list of books which the Committee have already put into circulation, and the selection meets with my cordial approbation. Works of a more evangelical and spiritual kind do not exist; and I am gratified to see that they are printed and bound in a neat and handsome style. I am deeply persuaded that great public benefit will arise from the appropriation of a portion of your funds in this way; and that the event will prove, that however expensive it may be in the commencement, it will be wise economy in the end. When I consider how many copies of 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress,' 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted,' 'Alleine's Alarm,' 'Edwards on the Affections,' and such like works, will be circulated through the whole length and breadth of this land, I am filled with pleasing anticipations of the good which your Society will be the means of accomplishing.' "

“ ‘I do sincerely hope that the Committee will persevere in the prosecution of this object, and as their circumstances may permit, increase the number of their publications of this description. The success which has already attended your efforts in this way, is calculated to inspire you with confidence to go on in the name of the Lord.’ ”

“Again he says, five years afterwards, ‘I reflect on no part of my life with more satisfaction than any little agency I have had in encouraging and promoting the Society’s volume circulation. I do consider the success of this enterprise as intimately connected with the prosperity of vital scriptural piety in our land—not in any one church, but in all evangelical churches, and beyond them all, by conveying a sound and practical knowledge of the gospel to multitudes who enjoy no public means of grace, or have not attended on them. If I could do any thing more to urge on this blessed work which has been so auspiciously commenced, I would cordially lend my aid.’ ”

“Again he says, under a later date, ‘The success of the volume circulation gladdens my heart every time I think of it; and I sincerely wish that, instead of twenty volumes, you had a hundred in circulation.’ ”

“A valuable work, stereotyped by the Society since his death, ‘Baxter on Conversion,’ was suggested to the Committee by him; and on his dying bed, calling to mind a wish which had been expressed by a destitute pastor for more good books, he requested his family to find the pastor’s address, and gave ten dollars to procure for him the Society’s Religious (or Pastor’s) Library of twenty-four volumes.”

From the American Messenger of December, 1851, in addition to facts above given from the Annual Report.

“rev. dr. archibald alexander

“We shall doubtless gratify our readers by some memorial of this distinguished servant of Christ, whom we loved as a father, and whose coöperation we enjoyed to the very close of his long and useful life.”

“He was born April 17, 1772, in Rockbridge county, in the valley of Virginia, between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies; and was of Scotch descent, both his parents having emigrated first to the north of Ireland, and then to this country. He received a classical education at Liberty Hall, near the residence of his parents, under the charge of the Rev. William Graham, with whom he studied theology two years, when, at the age of about twenty, October 1, 1791, he was commissioned to preach the gospel.”

“Before professing Christ he was led through severe spiritual conflicts, that he might know how to sympathize with others, and guide them in the right way; and when Christ was revealed to him in his fulness, and he was commissioned as a herald of the cross, he went out immediately as a missionary preacher through the mountainous and destitute regions of his native state, with a glowing heart ‘proclaiming the way of life to the ignorant and destitute, and gathering the lost into the fold of Christ. Preaching without notes, with strange discrimination for one so young, and with an energy of thought and pathos of delivery rare in the young or aged, he spread the doctrines of divine truth wherever he went.’ These arduous evangelical labors doubtless exerted an influence in training his mind to that clearness and simplicity, as well as richness of thought and expression,

which characterized his preaching, his instructions, his conversation, and his extensive writings through life. He regarded it as a high compliment, when told of a plain woman who had heard him in a destitute place, and said, 'I guess he aint a very larned man.' ”

“At twenty-five, he was elected president of Hampden Sydney college in his native state, and became also pastor of three adjacent churches. He married a daughter of Rev. James Waddell, the eloquent blind preacher, celebrated in the sketches by William Wirt. At his death she survived him, as did all their children, an only daughter and six sons, three of whom are clergymen, one a distinguished professor at Princeton, and another, Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander, pastor in New York city.”

“From the age of thirty-four to forty, he was an able and beloved pastor in Philadelphia, till 1812, when he was called to lay the foundations of the Theological Seminary in Princeton. He was then the only professor, but was soon joined by his loved colleague, the Rev. Dr. Miller, whose funeral-sermon, after thirty-seven years of harmonious labor, he preached in January, 1850. For the whole term of his connection with that seminary, almost forty years, he labored incessantly, till his last illness of a few weeks: fulfilling the duties of his professorship; watching over the students as a father, and guiding in an eminent degree by his affectionate advice their future course; constantly appealed to for counsel in all the varied interests of the churches and of the cause of benevolence; and with a discernment of character, a sound, practical judgment, a modesty and humility, and a singleness of purpose for the welfare of the Redeemer's kingdom, that gained universal confidence. It was kindly ordered that the Synod of New Jersey, of which he was a member, and out of which he named on his bed of weakness, one hundred and fifteen who had been his pupils, were in session at Princeton when he died, and were permitted, with a great concourse of clergymen and citizens, to unite in the solemnities of his funeral.”

“ ‘Death never appeared to me so delightful as now when it is near,’ he said to those around his sickbed; and often, as strength allowed, he spoke of the peace that dwelt in his soul. The records of his last hours will be precious to the church, and they will be found to illustrate and confirm the experience he has written in his sermons and letters as the fitting close of a life of faith. His great work on the Evidences and the Canon of Scripture, several other excellent treatises, and all the productions of his active and able pen, bear the impress of his singleness of purpose to honor Christ.”

“H.”

From the American Messenger for February, 1852.

“impressions of dr. alexander”

“This Christian patriarch of fourscore years is one of the few whose fame and usefulness are immortal. Having given a long life of wise and constant devotion to the Redeemer's kingdom, he has bequeathed to the church a name redolent with piety and honor. We would gratefully cherish the bequest, and contribute our humble influence to embalm it in every Christian heart. Perhaps we cannot better subserve the purpose than by a brief record of our impressions of the person, character, and influence of the venerable man who has so recently passed to his heavenly rest.”

“Dr. Alexander was of medium height, rotund, slightly stooping form, broad and high forehead, and piercing eye. His head was slightly inclined to one side, like Wilberforce’s. His manners were simple, frank, and dignified, eminently suited to inspire confidence and respect. A single interview would impress the visitor with his affability as a man, his maturity as a scholar, and his ripeness as a Christian.”

“The simplicity of character which marked Dr. Alexander is worthy of notice. True greatness is always simple. In Dr. Alexander it pervaded his tastes, language, manners, piety, every thing. In his writings, as our readers know, his thoughts were not only readily apprehended, but he could not well be misunderstood. So of his sermons and public appeals.”

“Modesty was a related trait. He seemed to know nothing of his own greatness. One who had been on terms of the closest intimacy for a generation, stated in our hearing, that he had never heard Dr. Alexander allude to his own influence.”

“Symmetry of character distinguished Dr. Alexander from most men. He was not so remarkable for logic, or rhetoric, or judgment, or zeal, or learning, singly, as for an admirable combination, which left nothing to be desired in the completeness of the man, the divine, and the Christian.”

“Penetration of mind, and an intuitive apprehension of the character and motives of those he met, were peculiarly characteristic of Dr. Alexander. He saw through a subject or a person apparently at a glance.”

“Candor and firmness were finely combined. He had not a jot of that pertinacity of opinion and purpose which too often characterizes even good men in their declining years. To the last, he seemed as ready for new projects of usefulness, if they were well planned and had obvious bearings on the Redeemer’s cause, as he could have been in the days of his youth. Witness his attachment to colportage, his seminary plans, and the readiness with which, in his eightieth year, he undertook elaborate preparation for an entirely new department assigned to his professorship, and innumerable other illustrations. At the same time, he was firm as a rock in resisting what he deemed false principles of reform, or religious action. A hot-headed reformer once spent hours in endeavoring to enlist the influence of Dr. Alexander for his movement, plying him with argument, entreaty, and other means less gentle. After magnifying sufficiently his own zeal in the reform, he turned tauntingly to Dr. Alexander and inquired if he thought he (Dr. A.) had any piety. “None to boast of,” was the searching reply of Dr. Alexander, sent home to the conscience with one of those glances of his speaking eye, which none will ever forget who have had occasion to remember its lightning-like power.”

“A noble-hearted catholicity could not but be a characteristic of such a man. No man loved his own honored church more sincerely and ardently than Dr. Alexander. But his love and preference for his own communion was not so exclusive as to reject all who worshipped God in other forms, or who had a like attachment to the church of their fathers. Nor did it deter him from an intelligent and whole-souled coöperation with evangelical Christians in heaven-blessed enterprises for spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ. Perhaps no better illustration can be found of the true combination of denominational and catholic affinities, in just proportions. He was none the less a Presbyterian, that he gave a quarter of a century and more of counsel and aid, in a thousand effective ways, to the Bible and Tract and other kindred organizations. He loved and confided in them to the last;

indeed, almost the last act of his life, as before stated in the Messenger, was to provide a destitute minister at his own cost with the Tract Society's 'Religious or Pastor's Library,' as if he would leave at once a legacy of attachment to the ministry of his own church he had so long labored to rear, and a legacy of confidence and approbation to the institution he had so highly appreciated, and to whose usefulness he had so largely contributed."

"Unceasing usefulness marked Dr. Alexander's career. The measure and amount of his labors for Christ's kingdom can never be fully known till the last day. But some sixty years of uninterrupted toil in the pulpit, in the professor's chair, and with the pen, have made a broad mark on this country and the world. A whole communion of Christians owe more to him than to any other man, perhaps, for the eminent scholarship and earnest zeal of their honored ministry. The cause of sacred learning is largely indebted to Dr. Alexander for his patient toil. And Oh, how much do the Tract Society, and the related Board of his own church and sister institutions, owe to his unwearied efforts with his pen! His early training and associations gave him a lively sympathy with the mass of plain, poor people scattered abroad over our land. For them he loved to write. He knew their heart, and could afford to write simply enough to be understood in his teachings. His earnest desire for the salvation of these masses inspired his zeal for the system of colportage and other enterprises which took the direction downward with gospel influences. He wrote, and planned, and counselled, and inspired the zeal of others, with unflinching steadfastness; and he still lives, and will live while the world stands, in his practical writings, which are loved and treasured by tens of thousands beyond the pale of his own communion as well as within its bounds. May the Holy Spirit own them for the spiritual good of untold thousands of dying immortals."

"C."

S. The Sermon, Delivered at the Inauguration of the Rev. Archibald Alexander

THE

SERMON,

delivered at

the inauguration

of the

REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D. as professor of didactic and polemic theology,

in the

theological seminary of the presbyterian church,

in

the united states of america. to which are added, the

PROFESSOR'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

and

THE CHARGE

to

the professor and students

published by order of the board of directors.

NEW-YORK:

published by whiting and watson, theological and classical booksellers, no. 96, broadway.

1812.

Extract from the minutes of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, August 12th, 1812.

THE Directors of the Theological Seminary, desirous of making known to the christian public the views and designs with which the Institution under their care has been founded, and is now open for the reception of pupils; and believing that these views and designs cannot be better explained, than by the publication of the Discourses this day delivered, at the Inauguration of the first Professor:

Resolved, that the thanks of this board be given to the Directors and Professor who delivered those Discourses, and that they be requested to furnish copies for the press.

Dr. Romeyn and Mr. Zachariah Lewis were appointed a committee to superintend the printing, distribution, and sale of the impression.

A true extract,

JOHN Mc DOWELL, Sec'ry.

the

DUTY OF THE CHURCH

to take measures for providing

AN ABLE AND FAITHFUL MINISTRY:

a

SERMON,

delivered at princeton, august 12, 1812,

at the

INAUGURATION

of the

REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D.

as professor of didactic and polemic theology,

in the

theological seminary of the presbyterian church.

by

SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

pastor of the church in wall-street, new-york:

THE

DUTY OF THE CHURCH,

&c.

2 Timothy 2:2.

And the things which thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. The apostle Paul received both his knowledge of the Gospel, and his commission to preach it, immediately from the great Head of the church. Yet, notwithstanding the extraordinary circumstances which attended his theological instruction,

and his official investiture, that all things might be done decently and in order, he submitted to the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, before he went forth on his great mission to the gentiles. In like manner, Timothy, his own son in the faith, to whom the exhortation before us is addressed, was set apart to the work of the holy ministry, by the Presbytery, in which body, on that occasion, the Apostle himself seems to have presided*. Timothy was now at Ephesus; and being the most active and influential member of the Presbytery which was constituted in that part of the church, his spiritual father directed to him, as such, and in him to the church in all succeeding times, the rules and instructions contained in the Epistles which bear his name. Among these we find the passage which has just been read: And the things which thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

It is impossible, within the limits of a single discourse, to do justice to a portion of scripture replete with such various and important matter, as the slightest attention will discover in this text. Of course, much of what properly belongs to its illustration, must be either wholly omitted, or very briefly noticed, on the present occasion. That the Christian Ministry is an institution of Jesus Christ; that this institution is essential, not only to the well-being, but also to the very existence of the church, as an organized body; that Christ has promised that there shall always be a succession of ministers in his church, to the end of the world; and that none have a right to enter on the appropriate functions of this sacred office, without having that right formally and officially “committed” to them, by men who are themselves already in the same office; are great, elementary principles of ecclesiastical order, which are all fairly implied in the passage before us; but which, I trust, it is not necessary for me to attempt either to establish or to illustrate before this audience. They are so plainly laid down in scripture, and so evidently reasonable in themselves, that I shall, at present, take them for granted.

Neither will it be deemed necessary, at present, to dwell on the numerous and important benefits of an able and faithful ministry. It may be said, without exaggeration, that every interest of man is involved in this blessing. The order, comfort, and edification of the church; the progress in knowledge, the growth in grace, and the consolation of individual believers; the regularity, peace, polish, and strength of civil society; the extension of intellectual and moral cultivation; the glory of God; and the eternal welfare of men; are among the great benefits which an able and faithful ministry is, ordinarily, the means of promoting; and which, without such a ministry, we cannot hope to attain, at least in any considerable degree. If it be acknowledged that the sanctions of religion exert a mighty, and most benign influence on the order and happiness of society; if the observance of the christian sabbath be as really a blessing to the world as it is to the church; if the solemnities of public worship, be a source of moral and temporal benefit to millions, who give no evidence of a saving acquaintance with the power of the Gospel; if the weekly instructions of the sanctuary have a native tendency to enlighten, refine, and restrain, those whom they are not the means of converting; and if it please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; then, it is evident, that an able and faithful ministry, next to the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, is the greatest benefit that can be conferred upon a people. And if these great institutions of heaven, are likely, other things being equal, to be beneficial, in proportion to the clearness, the force, the wisdom, and the fidelity with which they are exhibited, as both common sense and the word of God evidently dictate; then it is plain, that the more able and the more faithful that ministry, with which any people is blessed, the more extensive and important are likely to be the benefits

resulting from it, both to the church and the world. The father of a family, as well as the professor of religion, has reason to desire the attainment of such a ministry. The patriot, as well as the christian, ought earnestly to wish, and be ready to contribute his aid, that the church may obey the precept of her head and Lord: the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

I say, that the Church may obey this divine precept; for it is, undoubtedly, a mistake, and a very grievous mistake, to imagine, as many seem to imagine, that precepts of the kind before us, are addressed to ministers alone. It is freely granted, that ministers are the appointed agents for training up those who are to succeed them in this holy vocation; and for imparting to them the official powers, which they have themselves received. Yet it is, unquestionably, in the name, and as the constituted executive and organ of that part of the church which they represent, that they perform this service. If, therefore, as I take for granted all will allow, the design of the precept before us did not cease with Timothy: if both its reason and its obligation be permanent; then the church of Christ, at this hour, is to consider it as directed to her. It is the Church that is bound to take order, that what she has received be committed to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also, The doctrine of our text, then, is, that it is the indispensable duty of the Church of Christ, in all ages, to take measures for providing an able and faithful Ministry. The great fact, that this is the duty of the Church, I shall consider as sufficiently established by the plain and unequivocal precept before us; and shall employ the time that remains for the present discourse, in inquiring, What we are to understand by an able and faithful Ministry? And, What are the means which the Church is bound to employ for providing such a Ministry?

I. What are we to understand by an able and faithful Ministry?

It is a ministry, at once qualified and disposed to perform, with enlightened and unwearied assiduity, all the duties, whether of instruction, of defence, or of discipline, which belong to ambassadors of Christ, to pastors and rulers in his church. This general character implies Piety, Talents, Learning, and Diligence.

1. The first requisite to form a faithful and able minister, is Piety. By this I mean, that he be a regenerated man; that he have a living faith in that Saviour whom he preaches to others; that the love of Christ habitually constrain him; that he have himself walked in those paths of humility, self-denial, and holy communion with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in which it is the business of his life to endeavour to lead his fellow-men.

I shall not now speak of the necessity of piety, to a minister's personal salvation; nor of its inestimable importance to his personal comfort. I shall not dwell on the irksomeness, nay, the intolerable drudgery, of labouring in a vocation in which the heart does not go along; nor on the painful misgivings which must ever attend preaching an unknown Saviour, and recommending untasted hopes and joys. Neither shall I attempt to describe, tremendous and overwhelming as it is, the aggravated doom of that man, who, from the heights of this sacred office, shall sink into the abyss of the damned; who, after having preached to others, shall himself become a cast-away*. But my object is, to show the importance, and the necessity, of this best of all attainments, in order to qualify any man for discharging the duties of the ministerial office. It is to show, that, without piety, he cannot be an able minister. He cannot be a workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to each his portion in due season†.

How can a man who knows only the theory of religion, undertake to be a practical guide in spiritual things? How can he adapt his instructions to all the varieties of christian experience? How can he direct the awakened, the inquiring, the tempted, and the doubting? How can he feed the sheep and the lambs of Christ? How can he sympathize with mourners in Zion? How can he comfort others with those consolations wherewith he himself has never been comforted of God? He cannot possibly perform, as he ought, any of these duties, and yet they are the most precious and interesting parts of the ministerial work. However gigantic his intellectual powers; however deep, and various, and accurate his learning, he is not able, in relation to any of these points, to teach others, seeing he is not taught himself. If he make the attempt, it will be the blind leading the blind; and of this, unerring wisdom has told us the consequence*. It were rash, indeed, and unwarranted, to say, that a man who knows nothing of the power of godliness, may not be employed, by a sovereign God, as the means of saving benefit to others. God undoubtedly may, and probably sometimes does, “by way of miracle, raise a man to life by the bones of a dead prophet†.” He may, and, there is reason to believe sometimes does, “honour his own word so far as to make it effectual to salvation, even when it falls from unhallowed lips.” The ministry even of Judas Iscariot was, probably, not without its benefit to the church of Christ. But such a result is not, in ordinary cases, and certainly not in any considerable degree, to be expected. When unsanctified ministers are introduced into the church, we may generally expect them to prove, not only an offence to God, but also a curse to his people. Piety, orthodoxy, practical holiness, and all the spiritual glories of the household of faith, will commonly be found to decline in proportion to the number and influence of these enemies in disguise. And here I cannot help bearing testimony against what appears to me a dangerous mistake; which, though it may not be common, yet sometimes occurs among parents and guardians of the more serious class. I mean the mistake of destining young persons to the Gospel Ministry, from a very early period of life, before they can be supposed, from any enlightened view of the subject, to concur in the choice themselves; and before they give any satisfactory evidence of vital piety.—Brethren, I venerate the parent who desires, and daily prays, that it may please God to prepare and dispose his child, to serve him in the ministry of reconciliation. Nay, I think that parent worthy of the thanks of every friend to religion, who solemnly devotes his child, even from the earliest period of life, to the service of the church, and avowedly conducts every part of his education with a view to this great object; provided the original consecration, and every subsequent arrangement, be made on the condition, carefully and frequently expressed, as well as implied, that God shall be pleased to sanction and accept the offering, by imparting his grace, and giving a heart to love, and desire the sacred work. But there is a wide difference between this, and resolving that a particular son shall be a minister, in the same manner, and on the same principles, as another is devoted to the medical profession, or to the bar, as a respectable employment in life; without recognizing vital piety, and the deliberate choice of the ministry, from religious motives, as indispensable qualifications. This kind of destination to the sacred office, is as dangerous as it is unwarranted. Let the christian parent, however solemnly he may have devoted his child to the work of the ministry, and however fondly he may have anticipated his entrance on that blessed work; if he find, at the proper age for deciding the question, no comfortable evidence of a heart regenerated, and governed by the spirit of grace; let him deliberately advise;—though his heart be wrung with anguish by the sacrifice;—let him deliberately advise the choice of another profession. When young men begin to enter the gospel ministry, because they were early destined to the office; because it is a respectable profession; or

because they wish to gratify parents and friends; rather than because they love the office, and its work, and have reason to hope that God has been pleased to call them by his grace, and reveal his Son, in them*; we may consider the ministry as in a fair way to be made, in fact, a secular employment, and the church a prostituted theatre for the schemes and ambition of worldly men. So deeply and vitally important is piety in forming a faithful and able ministry; and so often has it appeared to be forgotten, or, at least, undervalued, amidst the brilliancy of more splendid accomplishments; that there cannot be too strict a guard placed on this point, both by public sentiment, and by ministerial fidelity. Many very excellent men, indeed, have felt a jealousy of Theological Seminaries, as such, as if they were calculated for training up learned and eloquent, rather than pious ministers. Though I believe that this jealousy has been sometimes indulged unjustly, and often carried to an unwise and mischievous extreme; and though there appears to me no other ground for it, than the melancholy fact, that the best human institutions are liable to perversion and degeneracy; yet I cannot find in my heart to condemn it altogether. Nay, I trust that a portion of it will always be kept alive, as a guard, under God, against the evil which it deprecates. For I persuade myself that every minister of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States, is ready to adopt the language, with a little valuation, of that great and excellent man, who, for near thirty years, adorned the American Church, and the presidential chair of this College. "Accursed be all that learning which sets itself in opposition to vital piety! Accursed be all that learning which disguises, or is ashamed of vital piety! Accursed be all that learning, which attempts to fill the place, or to supersede the honours, of vital piety! Nay, accursed be all that learning, which is not made subservient to the promotion and the glory of vital piety!*" But piety, though it hold the first place among essential qualifications here, is not all that is necessary. It is not every pious man, may, not every fervently pious man, that is qualified to be a minister, and far less an able minister. Another essential requisite to form the character of such a minister, is,

2. Talents. By which I mean, not that every able minister must, of necessity, be a man of genius; but that he must be a man of good sense; of native discernment and discretion; in other words, of a sound respectable natural understanding. When our blessed Lord was about to send forth his first ministers, he said unto them; Be ye wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves†. And, truly, there is no employment under heaven, in which wisdom, practical wisdom, is so important, or rather, so imperiously and indispensably demanded, as in the ministry of reconciliation. A man of a weak and childish mind, though he were pious as Gabriel, can never make an able minister, and he ought never to be invested with the office at all: for with respect to a large portion of its duties, he is utterly unqualified to perform them; and he is in constant danger of rendering both himself and his office contemptible. No reasonable man would require proof to convince him, that good sense is essential to form an able physician, an able advocate at the bar, or an able ambassador at a foreign court. Nor would any prudent man entrust his property, his life, or the interests of his country, to one who did not bear this character. And can it be necessary to employ argument, to show that interests, in comparison with which, worldly property, the health of the body, and even the temporal prosperity of nations, are all little things, ought not to be committed to any other than a man of sound and respectable understanding? Alas! if ecclesiastical judicatories had not frequently acted, as if this were far from being a settled point, it were almost an insult to my audience to speak of it as a subject admitting of a question.

Though a minister concentrated in himself all the piety, and all the learning, of the christian church; yet if he had not at least a decent stock of good sense, for directing and applying his other qualifications, he would be worse than useless. Upon good sense depends all that is dignified, prudent, conciliatory, and respectable in private deportment; and all that is judicious, seasonable, and calculated to edify, in public ministration. The methods to be employed for winning souls, are so many and various, according to the taste, prejudices, habits, and stations of men: a constant regard to time, place, circumstances, and character, is so essential, if we desire to profit those whom we address: and some tolerable medium of deportment, between moroseness and levity, reserve and tattling, bigotry and latitudinarianism, lukewarmness and enthusiasm, is so indispensable to public usefulness, that the man who lacks a respectable share of discernment and prudence, had better, far better, be in any other profession than that of a minister*. An able minister he cannot possibly be. Neither will any thing short of a sound judgment, a native perception of what is fit and proper, or otherwise, preserve any man who is set to teach and to rule in the church, without a miracle, from those perversions of scripture; those ludicrous absurdities; and those effusions of drivelling childishness, which are calculated to bring the ministry and the bible into contempt.

3. A third requisite to an able and faithful ministry, is competent knowledge. Without this, both piety and talents united are inadequate to the official work. Nay, without cultivation and discipline; without a competent store of facts and principles, to regulate the mind, the stronger the talents, the more likely are they to lead their possessor astray, and to become the instruments of mischief, both to himself and the church. The first ministers of the gospel were divinely inspired; and, of course, had no need of acquiring knowledge by the ordinary methods. They were put in possession by miracle, and perhaps in a single hour, of that information, which, now, can only be gained by years of laborious study*. It were well if this fact were remembered and weighed by those who plead, that, as the gospel was first preached by fishermen and tax-gatherers, so it may be as well preached, at the present day, by persons of fervent piety, and plain sense, who have never enjoyed any greater advantages of scholastic learning, than the apostles did. The supposed fact, which these vain and ignorant pleaders assume, is utterly unfounded. The apostles were not an illiterate ministry. They were the soundest, and best informed divines that ever adorned the christian church. So indispensable did it appear to infinite wisdom, that they should be such, that they were thus accomplished by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And we have reason to believe, that men, before unlearned, were chosen to be the subjects of this inspiration, in preference to others, that the miracle might be the more apparent; that it might be the more clearly seen that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of man*. Let this inspiration, confirmed as it then was by miracle, be now produced, and we will acknowledge it as more than an adequate substitute for the ordinary method of acquiring knowledge, by books and study. But if, as we all allow, the age of inspiration and of miracle be long since past; and if it be still necessary, notwithstanding, that the preachers of the gospel possess, substantially, the same knowledge that the apostles had; then, undoubtedly, it is to be acquired in a different way from theirs, that is, by the diligent use of ordinary means. If ministers must be apt to teach, as the Spirit of God has declared*, they ought to be capable of teaching. If the priest's lips ought to keep knowledge†, he certainly ought to possess knowledge. And if Timothy, though he lived in the days of inspiration, and was the immediate and favourite disciple of an inspired man, was yet enjoined, by that very inspired man, to give himself to reading, as well as to exhortation; to meditate upon these things,

and to give himself wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all‡; how much more necessary are similar means of acquiring knowledge, to those who are called to labours of the same nature, and quite as arduous, without possessing the same advantages! But what kind, and what degree of intellectual cultivation, and of acquired knowledge, may be considered as necessary to form an able minister of Jesus Christ? That we may give a more enlightened answer to this question, let us inquire, what such a minister is called, and must be qualified, to perform? He is, then, to be ready, on all occasions, to explain the scriptures. This is his first and chief work. That is, not merely to state and support the more simple and elementary doctrine of the gospel; but also to elucidate with clearness the various parts of the sacred volume, whether doctrinal, historical, typical, prophetic, or practical. He is to be ready to rectify erroneous translations of sacred scripture; to reconcile seeming contradictions; to clear up real obscurities; to illustrate the force and beauty of allusions to ancient customs and manners; and, in general, to explain the word of God, as one who has made it the object of his deep and successful study. He is set for the defence of the gospel*; and, therefore, must be qualified to answer the objections of infidels; to repel the insinuations and cavils of sceptics; to detect, expose, and refute the ever varying forms of heresy; and to give notice, and stand in the breach, when men, ever so covertly or artfully, depart from the faith once delivered to the saints†. He is to be ready to solve the doubts, and satisfy the scruples of conscientious believers; to give instruction to the numerous classes of respectful and serious inquirers; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine‡. He is to preach the gospel with plainness, dignity, clearness, force, and solemnity. And, finally, he is to perform his part in the judicatories of the church, where candidates for the holy ministry are examined and their qualifications ascertained; where a constant inspection is maintained over the faith and order of the church; where the general interests of Zion are discussed and decided; and in conducting the affairs of which, legislative, judicial, and executive proceedings are all combined. This is but a very brief and imperfect sketch of what a minister is called to perform. Now, it is evident that, in order to accomplish all this, with even tolerable ability, a man must be furnished with a large amount of knowledge. “He must,” (and on this subject I am happy in being able to fortify myself with the judgment, and to employ, for the most part, the language, of the General Assembly of our church,) “he must be well skilled in the original languages of the holy Scriptures. He must be versed in Jewish and Christian antiquities. He must have a competent acquaintance with Ancient Geography, and Oriental Customs. He must have read and digested the principal arguments and writings, relative to what has been called the Deistical controversy. He must have studied, carefully and correctly, Natural Theology, together with Didactic, Polemic, and Casuistic Divinity; and be able to support the doctrines of the Gospel, by a ready, pertinent, and abundant quotation of Scripture texts for that purpose. He must have a considerable acquaintance with general History and Chronology; and a particular acquaintance with the history of the christian Church. He must have studied attentively the duties of the Pastoral Office; the form of Church government authorized by the scriptures; and the administration of it as practised in the protestant churches*.” He must have become well versed in Moral Philosophy, as an important auxiliary in studying man, his constitution, the powers and exercises of his depraved and sanctified nature, and his duties thence arising. To all these, he must add, a respectable share of knowledge, in general Grammar, in Logic, Metaphysics, Natural Philosophy, Mathematical Science, Geography, Natural History, and polite Literature.

Several of these branches of learning are, indeed, only auxiliary to the main body, if I may so express it, of ministerial erudition. But they are important auxiliaries. No man, it is true, can be a complete master of them all; and it were criminal in a minister to attempt so much. The time requisite for this, must be taken from more important employments. Of some of these departments of knowledge, general views are sufficient; and of others, perhaps, an acquaintance with nomenclatures and first principles ought to satisfy the theological pupil. But so much of them ought to be acquired, as may enable their possessor the better to understand the scriptures, and the better to defend the gospel. I repeat it, every branch of knowledge is helpful and desirable to the christian minister.—Not to enable him to shine, as a man of learning this were infinitely beneath the aim of an ambassador of Christ: but to make him a more accomplished and useful teacher of others. For it is certain that the more he attains of real, solid science, provided it be sanctified science, the more clearly will he be able to explain the sacred volume, and the more wisely and forcibly to preach that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*.

4. Once more, it enters into the character of a faithful minister, that he is active, diligent and persevering in the discharge of his multiplied and arduous duties. However fervent his piety; however vigorous his native talents; and however ample his acquired knowledge; yet, if he be timid, indolent, wavering, easily driven from the path of duty, or speedily discouraged in his evangelical labours, he does not answer the apostle's description of a faithful man. The minister who is, in any good measure, entitled to this character, is one who carefully studies to know, and to the best of his knowledge, declares the whole counsel of God, without fearing the frowns, or courting the smiles, of men; who shrinks not from any self-denial, labour, or danger to which the will of his Master, and the interests of religion, evidently call him; who abhors the thought of sitting down in inglorious ease, while thousands are perishing around him; who does not allow himself to be diverted by secular or minor objects from his grand work; who is instant in season, and out of season, in all the diversified and momentous labours of his holy vocation; and the object of whose steady exertion, as well as supreme desire, it is, that the church may be built up; that souls may be saved; and that Christ in all things may be glorified*.

Such is a faithful and able minister. A minister fervently pious; eminently wise, discerning, and prudent; extensively learned, especially mighty in the Scriptures; abounding and prevalent in prayer; a bold, energetic, instructive, experimental preacher; a zealous, affectionate, condescending, laborious pastor; a friend to revivals of religion; a firm and persevering contender for the truth; one, in short, who devotes all his talents, all his learning, all his influence, and all his exertions, to the one grand object, fulfilling the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus.

Such a minister, to select an example, was the apostle Paul. With a heart warmed with the love of Christ; with an understanding vigorous, sound, and comprehensive; and with a store of various and profound knowledge, he went forth to meet and to conciliate the enemies of his divine Master: and in the course of His ministry, he manifested the importance of every qualification with which that Master had furnished him. Let us follow and observe him a little in the discharge of his ministerial labours. “Now we see him reasoning with Pagans, and then remonstrating with Jews: now arguing from the law of nature, and then from the Old Testament scriptures: now appealing to the writings of heathen poets and philosophers, and then referring to the traditions of the fathers, of which he had been exceedingly zealous: now stating his arguments with all logical exactness,

and then exposing the sophistry and false learning of his adversaries*:" now pleading with all the majesty and pathos of unrivalled eloquence, upon Mars-hill, and before Felix and Agrippa, and then instructing, from house to house, the young and the aged, with all the tenderness of a father, and all the simplicity and condescension of a babe.—And what was the consequence? With these qualifications, he laboured not only more abundantly, but more successfully, than all the apostles; and has probably been the means of richer blessings to the church and the world, than any other mere man that ever lived. But you will, perhaps, ask, "Ought all these qualifications to be considered as indispensable for every minister? For example, ought no one to have the ministry 'committed to him, unless he have acquired, or be in a fair way to attain, the whole of those literary and scientific accomplishments which have been recounted as desirable?" It is not necessary, perhaps it is not proper, at present, to give a particular answer to this question. My object has been to describe an able and faithful ministry. To my description I am not conscious of having added any thing superfluous or unimportant. Such a ministry it ought to be the aim and the endeavour of the church to train up. Yet, it is certain that under the best administration of ecclesiastical affairs that ever existed, since the days of the apostles, or that is ever likely to exist, all ministers have not been alike able and faithful: and it is equally certain that cases have occurred in which individuals with furniture for the sacred office inferior to that which is desirable, have been in a considerable degree, both respectable and useful. But still a character something resembling that which has been drawn, ought to be considered as the proper standard, and exertions made to attain as near an approximation to it, in all cases, as possible. And after all that can be done, exceptions to a rigid conformity with this standard, will be found in sufficient number, without undertaking to lower the standard itself, in such a manner as to provide for their multiplication. But,

II. What are the means which the Church is bound to employ, for providing such a ministry? This question was assigned as the second subject of inquiry.

And here, it is perfectly manifest, that the church can neither impart grace, nor create talents. She can neither make men pious, nor give them intellectual powers. But is there, therefore, nothing that can be done, or that ought to be done by her? Yes, brethren, there is much to be done. Though Jehovah the Saviour has the government upon his shoulder, his kingdom is a kingdom of means; and He is not to be expected to work miracles to supply our lack of exertion. If, therefore, the church omit to employ the means which her King and Head has put within her power, for the attainment of a given object, both the sin and the disgrace of failing to attain that object, will lie at her own door.

What, then, are the means which the church is bound to employ for providing an able and faithful ministry? They are such as these: looking for, and carefully selecting young men for piety and talents, for the work of the ministry; providing funds, for the temporary support of those who may stand in need of such aid; furnishing a seminary, in which the most ample means of instruction may be found; and, having done all this, to guard, by her judicatories, the entrance into the sacred office, with incessant vigilance.

1. The Church is bound, with a vigilant eye, to search for, and carefully to select, from among the young men within her bosom, those who are endowed with piety and talents, whenever she can find these qualifications united. Piety is humble and retiring; and talents, especially of the kind best

adapted to the great work of the ministry, are modest and unobtrusive. They require, at least in many instances, to be sought out, encouraged, and brought forward. And how, and by whom, is this to be done? The children of the church are, if I may so express it, the church's property. She has a right to the services of the best of them. And as it is the part, both of wisdom and affection, in parents according to the flesh, to attend with vigilance to the different capacities and acquirements of their children, and to select for them, as far as possible, corresponding employments; so it is obviously incumbent on the Church, the moral parent of all the youth within her jurisdiction, to direct especial attention to such of them as may be fitted to serve her in the holy ministry. And it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that whenever young men are found, who unite fervent piety, with talents adapted to the office, it is the duty of such to seek the gospel ministry; and it is the duty of the church to single them out, to bring them forward, and to endeavour to give them all that preparation, which depends on human means, for the service of the sanctuary.

2. The church is bound to provide funds for the partial or entire support of those who need this kind of aid, while they are preparing for the work of the ministry. Some of the most promising candidates for this holy work have not the means of supporting themselves, while they withdraw from the world, and give up its emoluments, for the purpose of becoming qualified to serve God in the Gospel of his Son. These persons must either abandon their sacred enterprise altogether, or receive, from some other source, adequate aid. And from what source can they so properly receive it, as from their moral parent, the Church? Nature, reason, equity, parental affection,—all conspire in pointing to this parent, as the most suitable provider. The aid which flows only from the hand of individual and occasional bounty, may be withdrawn, or grudgingly continued: but the church can never be weary, as long as ability is given her, of providing for her beloved children. The aid which individuals, as such, furnish, may excite, in delicate minds, a painful sense of dependence: but children ought to feel, can feel, no pain in receiving from the hand of parental affection. Nor is it any valid objection to the furnishing of this aid, that the objects of it may not always be found, when their character shall be completely developed, either ornaments to the church, or worthy of so much exertion and expenditure. As well might parents according to the flesh decline to provide for the support and education of their children, in early life, lest peradventure they might afterwards prove neither a comfort nor an honour to them. In this respect every faithful parent considers himself as bound, in duty and affection, to take all possible pains for promoting the welfare of his offspring, and having done so, to leave the event with God.

Neither ought the church to consider this provision as a burden, or imagine that, in making it, she confers a favour. It is as clearly her duty—a duty which she as really owes both to her Master and herself, as the ordinary provision which she makes for the support of the word and ordinances. Or rather, it is to be lamented that she has not been accustomed always to consider it, as an essential part of her ordinary provision for the maintenance of the means of grace.

3. A further means which the church is bound to employ, for providing an able and faithful ministry, is, furnishing a Seminary in which the candidates for this office may receive the most appropriate and complete instruction, which she has it in her power to give. In vain are young men of fervent piety, and the best talents, sought after and discovered; and in vain are funds provided for their support, while preparing for the ministry, unless pure and ample fountains of knowledge are opened to them, and unless competent guides are assigned, to direct them in drinking at those fountains. This, however, is so plain, so self-evident, that I need not enlarge upon its proof. But

perhaps it may be supposed by some, that there is no good reason why these means of education should be provided by the Church, as such. It may be imagined, that they will be as likely to be provided, and as well provided, by private instructors, as by public Seminaries. But all reason, and all experience, pronounce a different judgment, and assign, as the ground of their decision, such considerations as these.

First, when the Church herself provides a Seminary for the instruction of her own candidates for the ministry, she can at all times inspect and regulate the course of their education; can see that it be sound; through, and faithful and direct and control the instructors; can correct such errors? and make such improvements in her plans of instruction, as the counsels of the whole body may discover. Whereas, if all be left to individual discretion, the preparation for the service of the church may be in the highest degree defective, or ill-judged, not to say unsound, without the church being able effectually to interpose her correcting hand.

Again; when the Church herself takes the instruction of her candidates into her own hands, she can furnish a more extensive, accurate, and complete course of instruction than can be supposed to be, ordinarily, within the reach of detached individuals. In erecting and endowing a Seminary, she can select the best instructors out of her whole body. She can give her pupils the benefit of the whole time, and the undivided exertions, of these instructors. Instead of having all the branches of knowledge, to which the theological student applies himself, taught by a single master, she can divide the task of instruction, among several competent teachers, in such a manner as to admit of each doing full justice both to his pupils and himself. She can form one ample Library, by which a given number of students may be much better accommodated, when collected together, and having access to it in common, than if the same amount of books were divided into a corresponding number of smaller libraries. And she can digest, and gradually improve a system of instruction, which shall be the result of combined wisdom, learning, and experience. Whereas those candidates for the sacred office, who commit themselves to the care of individual ministers, selected according to the convenience or the caprice of each pupil, must, in many cases, at least, be under the guidance of instructors who have neither the talents, the learning, nor the leisure to do them justice; and who have not even a tolerable collection of books, to supply the lack of their own furniture as teachers.

Further; when the Church herself provides the means of instruction for her own ministry, at a public seminary, she will, of course, be furnished with ministers who have enjoyed, in some measure, a uniform course of education; who have derived their knowledge from the same masters, and the same approved fountains, and who may, therefore, be expected to agree in their views of evangelical truth and order. There will thus be the most effectual provision made, speaking after the manner of men, for promoting the unity and peace of the church. Whereas, if every candidate for the holy ministry, be instructed by a different master, each of whom may be supposed to have his peculiarities of expression and opinion, especially about minor points of doctrine and discipline, the harmony of our ecclesiastical judicatories will gradually be impaired; and strife, and perhaps eventually, schism, may be expected to arise in our growing and happy church.

It is important to add, that when the Church provides for educating a number of candidates for the ministry at the same seminary, these candidates themselves may be expected to be of essential

service to each other. Numbers being engaged together in the same studies, will naturally excite the principle of emulation. As iron sharpeneth iron, so the amicable competition, and daily intercourse of pious students, can scarcely fail of leading to closer and more persevering application; to deeper research; to richer acquirements; and to a more indelible impression of that which is learned, upon their minds, than can be expected to take place in solitary study. Nor is it by any means unworthy of notice, that, when the ministers of a church are generally trained up at the same seminary, they are naturally led to form early friendships, which bind them together to the end of life, and which are productive of that mutual confidence and assistance, which can scarcely fail of shedding a benign influence on their personal enjoyment, and their official comfort and usefulness. These early friendships may also be expected to add another impulse to a sense of duty, in annually drawing ministers from a distance to meet each other in the higher judicatories of the church; and, which is scarcely less important, to facilitate and promote that mutual consultation, respecting plans of research, and new and interesting publications, which is, at once, among the safeguards, as well as pleasures, of theological authorship.

These, brethren, are some of the considerations which call upon every church, to erect, and to support with vigour and efficiency, a Theological Seminary for the training of her ministry. If she desires to augment the number of her ministers; if she wishes their preparation for the sacred office to be the best in her power to give, and at the least possible expense; if she desires that they may be a holy phalanx, united in the same great views of doctrine and discipline, and adhering with uniformity and with cordial affection to her public standards; if she deprecates the melancholy spectacle of a heterogeneous, divided, and distracted ministry: and finally, if she wishes her ministers to be educated under circumstances most favourable to their acting in after life, as a band of brethren, united in friendship as well as in sentiment; then let her take measures for training them up under her own eye, and control; under the same teachers; in the same course of study; and under all those advantages of early intercourse, and affectionate competition, which attend a public seminary. In favour of all this reasoning, the best experience, and the general practice of the church, in different ages, may be confidently urged. "It has been the way of God," says the pious and learned Dr. Lightfoot "to instruct his people by a studious and learned ministry, ever since he gave a written word to instruct them in." "Who," he asks, "were the standing ministry of Israel, all the time from the giving of the law, till the captivity in Babylon? Not prophets, or inspired men; for they were but occasional teachers; but the Priests and Levites, who became learned in the law by study. Deuteronomy 33:10. Hosea 4:6. Malachi 2:7. And for this end, they were disposed into forty eight cities, as so many universities, where they studied the law together; and from thence were sent out into the several synagogues, to teach the people." They had also, the same writer informs us, "contributions made for the support of these students, while they studied in the universities, as well as afterwards when they preached in the synagogues." He tells us further, in another place, "that there were among the Jews, authorized individual teachers of great eminence, who had their Midrashoth, or Divinity Schools, in which they expounded the law to their scholars or disciples." "Of these Divinity Schools," he adds, there is very frequent mention made among the Jewish writers, more especially of the schools of Hillel and Shammai. Such a Divinity Professor was Gamaliel, at whose feet, the great Apostle of the gentiles received his education*."

Under the christian dispensation, the same system, in substance, was adopted and continued. At a very early period, there was a seminary of high reputation established in the city of Alexandria, in which candidates for the holy ministry were trained up together, and under the ablest instructors, both in divine and human learning; a seminary in which Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and others, taught with high reputation. Eusebius and Jerome both declare, that this seminary had existed, as a nursery of the church, and had enjoyed a succession of able teachers, from the time of Mark the evangelist†. Writers on christian antiquities also assure us that there were seminaries of a similar kind very early established at Rome, Cæsarea, Antioch, and other places‡; and that they were considered as essential to the honour and prosperity of the church. At the period of the reformation, religion and learning revived together. The Reformers were not less eminent for their erudition, than for their piety and zeal. They contended earnestly for an enlightened, as well as a faithful ministry; and, accordingly, almost all the protestant churches, when they found themselves in a situation to admit of the exertion, founded Theological Seminaries, as nurseries for their ministry. This was the case in Geneva, in Scotland, in Holland, in Germany, and, with very little exception, throughout reformed christendom. And the history of those seminaries, while it certainly demonstrates, that such establishments are capable of being perverted; demonstrates, with equal evidence, that they have been made, and might always, with the divine blessing on a faithful administration, be rendered extensively useful. And what have the most eminently pious and learned ministers, that ever adorned the American church, thought on this subject? Let yonder venerable walls tell! Yes, brethren, it was because Tennent and Dickinson, and Burr, and Edwards, and Davies, and Finley, and Blair, and other champions of the cross, were deeply impressed with the truth, that learning and talents, united with piety, are of the highest importance to the christian ministry, that they laboured and prayed so much for the establishment and support of Nassau-Hall. May their spirit and their opinions revive; and more and more pervade our church, until the dawning of the Millennial Sabbath! In establishments of this kind, in more recent times, our congregational brethren, in New-England, and our brethren of the Dutch and Associate Reformed churches, have gone before us, and set us noble examples. We have, at length, awoke from our sleep; and with tardy, but, as we hope, with firm, with well-advised, and with heaven-directed steps, have begun to follow them. In the name of Jehovah Jesus, the king of Zion, we lift up our banner! May his blessing descend, and rest upon the transaction of this day, as a pledge that he is about to visit our church in his abundant mercy!

4. The last means of providing an able and faithful ministry, on which I shall insist, is fidelity on the part of the Judicatories of the church in guarding the entrance into the sacred office. It is our happiness, that, according to the truly apostolic and primitive constitution of our church, the power of licensing candidates, and of setting apart to the work of the holy ministry, is not given to any individual, by whatever name he may be called. Nay, while the church provides a seminary for the instruction of her candidates for the sacred office, she does not give even to the conductors of that seminary, however pious, learned, or venerable, the right ultimately to judge of the qualifications of those candidates, and to admit or reject them at their pleasure. This is the prerogative of her appropriate judicatories; and the manner in which it is exercised, is all-important. However vigilantly and perseveringly other means for attaining the object proposed, may be employed, if there be a failure here, the most calamitous consequences may be expected. If presbyteries be superficial in their examinations of candidates; if they be too ready to lay hands on the weak, the ignorant, the erroneous, or those of doubtful piety; or if, for the sake of attaining an occasional

purpose, or meeting a temporary difficulty, they at any time suffer the barriers which have been erected for excluding the incompetent or the unworthy, to be removed or trampled down, they are taking the direct course to bring the ministry and religion into contempt.

I know that, on this subject, pleas are often urged which it is extremely difficult to resist. Some good qualities in the candidates; private friendships; an unwillingness to give pain; the scarcity of ministers; and the necessities of the church, are all alternately employed as arguments for the admission of unsuitable characters into the ministry. But it is a most important part of fidelity in the work of the Lord, to oppose and reject every plea of this kind. Private friendships ought not to interfere with a supreme regard to the Redeemer's kingdom. It is better, much better to inflict pain for a time, on an individual, than to wound the church of Christ. And by introducing into the ministry those who are neither faithful, nor able to teach, judicatories are so far from supplying the wants of the church, that they rather add to her difficulties, and call her to struggle with new evils. To be in haste to multiply and send out unqualified labourers, is to take the most direct method to send a destructive blast on the garden of God, instead of gathering a rich and smiling harvest. On the other hand, when judicatories, with enlightened vigilance, and fidelity, guard the entrance into the sacred office; when they exert the authority committed to them, to keep out of the ministry, incompetence, heresy, levity, and worldly mindedness; they obey a divine precept; they support the real honour of the gospel ministry; they constrain those who are looking toward that blessed work, to take a higher aim, and to seek for higher attainments; they give the churches bread instead of a stone, and fish instead of a serpent; and though they may appear, to those who make haste to be tardy in supplying the public demand for ministers, they are taking one of the most effectual methods, under God, for raising up a numerous, as well as an able and faithful ministry.

Let us now turn our attention to some practical inferences from the foregoing discussion. And,

1. If the representation which has been given be just, then our church has been, for a long time, almost entirely, and very criminally, negligent of a great and important duty. While she has directed much laudable attention to other objects, she has, in a great measure, suffered the most promising means of providing an able and faithful ministry, to take care of themselves. Other churches have also been guilty, in a considerable degree, of similar negligence; a negligence for which, alas! our country mourns; and would mourn much more, if the importance of the subject were understood and appreciated as it ought to be; but our church has been pre-eminently guilty! Though among the largest christian denominations in the United States; though possessing, in its individual members, perhaps more wealth than any other; though favoured, in many respects, with ample means for every kind of generous ecclesiastical enterprise; and though often and solemnly warned on the subject; she has yet been among the very last of all the evangelical denominations among us, to commence a course of efficient exertion for raising up a qualified ministry. We have slumbered, and slumbered, until the scarcity of labourers in our harvest, has become truly alarming! God grant that we may testify by our future conduct, that we remember, with unfeigned humiliation, our former negligence; and that we are resolved, as his grace shall enable us, to make amends for it, by redoubled zeal and diligence in time to come!

2. From what has been said, it appears, that the solemnity to attend on which we are this day assembled, is a matter of cordial and animating congratulation to each other, and to the church of Christ in the United States. We are convened, under the authority of the General Assembly of our

church, to organize a theological seminary, and to inaugurate the first professor in that seminary. Though later, much, later, in commencing this establishment than we ought to have been; we trust it is about to commence under the smiles of the great Head of the Church; and that we may confidently regard it as a token for good to the Redeemer's kingdom, Yes, brethren, we have more reason to rejoice, and to felicitate one another, on the establishment of this seminary, than on the achievement of a great national victory, or on making a splendid addition to our national territory. It is the beginning, as we trust, of an extensive and permanent system, from which blessings may flow to millions while we are sleeping in the dust. Let us, then, rejoice and be exceeding glad; and in the midst of our joy, let us look up to the Source of blessing, who can cause the walls of our Zion to rise even in troublous times*. While we congratulate each other, let our petitions ascend, with our praises, to the throne of grace, that the seminary this day established, and, as we verily believe, founded in faith and prayer, may be a fountain, the streams of which shall make glad the city of our God; flowing in every direction, and abundantly watering the abodes of Zion's king, until all flesh shall taste his love, and see his glory!

3. If what has been said be correct, then those who are more immediately charged with conducting this seminary, whether as Directors or Professors, ought to consider themselves as honoured with a very solemn and weighty trust. The design of the supreme Judicatory of our church, in founding this seminary, is nothing less than to train up an able and faithful ministry; a ministry on whose piety, talents, and learning, the temporal and eternal welfare of thousands, now living, may, speaking after the manner of men, depend; a ministry, whose character may have a commanding influence, in forming the character of others, and they again of those who may successively fill the same office, until the end of time! The design is interesting beyond expression; and the task of these who are appointed to carry it into execution, is serious and important to a degree which mortals cannot estimate. When I cast an eye down the ages of eternity, and think how important is the salvation of a single soul; when I recollect how important, of course, the office of a minister of the gospel, who may be the happy instrument of saving many hundreds, or thousands of souls; and when I remember how many and how momentous are the relations, which a Seminary intended solely for training up ministers, bears to all the interests of men, in the life that now is, and especially in that which is to come; I feel as if the task of conducting such a Seminary, had an awfulness of responsibility connected with it, which is enough to make us tremble! O my fathers and brethren! let it never be said of us, on whom this task has fallen, that we take more pains to make polite scholars, eloquent orators, or men of mere learning, than to form able and faithful ministers of the New Testament. Let it never be said, that we are more anxious to maintain the literary and scientific honours of the ministry, than we are to promote that honour which consists in being full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and the instruments of adding much people to the Lord. The eyes of the church are upon us. The eyes of angels, and, above all, the eyes of the King of Zion, are upon us. May we have grace given us to be faithful!

4. This subject suggests matter for very serious reflection to the Youth, who are about to enter as students in this seminary, with a view to the gospel ministry. Behold, my young friends, the high character at which you are called to aim! You have come hither, not that you may prepare to shine; not that you may prepare to amuse men by philosophic discussion, or to astonish them by flights of artificial eloquence: but that, by the blessing of God, upon the use of means, you may become faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also; that you may become wise in winning souls to

Christ; that you may prepare to go forth, defending and proclaiming the messages of grace to guilty men, and persuading them to be reconciled to God. Seek to excel. It is noble to excel. But let it be always for the edifying of the church. This, my young friends, this is the object which is recommended to your sacred emulation. We charge you, in the presence of God, to let all your studies and aims be directed to this grand object. Seek with humble, persevering, prayerful diligence, to be such ministers as you have heard described; and you will neither disappoint yourselves, nor the Church of Christ. Seek to be any thing else; and you will be a grief and a curse to both. May God the Saviour bless you, and prepare you to be workmen that need not be ashamed!

5. From this subject we may derive powerful excitements to young men of piety and talents, to come forward and devote themselves to the Gospel Ministry. We trust no young man will ever think of that holy vocation, until he has first given himself up a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. We would not, for any consideration, be accessory to the sin of alluring into the sacred office, those who know nothing of the power of godliness, and who, on the most favourable supposition, can be nothing better than miserable retailers of cold and unproductive speculations. But while we say this, and repeat it, with all the emphasis of which we are capable, we assert, with equal confidence, on the other hand, that wherever fervent piety appears, in any young man, united with those talents which are adapted to the office of an ambassador of Christ, it is incumbent on their possessor, without delay, to devote himself to the work of the ministry. There are only two questions which need be asked concerning any youth on this subject. "Has he a heart for the work? And has he those native faculties, which are susceptible of the requisite cultivation?" If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, I hesitate not to say, that in the present state of the churchy it is his duty to seek the ministry. Young men of this College! have none of you any desire to serve your fellow men, and to serve Christ, in this exalted office? You have but one short life to live in this world; and you must, in a very little time, decide how you will spend that life. "We confidently pronounce, that it can be spent in no manner so desirable, so noble, so godlike, as in the gospel ministry. If then, you love the Lord Jesus Christ, come—we affectionately invite you to come, and take part with us in the ministry of the grace of God. The example of Christ invites you to come; the tears of bereaved Churches, who can find none to break unto them the bread of life, entreat you to come; the miseries of wandering souls, who find none to lead them to heaven, plead with you to come. Come, then, and take part with us in the labours and rewards of the ministry of reconciliation!*"

6. Finally, if the representation which has been given be correct, then the Church at large ought to consider it as equally their privilege and their duty to support this Seminary. If one may judge by the language and the conduct of the generality of our church-members, they seem to consider all regard to institutions of this kind, as the province of ministers only. They readily grant, that ministers ought to be prompt and willing, to give their time, their labours, and, where they have any, their substance, for this end; but for themselves, they pray to be excused. They either contribute nothing toward the object; or contribute in the most reluctant and sparing manner, as if they were bestowing a favour, which they have a perfect right to withhold. My dear brethren, it is difficult to express in adequate terms either the sin or the folly of such conduct. Seminaries of this kind are to be founded and supported by the church, as such. It is the church that is bound to take order on the subject. It is the church that is responsible for their establishment and maintenance.

And if any of her members, or adherents, when called upon, will not contribute their just portion of aid for this purpose, the Head of the church will require it at their hands. Professing christians! look upon the alarming necessities of the church; upon destitute frontier settlements; upon several hundred vacant congregations, earnestly desiring spiritual teachers, but unable to obtain them. Look upon the growing difficulty, with which the most eligible and attractive situations in the church are supplied; and then say whether those who still remain idle can be innocent? Innocent! Their guilt will be greater and more dreadful than can be described. Come, then, brethren, humbled by the past, and animated by the future, rouse from your lethargy, and begin to act in earnest! Your master requires it of you! The aspect of the times requires it of you! The cries of the neglected and the perishing require it of you! Your own privileges and blessings require it of you! Yes, ye who call yourselves Christians! If you love the church to which you profess to belong: if you possess a single spark of the spirit of allegiance to her Divine Head and Lord; nay, if you desire not a famine of the word of life; if you desire not the heaviest spiritual judgments to rest upon you, then come forward, and act, as well as speak, like friends of the Redeemer's kingdom. Come forward, and give your influence, your substance, and your prayers, for the help of the Lord against the mighty.*

Amen!

AN

INAUGURAL DISCOURSE,

delivered in the

church at princeton, new jersey,

in the presence of the

directors of the theological seminary,

on

the 12th of august, 1812

by

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

AN

INAUGURAL DISCOURSE,

&c.

Highly respected and venerable Directors of the Theological School; and other learned and respectable Auditors, convened on the present so lemn occasion! The institution and commencement of a Theological Seminary, under the patronage and direction of the General Assembly of our church, ought to be a subject of mutual congratulation to all its members. But it cannot be concealed, that the same causes which have operated to render such an institution urgently necessary, have also opposed serious obstacles in the way of carrying it into effect. The deficiency, among us, of that kind and extent of learning requisite to confer dignity and respect, as

well as usefulness, on the professor's chair, is too obvious to require remark. But every important institution must have its infancy and growth, before it can arrive at maturity; and however long we might have deferred this undertaking, the same difficulties would probably have met us at its commencement, which we are now obliged to encounter. The sentiments and emotions by which my own mind is agitated, in consequence of the new and important station in which I find myself placed by the choice of my brethren, and especially, the deep sense which I entertain of my insufficiency for the work, I shall not attempt to express. If the design be of God, he will prosper the undertaking, notwithstanding the weakness of the instruments employed in carrying it on; and will crown our feeble efforts with success. On Him therefore may our hope and confidence be firmly fixed; and may 'his will be done on earth as in heaven!' I have selected, as the subject of the discourse now required of me, the words of our Lord, recorded in John 5:39 :

■ρευν■τε τ■ς γραφ■ς. Search the Scriptures. The verb here used, signifies, to search with diligence and attention. Its literal meaning appears to be, to pursue any one, by tracing his footsteps. Thus it is employed by Homer to express the lion's* pursuit of the man who had robbed him of his whelps, by his footsteps; and the dog's† pursuit of his game, by his track. The precise meaning of the word, therefore, both in its literal and figurative application, is expressed by the English word, investigate. It may be read, either in the indicative, or in the imperative mood. Doctor Campbell, in his new translation of the Gospels, prefers the former, and renders the passage, "Ye do search the Scriptures;" but Wetstein and Parkhurst consider it to be in the imperative, agreeably to our version: and certainly this rendering gives more point and force to the sentence, "search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have life, but they are they which testify of me."

Although the word, γραφ■ς, scriptures, is of such general import, as to include writings of any kind; yet there can be no doubt but what the Scriptures of the Old Testament were here intended. This phrase is used in the New Testament, as we use the word Bible, which, though literally signifying any book, yet is now appropriated to designate the volume of inspiration. The history of the origin of alphabetical writing is involved in considerable obscurity. The first notice which we find of the existence of such an art, is contained in the command given to Moses, in the 17 of Exodus, to write a certain transaction in a book*: and soon afterwards, we read that the law was written by the finger of Jehovah, on the two tables of testimony†. To me, it appears very probable, therefore, that it was about this time a subject of revelation to Moses. As a precise pattern of the tabernacle was shown to him. in the mount, and as certain persons were inspired with wisdom to fit them for the execution of that work, why may we not suppose that this wonderful art, so necessary for recording the revelations received from God, for the use of posterity, was also made known to Moses? One thing is certain; that all the alphabets of the western portion of the globe, and probably those of the eastern also, have had a common origin: and we have no authentic account of the invention of an alphabet by any people; so that whenever this art of writing may have had its origin, I am persuaded it was no invention of man, but a revelation from God. With respect to the antiquity of these writings, I know of none which can bear any competition with the Pentateuch. Some, indeed, have supposed, that some part of the Vedas of the Brahmins, was written before the books of Moses; but there is no historical evidence on which we can depend in support of this opinion. And we are too well acquainted with the fraudulent pretensions of the Hindoos to antiquity, to place any confidence in their assertions. The ultimate opinion of that incomparable scholar, Sir William Jones, on this subject, was, that the writings of Moses were the oldest of any

in the world*: and a more competent and impartial judge could not easily be found. As the words of the text are indefinite, they should be considered as imposing an obligation on all sorts of persons, according to their ability and opportunity, to search the scriptures. We cannot help therefore being struck with the impiety, as well as absurdity, of the practice of the Papists, in withholding the scriptures from the people. Will it be said, that when they misinterpret and pervert them, they should be taken away? But such was the conduct of the persons here addressed by Christ. They were so blinded by prejudice, that they could not perceive in the scriptures, that person, who was the principal subject of them. But does the divine Saviour forbid them the use of the scriptures, on this account? No; he enjoins it on them, to search them. To study them with more care, and with minds more free from prejudice.

Though the duty of searching the scriptures is common to all christians, yet there are some on whom it is more peculiarly incumbent. Teachers of religion, and candidates for the sacred office, are bound by an obligation of uncommon force to attend to this duty. In particular relation to such, I propose to consider the subject, in the sequel of this discourse. But before I proceed further, I would observe, that although the words of our Lord, in the text, refer to the Old Testament, (for at the time of their being spoken there were no other scriptures extant,) yet the reason of the command will apply with full force, to other inspired writings, as soon as they are promulgated. We shall therefore consider the scriptures of the New Testament, as well as the Old, embraced within the scope of our Saviour's command.

It will be important to bear in mind, that there are two distinct things comprehended in the object of this investigation. First, to ascertain that the scriptures contain the truths of God: and, secondly, to ascertain what these truths are.

Let us now suppose the two volumes containing the Old and New Testaments, the one in the original Hebrew, the other in the Greek, to be put into the hands of the theological student, accompanied with the command of Christ, search the scriptures. Investigate these volumes with diligence. What should be the first step in this investigation? Ought he not to be well satisfied of the identity of these books, with those which formerly existed? Here is a Hebrew volume; but does it contain the same writings to which our Saviour referred? And does this Greek volume comprehend the very books which were received as inspired in the Apostolic age? In this inquiry, the biblical student may obtain complete satisfaction. With respect to the canon of the Old Testament, one fact will be sufficient to remove all doubt. These books have been in the possession of both Jews and Christians, ever since the commencement of the gospel dispensation; and they now agree in acknowledging the same books to be canonical; which, considering the inveterate opposition subsisting between them, is a convincing evidence, that the canon of the Old Testament has undergone no change, since the introduction of Christianity. And that it had undergone none before that period, may be proved from this circumstance, that although, our Lord of ten upbraids the Jews with having perverted the scriptures, he never insinuates that they had altered or corrupted them. In confirmation of what has been said respecting the canon of the Old Testament, we might adduce the testimony of Josephus, and of the Christian Fathers; who not only agree with one another in their catalogue of the books of the Old Testament but with the canonical list which we now hold. The books called Apocrypha, were never received into the canon by the Jews, nor by the earlier Christian Fathers and councils, and have therefore no just claim to be considered as belonging to the Old Testament. With regard to

the New Testament, the evidence is equally convincing. The Christian Church was, in a short time, so widely extended, and embraced so many different languages and nations, that a universal agreement, in this whole body, through all the successive periods of the church, in acknowledging the same books to be canonical, must satisfy every impartial mind that our New Testament is the very same which was received and held sacred by the primitive church. To strengthen this conclusion, it may be added, that at a very early period, these books were translated into many different languages; several of which early translations, either in whole or in part, have come down to our times; and some of them have been preserved among Christians unknown to their brethren of other countries, for many centuries. In addition to this, it may be observed, that accurate lists of the books of the New Testament were made by early ecclesiastical writers, and also by general councils, which are still extant, and agree with our catalogue of canonical books. It deserves to be mentioned also, that the churches in every part of the world held copies of these scriptures, which they preserved with the utmost vigilance; and quotations were made from them, by all the fathers; so that a large portion of the New Testament might be collected from the works of the early ecclesiastical writers. Besides there are still extant manuscript copies of the whole, or a part of the New Testament, from twelve to fifteen hundred years old, which contain the same books that are comprehended in our printed volumes.

What has now been asserted, respecting the universal consent with which the books of the New Testament were received by the ancient church, in all its parts, must be admitted, with the exception of those few books, which have been termed, *Antilegomena*, because their divine authority was denied or disputed by some. Impartiality requires us also to state, that these books are not found in some of the oldest versions, as the Syriac, for instance; and therefore it must be admitted that the evidence for their canonical authority is not so complete, as of the rest, which were ever undisputed. At the same time, it ought to be observed, that the chief reason of doubting, was, because these books, for a while, were not so generally known to the churches: but as soon as they were accurately examined, and their evidence weighed, opposition to them ceased; and at no late period, they obtained an undisturbed place in the sacred canon. The theological student, having obtained satisfaction respecting the perfection of the canon of scripture, the next step in his investigation should relate to the integrity of the sacred text. For it is possible that the canon might be complete, and yet the text might be so corrupted and mutilated as to leave it uncertain what the original of these books might have been. It is of importance, therefore, to be able to prove, that the scriptures have suffered no material injury, from the fraud of designing men, or from the carelessness of transcribers. In the former part of the last century, this was a subject of warm altercation in the church. For whilst some maintained that the sacred text had not received the slightest injury from the ravages of time, others boldly asserted that it was greatly corrupted. The agitation of this question led to a more extensive and accurate examination and collation of manuscript codices than had been before made, and gave rise to that species of Biblical criticism, which has, within the last half century, assumed so conspicuous a place in Theological science. Distant countries were visited, the dark cells of cloisters and monasteries explored, and all important libraries ransacked, in search of copies of the scriptures. Learned men, with unparalleled diligence, employed their whole lives in the collation of manuscripts, and in noting every, even the smallest variation, in their readings. Their indefatigable labour and invincible perseverance in prosecuting this work, are truly astonishing. It has indeed, much the appearance of laborious trifling; but upon the whole, though not always so designed, has proved serviceable to

the cause of truth. For though the serious mind is at first astonished and confounded, upon being informed of the multitude of various readings, noted by Mills, Wetstein, and Griesbach, in the codices of the New Testament; and by Kennicot and De Rossi, in those of the Old; yet it is relieved, when on careful examination it appears that not more than one of a hundred of these, makes the slightest variation in the sense, and that the whole of them do not materially affect one important fact or doctrine. It is true, a few important texts, in our received copies, have by this critical process, been rendered suspicious; but this has been more than compensated by the certainty which has been stamped on the great body of scripture, by having been subjected to this severe scrutiny. For the text of our Bibles having passed this ordeal, may henceforth bid defiance to suspicion of its integrity. And with respect to the disputed texts referred to above, one thing should ever be kept in mind; that, granting that the evidence from the present view of ancient manuscripts, is against their genuineness, yet this may not be decisive. The learned Cave lays it down as a rule to direct us, in judging of the comparative excellence of the editions of the Fathers, "That the older the editions are, by so much the more faithful are they*." And assigns this reason for the rule, that the first editions were made from the best manuscripts, which were commonly lost or destroyed, when the edition was completed. And I see not why the same reason will not equally apply to the early editions of the scriptures. In fact, there is historical evidence, that the manuscripts used by cardinal Ximenes, in his Polyglott, have been destroyed, and they appear, from several circumstances, to have been both numerous and ancient: and I am persuaded also, notwithstanding what Wetstein and Michaelis have said to the contrary, that some of those used by Stephanas, in his editions of the New Testament, have also been lost. We cannot tell, therefore, what the evidence for these texts might have been to these learned editors. Certainly very strong, or they would not have inserted them. The next step in this investigation, would be, to ascertain, that these books are genuine; or were written by the persons whose names they bear; but as this appears to me to be substantially answered, by what has been already said, and by what will be added under the next article, I will not now make it a subject of particular discussion; but will proceed to inquire into the authenticity and inspiration of the scriptures. I join these two things together, because, although a book may be authentic without being inspired; yet if the Bible be authentic, it must have been given by inspiration, for the writers profess that they were inspired. The truth of this point may be established by several species of evidence, quite distinct from each other.

It may, in the first place, be demonstrated by proving the truth of the facts recorded in the scriptures. These facts, many of them, being obviously of a miraculous nature, if admitted to have existed, will indubitably prove, that those persons by whom they were performed, must have been sent and assisted of God: for, as the Jewish ruler rightly reasoned, "no man could do these things unless God were with him." Now the truth of these miracles may be established by testimony, like other ancient facts; and also by the history of them being so interwoven with other authentic history, that we cannot separate them: and especially, by that chain of events, depending on them, and reaching down to our own time, which has no other assignable origin but the existence of these miracles. For, to believe in the events which the history of the church presents to us, and yet deny the miracles of the gospel, would be as absurd, as believing that a chain which hung suspended before our eyes, had nothing to support it, because that support was out of sight. As to the witnesses of these facts, they are such, and deliver their testimony under such circumstances, and in such a manner, as to demand our assent. The impossibility of successfully impugning this

testimony, obliged the most insidious enemy of Christianity to resort to the principle, 'that no testimony is sufficient to confirm a miracle:' but the absurdity of this position, has been fully demonstrated by Campbell, Vince, and others, and it has also been shown by an ingenious writer*, that the gospel was true, even upon this author's own principles, because its falsehood would involve a greater miracle than any recorded in it. The next species of evidence in support of the proposition under consideration, is derived from prophecy. If the Scriptures contain predictions of events which no human sagacity could have foreseen; if they have foretold events the most improbable, which have occurred in exact conformity with the prediction; and if they have described a person combining in his character and life, traits and events apparently incompatible and inconsistent; and yet a person has appeared answering literally to this description, then certainly the writers of these predictions were inspired. But such is the fact. 'This sure word of prophecy' is, indeed, like 'a light that shineth in a dark place;' but it is also like the light of the dawn which 'shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Other evidence may lose something of its force by the lapse of time, but this grows brighter and stronger with every revolving year; for the scope of prophecy comprehends all ages; and new events are continually occurring which had been long foretold by the oracles of God. The third species of evidence for the authenticity and inspiration of the scriptures, arises out of their contents. The extraordinary, and superlatively excellent nature of the Christian religion, proves that it could not have been the production of impostors, nor of unassisted fishermen; nor indeed, of any description of uninspired men. Its doctrines exhibit that very information, which is necessary to satisfy the anxious inquiries of man, conscious of his guilt and desirous of salvation. Its precepts are so sublimely excellent, so marked with sanctity and benevolence; and at the same time so perfectly adapted to human nature and human circumstances, that the brightest wit can detect no flaw, nor suggest any improvement. "The heavens declare the glory of God;" and so does the holy page of Scripture. It bears the stamp of divinity in its face; and breathes a spirit which could originate no where else but in heaven. Another evidence, but connected with the last, is the blessed tendency and holy efficacy of the gospel to reform the hearts and lives of men, and to produce peace and joy in the mind and conscience; which effects never could result from any false religion. The success of the gospel, in its commencement, is also an important consideration. When we contemplate the resistance which was to be overcome, both external, from religious and civil establishments, and internal, from the inveterate prejudices and vices of men; and then take into view the means by which all these obstacles were surmounted, we cannot refuse to admit that the power of the Almighty accompanied them. The beneficial effects of Christianity on those nations which have received it, is a striking fact, and furnishes a strong argument in favour of the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures. Under their benign influence, war has become less sanguinary and ferocious; justice has been more equally distributed; the poor have been more generally instructed, and their wants supplied; asylums have been provided for the unfortunate and distressed; the female character has been appreciated and exalted to its proper standard in society; the matrimonial bond has been held more sacred; and polygamy, the bane of domestic happiness, discountenanced. In short, the whole fabric of society has been meliorated; and real civilization promoted by Christianity, wherever it has been received: and the above mentioned effects have borne an exact proportion to the purity in which this holy religion was preserved, and the degree of conformity to its precepts which has existed among any people. The next question which should engage the attention of the theological student, is, for what purpose were the Scriptures given? In answer to this, all are ready

to agree, that they were intended to be a guide to man in matters of religion; a rule of faith and practice. But here several important questions occur. Are the scriptures the only rule? Are they a sufficient rule? Are they an authoritative rule? and were they only designed to guide us in matters of religion? Our first controversy is with the Romanists, who maintain that tradition is also a rule of faith; and that the Scriptures without tradition are neither a sufficient nor intelligible rule. But this opinion takes away all that fixedness and certainty, which a written revelation was intended and calculated to give to religion. Wherein consists the advantage of having a part of the will of God committed to writing, if the interpretation of this depends on the uncertain and varying light of oral tradition? We might as well have nothing but tradition, as be under the necessity of resorting to this uncertain guide to lead us to the true meaning of the written word. But had it been intended to make this the channel of communicating the divine will to posterity, some method would have been devised, to preserve the stream of tradition pure. No such method has been made known. On the contrary, the Scriptures predict a general and awful apostacy in the church. It could not be otherwise, but that during this period, tradition would become a corrupt channel of information. This apostacy has taken place; and the stream of tradition has, in fact, become so muddy, and so swelled with foreign accessions, from every quarter, that Christianity, viewed through this medium, exhibits the appearance of a deformed and monstrous mass of superstition. But, if we should admit the principle, that the constant tradition of the church should be our guide, where shall we go to look for it? To the Greek, to the Latin, or to the Syriac church? To the 4th, 9th, or 14th, century? For there is no uniformity; not even in the infallible Catholic Church. Every one in the least acquainted with ecclesiastical history, must know, that not only has the practice varied, at different times, in very important matters; but also the Bulls of Popes, and Decrees and Canons of Councils, have often been in perfect collision with one another: and, what is worst of all, have often been in direct hostility with the word of God. For the same thing has happened to tradition in the Christian, as formerly in the Jewish church. 'It hath made the word of God of none effect,' 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' But whilst we reject tradition as a rule of truth, we do not deny the utility of having recourse to the early practice of the church, for the illustration of Scripture, where there is any doubt respecting apostolic practice or institution.

There are two other opinions, by which the sufficiency and authority of the Scriptures, as a rule of faith and practice, are invalidated. These, though held by persons erring on opposite extremes, agree in derogating from the respect due to the Scriptures. The first is, the opinion of those who will not believe any thing, though contained in Scripture, which does not correspond with their own reason. If, for instance a thousand passages of Scripture could be adduced, explicitly teaching the doctrine of the Trinity, of original sin, of efficacious grace of vicarious sufferings, or eternal punishments, they would not admit them, because they have determined all these to be contrary to reason; and therefore the scriptures must be so interpreted, as to exclude all such doctrines; and the texts which support them, must be tortured by the critical art, or perverted by the wiles of sophistry, until they are silent, or speak a different language. Now, the only mystery in the religion of these sons of reason, is that they should want a revelation at all. Certainly it would be more consistent to reject Christianity wholly, than whilst professing to receive it in the general, to deny almost all the particular doctrines of which the general system is composed. For my own part, I cannot consider Socinianism in any Other light than Deism masked. At any rate, they are nearly related. If that has a little stronger faith, this has the advantage on the score of consistency. The other opinion referred to, is that of fanatics in general, who, whilst they confess that the scriptures

are divinely inspired, imagine that they are possessed of the same inspiration. And some, in our own times, have proceeded so far, as to boast of revelations, by which the Scriptures are entirely superseded as a rule of faith and practice*. Now, the difference between these persons, and the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures, consists in two things. First, the inspired writers could give some external evidence, by miracle or prophecy, to prove their pretensions; but enthusiasts can furnish no such evidence: and secondly, the productions of the prophets and apostles, were worthy of God, and bore his impress; but the discourses of these men, except what they repeat from Scripture, are wholly unworthy their boasted origin, and more resemble the dreams of the sick, or the ravings of the insane, than the 'words of truth and soberness.'

But, on the other hand, there have been some who believed, that the scriptures not only furnish a rule to guide us in our religion, but a complete system of philosophy; that the true theory of the universe is revealed in the first chapters of Genesis; and that there is an intimate connexion betwixt the natural and spiritual world. The one containing a sort of emblematical representation of the other; so that even the high mystery of the Trinity is supposed to be exhibited by the material fluid, which pervades the universe, in its different conditions, of fire, light, and air. John Hutchinson, Esq. of England, took the lead in propagating this system, and has been followed by some men of great name and great worth. Jones, Horne, Parkhurst, Spearman, and Bates, would be no discredit to any cause. But, although, we acknowledge, that there is something in this theory which is calculated to prepossess the pious mind in its favour; yet it is too deeply enveloped in clouds and darkness to admit of its becoming generally prevalent. And if what these learned men suppose, had been the object of revelation, no doubt, some more certain clue would have been given to assist us to ascertain the mind of the Spirit, than the obscure, though learned, criticisms of Hutchinson. The next question which occurs, in the course of this investigation, is very important. How should the Scriptures be interpreted, in order that we may arrive at their true and full meaning? The obvious answer would be, by attending to the grammatical and literal sense of the words employed, to the force and significance of the figures and allusions used, and to the idiom of the languages in which they are written. But here we are met by a very important and embarrassing question. Is the literal meaning of Scripture, always, or generally, the principal and ultimate sense; or, are we to suppose that under this, there is a recondite, spiritual meaning contained? Most of the Fathers considered the Scriptures to contain a double sense; the one literal, the other mystical or allegorical; and they regarded the first very little except in relation to the second. The Romanists maintain an opinion very similar; but the mystical sense they divide in to several parts. And among Protestants, there are many who discover a strong predilection for this mode of interpretation. But this principle, admitted without limitation or qualification, has a direct tendency to overthrow all certainty in divine revelation. For, as there is no certain key to this mystical or spiritual meaning, every man makes it out according to the liveliness of his own imagination: and weak men by their fanciful expositions greatly degrade the dignity and mar the beauty of revealed truth. The followers of Baron Swedenbory, not contented with two, maintain that the Scriptures contain three senses, the celestial, spiritual, and natural, which are connected by correspondences. This doctrine of correspondences, is, according to them, the only key to open the true meaning of Scripture; which was, for many ages, lost, but recently was made known to this extraordinary nobleman. Notwithstanding the extravagance of this system, it has charms for some persons, and these not of the illiterate vulgar. It is a sort of refined mysticism, which corresponds with the peculiar turn of some minds, that are fond of novelty, and disdain to walk in

the old beaten track. Reasoning or argument, with those who profess to hold familiar intercourse with angels, would, I presume, be superfluous. We shall leave them therefore to enjoy their visions of a terrestrial heaven, without interruption, whilst we proceed to observe, That among the orthodox themselves, there is no small difference of opinion respecting the extent which may be given to the meaning of scripture. The celebrated Cocceius laid it down as a rule, that scripture should be considered as signifying all that it could be made to signify. The whole of the Old Testament, in his opinion, was either typical or prophetic of Messiah and his kingdom. Here, as in a glass, he supposed the future destinies of the church might be viewed. The learned Grotius verged to the very opposite extreme, in his ideas of the interpretation of scripture. This gave rise to a saying which became proverbial, respecting these two great men; and which is highly creditable to the piety of the former; "Grotium nusquam in sacris literis invenire Christum, Cocceium ubique." 'That Grotius could find Christ no where in the Bible, Cocceius every where.' This rule of Cocceius, however, is liable to great abuse; and as Limborch justly observes, 'is calculated to make of the Scriptures a mere Lesbian rule, or nose of wax, which may be bent into any shape; and seems to be no other than the old allegorical method of interpretation, introduced under a new name.'

But, on the other hand, it is certain, that many of the persons, occurrences, and ceremonies, of the Old Testament, are typical; and some things are thus interpreted in the New Testament, which we never should have conjectured to possess any meaning beyond the literal, unless we had been otherwise taught by inspiration. Besides, all judicious commentators are forced to admit, that many of the prophecies have a primary and secondary reference, even the most important of those which relate to Messiah, are of this description. Those who insist that one meaning and no more belongs to every text, are greatly at a loss how to reconcile with their opinion, the quotations made from the Old Testament in the New, where they are expressly said to be fulfilled, though certainly, many of them, not in their primary and literal sense. Under the guidance of sound sense and just criticism, we should pursue a middle course between these two extremes. But although we cannot admit the rule of Cocceius in all its latitude, nor go the whole way with his followers; yet it is but justice to acknowledge, that some of them deserve to be ranked with the first expositors and theologians who have appeared in the church. As long as truth, piety, and solid learning, shall be held in esteem, the names, of Witsius, Vitringa, Burman, Van Til, and Braunius, will be dear to the theological student.

Upon the whole, our conclusion respecting this matter, is, that every particular passage of scripture should be interpreted according to the peculiar circumstances of the case: the literal should be considered as the true and only meaning, unless some remoter sense be indicated by some peculiar aptitude, correspondence, or fitness, in the words and ideas of the text; or unless it be referred to something else in the Scriptures themselves. Good sense and the analogy of faith, are the guides which we should follow in interpreting the Bible.

We come now to consider the helps which the biblical student needs, to enable him to search the scriptures with success. The volumes which we have already supposed to be put into his hands, are not written in our vernacular tongue. We have, it is true, an excellent translation of the scriptures; but this was not made by inspiration, and cannot therefore possess the same authority and infallibility, with the originals. We admit the lawfulness and utility of translations for the use of the people; but nothing can be more evident, than that the expounder of scripture should be well acquainted with the very 'words by which the Holy Ghost teacheth' us the will of God. The

knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages, therefore, is a necessary pre-requisite to the successful study of the scriptures. I think I may venture to assert, that this single acquisition will be of more importance to the theological student, than all the commentaries which have ever been written. By this means, he will be able to see with his own eyes; and will be qualified to judge for himself.

Every person who has had experience, will acknowledge, that even in reading the plainest texts, there is a satisfaction and advantage to be derived from the original, which cannot easily be explained. It becomes therefore a duty incumbent on all who are candidates for the sacred office, or invested with it, to endeavour to become acquainted with the original Scriptures. But in all writings, and especially such as contain historical facts, there are frequent allusions to the existing customs of the country, and to the prevailing opinions of the people, where the book was written. The same is found to be the case with the scriptures. Many passages would be quite unintelligible, without some acquaintance with Jewish antiquities. The customs and manners of that people should, therefore, be studied with particular attention. And as scriptural history frequently refers to the condition, character, and transactions of contemporaneous nations, it is of importance to be well acquainted with their history, as delivered to us by profane authors. There is, however, a more important reason why the Biblical student should be well versed in history, ancient and modern; and that is, because there he must look for the accomplishment of many important prophecies. Even the fulfilment of the remarkable prediction of Christ, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, is not recorded in scripture, but must be sought in the Jewish and Roman historians.

Chronology and geography are also requisite helps, to enable us to understand many parts of scripture. These have been called the eyes of history; and they are not more so of civil, than sacred history.

Even modern travels have been turned, by some learned men, to a very important account, in explaining the scriptures. For oriental customs and modes of living, have not been subject to the same capricious changes, which have prevailed in the western nations. And therefore, by observing carefully what oriental customs are, at this day, a very probable opinion may be formed, of what they were two thousand years ago. This observation holds good, particularly, in relation to such Eastern nations as have never been conquered, nor incorporated with any other people; as the Arabs, for instance.

Indeed, to speak the truth, there is scarcely any science or branch of knowledge, which may not be made subservient to theology. Natural history, chemistry, and geology, have sometimes been of important service, in assisting the Biblical student to solve difficulties contained in scripture; or in enabling him to repel the assaults of adversaries, which were made under cover of these sciences. A general acquaintance with the whole circle of science is of more consequence to the Theologian, than at first sight appears. Not to mention the intimate connexion which subsists between all the parts of truth, in consequence of which important light may often be collected from the remotest quarters; it may be observed, that the state of learning in the world requires the advocate of the Bible, to attend to many things which may not in themselves be absolutely necessary. He must maintain his standing as a man of learning. He must be able to converse on the various topics of learning with other literary men; otherwise the due respect will not be paid to him; and his sacred office may suffer contempt, in consequence of his appearing to be ignorant of

what it is expected all learned men should be acquainted with. But next to the knowledge of the original languages, an acquaintance with early translations is most important. The Septuagint, the Chaldaic paraphrase, the Syriac, and the Vulgate, deserve to be particularly mentioned. The Septuagint is an invaluable treasure to the student of sacred literature. Most of the Fathers, and several learned moderns, believed it to have been made by inspiration; and others, as well as these, have preferred it to the Hebrew original. But this is certainly attributing too much to it. The fabulous account of the miraculous manner in which it was executed, given by Aristeas, which misled the fathers, is now generally exploded; and this was the principal ground on which the opinion of its inspiration rested. It has been pleaded also, that this version was constantly quoted by Christ and his Apostles; but our Lord himself could not have used it, as he spoke and conversed not in the Greek, but the Syriac language. And although it is true, that the Apostles and Evangelists commonly quote from it, yet not uniformly. Sometimes they differ from it, and give a better translation of the original. It has also been plausibly stated, that the manuscripts from which this version was made, must have been much more perfect than any, now extant, after the lapse of two thousand years. But it ought to be remembered, that the copies of the translation have been as liable to the injuries of time, as those of the original: and indeed much more so; for providence raised up a set of men, who watched over the Hebrew text with unceasing and incomparable vigilance. The Masorites devoted their lives to this object; and to prevent all possibility of corruption or alteration, they numbered not only the words, but the letters, of every book in the Bible. No such means were employed for the preservation of the text of the Lxx; and accordingly the various readings in the copies of this version, are far more numerous and important than those of the Hebrew original. But whilst we reject the high claims for this version, which go to place it on a level with, or give it the preference to, the original; we willingly acknowledge its importance; and what is remarkable, is, its utility is greater in relation to the New Testament, than the Old; for it is written in that very dialect of the Greek language, in which the books of the New Testament are written; that is, the words are Greek, but the idiom Hebrew. It is therefore of more importance in assisting us to understand the language of the New Testament, than all other Greek authors beside. This version has, by the consent of all, been considered the oldest extant; but a recent writer in *The Christian Observer**, asserts that the Syriac translation of the Old Testament, contains internal marks of an antiquity superior to that of the Septuagint. The evidence of the fact, if it be so, must be internal; for I believe it is certain, that there is no external testimony which will support this assertion. The Chaldaic paraphrase has commonly been referred to the time of Christ's advent, or to a period a little earlier; but the above-mentioned writer asserts that it is nearly as old as the time of Ezra. Without stopping to inquire into the validity of this opinion, I would observe, that these paraphrases are of no small importance to the interpreter of scripture, as they serve to show how the Jewish doctors understood certain passages prior to the birth of Christ; and clearly prove, that they referred to the expected Messiah, all or most of those prophecies, which we apply to Christ. The Syriac version of the New Testament is very valuable, on account of its antiquity; and has some shadow of claim to the authority of an original; for it is written in the same, or very nearly the same language, which our Lord used when he delivered his sermons and instructions to the people; and may therefore be supposed to contain, in many instances, the identical words which he uttered. In the opinion of some, it was made at the close of the Apostolic age, or at furthest some time in the second century: but others refer it to the third, fourth, or even the fifth, century. However these things may be, it cannot be doubted, but that much advantage

may be derived from this version in searching the scriptures; and accordingly much use has been made of it by the learned, of late, in solving difficulties and elucidating obscure passages, which occur in the New Testament: and being written in a language possessing a near affinity with the Hebrew, it is easily accessible to the Hebrew scholar. The Vulgate, is commonly supposed to have been made by Jerome, and to have succeeded to older latin versions. It was, for many ages, the only medium through which the revelation contained in holy Scripture, was viewed in the western part of the church. The Romanists, considering that this version could be made to favour their pretensions and corruptions, more than the original, bent all their force to the support of its authority; whilst at the same time, they let slip no opportunity of disparaging the Hebrew text. At length they proceeded so far as to decree, in the Council of Trent, 'that it should be reckoned as the authentic standard by which all disputations, preachings, and expositions, should be judged; and that no person should dare to reject its authority on any pretext whatever.' The more liberal Catholics themselves, are ashamed of the unblushing effrontery of this decree; and what slender foundation there was for so high a claim, may be conjectured from this circumstance, that a learned man* of their own communion declares, that he had himself noted eighty thousand errors in this version. But, nevertheless, it may be useful in many ways to the Biblical student, and being written in Latin, is accessible to every scholar. And here I will take occasion to remark, the great importance of a familiar acquaintance with the Latin language, to the Theologian. Although no part of scripture is written in that language, yet it is almost essentially necessary to pass through this vestibule, in order to arrive at the knowledge of any other ancient language; most valuable grammars and dictionaries being written in Latin: and almost all Theological works, not designed for the immediate use of the people, were composed in this language, prior to the middle of the last century, a very small portion of which have been translated into English. The course of theological study would indeed be very much circumscribed, if we were destitute of this key to unlock its rich treasures. It would lead me into a discussion too long, to consider, what assistance may be derived from the writings of the Fathers; what from the Schoolmen; what from the Reformers; and what from more modern commentators and critics, in the interpretation of the scriptures. The time allotted for this discourse, would be entirely insufficient to do justice to this subject. I shall therefore leave it untouched, and proceed to mention, A help, which, though put in the last place, in this discourse, is of more real importance than all the rest; and that is, the illumination and assistance of the Holy Spirit. Illumination differs from inspiration in this respect; that whereas by the latter we are made acquainted with truths before unrevealed, or unknown, by the former we are enabled to discern the beauty and real nature of the truths contained in a revelation already made. It is obvious, that in the study of divine truth, much depends on the temper and condition of the student's mind. A proud and self-sufficient person, however endowed with acuteness of intellect, and furnished with stores of literature, is continually prone to fall into pernicious error; whilst the humble man occupies a station from which truth may be viewed to advantage. Prejudice, proceeding from education or passion, blinds the mind, and warps the judgment; but the sincere and ardent love of truth disposes us to view the whole evidence, and impartially to weigh the arguments on both sides of any question. As much therefore depends upon, preserving our own minds in a proper state, as upon the diligent use of external means of information. The conclusion from these premises is, that the student of sacred literature should be possessed of sincere and ardent piety. He should be a man 'taught of God,' conscious of his own insufficiency, but confident of the help of the Almighty. Indeed, when we consider the weakness of

the human intellect, and the various prejudices and false impressions to which it is constantly liable, we must be convinced, that without divine assistance, there is little hope of arriving at the knowledge of truth, or preserving it when acquired. He, who would understand the Scriptures, therefore, ought not to 'lean to his own understanding' but by continual and earnest prayer, should look unto the 'Father of lights,' from whom proceedeth every good and every perfect gift; and who hath promised to give wisdom to those who lack it, and ask for it.

There is no person who needs more to be in the constant exercise of prayer, than the Theological student: not only at stated periods, but continually, in the midst of his studies, his heart should be raised to heaven for help and direction. A defect here, it is to be feared, is one principal reason why so much time and labour are often employed in theological studies with so little profit to the church. That knowledge which puffeth up is acquired; but charity, which edifieth, is neglected. When the serious mind falls into doubt respecting divine truths, the remedy is not always reasoning and argument, but divine illumination. The mind may be in such a state, that it is rather perplexed, than relieved, by mere human reasoning; but at such times a lively impression made by the Spirit of truth, banishes all doubt and hesitation; and then, the same texts, or arguments, which were before unavailing to our conviction and satisfaction exhibit the truth in a light as clear as demonstration. This may appear to some to savour of enthusiasm. Be it so. It is, however, an enthusiasm essential to the very nature of our holy religion, without which it would be a mere dry system of speculation, of ethics and ceremonies. But this divine illumination is its life, its soul, its essence. It is true, this influence is not peculiar to the theologian. Every sincere christian, in his measure, partakes of this 'anointing,' by which he is taught to know all things; but the teacher of religion needs a double portion of this spirit. How often does the minister of the gospel labour and toil with all his might, without producing any thing of importance, for edification! But if he receive the aid of the Spirit, his text is opened and illustrated, with any painful exertion of his own. He is conscious, indeed, that he is a mere recipient. The train of thought which occupies his mind, appears to originate in some occult cause, which he cannot trace. And happy would it be for preachers, happy for their hearers, if there were more dependence on divine assistance, not only in the composition, but in the delivery of sermons! When God shall appear in his glory, to build up Jerusalem, he will raise up, I have no doubt, a race of preachers, who shall partake of tins heavenly gift, in a much higher degree than has heretofore been common. He will bring forward to the sacred office, men possessing boldness, founded on their reliance upon divine assistance; clearness, proceeding from divine illumination; and that unction which flows from the sweet and lively experience of the truth delivered, in the heart of the preacher. The solicitous, and often unsuccessful, effort to rise to some artificial standard of oratory, shall then yield to nobler motives; and the preacher, like Paul, shall be willing to make a sacrifice of his own reputation for learning, and refinement, at the foot of the cross: and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord. Gospel simplicity and sincerity, shall then be preferred by the Man of God, to all the soaring flights of eloquence, and to all the splendid trappings and tinsel of human science. May it please the Lord of the vineyard speedily to send forth many such labourers into his harvest; for the harvest is great, and the labourers are few!

I will now bring this discourse to a conclusion, by offering some motives to excite the Theological student to diligence in the perusal of the sacred scriptures. A book has a claim upon our time and study, on account of the authority by which it comes recommended, the excellency of the matter

comprehended in it, and the interest which we have involved in the knowledge of its contents. On all these accounts the Bible has the highest possible claim on our attention. It comes to us, as we have proved, authenticated as the word of God; stamped as it were with the signature of heaven; and recommended to our diligent perusal by the Lord Jesus Christ. The matter which it contains, is, like its origin, divine: truth, pure, glorious and all important truth, constitutes the subject of this Book. The saying ascribed to Mr. Locke, when he took leave of a beloved relation, shortly before his end, was worthy of that profound genius; "Study," said he, "the Sacred Scriptures; they have God for their author, truth without mixture of error for their matter, and eternal life for their end." If we should take the lowest view of the subject, and form our opinion of the scriptures by the same rules by which we judge of human compositions, they will be found to transcend the highest efforts of human genius, as far as the heavens are above the earth. Hear on this subject, the decision of a scholar, in whom learning and taste in their highest perfection were combined; "I have regularly and attentively read these holy scriptures, and am of opinion that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity and beauty, purer morality, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed.*" But the excellency of the Scriptures cannot be appreciated by the rules of human criticism. As well might we think of judging of the proportions of the celestial arch, or the location of the stars in the vast expanse, by the rules of architecture. The word of God, like his works, is on a plan too vast, too sublime, too profound, to be measured by the feeble intellect of man.

Fully to explain how worthy the scriptures are of our attention, on account of the matter comprehended in them, would require us to exhibit all the truths which they contain; but as this cannot be done in one, or a few discourses, I will now content myself with mentioning a few leading points on which the scriptures furnish as with information of the most important kind. In the first place, then, it is here, and here alone, that we can learn the true character of God. The indistinct outline, which may be traced in the works of creation, is here filled up. The knowledge of God, which could be derived from a view of his works, would not be sufficient for man even in a state of innocence; and much less so when he is fallen into sin. None have ever been able to form just conceptions of the Deity from the light of nature alone. A revelation was absolutely necessary to teach man what God is; and the Bible contains all the information which we need on this subject. Here the divine glory is revealed. The moral attributes of Deity, especially, are represented in the clearest, strongest light. Truths respecting the divine nature, are here revealed, concerning which, reason and philosophy could never have formed a conjecture. The glorious and mysterious doctrine of a Trinity in unity, is taught from the beginning to the end of the Bible; a doctrine offensive to the pride of man, but one which will afford subject for profound contemplation through eternity. From the scriptures we learn, not only that God is holy, just, merciful, and faithful; but we behold these attributes harmonizing in a work which, according to all the views that finite wisdom could have taken of it, must have placed them in a state of complete variance; that is, in the justification and salvation of a sinner. In the redemption of Christ these divine perfections not only appear harmonious; 'mercy and truth having met together, find righteousness and peace having kissed each other;' but in the cross, are exhibited with a lustre and glory, which, according to our conceptions, could not have been given to them, in any other circumstances. If we would know the only true God, then, we must 'search the Scriptures'. In the next place, we obtain from the Bible a satisfactory account of the origin of evil, natural and moral. Not, indeed, an explanation

of the reason why it was permitted; but such an account of its introduction, as is perfectly consistent with the honour and purity of the divine government. We here learn that God created man 'in a state of innocency, with freedom and power to will and do that which was well pleasing to himself, but yet mutable, so that he might fall from it.' This liberty was abused by man: sin therefore owes its origin to the creature, who is wholly chargeable with its blame; although it did not take place without the knowledge, nor contrary to the purpose, of the infinite God. The first man being the root of all his posterity, and being appointed to act for them as well as for himself, they are involved with him in all the consequences of his fall; for 'they sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. All the streams of sin and misery in the world, flow from this original fountain. And so deep and dreadful is this fall of man, that he is utterly unable to recover himself from the guilt and depravity into which he is by nature sunk. The last mentioned article of information would be only calculated to plunge us into the depths of misery and despair, were it not, that the scriptures teach us the consoling doctrine of redemption. Indeed, the whole Bible may be considered as a history of Redemption. Here we can trace the wondrous plan up to its origin, in the eternal counsels of peace. Here we read of the early developement of this plan, after the fall, in paradise. The incarnation and victory of the glorious Redeemer was clearly intimated in the promise, 'that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.' To this object, the faith of the pious was directed, by every new revelation and institution. Prophets, in long succession, with lips touched with hallowed fire, described and predicted Immanuel. Although their prophecies are often expressed in dark symbolical language, yet sometimes, from the midst of this darkness, there are vivid coruscations of light, which exhibit the promised Messiah as visibly, as if he had already come. At length the fulness of time arrived, and "God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." "God was now manifest in the flesh." And He "who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." The redemption of the church by the blood of the Son of God, is a subject on which angels look with wonder; and it is a subject, which, through eternity, will furnish a theme for the songs of the redeemed of the Lord. But the scriptures give us information, not only of the work of the Redeemer in procuring for us an "everlasting righteousness;" but also of the work of the Spirit, in uniting the redeemed soul to Jesus Christ; in regenerating, sanctifying, supporting, guiding, and comforting it; until it is 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.'

Another important article of information which we find in the Scriptures of truth, is a clear expression of the will of God, in relation to the duty of man. There are, it is true, traces of the law of God still remaining on the heart of every man; but these are far from being sufficient to show him the full extent, and the spiritual nature, of the duties required of him. And what might be known from honestly inquiring of our own consciences, respecting our duty, is often missed through the influence of false principles, instilled into the mind by a defective education, and by customs become universally prevalent, through the corruption of human nature. But we need be no longer at a loss about the law of God. He condescended to publish it, with his own voice, in the hearing of all Israel; and to write it with his own finger, on tables of stone. To explain this law, we have many comments from inspired men; but especially we have the lucid exposition of the Law-giver himself; and, what is more important, we behold it fully illustrated and exemplified, in the obedience which

he, in our nature, and for our sakes, rendered to it; so that, if we now wish to know our duty, we have only to contemplate the character of Jesus Christ. If we wish to do it, we have only to walk in his foot-steps.

Finally, the scriptures contain a distinct and full revelation of futurity, as far as it is necessary for us to know what is to be hereafter. In them, "life and immortality are brought to light." Full assurance is given, by the testimony of one who cannot lie, that 'an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory' is reserved for the people of God in another world. In the New Testament, we are made familiar with heaven, by the frequency with which it is mentioned and described. The existence of a future world is no longer left to be collected by uncertain reasoning, and probable conjecture. It is now a matter of testimony. Faith has a firm ground on which to rest; for this truth is linked with every fact and doctrine of the gospel; is seen in every promise and threatening under the new dispensation. But the scriptures reveal not only a heaven of glory, but a hell of horror; a dark and "bottomless pit," where 'the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched,' and where 'there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.' They give us the certain assurance, also, of a day being appointed in which God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; and in which they that are in their graves shall rise, some to everlasting life and glory, and others to everlasting shame and contempt. From this brief survey of what the scriptures teach us, we must be convinced of the great importance of being well acquainted with them. Our own salvation is involved in the right knowledge of this book; and if we are teachers of others, how important is it, that we 'as good stewards of the mysteries of God,' be 'able rightly to divide the word of truth, giving to every one his portion in due season.' We should, therefore, "meditate on these things, and give ourselves wholly to them, that our profitting may appear unto all." We must "take heed unto ourselves, and to our doctrine, and continue in them; for by so doing we shall both save ourselves and them that hear us." But we shall not only find the scriptures to be a source of profitable instruction; a rich mine of truth which has never yet been fully explored; but also a source of pure and permanent delight. As the natural light is pleasant to the eyes, so is truth to the understanding, unless some moral disease render its approach unacceptable. 'They whose deeds are evil, love darkness rather than light;' but the regenerate soul 'rejoices in the truth.' Food to the hungry is not more pleasant, nor cold water more refreshing to the thirsty, than evangelical truth to the pious mind. It is, indeed, the bread of life which cometh down from heaven; the hidden manna, with which the spiritual Israel are fed, whilst they sojourn in this wilderness. The person who has been taught of God, prefers the truths of his word to all earthly treasures, and to all the sweets of nature. 'More are they to be desired, than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey comb.' 'The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.' 'Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.' How delightful must it be to sit as a disciple at the feet of Jesus, and with a child-like docility, imbibe precious instruction, from his word and Spirit! When we fall under the power of some overwhelming temptation, or when dark clouds of adversity thicken around us, in the truths and promises of our God, we find our only refuge. In the sanctuary, when the oracles of God are delivered, doubt and unbelief, sorrow and despair, are driven away. Here divine beauty beams with mild effulgence on the soul, and the troubled spirit is charmed to rest. "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand." "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of One Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord." When Jesus joins himself to his disconsolate disciples, how soon is their sorrow turned into joy! And whilst he 'opens their understandings to

understand the scriptures,' how do their hearts burn within them!' That which above all things makes the scriptures precious, and the study of them delightful, is, that there we can find Jesus Christ. We have no need to say, "who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead?" For, "the word is nigh us, even in our mouth, and in our heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." "Christ and him crucified," is the centre of the Christian's religion, the foundation of his faith and hope, and the perennial spring of all his pleasures and his joys. When, at any time, it pleases God to shine upon his word, whilst the believer reads its sacred contents, what a divine glory illuminates the holy page! What attractive beauty draws forth the best affections of his heart! What wonders do his opened eye behold in the cross! He seems to be translated into a new world, and is ready to exclaim, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." "Old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new." O! could the pious reader of the scriptures constantly retain these spiritual views, and these holy impressions, heaven would be begun. This wilderness would 'bud and blossom as the rose,' and paradise be renewed on earth. But 'this is not our rest, it is polluted;' that remaineth for the people of God; even "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." But whilst we are on our pilgrimage to this promised land, the scriptures will be "a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths." They will answer the same purpose to us, which the pillar of cloud and of fire, did to the Israelites. They will guide us in the right way, through all our journey. Let us, then, be persuaded 'diligently to search the Scriptures.' I beg leave to conclude this discourse in the words of the pious Weller, the friend and disciple of Luther:

"I admonish you again and again, that you read the sacred scriptures in a far different manner from that in which you read any other book: that you approach them with the highest reverence, and most intense application of your mind; not as the words of a man, nor an angel, but as the words of the Divine Majesty, the least of which should have more weight with us, than the writings of the wisest and most learned men in the world*."

CHARGE,

to

THE PROFESSOR,

and

students of divinity

by

PHILIP MILLEDOLER. D. D.

CHARGE, &c.

Reverend and dear Brother, The engagements you have formed this day, are peculiarly solemn and affecting. The charge devolving on the Pastor of a congregation, in entering upon the duties of his office, is deeply interesting, but not so interesting as yours. You are not called by a particular branch of our church to minister in holy things, but by her highest ecclesiastical judicatory, to

superintend the education of her sons. Under the direction, we trust, of the great Head of the Church, you have been invited to train up for her service, bands of intelligent, intrepid, and faithful champions of the cross. The characters you are to form for active service, are the flower of our youth; young men from whose lips, at some future, and not far distant period, multitudes of souls may receive instruction; who may be destined to fill the chairs of teachers and professors in our schools, and on whose fidelity, under God, may depend the future peace and prosperity of the church, and the salvation of thousands, perhaps millions, yet unborn.

Suffer me, under these circumstances, to give a brief exhibition of the views of the general assembly in founding this institution, and to point out some duties incumbent on you, in the accomplishment of those views. The assembly, in founding this school, are desirous of securing and perpetuating to the church, a learned, orthodox, pious, and evangelical Ministry.

We want a learned Ministry.

Whatever mischief has been done to the world by philosophy, falsely so called, we are persuaded that true learning has never injured the church, and never will. Such is the harmony subsisting between the works and word of God, that discoveries in the former will never cease to promote our regard for the latter. It has been said, that ignorance is the mother of devotion; that aphorism we utterly and indignantly reject. To instruct others, and especially in divine things, men must first be instructed themselves. On this principle God himself has acted from the beginning of the world to the present day. In former ages, he himself spake directly to the prophets. The messages they delivered were formed under the immediate influence of his grace, and the inspiration of his Spirit. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*." At the entrance of our Saviour upon his Ministry, he chose twelve disciples. These were prepared by himself for their work, and that too especially in the first instance by a regular course of instruction and discipline. It was after that course of instruction, and not before, that they were sent out to evangelize the world. Of completing the designs of God toward our race, in their day, these servants of Christ had no expectation. Their number was small, their lives precarious, the opposition they met with, powerful and constant; and their influence confined to regions which, however extensive in themselves, were yet small when compared to the whole world. They were therefore solicitous to provide for the future wants of the church, and took immediate steps for transmitting their power and authority to others. Hence that charge of Paul to Timothy*: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Thus early provision was made for the supply of the church with an able and faithful ministry. Beside the instruction they had received from their Lord, the Apostles and their immediate successors were qualified in a miraculous manner for their work.—They were endowed with the gift of tongues. Devils fled at their rebuke; diseases, the most inveterate, were healed by a word or by a touch. They had also the power of discerning spirits†; a power which gave them no small advantage over ordinary teachers. All these gifts, from their extraordinary nature, and the well known disposition of mankind, were calculated to excite curiosity, to attract attention, to draw men within the sphere of the Gospel, and to carry home, by divine grace, irresistible conviction to their understandings and hearts. They enjoyed another advantage; they were under the influence of the Spirit of God, to a degree, of which now, alas! owing to our most awful supineness, we can hardly form a conception. This influence of the Spirit gave dignity to their manners, intrepidity to their zeal, and a general

character to their ministry, which commanded the admiration of both friends and foes. With such advantages, it is not to be wondered at, that they towered with eagles' flight above the philosophers of their day, and outstripped in their progress all the wisdom of the sages, and all the eloquence of the schools. But the gift of tongues, with other miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, began gradually to disappear with the extension of the Gospel. This circumstance had a considerable influence in changing the face of the church, and especially in regard to the education of her ministers. That the scriptures might be read in the languages in which they were originally penned, or translated into the tongues of foreign nations; that young Gentile converts might become mighty in the scriptures; and that the sons of the church might be qualified to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, against learned and subtle adversaries without, as well as against sectaries in her own bosom, it was soon perceived that a learned, as well as pious, ministry, was indispensably necessary. The most distinguished of the primitive fathers were advocates for a learned ministry. They well knew that learning without piety might be abused to the worst of purposes; but they were unwilling to allow that the abuse of what is good in itself, can ever detract from its intrinsic value. In this view of the subject, they were followed by the Reformers; and it is a principle which has been acted upon, and contended for, from that day to the present, by the best and purest churches in Christendom. In the careful instruction, then, of our Youth, dear Sir, for the work of the Gospel Ministry, you will neither stand upon new or untenable ground. And, assured as you may be, that you are doing the will of Christ, you may safely employ in it all the stores of your learning; all the resources your genius, and all the powers of your soul. But whilst there can be no doubt, either of the lawfulness or expediency of such a work, it is not to be concealed, that it is a task of great labour and difficulty. To say nothing of that diversity of disposition, taste, and intellect, in students themselves, which renders the art of teaching, as well as government, so exceedingly intricate; waving also at present all observations on methods of instruction, I will venture to say, that the work itself is one of the most arduous in the world. The scriptures are a mine of inexhaustible wealth, but to be enriched with their treasures will require close and constant application. To exhibit divine truth in a lucid and systematic manner; to show the unity of Scripture in the connexion and dependence of its parts; to make of our young men sound Biblical critics, and able casuists; to furnish them with gospel armour of proof, offensive and defensive; to give them an extensive acquaintance with Church history and government; but especially so to indoctrinate, and, if I may use the expression, leaven them with heavenly truth, that they may ever after hold, and defend it for themselves, as Well as communicate it to others; is a work indeed of no small magnitude. In this work you will soon, we hope, be aided by faithful colleagues; but a large and important part of it will still rest, under God, upon yourself. To cultivate such a field as this, dear sir, will be sufficient to call forth the exertions of the most active and enterprising mind; it will therefore behove you, notwithstanding all your present acquirements, not only to cherish the attainments you have already made, but also further to enrich your mind with the spoils of science, and to extend your inquiries into almost every department of literature, sacred and profane.

Another charge devolving upon you with peculiar weight, dear Brother, is the faithful maintenance of that system of doctrines handed down to us by our fathers, and for which in numerous instances they have sacrificed "their fortunes, their liberties, and their lives." Strongly attached to the doctrines of the reformation contained in her standards, jealous of innovation, and anxious to transmit the truth as it is in Jesus inviolate to posterity, the Presbyterian church will expect, and

permit me to add, Sir, after the signal mark of her confidence reposed in you, will have a right to expect, that her doctrines, and especially her distinguishing doctrines, will be taught in this school without adding to, or taking aught from them in any wise, or under any pretext whatsoever. It is also expected that these doctrines will be explained in terms used by her best writers from almost time immemorial, and which from long use have become familiar to, and are best understood by, her members. By observing this plan, there will be an agreement of theological terms used in the instruction of our youth, with those used in our standard books, as well as an agreement of terms used by our future licentiates and ministers, with those to which our congregations are accustomed. An object this, of no small importance to the future harmony of our churches. The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, and form of government connected with it, will be an important book in this seminary. Containing a form of sound words drawn from the lively oracles of God, and tested by experience, it has long served, and will hereafter serve, as a bond of union to the churches. As every minister in our connexion is required to subscribe this Confession, they should be well acquainted with its contents. When adopted, it cannot be renounced without renouncing our communion; nor invaded, without a species of sacrilege. If important doctrinal errors are ever introduced into our churches, they will be introduced by a gradual departure from our standards. These should be guarded, therefore, with inviolable care. Is any man dissatisfied with them, he is not bound to receive them; and if he does receive them, he is by that very act sacredly bound to cherish and maintain them. To surrender truths deemed of minor importance is only to prepare the way for other demands, and greater sacrifices; and if first attempts are not repelled, they will soon be followed by others, till all is gone that is worth contending for. To give our young men an early acquaintance with these standards, is therefore an object of primary importance; and should they be required, during their theological course, to commit to memory the greater part, if not the whole, of our confession and book of discipline, it would be attended with incalculable advantage. It would not only give them a decided superiority over others in ecclesiastical councils, but would also tend to guard them against error, as well as to secure their attachment to the truth. Peculiarly set for the defence of the Gospel, it will be expected of you, dear brother, that you will stand as a bulwark for truth against the encroachments of error. In this respect also, the assembly have deposited in your hands a most sacred trust; and one we are persuaded, that will never be abused. With pleasure we anticipate the period when the youth of our seminary will not only exhibit sound principles themselves, but will also be disposed, and prepared to hand them down inviolate to others. And as it is desirable that we should have a learned and orthodox, so we also need a pious and evangelical, ministry. Whatever may be the talents of ministers, they are like, without personal piety, to be of no lasting advantage to the church; nay, such characters have often inflicted upon it deep, and almost incurable wounds. That they are utterly unfit for the sacred office, is manifest. How shall they feed the flock of Christ purchased with his blood, who have no interest in that purchase? How shall they sympathize in the sufferings of God's people, who have no spiritual feeling? Or how shall they speak a word in season to weary and tempted souls, who themselves never felt, and therefore never mourned, under the awful pressure of their sins? Their godly hearers can be satisfied with them no longer than they shall have address enough to conceal their real characters, and they not unfrequently become the scorn even of the careless and impenitent. We hope the time is far distant, when our churches will be satisfied with mere exhibitions of learning, or eloquence, or with the substitution of dry moral lectures for the preaching of the cross. The apostle Paul was determined to know

nothing among his hearers but Jesus Christ and him crucified.—He was convinced that nothing under heaven could exhibit the divine character in a clearer light, and that nothing had equal influence on the human mind, to control, reform, and change it into the image of God. He had fairly made the experiment, and hath taught us, both by precept and example, that the true ministry of reconciliation must be pious and evangelical. In preparing such a Ministry for the church, it is desirable that such, and such only, should be sent forward to the school as are hopefully pious. What remains to the professors of the institution, is continually to insist upon the necessity of it, to cultivate it where it exists, by precept and example; to honour it with marked respect, and in every instance in which they shall be satisfied of the want of it in any pupil, to take effectual steps to prevent his entrance upon an office, for which in such case he is so evidently disqualified.

Thus, reverend and dear brother, I have endeavoured to mark out your glorious work, and have ventured a few thoughts on the best means of its accomplishment. We want a learned, orthodox, pious, and evangelical ministry. To such, and such only, can we confidently and comfortably commit the affairs of the church; and to leave another ministry in it, if we ourselves are faithful, would plant thorns in our dying pillows. As no greater curse can fall upon a people than to commit its spiritual interests into the hands of weak and unskilful, but especially of unprincipled, men; so, on the other hand, we are persuaded that an able and faithful ministry, is one of the most distinguished blessings to the world. Its influence in the church must be obvious to all; and its benign influence on our schools, as well as on the general good order and happiness of society, will be denied only by the thoughtless, or the profligate. This seminary then, even in its infant state, is an object of public interest; an object not only calculated to call forth the good wishes of our own church, but of the church at large, and even of the nation. Though its origin be small, the voice of its sons, we trust, will one day be heard to advantage from one extreme of these United States to the other; nay, the time may not be far distant, when they will vie with their transatlantic brethren, in carrying the lamp of eternal truth, and planting the standard of the cross, on the remotest shores of heathen lands. The blessings that flow from such a ministry, are not blessings of a day, of a year, or even of an age.—These men will in due time transmit their knowledge and authority to others, and these again to their successors, to the final conflagration of the globe. In this view of the subject, Reverend Sir, you will feel a weight of responsibility upon you sufficient to bow the shoulders of an angel. The infant state of the institution will add to that weight. The General Assembly have stamped it with grand and impressive features, but they have only drawn the great outlines of its character. Much yet remains to be done. The perfection of their plan will be the result of time and experience, and will greatly depend on the wisdom and diligence of their professors. In all this work, dear brother, you will have the eyes of God, of angels, and of men, upon you; but you enter upon it with great encouragement. You may promise yourself the good wishes and prayers of the whole church of God. You may also promise yourself the cordial co-operation of your brethren in the Lord. In their personal friendship, as well as interest in the work, you will find pledges of future consolation and support. But above all, you may promise yourself, if faithful, the constant blessing of the great Head of the church: there lies your strength, your wisdom, your every qualification for the work. The promise, “Lo, I am with you always,” has never been forgotten by him, and never will. I have only to add a wish that when the book shall be opened that records the transactions of this day, that you may have cause to rejoice in them for ever.

Permit me, also, young gentlemen, on this solemn occasion, to address myself to you. You will have the honour of being the first whose names are enrolled in the register of this Seminary. They will stand, we hope, at the head of a host of worthies, whose future labours shall bless the church of God, and do honour to their country. As you are first in order of time, so we pray, that you may be numbered with the first, in devotion to God, and usefulness to mankind. The studies in which you will be engaged, are not only delightful, to the pious mind, but are also calculated to enlarge your souls; to ennoble and transform them into the very image of God. The privilege you will enjoy, of consecrating your time to the study of the scriptures, and your persons to the service of Christ, is too great for expression. You are now, young gentlemen, to lay the foundation of your future character and usefulness in life; and, in some measure at least, as connected with it, of your future and eternal felicity. Permit me then to urge, with all possible earnestness, a diligent improvement of time and opportunities afforded you in the good providence of God. Your stay in this seminary may seem long in prospect, but it is really short; short in itself, and especially so, when compared with the work you have to do. Observe the plan of education marked out by the Assembly, and you will see at once, that the most diligent application will barely suffice, to give you, not to say a perfect, but even a competent knowledge of the subjects it embraces.

If any suppose that occasional application, or superficial reading, will constitute an eminent divine, they are exceedingly mistaken. In searching after, illustrating, or defending truth, the whole circle of the sciences may be pressed into the service of Christ. The study of the scriptures, especially in their original languages, is a work of time, as well as of deep research. To obtain an accurate knowledge of scripture types, prophecies, and doctrines; to be acquainted with the sophistry of enemies, and qualified to expose it; to be well informed in church history and government; and to acquire facility in collecting, judgment in arranging, and gracefulness in the delivery of your thoughts, will all require time and labour. But whilst I thus urge preparation for the altar in the acquirement of useful knowledge, let me also insist, particularly insist, on the cultivation of personal piety. As you are now to lay the foundation of solid learning, and literary eminence, so also of good character. Many eyes will be upon you, and more expected than from other young men of the same age, engaged in other pursuits. To the youth of this venerable seat of learning and the arts, you are especially called, to set examples of piety worthy of imitation. Not to speak of actions grossly derogatory to your Christian character, and the stain of which might follow you to your graves; remember, that you have in great measure passed that period of life, in which folly is extenuated by juvenile indiscretion. A short time will place you, God willing, upon the theatre of the world, under the august character of Ambassadors of Christ. Bear this in constant remembrance; and if you ever hope to fill that station with dignity to yourselves, usefulness to others, and glory to God, learn now to live by faith in the Son of God; govern your passions, deny yourselves, and consecrate your whole souls to the service of the Redeemer. Whatsoever things are true, just, lovely, and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Let the world take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus; let it appear evident to all that you have entered upon your work with due reflection, and from proper motives, and you will in no wise lose your reward. With piety toward God, my young friends, be careful to cultivate respect for your instructors. It is the sign of an ingenuous mind, and a debt of gratitude you owe them. They will deserve well at your hands. The hero of Macedon revered his father much, but he revered his instructor more. He viewed him as a second father; as one who had formed his mind; and acknowledged a debt of gratitude he never could repay. Christian youth, in regard to their christian

teachers, must not be outdone by the gratitude of a heathen.

Beloved pupils, who have commenced with me your theological course—I now resign you with pleasure into other hands. Divided between parochial duties, and the care I owed you, I have found the task of instruction difficult, and sometimes oppressive; your future teacher, unincumbered by other cares, can, and will cheerfully, devote his whole time to your improvement. I am happy to bear this public testimony to your former diligence and good conduct, and trust you will secure, by your future deportment, the approbation of your teachers, of the public, of your conscience, and your God.

S. Suggestions in Vindication of Sunday-Schools

SUGGESTIONS

in

VINDICATION OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS,

but more especially for the improvement

of

SUNDAY-SCHOOL BOOKS,

and the

ENLARGEMENT OF THE PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

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SUGGESTIONS

in

VINDICATION OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS

The importance of the general diffusion of religious knowledge, seems now to be universally admitted. No longer is it pretended, that ignorance is the mother of devotion; or that real knowledge can be injurious to any portion of the community. Experience teaches, that the more ignorant men are, the more liable are they to be hurried into acts of violence and excess; or to be seduced into vice by the persuasions and example of the wicked. Most malefactors, who are condemned by the laws of the country, are exceedingly ignorant of religious truth: the mob, often influenced and led on to acts of shocking outrage, is every where composed of the least informed of the people. An ignorant multitude is always liable to be misled by designing demagogues, or seduced by artful impostors. A regard to character, and a respect for the opinions of others, is greatly strengthened by an increase of knowledge, and this is one of the strongest barriers against infamous vice. Conscience, the most powerful of restraints, possesses force in proportion to the light of truth in the mind. Superstition may, indeed, be promoted by ignorance, but true religion, never. Fanaticism also is closely allied to ignorance, but the most effectual remedy against enthusiasm, is genuine piety. Skepticism, it is true, is often associated with a considerable extent of knowledge; but the cure of infidelity must be found in a correct acquaintance with the truth; and the best preventive of this evil is, early religious instruction. It cannot be doubted, that the manners of men are polished by education. Where do you find manners the most sordid and brutal, but

among those who have never been instructed? Ferocious passions naturally spring up in minds entirely uncultivated. And it need not be feared that instruction will render the poor more miserable, by making them more sensible of their humble condition. Sound religious knowledge will teach them, that happiness may be enjoyed as fully in a cottage as in a palace; that contentment with our condition is the duty of all; and that want and affliction furnish a very salutary discipline, by which faith is tried, virtue improved, and the soul prepared for a better world. The discontented, envious poor, are not commonly those who have been religiously educated, but the ignorant and profligate. It can admit of no doubt, therefore, that the diffusion of knowledge, and especially of religious knowledge, among all classes of people, is a thing to be desired; and that no pains and labour can be considered too great, which are the means of accomplishing this end. But how this can be most successfully effected, is a question which demands the serious consideration of every friend of man. God has, indeed, appointed the preaching of the gospel as the great instrument of the instruction and moral reformation of men, and nothing should be allowed to supersede this; for God is wiser than man; and will, moreover, honour and bless his own institutions. Let it be admitted, then, that the faithful preaching of the gospel is the great means to which all others should be subordinate. But God has also directed Christians to give mutual instruction to one another, and “to hold forth the word of life” to those who are in darkness. Private instruction is as much authorized as public preaching; and, in its place, is as necessary. Indeed, without private instruction, public preaching will be in a great measure useless. One who is totally uneducated, cannot understand the purport and connexion of a sermon. The people must, by some means, be prepared by elementary education, to profit by the public teaching of the church; and the want of this elementary knowledge, is one great reason why so many hear to so little profit. They hear, but they understand not; and thus the good seed is lost. This preparatory instruction ought to be given in every family; but alas! I need not say how commonly this is neglected, or so imperfectly attended to, that our youth are, in many places, growing up in shameful and dangerous ignorance. But if parents and masters will not perform their duty in this respect, can no remedy be devised? can no substitute be proposed? Yes; God, in his kind providence, has directed the attention of his church to a remedy which may be considered effectual, if it be diligently and universally used. This is the SUNDAY SCHOOL system of instruction. Although this method of teaching the young and ignorant is so simple, yet it deserves to be ranked second, to no discovery of our age. I do not know that the beneficence of providence has been more manifest in any thing which has occurred in our day, than in the general institution of Sunday-schools. Other benevolent institutions provide the means of religious instruction; but the Sunday-school makes the application of them. Indeed all others require this for their successful operation. Bibles and tracts cannot be useful to those who cannot read; but in these humble seminaries the ignorant are taught to read. Pious youth are wanted to be educated for pastors and missionaries; and where will you go to find them, but to the Sunday-schools? Here will often be seen the first buddings of that piety, which expands in the performance of faithful missionary labour in some heathen land. A large majority of the missionaries now in the field, were nurtured in Sunday-schools. Here will be sown, in many a heart, the precious seed which will germinate in a thousand benevolent efforts, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. While the civilian is earnestly employed in devising plans for prisons, and dungeons for solitary confinement, let it be the noble object of the patrons of Sunday-schools, to render all such institutions, if possible, unnecessary. And this is not a vain hope, if all the children in the country could be brought under the regular influence of this mode of instruction. Scarce any

of those taught in these schools have ever been disgraced by a condemnation for crime.

We are, as the voice of experience teaches, never less liable to lose the fruit of our labour, than when we instil religious instruction into the susceptible minds of children. This precious seed is seldom entirely lost; for although it may lie long buried, as it were, under the dust, it may spring up at a late day, and flourish long after the hand that sowed it, is laid in the grave. Besides, we are not aware how much positive evil is prevented by the impressions of religious truth on the minds of youth. In the Sabbath-school the little boy is taught the Ten Commandments; it is moreover inculcated on him, that God is angry with the wicked, and that his curse will follow the evildoer. Also, he learns there, that the evil of sin is so great, that God's own Son came into our world, and died on the cross, to make an atonement for it. In his Bible, which he here learns to read, he finds it written, that "the wicked shall be turned into hell;" and that the ungodly shall not inherit eternal life. Now, when this boy goes into the world, and meets with dissolute companions, who tempt him to steal, or murder, or bear false witness, will not these solemn truths which he has learned at school, rush upon his mind, and operate as strong restraints to preserve him from the commission of crimes, under the power of which he would easily fall, were it not for these salutary impressions?

Sunday-schools were originally instituted with a special view to those unhappy children, who through the ignorance, or profligacy, or carelessness of their parents, have no religious instruction; but on the contrary, are brought up under the influence of evil counsels and worse examples; and such children ought still to be considered the direct object of these institutions; but it has been found, that they may be rendered highly useful to children of every description. Often it happens, that well disposed and pious parents are poorly qualified to communicate religious instruction to their own children; and not un-frequently, children are more attentive to lessons of morality and religion coming from others, than to those which they learn from their own parents. From these they are so accustomed to hear advice and reproof, that they are very apt to contract a habit of heedlessness when admonished by them; but when another, who claims no authority but that which is founded on kindness, speaks affectionately to these children, they are mute with attention, and seem to be tenderly affected with what they hear from their beloved Sunday-school teachers. The good order and solemnity maintained in these schools, has a great effect in predisposing the youthful mind to be attentive and serious; and also the gentle emulation which is properly excited, gives a spring and alacrity to the spirits which is favourable to improvement. There are few parents, I believe, who can instruct their own children as well as they may be taught in many of our Sabbath-schools. But the good effect of this institution is nearly as conspicuous, in regard to the teachers, as the pupils. It has been long a maxim, that to know a thing accurately, the best method is to teach it. And with respect to religious knowledge, it has ever been found very difficult to induce people generally, whether old or young, to give such patient attention to divine truth, as to become well acquainted with the doctrines and precepts of the Bible. Now this difficulty is happily obviated in regard to the teachers in our Sunday-schools. The necessity which they are under of teaching the lesson, furnishes a motive sufficiently strong, to induce them to study it with diligence, and by the aid of all the helps to which they can have access. Thus many of our intelligent young people are actually becoming accurate Bible theologians. They are acquiring divine knowledge, in that way, which leads them thoroughly to understand what they learn, and to fix it indelibly in the memory. I do not know any better school in which these persons could be

placed for their own improvement, than to enjoy the privilege of teaching the children in Sunday-schools. The advantages of this situation, I am persuaded, have not been overrated. The good resulting from this benevolent employment has not been confined to mere improvement in sacred knowledge, but in many instances, has issued in the conversion of the heart to God. There can, I believe, be no doubt, but that a larger proportion of Sunday-school teachers, have become truly pious, within a few years, than of persons of any other class or description. God fulfils his own gracious promise, that they that water shall themselves be watered. The benefits derived from these blessed institutions to teachers, are, themselves, a rich compensation for all their labour, and for all the expenses incurred, in keeping them up. But Sunday-schools have not only been beneficial, in a high degree, to the pupils, and the teachers, but also to the parents, and other relatives, of the children. Many parents are so hostile to religion and to religious men, that they can scarcely be approached, in any other way, than through their children. All such persons view religion, distorted and deformed, through a medium of dense prejudice; but when their children repeat their lessons in their hearing, and read to them from the sacred Scriptures, new light often darts into their minds, and speedily a great change takes place in their sentiments. Sometimes, also, ignorant or profligate parents will accompany their children to a Sabbath-school, who can by no other means be induced to enter the walls of a church. When there, their attention is rivetted, while they listen to the answers of their own children; and thus the truth finds access to minds long estranged from God, and deeply buried in ignorance. But it is not the ignorant and vicious parent only, that derives benefit through the attendance of his children at Sunday-schools; many well-informed and respectable people are led by the inquiries of their children, to search after many things which they never knew before, or had forgotten. In families where much attention is paid to the lesson for the week, all hands are set to work to find out appropriate answers to the questions. Commentaries are consulted, and I have no doubt, that, in many cases, the exercises of the Sunday-schools have been the means of bringing these valuable books into families, where they would not otherwise have been found. And it is much to be desired, that we had a commentary, sound and concise, evangelical and practical, adapted to Sunday-schools. If such a book were placed in every family from which children come, how extensively would Bible knowledge be diffused in a short time?

It may, moreover, be mentioned as one of the minor advantages of Sunday-schools, that they promote neatness and decency of dress and personal appearance, among the poor. The moral, pious, and industrious poor are generally remarkable for cleanliness, and for being tidy in their dress, when they go out from home: but the idle, intemperate, and profligate, are usually disgustingly filthy; and their children are squalid in their whole appearance. Now, how close the connexion is between neatness, and purity of mind, I shall not attempt to determine; but that every step in civilization is favourable to virtue and religion, there is no room to doubt: and whatever will have the effect of inducing parents to exercise some care and industry, in attending to the personal appearance of their children, so as to put them into decent trim, has, in my opinion, a very salutary result. But my object in this essay, is not, merely to descant on the utility of Sunday-schools: I wish to enter somewhat particularly into the principles on which these institutions should be conducted; and the improvements, which may, without difficulty, be engrafted on the existing system. Not, that I mean to give any precepts, relative to the minute regulations of these institutions. My experience does not enable me to judge, or direct any thing on this subject: and it is one on which teachers and superintendents are better capable of directing,

than other persons. But although I have had no experience in the management of Sunday-schools, I have not been an uninterested spectator of their origin and rapid progress; and the more I reflect upon the subject, the more important does the institution appear. I confess, therefore, that I feel no small solicitude, that nothing should occur, which would have a tendency to retard its advancement, or prevent it from attaining to that perfection and accomplishing that measure of good, of which the system is capable. My zeal in the cause of Sunday-schools, therefore, together with the request of some respected persons who are devoted to this object, must be my apology, for offering my opinions, freely, to the public, on this interesting subject.

1. I have observed, with pleasure, that the system of Sunday-school benevolence, in its most prominent features, is catholic. It willingly embraces all who receive the Bible, and are willing to use it. It has, therefore, been considered a desirable object, to combine as many religious denominations, in this enterprise, as possible; and it is not perceived, that with prudent management, there can exist any ground of unpleasant collision. The American Sunday-School Union, as a society, professes no creed but the Bible; although the individuals who are concerned in its management, belong to several distinct denominations, to the forms and peculiar opinions of which respectively, they adhere. But, in conducting Sunday-schools, they know no sect but Christianity; no creed but the Bible. The object of Sunday-schools, is, to communicate that knowledge which is common to all who hold the fundamentals of Christianity. There is, undoubtedly, in our time, some approach to the spirit of unity and catholicism; and, certainly, this spirit, when genuine, should be cherished, as pertaining to the gospel of Christ. In whatever institutions, therefore, christians of different denominations can combine their benevolent and pious efforts, with an increase of strength, and without compromising their peculiar tenets, they ought to unite; and it partakes of the nature of schism, to break this union, on account of narrow sectarian feelings and interests. While schemes of close connexion between those who differ in matters viewed to be of some importance to the purity of faith and worship, are only adapted to produce collision, and greater alienation than before existed; it is delightful to see those, who have long been too far apart, drawn near together, by the power of their mutual love to Christ, and by the sweet bands of brotherly love. Why should those who are so soon to inhabit one house in heaven, treat each other as aliens and enemies? or, spend their time in building up high walls of separation? Let each section of the church catholic, maintain, with becoming firmness and zeal, what they honestly believe to be the truth of God; and no imputation of bigotry can justly be charged upon them, while they pursue this course: but, as the points of difference between evangelical Christians are trivial, compared with the important and fundamental truths in which they agree, brotherly kindness ought not to be interrupted on account of their differences; and whenever any occasion offers, on which they can cordially unite their efforts, it is manifestly their duty to receive one another as Christ has received them; and to show to a world which is ever cavilling on account of the dissensions of christians, that real christians can love one another still, although partially separated by names and forms.

It is manifest, from an examination of the constitution of the Sunday-School Union, that all its articles are catholic: no preference is there shown to any one denomination. And it is equally evident, from a consideration of the character of the gentlemen who compose the board of Managers, that no partiality has been exhibited. It would scarcely be possible to form a board, with a more equal respect to the several denominations concerned in this enterprise; and, as far as is

known to me, the same impartiality is manifest in the proceedings of the board, both in the selection of their officers and committees, and in the books selected for publication.

I have been led to make these remarks, because it has been objected, by some, to this society, that while it professes catholic principles, it is, in fact, merely an instrument for building up one denomination. But how is this possible, when no one denomination has a majority in the board? Will all parties, retaining their peculiar sentiments and attachments, concur, in promoting the separate interests of a society different from their own? And I would ask of those who make this objection, what single act of the American Sunday-School Union has even the semblance of partiality for a particular sect? I am verily persuaded that no such act can be pointed out. It may be true, indeed, that some denominations enter more zealously and generally into the enterprise than others, but this argues no fault in the constitution, or partiality in the board; or in their agents. The remedy is—and it would be a most desirable one—that all denominations emulate each other in zeal and energy, in promoting Sunday-schools, in their respective churches. Here is a wide field for a noble, a holy competition. But surely, there exists no ground of complaint, and no reason for objection to the constitution or administration of the Society.

2. But while the American Sunday-School Union have been scrupulously careful to maintain impartiality, as it relates to the several religious denominations united in this scheme of benevolence; it is probable, that they have not been sufficiently aware of another objection, which has recently been made by some warm friends of the institution. It is alleged, that there is danger, lest the American Union should establish a system of religious instruction every where, independent of the regular and authorized pastors of the church. It is said, that their agents penetrate into the parishes of every denomination, and there establish their schools without the consent, or concurrence of ministers, or other church-officers; and that by this means, the religious instruction of the youth is likely to be taken out of the hands of those to whom, according to the economy of Christ's house, it has been regularly committed And, moreover, that we have no security for the soundness of the doctrines inculcated by the teachers of a society, which may propagate just what opinions it pleases; and so it may happen, that the children of a parish may, in the Sunday-schools, be taught doctrines directly repugnant to those held by the minister, and by the church to which he belongs. I bring forward this objection with all its force, that its weight may be duly appreciated by the Managers of the Union.

Now, in answer to this, it can be truly stated, that the Managers of the American S. S. Union have ever been solicitous to obtain the co-operation of the clergy in their respective spheres of action and influence; and they have not only invited their aid, but have even, in some instances, given offence to some clergymen by one of their standing questions, which they regularly call upon the schools under their care to answer; which is, "How far are the ministers engaged in promoting the schools? Have you taken any steps to interest ministers in your vicinity to promote Sunday-schools?" But if ministers, generally, have paid little or no attention to the subject, and the schools have gone forward without their aid or inspection, surely the blame does not lie at the door of the American S.S. Union. If the clergy of the different denominations will not take hold of this thing, and give it a direction within their own parishes or preaching districts, it is impossible for the American S. S. Union to compel them to perform their duty. And if the minister of a parish will not come forward and lend his aid and counsel, must the work stop? Must the Sunday-school agent make no effort to provide for the instruction of those who are willing to be taught within those

bounds? Surely, no sincere friend to the rising generation would affirm this. And candour compels me to declare, that when at the late meeting of the Delegates of Auxiliaries with the Board, in Philadelphia, this subject was brought up and discussed, the Managers discovered every disposition to adopt any resolution, or take any measures, which would have the effect of enlisting the clergy of the several denominations, cordially in this work: and when a resolution was proposed and voted by the Delegates of the Auxiliaries, to urge this matter again and more earnestly on the pastors and other church-officers, it received the decided approbation of the Board of Managers of the American Sunday-School Union. But the aspect of the question which is most important is, not who have been remiss in the discharge of duty in time past, but what can be now done to avert the danger and prevent the evil which it has been seen is imminent. In observing on this subject, I beg leave respectfully to say to the ministers of the gospel of every denomination:—

Dear brethren, I scarcely know a pastoral duty of higher responsibility, than to lend your utmost aid and influence to give efficiency and a right direction to Sunday-schools within the limits of your parishes and your vicinity. You have known and felt how difficult or rather impossible it is, for one man to instruct effectually all the youth of a large parish. If you should do nothing else, it would still be imperfectly done. Under these discouraging prospects, some of you have probably been driven almost to despair of effecting any thing; while others have endeavoured, by occasional catechising, and by paying an annual pastoral visit to the families under your care, to accomplish what seemed practicable: but you know, that unless parents, guardians, and masters will do their duty faithfully, in the domestic instruction of their families, these occasional exercises never can be effectual to feed the lambs of Christ's flock. O! how much would many of our fathers in the ministry have given for a half a dozen faithful co-adjutors in communicating elementary knowledge to the young? But in their time, such aid could not have been obtained. No young person, nor scarcely any elderly one, could have been persuaded to become teachers. Such a thing was unknown and uncustomary, and no one thought of it. But, now, Providence has provided you with a piece of moral machinery, which, if rightly directed, will be of as much avail to you, as the labour-saving machines to the mechanic in our extensive manufactories. It will not answer for you to leave it in the hands of others. They may direct it well, or they may not; but as it is to operate on the youth of your charge, for whom you have an account to give, you ought yourself to attend to its operation. You ought to be solicitously attentive to, and be found in the midst of, all Sabbath-Schools within your own charge—watching, from week to week, with that deep interest and anxiety which you cannot but feel, the course of instruction—the conduct and character of teachers and scholars—and the progress and prospects of the school; admonishing in love and pastoral faithfulness the labourers who may seem to be remiss—giving encouragement to the faithful and a word of exhortation to all. Thus you will make one of their number,—you will be intimately acquainted and connected with all their plans and proceedings, and may exercise over them all the kind care and salutary influence which belong to your place and duty, and for which they will return kindness, confidence, and gratitude. It is this faithful, constant, official inspection, which the officers and managers of the American Sunday-School Union greatly desire to see exercised over their schools by every minister of the Lord Jesus Christ;—they feel as if this was the right and province and duty of ministers, and they have often mourned over the distance which has seemed to separate the chief labourers in the vineyard from those whose design, responsibility, and success are so nearly allied to their own. Others may perform the laborious parts of the service,

but it belongs to you, and it behooves you, to inspect these schools, and see that nothing is inculcated which is contrary to sound doctrine, and that no spirit of wild fanaticism is introduced by ignorant zealots. As a watchman on the walls of Zion, you cannot, you must not remain an indifferent spectator of this powerful system. It will go forward whether you lend your assistance or not; but it is your incumbent duty to give it direction, so far as its operation affects those under your care. Why is it that some of you, my brethren, have so little discerned the signs of the times, as not to perceive, that a mightier moral engine has not been set in operation for ages? That it affords to the faithful pastor greater facilities for the instruction of his people than any thing before discovered? And is it possible that any of you have paid no serious attention to the progress of Sunday-schools, and have given no effectual aid to their establishment in your parishes? or that, having them there, you are contented that they may take their course, (and whoever will, may have the superintence of their instruction?) I respectfully ask you, who have hitherto neglected this subject, what you could desire in the way of aid to your arduous pastoral duties, more convenient and effectual than Sabbath-schools in every district of your congregation? By their means you enjoy the assistance of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty persons, every Sabbath, earnestly and diligently engaged in giving religious instruction to the children of your charge; and giving it to multitudes whom your instructions would never have reached. And your young men and women, instead of spending the Sabbath idly or unprofitably, are now, many of them—if Sunday-schools abound with you—in a train of useful learning and improvement, which will every year be rendering them more capable of being useful and respectable members of the church, and will qualify them for becoming heads of families with a good prospect of being able to teach them the way of life, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I am acquainted with one large congregation, where the pastor, until lately, neglected Sabbath-schools, and they languished until they were near extinction; but now he feels their importance, and devotes himself to promote their prosperity, visiting one of them and lecturing to children and parents every Sabbath, and the whole aspect of this congregation is changed. The desire of learning has extended itself to all ages; and there is, throughout the congregation, a lively attention and alacrity in relation to sacred things, which is very different from the apathy and lukewarmness of their former condition. I confess, I do not see how any man having the care of souls, can reconcile it to his conscience, or how he will answer it to his Master, if he continues to be indifferent to this important concern. But it is not sufficient that you approve the institution, and speak well of it, and give free consent to its introduction into your parish: much more than this is incumbent on you, and expected from you. It is a duty, the obligation of which you cannot evade, to give your personal aid and counsel to carry on this important work. Many ministers begin to have their eyes opened to see this business in a far different light from what they formerly did; and begin to look upon Sunday-schools as the most important auxiliaries to their great work of rescuing immortal souls from everlasting destruction: and I hope the time is at hand, when every clergyman and every church-officer, will be found taking an active and a leading part in the affairs of this institution, so far as it is connected with their respective churches.

And, here, I beg leave to state, that the American Sunday-School Union prescribe no standard of doctrine to the schools in their connexion. Their object is to bring their scholars to a knowledge of the Bible, the great repository of all religious truth. The Sunday-school teacher who seeks wisdom from on high, and draws his instructions from this pure fountain, will not be likely to be misled, or to mislead others, in any matter of importance. But it behooves the pastors of the churches to see to

it, that nothing is inculcated on the youth under their charge, which is inconsistent with that form of doctrine which he himself esteems and teaches to be truth. And it is a fact too well known to be here repeated, that the catechisms of different evangelical churches have been frequently and willingly used as books of instruction, whenever this has been requested by parents, or others having the right to direct the religious instruction of children. And if this long approved method of instruction has been less attended to than its importance demands, the reason may be found in the diversity of religious denominations, which are frequently mingled in the same school; or, where this does not exist, in the inattention of the clergy to the schools established within the precincts of their pastoral charges. For, I may venture to affirm, that no evangelical pastor will ever meet with any difficulty in having the catechism or form of doctrine adopted by his own church, inculcated on the youth of his own parish. I am, at this time, acquainted with a large and flourishing Sunday-school, containing above a hundred scholars, in which the catechism of the church to which they belong is made an object of attention and instruction on one Sabbath in each month. But in schools unconnected with the pastoral charge of any minister—of which there are many—the superintendents and teachers must of course pursue that mode of religious instruction which to them appears best: and as long as all the books of instruction used in Sunday-schools are published, and may be examined by all who feel an interest in this subject, there can be no danger that error will be circulated by means of this institution.

3. Another important subject connected with this institution, is the publication and circulation of books. As much has been said of late respecting the character of the books issued from the Depository of the American S. S. Union, I will take the liberty of expressing my opinion of the manner in which this department of the business should be conducted.

Although the preparation of books was not originally contemplated as a part of the Sunday-school system; yet, in the progress of the enterprize, it has grown up to an importance which is fully equal to that of any other department. Indeed, when we reflect upon the recent origin of this Institution, and upon the smallness and obscurity of its commencement, we cannot but be astonished at the extent of its operations in the circulation of books. If we except the book establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I believe, there is no other society in this country which supplies so large a portion of the population with its reading. And, certainly, they who select and distribute the books which are perused and studied by the people, and especially by the young, will have a greater influence in forming the character of the nation than any other persons, let them use what other means they may. The plan of connecting libraries with each school, and establishing depositories in convenient situations, is characterized by wisdom. It has long been a desideratum to have congregational libraries for the use of the people; and, frequently, attempts have been made to establish them; but with very little success. The people have not taken a lively interest in these institutions, and where they exist, do not, generally, make much use of the books. The reason of this seems to be, that the authors selected for such libraries, though valuable, are not suited to the taste, nor level to the capacity of common people. Few have leisure or inclination to go through ponderous volumes, or to peruse books of deep reasoning, and replete with learning. The experiment made by the American Sunday-School Union, evinces, that small books, written in a lively style, and rendered interesting by pleasant narratives, are the kind of reading which is adapted to the taste of a large part of our adult as well as youthful population. For, although the libraries are intended particularly for the use of the children, yet it is found, that when the books

are brought into the families to which the scholars belong, they are read with avidity by persons of all ages. By this means, the books published and distributed into every nook and corner of the United States, by the American Sunday-School Union, are producing a great effect on a vast multitude of people. The management of this business has been committed, by the Board of Managers, into the hands of a publishing committee, who have, without the least prospect of personal emolument, devoted to it their time and attention, with an untiring assiduity, which demands the gratitude of all who are friendly to the universal diffusion of knowledge. The caution exercised by this committee will be manifest, when it is understood that no work is sent to the press to which any of the committee objects. The demand for books, however, has increased so rapidly, and the call for variety, as well as numbers, has been so urgent and incessant, that it may not have been practicable for the publishing committee, in every instance, to furnish the most suitable works. They have done, perhaps, the best that could be done in their circumstances; and while they have merited our warmest commendation for their disinterested labours, there seems to be no just ground for censure, because they have not done what it was impossible to do. I think it necessary to enter thus far into a vindication of the publishing committee, since much has been said respecting the character of the books published, under their inspection; and complaints are still abroad on this subject. But while I would cheerfully award unqualified commendation to this respectable committee, I do not mean to say, that they have fallen into no mistakes, in managing this momentous concern. But it should be kept in mind, by those inclined to find fault, that this responsible business has devolved upon them unsought and unexpected. Indeed, there is something wonderful in the rapid increase of every thing connected with this Institution. The persons who now have the management of this great concern, began their labours in obscurity, neither desiring nor seeking the notice of the world; but God has abundantly prospered their humble and disinterested efforts; so that now they find themselves, without having aspired to it, placed at the head of one of the most useful institutions in the world. They feel their responsibility to be great beyond expression, and are deeply sensible, I trust, of their need of wisdom from on high; and, at the same time, will be thankful for any suggestions which the friends of the cause are disposed to make to aid them in their arduous work. I am not apprehensive, therefore, of giving any offence to the Board, or their committee by the freedom of my remarks. The principal objection in regard to the books issued from the Depository is, that, too generally, they were of a light and fictitious character. Now, I am not sufficiently conversant with all the publications of the Union to judge correctly on this subject, but I am inclined to believe, that there has existed a mistake on this point. Too many fictitious stories, and some of them containing few lessons of moral or religious instruction, have been put into circulation. The tendency of this is to vitiate the taste of the rising generation, so that while they are greedy after fiction, they will have no appetite for solid, instructive reading. And, I believe, the committee themselves have for some time been turning their attention to works of more substantial value.

But, it is evident that no course which can be pursued in this business, will unite the suffrages of all good people; for some object to all fictitious writings as having in the main a bad tendency, and as incompatible with the simplicity and sincerity of the Christian religion. It seems necessary, therefore, to say a few words on this subject;—but it would require a volume to discuss it fully.

I would, then, observe, that we cannot proscribe all writings in which fictitious personages are introduced, without passing a sentence of condemnation on various parts of Sacred Scripture, and

particularly on the parables of our Lord Jesus Christ. These must fall under the denomination of fictitious discourses; or discourses in which unreal personages are introduced, and represented as speaking and acting, that by this means important truth might be conveyed to the minds of men, in such a manner as to be understood, to obviate prejudice and to create interest. The Song of Solomon, also, a canonical book of Scripture, is from the beginning to the end a spiritual allegory. This method of instruction seems also to be dictated by nature; for fables or apologues and allegories, are in use among all nations; and the severest moralists have never supposed that there was any thing inconsistent with the strictest regard to truth in the introduction of fictitious personages: for where there is no purpose to deceive, and where no one is deceived, there can be no violation of truth and sincerity. Words are but the signs of our ideas, and it matters not what language we use, if it fairly conveys our true meaning to others. When a man employs words ironically, the literal sense is absolutely false if the irony be just; and yet the meaning of the person is as clear, and more forcible, than if the truth were simply uttered.

Again,—a fictitious narrative, used as a vehicle for important moral instruction, bears a strong analogy to the use of general terms in common speech. We know, that all things in existence are particular or individual things; but finding a great many individuals which bear a striking resemblance to each other, we give a common name to the whole. In like manner, there are many individual persons of similar character; there are many courses of conduct, which, with their causes and attendant circumstances, are of usual occurrence; and it is important to collect these features of human life, and so embody them, that they may be useful to those who are yet without experience. Now, this may be done in several ways, as by general maxims or aphorisms; by narratives of real facts; or connecting those common matters of observation and experience with fictitious personages, which, as it leaves the moral instructor at liberty in the selection of circumstances, possesses some advantages over the simple narrative of facts in the order, and with the circumstances, in which they occur. When, however, the picture of human manners or character is fairly taken from nature, it is, what may with propriety be called, general history; it is a representation of what often actually happens, without the peculiar circumstances of any single case; and the difference between a judiciously constructed fictitious narrative, intended to convey moral instruction, and real history, is no greater than between the use of a proper name and a common appellation, when we speak of any individual. In this way much might be taught, which, in common, is learned by painful experience. And this mode of instruction being capable of being rendered highly interesting to the young especially, ought not to be relinquished, or given up to those who will employ it for the mere indulgence of fancy and feeling, and frequently to the real injury of the reader. It is impossible to suppress all fictitious writings, or to restrain young people from reading them; is it not then the dictate of wisdom to provide them with such as are not only innocent but instructive? Is not this the most probable method of weaning our young people from the fondness for novel-reading? the effects of which are sometimes so fatal, and most commonly injurious. But, I am aware, that the land of fiction is a dangerous ground to travel over. There is no species of writing so liable to abuse; and none so difficult to execute with judgment. The imagination, when indulged, is prone to extravagance; and is as liable to become wild on religious subjects, as any others. A vivid fancy is often without the guidance of sound judgment and correct taste; and when a writer begins to feel a deep interest in the personages of his own imagination, the great end of writing is apt to be forgotten, and the narrative be so woven, as to create, interest and afford pleasure, rather than to convey moral instruction. It should also be remembered, that

fictitious writings should never be permitted to form the principal reading of the young; and they should be prepared with much judgment and care, and used with great caution. A judicious parent will not refuse to indulge his child, occasionally and moderately, with wholesome sweetmeats, creams, and comfits; but who would think it wise to feed him with nothing else? Just so, writings of this description may be useful to interest young people, and to form a taste for books in those in whom it does not naturally exist, and to convey moral instruction in a grateful vehicle; but the books commonly used, should be of a more solid and didactic kind.

Upon the whole, then, I would give it as my opinion, that while fictitious works should not be altogether proscribed, they should not form a large proportion of the books issued from the Depository; and that in the selection of those to be put into the hands of children, the utmost caution should be used. It would be a real loss to the rising generation, to call in all the delightful and instructive little stories of Mrs. Sherwood and Miss Edgeworth. Who would object to the "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain," or other stories of Miss Hannah More, in the "Cheap Repository," because they are not real histories? For a long time it was commonly supposed, that that tract of unrivalled excellence, "The Dairyman's Daughter," was a fictitious story; and now, when it is known, from the best authority, that it contains a history of real facts, its effect is probably no greater than before; although it affords us much pleasure to be assured, that the persons in whom we have taken so lively an interest, did actually exist. One thing, in my opinion, ought faithfully to be done by authors: they should inform their readers whether the personages and occurrences of their narratives, are real, or fictitious; for whatever be said of the lawfulness of fictitious writing, it never can be consistent with truth, to palm on the public a tale of the imagination for historic truth.

It may occur to some, that there does not exist sufficient security, that the books selected for publication will uniformly be of the proper character. It may be alleged, that the committee of publication, consisting of gentlemen engaged in secular business, who can only devote their leisure hours to the examination of books, there is reason to apprehend, that an injudicious selection will often be made. And, moreover, it may be thought, that as clergymen, as a class, are better acquainted with religious books, and better judges of their adaptation to be useful to the rising generation, than any other description of men, that it would be wise to submit all contemplated works to them for their opinion and advice, before publication. To which I would reply, that several of this committee are men of liberal education, and are so situated as to have it in their power to devote much of their time to this interesting work. Moreover, they have constantly, the aid and advice of the Corresponding Secretary of the Society, and of the Editor of the Magazine, who are not only pious, but literary men, whose whole time is devoted to the interests of the Union. But still, I am pleased to find that the public mind is awake to the importance of this subject, because it is evident, that the same power of multiplying and distributing books which is calculated, under a wise direction, to be the means of so much good, is equally capable, under a different guidance, to become an engine of incalculable evil. It gives me pleasure, therefore, to have it in my power to state, that the committee are so deeply sensible of the high responsibility of their office, and of their own liableness to error, that they have been in the habit of subjecting those works, concerning which there could be any doubt, to the judgment of men in whose opinion the religious public repose the greatest confidence. And it is still their wish and purpose, as far as possible, to avail themselves of the suggestions and counsels of such men, both of the clergy and laity; so as to secure, as far as human frailty will permit, the selection of those books for

publication, which will be best adapted to promote the edification of all who read them.

I will now proceed freely to inquire, whether the system of instruction in Sunday-schools admits of any improvement or enlargement. And here, before I go farther, I would remark, that my observations on this subject must be considered theoretical, rather than practical: but the benefit of theory is, that it often suggests what, in practice, is found to be easiest and best. Again, I would observe, that it is not contemplated as practicable that the whole system which I am about to delineate should be every where introduced; or that it should be carried into complete effect, any where, immediately. Improvements in such institutions require time and experience; and I doubt not, that, in some respects, better plans and arrangements than those here specified will be discovered. My object will be accomplished if improvements be commenced; and in some measure answered, if I can succeed in turning the public attention to the subject.

It appears to me, then, that the system of Sunday-school instruction might be greatly enlarged, both as it relates to the pupils received under their tuition, and as it relates to the subjects of instruction. In regard to the former, my plan would be so large as to include all persons who need instruction, from the infant of two years, up to the man of a hundred years of age. Infant schools are now in a rapid progress of being established, and they are filling the minds of the Christian and philanthropist with pleasure and surprise. And there is no reason why there should not be Sabbath-schools for infants as well as for children of greater age. In giving instruction, age should make no distinction. Infant schools should therefore be a regular part of the Sunday-school system. It is true, they are kept through the week; and so are other schools; but their teachers, during the week, may give them no religious instruction. If the American Union does not gather these tender little ones under her fostering wing, they may fall into the clutches of those who will seek to devour them; their infant minds may be made to imbibe the poison of error, instead of the sincere milk of the word.

Again,—the Sunday-school system ought to embrace all those youth who are included in Bible classes. There never can be any definite line of distinction drawn between the appropriate studies of Sunday-schools and Bible classes. In practice, all distinction is already confounded; and why should the instructions of Sunday-schools stop at a particular point? Why not instruct the pupils as long as they are willing to remain? The objections that might be conceived to this amalgamation will, I trust, be obviated by the plan which will be submitted immediately for consideration. But I would not confine the instruction of Sunday-schools to youth; I would have it extended to all who are willing to be taught. The fact is, that multitudes of adults need instruction as much as the youth; and many would be delighted to have the opportunity of learning. Pride and false modesty would prevent some from coming forward, lest their ignorance should become manifest; but I would spread a mantle over their weakness, and devise a method of instruction which would require from adults nothing else but to hear, with the privilege of asking questions as often as they might be disposed to do so.

Having developed my plan for the enlargement of the system, as respects the pupils, I will add, that the execution would require a correspondent enlargement in regard to teachers. It would require that the pastor and his coadjutors, by whatever name called, should all become active teachers in these institutions. My idea is, that the whole church should form one great Sabbath-school, and that all the people should be disciples or teachers; or sometimes the one and

sometimes the other, according to circumstances. Knowledge, like wealth, is not acquired merely for ourselves; it should be like the light of a candle, for the benefit of all in the house. Every man and woman is under sacred obligations to teach those more ignorant than themselves. There is no good reason why the instruction of Sunday-schools 'should be confined to a few young people, as is commonly the case. Let the aged fathers and mothers, who have been learning for more than half a century, impart of the rich stores of their experience to the young. Let the learned, if there be such in the parish, not disdain to instruct in the higher branches of liberal knowledge; and, especially, let the pastor consider the Sabbath-school as one principal field of his labours. Here the whole work of catechising, and of instructing Bible classes, may be advantageously performed. Here he may preach to the young, far more effectually than from the pulpit. But it is time that I should develop the proposed plan, as it respects the enlargement of the studies pursued in these schools. This has already been hinted at in speaking of Bible classes; but I will now enter more into detail. After mature deliberation, I am of opinion, that all the pupils who can ever be taught in Sunday-schools, might be conveniently arranged into six different classes; and supposing a child to enter the first or lowest class, and to go through the whole system, he would rise, by regular gradations, through the whole of the six classes in succession. The first class would include infants and others, who were learning to spell and read. The second class, such children as were able to read, but not sufficiently advanced in age and intellect, to study the lessons contained in the prepared books of questions. These children should be furnished with a simple, historical catechism, containing questions and answers; and also plain moral precepts, with a reference to the retributions of eternity. The third class should embrace all children and others who are capable of learning the select lessons: in short, most of those who now attend Sabbath-schools. The fourth class should comprehend all those who have gone over the selected lessons which relate principally to historical passages; and they should be furnished with a similar book of selected lessons relating to the doctrines and moral precepts of the Bible. Their answers to these doctrinal questions ought to be in the words of Scripture. After which, they should learn the catechism of the church to which they belong, with such explanatory lectures, or exposition, as might be provided. The fifth class would consist of such young persons as are commonly included in Bible classes, who would be instructed in the emblems, figures, parables, types, and most remarkable prophecies of Scripture. This would include Biblical antiquities, and many other interesting matters which do not fall under that denomination; especially a short system of sacred geography, and a concise and perspicuous view of the collateral history of the Bible: by which I mean, such historical facts as are referred to in the Scriptures, or may serve to elucidate the sacred history. The sixth class should be instructed carefully in the evidences of divine revelation, external and internal; in the nature and proof of divine inspiration; and in the history and canonical authority of all the books contained in the Old and New Testaments; together with the reasons for rejecting apocryphal books of every description. The obvious objection to this system is, that it is too much extended: but is there any one thing included in it which every intelligent Christian ought not to know? Is there any part of this system, which, in a regular course of Christian instruction, can be dispensed with? And if we cannot communicate as much religious instruction as is desirable, that need not hinder us from forming a complete system, and from carrying it into effect as far as we can. It cannot, indeed, be expected that all, or even a majority of scholars, will go through the whole course; but some will be found willing to do so; and as the value of Biblical knowledge comes to be more highly appreciated, the number of thorough, persevering scholars will increase every year.

Another objection to a plan of instruction so extended is, that competent teachers cannot be obtained to communicate instruction on all the points mentioned. The answer to this objection has already been given in part, when we spoke of the part which it was expected the pastor and other well informed persons in the parish would take, in the instruction of Sunday-schools. To which I will now add, that with a proper apparatus of suitable books, on the subjects mentioned, some of which are now in readiness, and others are in a course of being prepared by the American Sunday-School Union, there will be found no great difficulty in carrying the plan into full accomplishment.

Moreover, if we create a demand for teachers of higher attainments than are now needed, many of those already in office will take much pains to prepare themselves for this work; and thus the extension of the plan of instruction will have a most favourable effect on the improvement of many young persons of both sexes, who are now devoted to this employment.

Besides, it would be one advantage of this plan, that those teachers who should instruct the three lower classes, might be scholars in the three higher, if such an arrangement should be made as would allow of the lower classes reciting in the morning, and the higher in the afternoon or evening.

If, for example, in villages and the country, the Sabbath-schools should meet at 9 o'clock in the morning, at which time the three younger classes would be instructed, and at which the attendance of the pastor ought not to be expected. Supposing, then, the public service to commence, as is usual, at 11 o'clock, the children might all attend in the church, under the inspection of their teachers; but let the afternoon be devoted entirely to the instruction of the higher classes and of adults, at which time let the pastor and his assistants attend, and aid in the instruction of the school. And it may here be remarked, that however numerous the schools may be for younger children in the morning, it would generally be expedient that all the teachers and advanced scholars should meet together in the church, or some other central place, in the afternoon; because this description of learners will be less numerous than the younger, and the minister cannot instruct in more places than one. This arrangement would, it is true, exclude the afternoon sermon where such a service is usual; but it would furnish a substitute far more effectual for the instruction of the people. In cities and large towns this plan may not be considered expedient, or where the people have always been accustomed to a regular afternoon service in the church; but if once the instruction of adults as well as children was made a part of the exercise of Sunday-schools, it would be found, on trial, to be far more beneficial to all concerned to attend these, than to hear an additional sermon; and especially as the usual service of prayer and praise might be as solemnly performed in the Sabbath-school as in the church. And on all these occasions there ought to be some kind of lecture delivered by the pastor. But in regard to the particular arrangement, every congregation could determine it best for themselves. All that I mean by the above observations is, to show that the plan proposed may, without any great inconvenience, be reduced to practice, as in cities and large towns the evening might be occupied with the exercises of the Sabbath-schools, if that was preferred to the afternoon. In regard to the instruction of adults, several methods might be proposed, which would render the service both pleasant and profitable. They might meet, on some convenient time in the week, in little knots, or on Sabbath morning, and converse freely on the subject of the lesson prescribed, whatever it might be; and in the time of the regular meeting of the Sabbath-school, such as were willing might

be questioned by some elderly person, or by the pastor, and the others might be permitted to hear and to learn. Having studied the lesson, they would be nearly as much instructed by the examination of others as by their own; a plan of this sort is now in operation in a very large and respectable congregation in New-Jersey. But should none of adult age consent to be publicly catechised, it need create no discouragement; for the pastor, or other teacher, might propound the questions and answer them himself, allowing all persons freely to make any inquiry, or ask for any explanation. It is scarcely conceivable what a spring this practice would impart to the minds of the people, which are commonly left to stagnate; and as it would undoubtedly increase their knowledge, so it would add much to their happiness, by leading them to shake off that inertness which is so unfavourable to real enjoyment. It is not necessary, however, to establish any uniform method for the instruction of adults; what would be well suited to one people, would not be adapted to another: a judicious pastor would be able to regulate this matter in his own flock. Let the experiment be fairly made, and if it do not result in much good, I shall confess myself disappointed.

6. The only other subject on which I wish to make any remarks, is that of agents and auxiliaries. To carry into full effect the plans of the American Sunday-school Union, many prudent, industrious, and persevering agents, will be requisite. It has hitherto been common to look to the profession of the ministry alone for agents; but experience teaches, that they cannot be supplied in sufficient numbers from that quarter; and considering the want and importunate demand for preachers in the destitute regions of our country, they ought not, except in extraordinary cases, to relinquish the appropriate duties of their office to become agents for this or any other society. Here the question meets us, whether pious, active, and judicious laymen would not answer for Sunday-school agents as well, and in some respects better, than clergymen? Of this, I have myself no doubt. But, can they be obtained? Why not? There are scores of young men in our principal cities who have been long experienced in conducting Sunday-schools, and who take a deep interest in their furtherance and prosperity. Undoubtedly some of these zealous men will cheerfully offer their services as soon as the door shall be opened for their employment. I know, indeed, that on their part it would require a sacrifice of worldly prospects for the sake of Christ and his cause: but, I ask, are they unwilling to make this sacrifice? I should be grieved to think, that that was the fact. Why should it be required of ministers alone to exercise self-denial, and make sacrifices for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom? Did Christ give one set of terms to ministers and another to private Christians? Or rather did he not require of every disciple the same disposition to deny himself and to renounce the world, by taking up his cross and following him? It cannot reasonably be supposed, that the employment of pious laymen on agencies will in any way infringe on the sacred office of the ministry. He will have nothing to do with the peculiar duties of a preacher. He must often, indeed, give public statements to the people, and it may often be convenient to use the pulpit for this purpose; but an exhibition of the views and plans of the American Union will no more interfere with the duties of those ordained to the sacred office, than speaking at the bar, or in the senate. And as there does exist a jealousy among the several denominations, or at least among some who belong to them, respectively, it might have some tendency to obviate the difficulty which has been felt on this point, if well qualified laymen should be commissioned as agents. In regard to auxiliaries, it seems to me, that at present the organization of the Union is very incomplete. Their connexion with the parent, or central society is by far too loose and undefined, to enable the whole body to exert that energy which she would be capable with a more perfect organization. One thing is clear,

that all the agents of the auxiliaries ought to be appointed by the Board of the American Union, and should be amenable to this body. Unless it is intended to carry on the operations of Sunday-schools by societies perfectly independent of each other, something ought to be done speedily to draw the bands of connexion closer, to enable the General Union to aid more effectively the exertions of the auxiliaries; and to render the auxiliaries in fact, what they are in name, aids to the parent society in her arduous and extended operations. But while local societies appoint agents to traverse large portions of country, and carry on their measures without consulting or even informing the American Union of their plans and operations, it is just the same as if there existed no connexion whatever. As far as I can learn, there is not even any systematized plan of increasing the funds of the general society by the numerous auxiliaries. It would require more wisdom and more time than the writer can command, to devise an effective plan of union and cooperation between the general society and its auxiliaries. All I intended was, to bring the subject before the public; and I do solemnly hope, that it will engage the earnest attention of the General Union, and of all the local Unions in the land. And now I would appeal to the pious and benevolent of all denominations, to say whether this Institution, so extensive in its operations, so multiplied in its ramifications, and so beneficial to all classes of society in its results, shall be cramped or retarded in its career of usefulness for want of adequate pecuniary aid? Seldom, since its earliest existence, has the American Sunday-School Union made any appeal to the public for this species of aid: the operations of this society have been, not to draw any thing from the people, but to confer benefits upon them; and still it contemplates no other system; for while tens of thousands are, every week, deriving rich blessings from the Institution, those persons engaged in managing it give the strongest possible evidence of disinterestedness;—personal emolument, or advantage they neither expect nor are willing to receive. Now, it is evident that the principal burden of sustaining an institution in which the whole community have so deep an interest, ought not to devolve upon a few persons: but, hitherto, this has been very much the case. When it is considered how small a sum from every Sunday-school, or even from every auxiliary, regularly forwarded, annually, to the parent society, would enable them not only to carry on, but greatly to enlarge their operations, especially in the publishing department, I cannot persuade myself that there will be found any reluctance in the public to contribute the funds requisite for the energetic and extensive operation of this powerful engine for doing good. There can be no doubt, that the American Sunday-School Union is highly in favour with all the friends of religion and sound morality in our country. Perhaps no other institution has so universally conciliated the affections of the people. It is with confidence, therefore, that I make this appeal to the public, to render promptly and liberally all the pecuniary aid which is needed. No permanent funds are contemplated by the society. Whatever sums may be received will be immediately applied to the important purposes of sustaining and enlarging the system of Sunday-schools. That I am not mistaken in supposing that the society needs pecuniary aid, is evident from the fact revealed at the last Anniversary by the worthy President of the American Sunday-School Union, that the Treasurer of the Institution was \$17,000 in advance for the Union. It is true, indeed, that the sums due to the Institution are considerably more than what they owe, but these are widely scattered, and the collection of them very slow. For their valuable building, the Union is indebted almost entirely to the liberality of a few devoted friends in the city of Philadelphia: but a large part of the purchase money of this property is still due. From this brief statement of facts, it will be evident to all the friends of Sunday-schools in our country, that the time has arrived when it has become an imperious duty for the Christian

public to step forward and relieve the Board from their pressing embarrassments, and to take effectual measures to prevent the recurrence of the same in future. In conclusion, I have only to say, that the more I reflect on the power and salutary influence of the Sunday-school system, the more am I convinced, that it has been raised up by a benignant Providence to be one of the most effective engines in overthrowing the kingdom of Satan, and promoting a general reformation in society, especially in that class of people who have evaded the influence of other means of improvement. If what I have written may contribute in some small degree to the furtherance of this good cause, I shall think that my time was well employed, and that I have received a rich remuneration for my labour.

S. Thoughts on Religious Experience

THOUGHTS

on

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

by the

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Death-bed exercises of Mr. Baxter, and the Rev. Thomas Scott, D. D.

CHAPTER XXII("tw://[self]?tid=5" \ "Religious_Experience_Chapter_22-")

Preparation for death.—The state of the soul after death

PRAYER

For one who feels that he is approaching the borders of another world

PREFACE

There are two kinds of religious knowledge, which, though intimately connected as cause and effect, may nevertheless be distinguished. These are the knowledge of the truth as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and the impression which that truth makes on the human mind when rightly apprehended. The first may be compared to the inscription or image on a seal; the other to the impression made by the seal on the wax. When that impression is clearly and distinctly made, we can understand, by contemplating it, the true inscription on the seal more satisfactorily, than by a direct view of the seal itself. Thus it is found, that nothing tends more to confirm and elucidate the truths contained in the word, than an inward experience of their efficacy on the heart. It cannot, therefore, be uninteresting to the Christian, to have these effects, as they consist in the various views and affections of the mind, traced out, and exhibited in their connexion with the truth, and in their relation to each other. There is, however, one manifest disadvantage, under which we must labour, in acquiring this kind of knowledge, whether by our own experience, or that of others; which is, that we are obliged to follow a fallible guide; and the pathway to this knowledge is very intricate, and the light which shines upon it, often obscure. All investigations of the exercises of the human mind are attended with difficulty; and never more so, than when we attempt to ascertain the religious or spiritual state of our hearts. If, indeed, the impression of the truth were perfect, there would exist little or no difficulty; but when it is a mere outline and the lineaments obscure, it becomes extremely difficult to determine whether it be the genuine impress of the truth: especially as in this case, there will be much darkness and confusion in the mind, and much that is of a nature directly opposite to the effects of the engrafted word. There is, moreover, so great a variety in the constitution of human minds, so much diversity in the strength of the natural passions, and so wide a difference in the temperament of Christians, and so many different degrees of piety, that the study of this department of religious truth is exceedingly difficult. In many cases the most experienced and skilful casuist will feel himself at a loss; or may utterly mistake, in regard to the true nature of a case submitted to his consideration. The complete knowledge of the deceitful heart of man, is a prerogative of the omniscient God. "I the Lord search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men." But we are not on this account forbidden to search into this subject; so far is this from being true, that we are repeatedly exhorted to examine ourselves, in relation to this very point; and Paul expresses astonishment, that the Corinthian Christians should have made so

little progress in self-knowledge. "Examine yourselves," says he, "whether you be in the faith—prove your own selves—know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." In judging of religious experience, it is all important to keep steadily in view the system of divine truth, contained in the Holy Scriptures; otherwise, our experience, as is too often the case, will degenerate into enthusiasm. Many ardent professors, seem too readily to take it for granted, that all religious feelings must be good. They therefore take no care to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious, the pure gold, and the tinsel. Their only concern is about the ardour of their feelings; not considering, that if they are spurious, the more intense they are, the further will they lead them astray. In our day, there is nothing more necessary than to distinguish carefully between true and false experiences, in religion; to "try the spirits whether they are of God." And in making this discrimination, there is no other test but the infallible word of God; let every thought, motive, impulse and emotion, be brought to this touch-stone. "To the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them."

If genuine religious experience is nothing but the impression of divine truth on the mind, by the energy of the Holy Spirit, then it is evident that a knowledge of the truth is essential to genuine piety; error never can, under any circumstances, produce the effects of truth. This is now generally acknowledged. But it is not so clearly understood by all, that any defect in our knowledge of the truth, must, just so far as the error extends, mar the symmetry of the impression produced. The error, in this case, is of course not supposed to relate to fundamental truths, for then there can be no genuine piety; but where a true impression is made, it may be rendered very defective, for want of a complete knowledge of the whole system of revealed truth; or its beauty marred by the existence of some errors mingled with the truth, which may be well illustrated by returning again to the seal. Suppose that some part of the image inscribed on it has been defaced, or that some of the letters have been obliterated, it is evident, that when the impression is made on the wax there will be a corresponding deficiency or deformity, although in the main the impress may be correct. There is reason to believe, therefore, that all ignorance of revealed truth, or error respecting it, must be attended with a corresponding defect in the religious exercises of the person. This consideration teaches us the importance of truth, and the duty of increasing daily in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the true and only method of growing in grace. There may be much correct theoretical knowledge, I admit, where there is no impression corresponding with it on the heart; but still, all good impressions on the heart are from the truth, and from the truth alone. Hence we find, that those denominations of Christians which receive the system of evangelical truth, only in part, have a defective experience; and their Christian character, as a body, is so far defective; and even where true piety exists, we often find a sad mixture of enthusiasm, self-righteousness, or superstition. And even where the theory of doctrinal truth is complete, yet if there be an error respecting the terms of Christian communion, by narrowing the entrance into Christ's fold to a degree which his word does not authorize, this single error, whatever professions may be made to the contrary with the lips, always generates a narrow spirit of bigotry, which greatly obstructs the free exercise of that brotherly love which Christ made the badge of discipleship.

If these things be so, then let all Christians use unceasing diligence in acquiring a correct knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and let them pray without ceasing for the influence of the Holy Spirit, to render the truth effectual in the sanctification of the whole man, soul, body, and

spirit. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," was a prayer offered up by Christ, in behalf of all whom the Father had given him.

ADVERTISEMENT

The following Thoughts on Religious Experience were, for the most part, published in successive numbers, in the Watchman of the South, and thence transferred to several other papers, belonging to different denominations; so that they have been pretty widely circulated through the religious community. They were commenced without any view to their being collected into a volume; and, indeed, without any plan or purpose, in regard to the extent to which the subject would be pursued. They were generally written hastily, in such fragments of time as could be spared from the daily duties of an arduous profession, and in a state of health far from being perfect. This is the only apology which the author has to offer, for the imperfections which will doubtless be found in them. For although he has cursorily revised them since the call was made for their re-publication, in this form, yet he has made no alteration of any consequence. He is thankful to God, that they have been made useful to a single soul; and that they may be rendered still more so, is his humble prayer. He would, however, inform the reader that one third or one fourth of this volume, principally the latter part, has never before been published.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I("tw:///self?tid=5&popup=0" \ "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Early religious impressions.—Different results.—Classes of persons least impressed.—Examples of ineffectual impressions

There is no necessity for any other proof of native depravity, than the aversion, which children early manifest to religious instruction and to spiritual exercises. From this cause it proceeds, that many children, who have the opportunity of a good religious education, learn scarcely any thing of the most important truths of Christianity. If they are compelled to commit the Catechism to memory, they are wont to do this without ever thinking of the doctrines contained in the words which they recite; so that, when the attention is at any time awakened to the subject of religion, as a personal concern, they feel themselves to be completely ignorant of the system of divine truth taught in the Bible. Yet even to these, the truths committed to memory are now of great utility. They are like a treasure which has been hidden, but is now discovered. Of two persons under conviction of sin, one of whom has had sound religious instruction, and the other none, the former will have an unspeakable advantage over the latter in many respects.

Many children, and especially those who have pious parents, who speak to them of the importance of salvation, are the subjects of occasional religious impressions, of different kinds. Sometimes they are alarmed by hearing an awakening sermon, or by the sudden death of a companion of their own age; or, again, they are tenderly affected, even to tears, from a consideration of the goodness and forbearance of God, or from a representation of the love and sufferings of Christ. There are also seasons of transporting joy, which some experience, especially after being tenderly affected with a sense of ingratitude to God for his wonderful goodness, in sparing them and bestowing so many blessings upon them. These transient emotions of joy cannot always be easily accounted for, but they are commonly preceded or accompanied by a hope, or persuasion, that God is reconciled and will receive them. In some cases it would be thought that these juvenile

exercises were indications of a change of heart, did they not pass away like the morning cloud, or early dew, so as even to be obliterated from the mind which experienced them. Some undertake to account for these religious impressions, merely from the susceptible principle of human nature, in connection with the external instructions of the word, and some striking dispensations of Providence; but the cause assigned is not adequate, because the same circumstances often exist, when no such effects follow. Others ascribe them to the evil spirit, who is ever seeking to deceive and delude unwary souls, by inspiring them with a false persuasion of their good estate, while they are in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. While I would not deny that Satan may take advantage of these transient exercises to induce a false hope, I cannot be persuaded that he produces these impressions; for often the persons, before experiencing them, were as careless and stupid as he could wish them to be; and because the tendency of these impressions is salutary. The youth, thus affected, becomes more tender in conscience, forsakes known sin before indulged, has recourse to prayer, and feels strong desires after eternal happiness. These are not what Satan would effect, if he could; unless we could suppose that he was operating against himself, which our Saviour has taught us to be impossible. I am of opinion, therefore, that these transient impressions should be ascribed to the common operations of the Spirit of God, and may have some inexplicable connection with the future conversion and salvation of the person. There is a common practical error in the minds of many Christians in regard to this matter. They seem to think that nothing has any relation to the conversion of the sinner, but that which immediately preceded this event; and the Christian is ready to say, I was awakened under such a sermon, and never had rest until I found it in Christ; making nothing of all previous instructions and impressions. So, when a revival occurs under the awakening discourses of some evangelist, people are ready to think that he only is the successful preacher whose labours God owns and blesses; whereas, he does but bring forward to maturity, feelings and convictions, which have been long secretly forming and growing within the soul, but so imperceptibly, that the person himself was little sensible of any change. It may be justly and Scripturally compared to a growing crop: after the seed is sown it vegetates, we know not how, and then it receives daily the sun's influence, and from time to time, refreshing showers; but about the time of earing, after a long drought, there comes a plentiful shower, by means of which, nutriment is afforded for the formation of the full corn in the ear. No one will dispute the importance and efficacy of this last shower in maturing the grain; but had there been no cultivation and no showers long before, this had never produced any effect.

Whether those who are never converted, are the subjects of these religious impressions, as well as those who are afterwards brought to faith in Christ, is a question not easily answered. That they experience dreadful alarms and pungent convictions at times, and also tender drawings, cannot be doubted; but whether those "chosen in Christ" are not, in their natural state, subject to impressions which others never experience, must remain undetermined, since we know so little of the real state of the hearts of most men; but as there is, undoubtedly, a special providence exercised by Christ over those sheep not yet called into the fold, I cannot but think it probable that they are often influenced by the Holy Spirit in a peculiar manner, to guard them against fatal errors and destructive habits, and in preparing them, by degrees, to receive the truth.

We know very little, however, of what is passing in the minds of thousands around us. The zealous preacher often concludes and laments that there is no impression on the minds of his hearers, when, if the covering of the human heart could be withdrawn, he would be astonished and

confounded at the variety and depth of the feelings experienced. Those impressions which manifest themselves by a flow of tears, are not the deepest, but often very superficial; while the most awful distresses of the soul are entirely concealed by a kind of hypocrisy, which men early learn to practise, to hide their feelings of a religious kind from their fellow-creatures. A man may be so much in despair as to be meditating suicide, when his nearest friends know nothing of it. The attempt at immediate effect, and the expectation of it, is one of the errors of the present times; indeed, it is the very watch-word of a certain party. But let us not be misunderstood; we do not mean to say that all men are not under indispensable obligations immediately to obey all the commands of God. Concerning this, there can be no difference of opinion. But the persons to whom we refer seem to think that nothing is done towards the salvation of men, but at the moment of their conversion, and that every good effect must be at once manifest. Perhaps some one may infer that we believe in a gradual regeneration, and that special grace differs from common, only in degree; but such an inference would be utterly false, for there can be no medium between life and death; but we do profess to believe and maintain, that there is a gradual preparation, by common grace, for regeneration, which may be going on from childhood to mature age; and we believe that, as no mortal can tell the precise moment when the soul is vivified, and as the principle of spiritual life in its commencement is often very feeble, so it is an undoubted truth, that the development of the new life in the soul may be, and often is, very slow; and not unfrequently that which is called conversion is nothing else but a more sensible and vigorous exercise of a principle which has long existed. Just as the seed under ground may have life, and may be struggling to come forth to open day; but it may meet with various obstructions and unfavourable circumstances which retard its growth. At length, however, it makes its way through the earth, and expands its leaves to the light and the air, and begins to drink in from every source that nutriment which it needs. No one supposes, however, that the moment of its appearing above ground is the commencement of its life; but this mistake is often made in the analogous case of the regeneration of the soul. The first clear and lively exercise of faith and repentance is made the date of the origin of spiritual life, whereas it existed in a feeble state, and put forth obscure acts long before. I find, however, that I am anticipating a discussion intended for another part of this work. At present, I wish only to remark further, that what has been said about early impressions and juvenile exercises of religion is not applicable to all.

There are, alas! many who seem to remain unmoved amidst all the light and means by which most are surrounded in this land; and these, too, are often found in the families of the pious, and do actually pass through more than one revival without partaking of any unusual influence, or experiencing any strong religious feeling. Esau had a title to the birthright, and yet he so despised this peculiar blessing that he actually sold it for "a mess of pottage." Abraham, too, had his Ishmael, and Jacob a troop of ungodly children. Eli's sons were wicked in the extreme, and Samuel's came not up to what was expected from the children of such a father. Among all David's children we read of none who feared God but Solomon. Those, however, who become extremely wicked have often resisted the strivings of the Spirit; and not unfrequently the most impious blasphemers and atheists have once been much under the influence of religious light and feeling; but quenching the Spirit, have been given up to "believe a lie," and "to work all uncleanness with greediness."

We have said that there are some persons who grow up to manhood without experiencing any religious impressions, except mere momentary thoughts of death, and judgment; and these may be persons of a very amiable disposition and moral deportment; and these very qualities may be, in part, the reason of their carelessness. They commit no gross sins, the remembrance of which wounds the conscience. Being of a calm and contented temper, and fond of taking their ease, they shun religious reflection, and turn away their thoughts from the truth, when it is presented to them from the pulpit. Some persons, of this description, have been awakened and converted, at mature age, and have then confessed, that they lived as much without God as atheists, and seldom, if ever, extended their thoughts to futurity. Of course they utterly neglected secret prayer, and lived in the midst of gospel light, without being in the least affected by it.

There is, moreover, another class, who seem never to feel the force of religious truth. They are such as spend their whole waking hours in the giddy whirl of amusement or company. Full of health and spirits, and sanguine in their hopes of enjoyment from the world, they put away serious reflection as the very bane of pleasure. The very name of religion is hateful to them: and all they ask of religious people is to let them alone, and seize the pleasures of life while within their reach. If we may judge from appearances, this class is very large. We find them the majority in many places of fashionable resort. The theatre, ball-room, and the very streets are full of such. They flutter gaily along, and keep each other in countenance; while they are strangers to all grave reflection, even in regard to the sober concerns of this life. If a pious friend ever gets the opportunity of addressing a word of serious advice to them, their politeness may prevent them from behaving rudely, but no sooner is his back turned, than they laugh him to scorn, and hate and despise him for his pains. They habituate themselves to think that religion is an awkward unseemly thing, and wonder how any person of sense can bear to attend to it. Very often this high reverie of pleasure is short: in such a world as this, events are apt to occur, which dash the cup of sensual delights, while it is at the lips. Death will occasionally intrude even upon this gay circle, and put a speedy end to their unreasonable merriment. O how sad is the spectacle, to see one of the votaries of fashion suddenly cut down, and carried to the grave!—When mortal sickness seizes such persons, they are very apt to be delirious, if not with fever, yet with fright; and their officious but cruel friends, make it their chief study, to bar out every idea of religion; and to flatter the poor dying creature with the hope of recovery, until death has actually seized his prey. Such an event produces a shock in the feelings of survivors, of the same class, but such is the buoyancy of their feelings, and their forgetfulness of mournful events, that they are soon seen dancing along their slippery path with as much insane thoughtlessness, as before. Nothing, which ever occurs, tends so much to disturb the career of this multitude, as when one of their number is converted unto God. At first they are astounded, and for a moment pause, but they soon learn to ascribe the change to some natural cause, or to some strange capriciousness of temper, or disappointment in earthly hopes. Very soon you will see them as much estranged from such an one, although before an intimate friend—as if he had never been of the number of their acquaintances. Often their nearest relatives are ashamed of them, and, as much as possible, shun their company. How absurd then is it, for any to pretend, that men naturally love God, and only need to know his character to revere it! If there be a truth established beyond all reasonable question, by uniform experience, it is, that lovers of pleasure are the enemies of God. The class of speculating, money-making, business-doing men, is probably as numerous, and, though more sober in their thoughts, yet as far from God, and as destitute of religion as those already described; but as we

find these not commonly among the youth, but middle aged, we shall not attempt to delineate their character, or describe their feelings. I must return to the consideration of early religious impressions which do not terminate in a sound conversion to God. Some five and forty years ago, I was frequently in a family where the parents, though respecters of religion, were not professors. They had a sweet, amiable little daughter, eight or ten years of age, who had all the appearance of eminent piety. She loved the Bible, loved preaching and religious people, was uniform and constant in retiring for devotional exercises, and spoke freely, when asked, of the feelings of her own mind. I think I never had less doubt of any one's piety than of this little girl's. There was no forwardness, nor pertness; nor any assumption of sanctimonious airs. All was simplicity, modesty, and consistency; she was grave but not demure; solemn and tender in her feelings, without affectation. She applied for admission to the communion—and who dare refuse entrance into the fold to such a dear lamb? Here my personal acquaintance ends. But years afterwards, upon inquiry, I found that when she grew up to woman-hood, she became gay and careless, and entirely relinquished her religious profession. My Methodist neighbour, I know, if he had the chance to whisper in my ear, would say, "I have no difficulty in accounting for this case, she was a child of God, but fell from grace." But I have never been able to adopt this method of explaining such phenomena. There are few truths of which I have a more unwavering conviction, than that the sheep of Christ, for whom he laid down his life, shall never perish. I do believe, however, that grace may, for a season, sink so low in the heart into which it has entered, and be so overborne and buried up, that none but God can perceive its existence. Now, that may have been the fact in regard to this dear child; for her later history is unknown to me. She may, for aught I know, be still alive, and be now a living consistent member of Christ's Church, and may possibly peruse these lines, though if she should she may not recognize her own early features, taken down from memory after the lapse of so many years. But the picture is not of one person only, but of many; differing only in trivial circumstances.

I retain a distinct recollection of another case of a still earlier date; and where the history is more complete. An obscure youth, the son of religious parents, in a time of awakening, seemed to have his attention drawn to the concerns of his soul; so that he seriously and diligently attended on all religious meetings. He had the appearance of deep humility; and though free to speak, when interrogated, was in no respect forward or self-sufficient. Indeed, he was scarcely known, or noticed, by the religious people who were in the habit of attending prayer meetings. It happened, that on an inclement evening, very few were present, and none of those who were accustomed to take a part in leading the devotional exercises; the person, at whose house the meeting was held, not wishing to dismiss the few who were present, with a single prayer, asked this youth if he would not attempt to make a prayer. He readily assented, and performed this service with so much fervency, fluency, and propriety of expression, that all who heard it were astonished. From this time he was called upon more frequently than any other, and often in the public congregation; for some people preferred his prayers to any sermons; and I must say, that I never heard any one pray, who seemed to me to have such a gift of prayer. The most appropriate passages of Scripture seemed to come to him in rapid succession, as if by inspiration. Now the common cry was, that he ought to be taken from the trade which he was learning, (for he was an apprentice)—and be put to learning. The thing demanded by so many, was not difficult to accomplish. He began a regular course of academical studies, and his progress, though not extraordinary, was respectable. But, alas! how weak is man—how deceitful is the heart! This young man soon began to exhibit

evidence too plain, that conceit and self-confidence, were taking root and growing very rapidly. He became impatient of opposition, arrogant towards his superiors, and unwilling to yield to reproof administered in the most paternal spirit. When the time came to enter upon trials for the ministry, the Presbytery, to which he applied, refused to receive him under their care. But this solemn rebuff, instead of humbling him, only provoked his indignation, and, as if in despite of them, he turned at once to the study of another profession, in which he might have succeeded had he remained moral and temperate in his habits; but falling into bad company, he became dissipated, and soon came, without any known reformation, to a premature end. Now suppose this man had been permitted to enter the ministry, the probability is, that though his unchristian temper would have done much evil, yet he would have continued in the sacred office to his dying day. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

CHAPTER II("tw:///self?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Piety in children.—Comparatively few renewed in infancy and childhood.—Soul awakened in different ways.—Legal conviction not a necessary part of true religion.—Progress of Conviction

It is an interesting question, whether now, there are any persons sanctified from the womb? If the communication of grace ever took place, at so early a period of human existence, there is no reason why it should not now sometimes occur. God says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." And of John the Baptist, Gabriel said to Zacharias, his father, "And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." The prophet Samuel also, seems to have feared the Lord from his earliest childhood. In later times, cases have often occurred, in which eminently pious persons could not remember the time when they did not love the Saviour and experience godly sorrow for their sins; and, as we believe that infants may be the subjects of regeneration, and cannot be saved without it, why may it not be the fact, that some who are regenerated live to mature age? I know, indeed, that many conceive that infants are naturally free from moral pollution, and, of course, need no regeneration; but this opinion is diametrically opposite to the doctrine of Scripture, and inconsistent with the acknowledged fact, that, as soon as they are capable of moral action, all do go astray, and sin against God. If children were not depraved, they would be naturally inclined to love God, and delight in his holy law; but the reverse is true. Perhaps one reason why so few are regenerated at this early age is, lest some should adopt the opinion that grace came by nature, or that man was not corrupt from his birth. Some have opposed the idea that any are sanctified from their birth, for fear that mere moralists and those religiously educated, should indulge the hope that they were born of God, although they have experienced no particular change, in any part of their lives, as far back as memory reaches. But, allowing that some may improperly make this use of the doctrine, it only proves that a sound doctrine may be abused. All the doctrines of grace have been thus abused, and will be, as long as "the heart is deceitful above all things." There is, however, no ground for those who are still impenitent, to comfort themselves with the notion that they were regenerated in early infancy; for piety in a child will be as manifest as in an adult, as soon as such a child comes to the exercise of reason; and in some respects, more so, because there are so few young children who are pious, and because they have more simplicity of character, and are much less liable to play the hypocrite than persons of mature age. Mere decency of external behaviour, with a freedom from gross sins, is no evidence of regeneration; for these things may be found in many whose spirit is proud and self-righteous, and entirely opposite

to the religion of Christ: and we know that outward regularity and sobriety may be produced by the restraints of a religious education and good example, where there are found none of the internal characteristics of genuine piety. Suppose then, that, in a certain case, grace has been communicated at so early a period, that its first exercises cannot be remembered, what will be the evidences which we should expect to find of its existence? Surely, we ought not to look for the wisdom, judgment, and stability of adult years, even in a pious child. We should expect—if I may say so—a childish piety: a simple, devout, and tender state of heart. As soon as such a child should obtain the first ideas of God, as its Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and of Christ, as its Saviour, who shed his blood and laid down his life for us on the cross, it would be piously affected with these truths, and would give manifest proof, that it possessed a susceptibility of emotions and affections of heart, corresponding with the conceptions of truth which it was capable of taking in. Such a child would be liable to sin, as all Christians are, but, when made sensible of faults, it would manifest tenderness of conscience and genuine sorrow, and would be fearful of sinning afterwards. When taught that prayer was both a duty and privilege, it would take pleasure in drawing nigh to God, and would be conscientious in the discharge of secret duties. A truly pious child would be an affectionate and obedient child to its parents and teachers; and kind to brothers and sisters, and indeed, to all other persons; and would take a lively interest in hearing of the conversion of sinners, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. We ought not to expect from a regenerated child uniform attention to serious subjects, or a freedom from that gaiety and volatility which is characteristic of that tender age; but we should expect to find the natural propensity moderated, and the temper softened and seasoned, by the commingling of pious thoughts and affections with those which naturally flow from the infant mind. When such children are called, in Providence, to leave the world, then commonly, their piety breaks out into a flame, and these young saints, under the influence of divine grace, are enabled so to speak of their love to Christ and confidence in him, as astonishes, while it puts to shame aged Christians. Many examples of this kind we have on record, where the evidence of genuine piety was as strong as it well could be. There is a peculiar sweetness, as well as tenderness, in these early buddings of grace. In short, the exercises of grace are the same in a child as in an adult, only modified by the peculiarities in the character and knowledge of a child. Indeed, many adults in years, who are made the subjects of grace, are children in knowledge and understanding, and require the same indulgence, in our judgments of them, as children in years. To those who cannot fix any commencement of their pious exercises, but who possess every other evidence of a change of heart, I would say, be not discouraged on this account, but rather be thankful that you have been so early placed under the tender care of the great Shepherd, and have thus been restrained from committing many sins, to which your nature, as well as that of others, was inclined. The habitual evidences of piety are the same, at whatever period the work commenced. If you possess these, you are safe; and early piety is probably more steady and consistent when matured by age, than that of later origin, though the change, of course, cannot be so evident to yourselves or others.

If piety may commence at any age, how solicitous should parents be for their children, that God would bestow his grace upon them, even before they know their right hand from their left; and, when about to dedicate them to God, in holy baptism, how earnestly should they pray that they might be baptized with the Holy Ghost—that while their bodies are washed in the emblematical laver of regeneration, their souls may experience the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. If the sentiments, expressed above, be correct, then may there be

such a thing as baptismal regeneration; not that the mere external application of water can have any effect to purify the soul; nor that internal grace uniformly or generally, accompanies this external washing, but that God, who works when and by what means he pleases, may regenerate, by his Spirit, the soul of the infant, while in his sacred name, water is applied to the body. And, what time in infancy is more likely to be the period of spiritual quickening than the moment when that sacred rite is performed, which is strikingly emblematical of this change. Whether it be proper to say that baptism may be the means of regeneration, depends on the sense in which the word means is used. If in the sense of presenting motives to the rational mind, as when the word is read or heard, then it is not a means; for the child has no knowledge of what is done for it. But, if by means, be understood something which is accompanied by the divine efficiency, changing the moral nature of the infant, then, in this sense, baptism may be called the means of regeneration when thus accompanied by divine grace. The reason why it is believed, that regeneration does not usually accompany baptism, is simply because no evidences of spiritual life appear in baptized children more than in those which remain unbaptized. The education of children should proceed on the principle that they are in an unregenerate state, until evidences of piety clearly appear, in which case, they should be sedulously cherished and nurtured. These are Christ's lambs—"little ones, who believe in him" whom none should offend or mislead upon the peril of a terrible punishment. But though the religious education of children should proceed on the ground that they are destitute of grace, it ought ever to be used as a means of grace. Every lesson, therefore, should be accompanied with the lifting up of the heart of the instructor to God for a blessing on the means. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

Although the grace of God may be communicated to a human soul, at any period of its existence, in this world; yet the fact manifestly is, that very few are renewed before the exercise of reason commences; and not many, in early childhood. Most persons, with whom we have been acquainted, grew up without giving any decisive evidence of a change of heart. Though religiously educated, yet they have evinced a want of love to God, and an aversion to spiritual things. Men are very reluctant, it is true, to admit that their hearts are wicked, and at enmity with God. They declare that they are conscious of no such feeling, but still the evidence of a dislike to the spiritual worship of God, they cannot altogether disguise; and this is nothing else but enmity to God. They might easily be convicted of loving the world more than God, the creature more than the Creator; and we know that he, who will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Let the most moral and amiable of mankind, who are in this natural state, be asked such questions as these, Do you take real pleasure in perusing the sacred Scriptures, especially those parts which are most spiritual? Do you take delight in secret prayer, and find your heart drawn out to God, in strong desires? Do you spend much time in contemplating the divine attributes? Are you in the habit of communing with your own hearts, and examining the true temper of your souls? No unregenerate persons can truly answer these, and such like questions, in the affirmative. It is evident, then, that most persons, whom we see around us, and with whom we daily converse, are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and, continuing in that state, where Christ is they never can come. And yet, alas! they are at ease in Zion; and seem to have no fear of that wrath which is coming. Their case is not only dangerous, but discouraging. Yet those who are now in a state of grace, yea, those of our race who are now in heaven, were once in the same condition. You, my reader, may now be a member of Christ's body, and an heir of his glory; but you can easily look back, and remember the time, when you were as unconcerned about your salvation, as any of the gay, who

are now fluttering around you. The same power which arrested you, is able to stop their mad career. Still hope and pray for their conversion. But tell me, how were you brought to turn from your wayward, downward course? This, as it relates to the external means of awakening, would receive a great variety of answers. One would say, while hearing a particular sermon, I was awakened to see my lost estate, and I never found rest or peace until I was enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Another would answer, I was brought to a consideration, by the solemn and pointed conversation of a pious friend, who sought my salvation. While a third would answer, "I was led to serious consideration, by having the hand of God laid heavily upon me, in some affliction." In regard to many, the answer would be, that their minds were gradually led to serious consideration, they scarcely know how. Now, in regard to these external means or circumstances, it matters not, whether the attention was arrested, and the conscience awakened, by this or that means, gradually or suddenly. Neither do these things at all assist in determining the nature of the effect produced. All who ever became pious must have begun with serious consideration, whatever means were employed to produce this state of mind. But all who, for a season, become serious, are not certainly converted. There may be solemn impressions and deep awakenings which never terminate in a saving change, but end in some delusion, or the person returns again to his old condition; or rather to one much worse; for it may be laid down as a maxim, that religious impressions opposed, leave the soul in a more hardened state than before; just as iron, heated and then cooled, becomes harder. In general, those impressions which come on gradually, without any unusual means, are more permanent than those which are produced by circumstances of a striking and alarming nature. But even here there is no general rule. The nature of the permanent effects is the only sure criterion. "By their fruits ye shall know them." That conviction of sin is a necessary part of experimental religion, all will admit; but there is one question respecting this matter, concerning which there may be much doubt; and that is, whether a law-work, prior to regeneration, is necessary; or, whether all true and salutary conviction is not the effect of regeneration. I find that a hundred years ago, this was a matter in dispute between the two parties, into which the Presbyterian church was divided, called the old and new side. The Tennents and Blairs insisted much on the necessity of conviction of sin, by the law, prior to regeneration; while Thompson and his associates were of opinion, that no such work was necessary, nor should be insisted on. As far as I know, the opinion of the necessity of legal conviction has generally prevailed in all our modern revivals: and it is usually taken for granted, that the convictions experienced are prior to regeneration. But it would be very difficult to prove from Scripture, or from the nature of the case, that such a preparatory work was necessary. Suppose an individual to be, in some certain moment, regenerated; such a soul would begin to see with new eyes, and his own sins would be among the things first viewed in a new light. He would be convinced, not only of the fact that they were transgressions of the law, but he would also see, that they were intrinsically evil, and deserved the punishment to which they exposed him. It is only such a conviction as this that really prepares a soul to accept of Christ in all his offices; not only as a Saviour from wrath, but from sin. And it can scarcely be believed, that that clear view of the justice of God, in their condemnation, which most sensibly experience, is the fruit of a mere legal conviction, on an unregenerate heart. For this view of God's justice is not merely of the fact, that this is his character, but of the divine excellency of his attributes, which is accompanied with admiration of it, and a feeling of acquiescence or submission. This view is sometimes so clear, and the equity and propriety of punishing sin are so manifest, and the feeling of acquiescence so strong, that it has

laid the foundation for the very absurd opinion, that the true penitent is made willing to be damned for the glory of God. When such a conviction as this is experienced, the soul is commonly nigh to comfort, although at the moment it is common to entertain the opinion, that there is no salvation for it. It is wonderful, and almost unaccountable, how calm the soul is in the prospect of being for ever lost. An old lady of the Baptist denomination was the first person I ever heard give an account of Christian experience, and I recollect that she said that she was so deeply convinced that she should be lost, that she began to think how she should feel and be exercised in hell; and it occurred to her, that all in that horrid place were employed in blaspheming the name of God. The thought of doing so was rejected with abhorrence, and she felt as if she must and would love him, even there, for his goodness to her; for she saw that she alone was to blame for her destruction, and that He could in consistence with his character do nothing else but inflict this punishment on her. Now surely her heart was already changed, although not a ray of comfort had dawned upon her mind. But is there not before this, generally, a rebellious rising against God, and a disposition to find fault with his dealings? It may be so in many cases, but this feeling is far from being as universal as some suppose. As far as the testimony of pious people can be depended on, there are many whose first convictions are of the evil of sin, rather than of its danger, and who feel real compunction of spirit for having committed it, accompanied with a lively feeling of ingratitude. This question, however, is not of any great practical importance; but there are some truly pious persons who are distressed and perplexed, because they never experienced that kind of conviction which they hear others speak of, and the necessity of which is insisted on by some preachers. Certainly that which the reprobate may experience—which is not different from what all the guilty will feel at the day of judgment—cannot be a necessary part of true religion; and yet it does appear to be a common thing for awakened persons to be at first under a mere legal conviction.

Though man, in his natural state, is spiritually dead, that is, entirely destitute of any spark of true holiness, yet is he still a reasonable being, and has a conscience by which he is capable of discerning the difference between good and evil, and of feeling the force of moral obligation. By having his sins brought clearly before his mind, and his conscience awakened from its stupor, he can be made to feel what his true condition is as a transgressor of the holy law of God. This sight and sense of sin, under the influence of the common operations of the Spirit of God, is what is usually styled conviction of sin. And there can be no doubt that these views and feelings may be very clear and strong in an unrenowned mind. Indeed, they do not differ in kind from what every sinner will experience at the day of judgment, when his own conscience will condemn him, and he will stand guilty before his judge. But there is nothing in this kind of conviction which has any tendency to change the heart, or to make it better. Some indeed have maintained, with some show of reason, that under mere legal conviction, the sinner grows worse and worse; and certainly he sees his sins to be greater in proportion as the light of truth increases. There is not, therefore, in such convictions, however clear and strong, any approximation to regeneration. It cannot be called a preparatory work to this change, in the sense of disposing the person to receive the grace of God. The only end which it can answer is to show the rational creature his true condition, and to convince the sinner of his absolute need of a Saviour. Under conviction there is frequently a more sensible rising of the enmity of the heart against God and his law; but feelings of this kind do not belong to the essence of conviction. There is also sometimes an awful apprehension of danger; the imagination is filled with strong images of terror, and hell seems almost uncovered to the view of the convinced sinner. But there may be much of this feeling of terror, where there is very little

real conviction of sin; and on the other hand, there often is deep and permanent conviction, where the passions and imagination are very little excited. When the entrance of light is gradual, the first effect of an awakened conscience is, to attempt to rectify what now appears to have been wrong in the conduct. It is very common for the conscience, at first, to be affected with outward acts of transgression, and especially with some one prominent offence. An external reformation is now begun: for this can be effected by mere legal conviction. To this is added an attention to the external duties of religion, such as prayer, reading the Bible, hearing the word, &c. Every thing, however, is done with a legal spirit; that is, with the wish and expectation of making amends for past offences; and if painful penances should be prescribed to the sinner, he will readily submit to them if he may, by this means, make some atonement for his sins. But as the light increases, he begins to see that the heart is wicked; and to be convinced that his very prayers are polluted for want of right motives and affections. He, of course, tries to regulate his thoughts, and to exercise right affections; but here his efforts prove fruitless. It is much easier to reform the life than to bring the corrupt heart into a right state. The case now begins to appear desperate, and the sinner knows not which way to turn for relief, and, to cap the climax of his distress, he comes at length to be conscious of nothing but unyielding hardness of heart. He fears that the conviction which he seemed to have, is gone, and that he is left to total obduracy. In these circumstances he desires to feel keen compunction, and overwhelming terror, for his impression is, that he is entirely without conviction. The truth, however, is, that his convictions are far greater, than if he experienced that sensible distress which he so much courts. In this case, he would not think his heart so incurably bad, because it could entertain some right feeling, but as it is, he sees it to be destitute of every good emotion, and of all tender relentings. He has got down to the core of iniquity, and finds within his breast a heart unsusceptible of any good thing. Does he hear that others have obtained relief by hearing such a preacher, reading such a book, conversing with some experienced Christian? he resorts to the same means, but entirely without effect. The heart seems to become more insensible, in proportion to the excellence of the means enjoyed. Though he declares he has no sensibility of any kind, yet his anxiety increases; and perhaps he determines to give himself up solely to prayer and reading the Bible; and if he perish, to perish seeking for mercy. But however strong such resolutions may be, they are found to be in vain; for now, when he attempts to pray, he finds his mouth as it were shut. He cannot pray. He cannot read. He cannot meditate. What can he do? Nothing. He has come to the end of his legal efforts; and the result has been, the simple, deep conviction that he can do nothing; and if God does not mercifully interpose, he must inevitably perish. During all this process he has some idea of the need of divine help; but until now, he was not entirely cut off from all dependence on his own strength and exertions. He still hoped that, by some kind of effort or feeling, he could prepare himself for the mercy of God. Now he despairs of this; and not only so, but for a season he despairs, it may be, of salvation—gives himself up for lost. I do not say, that this is a necessary feeling, by any means, but know that it is very natural, and by no means uncommon, in real experience. But conviction having accomplished all that it is capable of effecting, that is, having emptied the creature of self-dependence and self-righteousness, and brought him to the utmost extremity—even to the borders of despair, it is time for God to work. The proverb says, “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity:” so it is in this case; and at this time, it may reasonably be supposed, the work of regeneration is wrought; for a new state of feeling is now experienced. Upon calm reflection, God appears to have been just and good in all his dispensations; the blame of its perdition the soul fully takes upon itself;

acknowledges its ill-desert, and acquits God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." The sinner resigns himself into the hands of God; and yet is convinced that if he does perish he will suffer only what his sins deserve. He does not fully discover the glorious plan according to which God can be just and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus Christ. The above is not given as a course of experience which all real Christians can recognize as their own, but as a train of exercises which is very common. And so I do not consider legal conviction as necessary to precede regeneration, but suppose there are cases in which the first serious impressions may be the effect of regeneration, I cannot, of course, consider any particular train of exercises under the law as essential. It has been admitted, however, that legal conviction does in fact take place in most instances, prior to regeneration; and it is not an unreasonable inquiry, why is the sinner thus awakened? What good purpose does it answer? The reply has been already partially given; but it may be remarked, that God deals with man as an accountable, moral agent, and before he rescues him from the ruin into which he is sunk, he would let him see and feel, in some measure, how wretched his condition is; how helpless he is in himself, and how ineffectual are his most strenuous efforts to deliver him from his sin and misery. He is, therefore, permitted to try his own wisdom and strength; and finally, to lead him to the full acknowledgment of his own guilt, and to justify the righteous Judge who condemns him to everlasting torment. Conviction, then, is no part of a sinner's salvation, but the clear practical knowledge of the fact that he cannot save himself, and is entirely dependant on the saving grace of God.

CHAPTER III("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

The new birth an event of great importance.—The evidences of the new birth.—Diversities of experience in Converts.—Examples.—Causes of diversity

There is no more important event, which occurs in our world, than the new birth of an immortal soul. Heirs to titles and estates, to kingdoms and empires, are frequently born, and such events are blazoned with imposing pomp, and celebrated by poets and orators, but what are all these honours and possessions but the gewgaws of children, when compared with the inheritance and glory to which every child of God is born an heir. But this being a birth from above, and all the blessings and privileges of the young heir, of a hidden and spiritual nature, the world around cannot be expected to take a lively interest in the event. It is with the children of God as with the divine Saviour; "the world knoweth them not as it knew him not." The night on which He was born, there was a great crowd of the descendants of David, collected from every part of the Holy land, where they were scattered abroad; but none of all these knew that a Saviour was born that night. Yet the angels celebrated the event in a truly celestial hymn, and announced the glad tidings to a company of simple shepherds, who were watching their flocks in the open field. So these celestial inhabitants, the messengers of God, take a lively interest still in events in which a gay and ungodly world feel no concern. For "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." How they know certainly when a soul is born to God, we need not inquire; for they have faculties and sources of knowledge, unknown to us. We know that "they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" but how they carry on their ministry we cannot tell. If the evil spirit can inject evil thoughts into our minds, why may not good spirits suggest pious thoughts, or occasionally make sudden impressions for our warning, or change, by some means, the train of our thoughts? No doubt the devil soon learns the fact, when

a sinner is converted unto God; for he has then lost a subject, and, perhaps, no conversion ever takes place, which he does not use every effort to prevent.

But, to return to our subject. The implantation of spiritual life in a soul dead in sin, is an event, the consequences of which will never end. When you plant an acorn, and it grows, you expect not to see the maturity, much less the end of the majestic oak, which will expand its boughs and strike deeply into the earth its roots. The fierce blast of centuries of winters may beat upon it and agitate it; but it resists them all. Yet finally this majestic oak, and all its towering branches, must fall. Trees die with old age, as well as men. But the plants of grace shall ever live. They shall flourish in everlasting verdure. They will bear transplanting to another clime—to another world. They shall bloom and bear fruit in the paradise of God. At such an hour one is born in Zion unto God. Few know it—few care for the event, or consider it of much importance. But, reader, this feeble germ—this incipient bud, will go on to grow and flourish for infinitely more years than there are sands upon the sea shore. To drop the figure. This renewed soul will be seen and known among the saints in heaven, and assisting in the never-ceasing songs of those who surround the throne of God and the Lamb, millions of ages hereafter. Pure and holy shall it be—“without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” Bright as an angel, and as free from moral taint—but still distinguished from those happy beings, to whom it is equal, by singing a song in which they can never join—in wearing robes made white in the blood of the Lamb; and claiming a nearer kindred to the Son of God, than Gabriel himself. Can that event be of small moment, which lays a foundation for immortal bliss—for eternal life?

Let us, then, patiently and impartially inquire into some of the circumstances and evidences of the new birth. And here I cannot but remark, that among all the preposterous notions which a new and crude theology has poured forth so profusely, in our day, there is none more absurd, than that a dead sinner can beget new life in himself. The very idea of a man's becoming his own father in the spiritual regeneration, is as unreasonable as such a supposition in relation to our first birth. Away with all such soul-destroying, God-dishonouring sentiments. Which were “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”—“Born of the Spirit”—“And you hath HE quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” But who can trace the work of the Spirit in this wonderful renovation? Can we tell how our bones and sinews were formed in our mothers' wombs? Surely, then, there must be mystery in the second birth. As our Lord said to Nicodemus when discoursing on this very subject: “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.”

There are, doubtless, great diversities in the appearances of the motions and actings of spiritual life in its incipient stages. The agent is the same—the deadness of the subject the same—the instrument the same, and the nature of the effect the same, in every case. But still, there are many differing circumstances, which cause a great variety in appearance and expression; such as the degree of vigour in the principle of life communicated. I know, indeed, that there are some who entertain the opinion, that the new creature as it comes from the hand of God—if I may so speak—is in all respects identical or of equal value. But this is not the fact. There is as much difference in the original vigour of spiritual as of natural life. Now, who does not perceive, what a remarkable difference this will make in all the actings and external exhibitions of this principle. As in nature, some children as soon as born are active and vigorous and healthy; and let all around

know quickly that they are alive and have strong feeling too; whereas others come into the world with so feeble a spark of life, that it can hardly be discerned whether they breathe or have any pulsation in their heart and arteries; and when it is ascertained that they live, the principle of vitality is so weak, and surrounded with so many untoward circumstances and symptoms, that there is a small prospect of the infant reaching maturity. Just so it is, in the new birth, some are brought at once into the clear light of day. They came “out of darkness into the marvellous light” of the gospel. “Old things are” consequently “passed away, and all things are become new.” The change is most obvious and remarkable. They are as if introduced into a new world. The Sun of righteousness has risen upon them, without an intervening cloud. Their perception of divine things is so new and so clear, that they feel persuaded that they can convince others, and cause them to see and feel as they do. Indeed, they wonder why they did not always see things in this light, and they do not know why others do not see them as they do. Such persons can no more doubt of their conversion than of their existence. Such a case was that of Saul of Tarsus. Such also was the case of Col. Gardiner. Now this bright day may be clouded over, or it may not. In the case of the two persons mentioned, there does not seem ever to have arisen a passing cloud to create a doubt whether indeed they had been brought to enjoy the light of a heavenly day. But many a day which begins with an unclouded sun, is deformed by dark and lowering clouds, and even agitated with tremendous storms before it closes. So it may be in the spiritual life. Some commence their pilgrimage under the most favourable auspices, and seem to stand so firmly on the mount, that they are ready to say, “I shall never be moved.” Yet when their Lord hides his face, they are soon troubled; and may long walk in darkness, and enjoy no light of comfort. And commonly this change is brought about by our own spiritual pride and carelessness. The opinion commonly entertained, that the most enormous sinners are the subjects of the most pungent convictions of sin, and the most alarming terrors of hell, is not correct. In regard to such, the commencement of a work of grace is sometimes very gradual, and the impressions so apparently slight, that they afford very little ground of sanguine expectations of the result. While, on the other hand, some persons of an unblemished moral character, and who, from the influence of a religious education, have always respected religion, and venerated its ordinances, when brought under conviction, are more terribly alarmed and more overwhelmed with distress, than others whose lives have been stained by gross crimes. The Rev. John Newton, when awakened to some sense of his sinful and dangerous condition, which occurred during a violent and long continued storm at sea, though his judgment was convinced that he was the greatest of sinners, and he doubted whether it was possible for him to be saved; yet seems to have had no very deep feelings or agitating fears. He says, “It was not till after, perhaps, several years, that I had gained some clear views of the infinite righteousness and grace of Christ Jesus my Lord, that I had a deep and strong apprehension of my state by nature and practice; and perhaps till then I could not have borne the sight; so wonderfully does the Lord proportion the discoveries of sin and grace. For he knows our frame, and that if he were to put forth the greatness of his power, a poor sinner would be instantly overwhelmed, and crushed as a moth.” And, though from this time there was a sensible change, and his mind was turned towards religion, yet it is evident from the history of his life, as well as his experiences afterwards, that grace existed during several years, in the feeblest state of which we can well conceive. It appeared so much so to himself, that he warns all persons from considering his experience a model for for them. “As to myself,” says he, “every part of my case has been extraordinary—I have hardly met a single instance resembling it. Few, very few have been rescued from such a dreadful

state, and those few that have been thus favoured, have generally passed through the most severe convictions; and, after the Lord has given them peace, their future lives have been usually more zealous, bright, and exemplary than common." Now this is the opinion which I think, is taken up rather from theory than an observation of facts. I think that those persons, who have been most conversant with exercised souls will say that there is no general rule here—that very pungent convictions and deep distress are found as frequently in those who have been preserved from out-breaking transgressions, as in those noted for their immoralities. There seems, indeed, more reason for severe convictions in the latter case; but convictions are not uniformly proportioned to the magnitude of crimes. And in truth, we are incapable of comparing together the heinousness of the sins of different persons. The moral man, as we call him, may be the greater sinner of the two, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. I heard a popular preacher once undertake to prove, that moral men and formal professors must, in all cases, be far more wicked than the blaspheming infidel, and gross debauchee. The argument was plausible, but laboured under one essential defect; and I was of opinion, and still am, that such a doctrine is highly dangerous, and calculated to encourage men to go to all lengths in wickedness. When I was a very young preacher, I expressed the opinion, in a sermon preached in North Carolina, that the mere moralist and formalist were more out of the way of conviction than the openly profane. When the sermon was ended, a fierce looking man came up to me and said that I had delivered precisely his opinion on one point, and mentioned the above sentiment. I inquired, when he was gone, who he was, and found that he was the most notorious profligate in all the country; and not long afterwards he was apprehended and imprisoned, at the head of a company engaged in felonious acts. This taught me a lesson which I never forgot. Mr. Newton proceeds thus: "Now, on the one hand, my convictions were very moderate, and far below what might have been expected from the dreadful review I had to make; so, on the other, my first beginnings in a religious course were as faint as can well be imagined. I never knew that season alluded to, Revelation 2:4, usually called the time of "first love." And then he relates facts which give sad evidence of a very low state of grace; and, if it had never risen higher, we should certainly have been inclined to believe that he was not a subject of saving grace. But this leads me to remark a fact analogous to what is common in the natural world; that the infant which, when born, barely gives evidence of life, may not only grow to maturity, but in size and strength may far exceed those who commenced life with more activity and vigour; and so in the spiritual life, when the incipient motions and affections are very feeble, the person may eventually become a mature and eminent Christian, as we have no doubt Mr. Newton did. Another instance of a similar kind, if my memory serves me, was the Rev. Mr. R. Cecil, who had also been, for many years, a profane infidel; but who, in process of time, became one of the most eminent Christians, as well as spiritual ministers of his day. Dr. Thomas Scott, also, was a Socinian, and yet a preacher of the established Church; but the progress of illumination and conviction in his mind was very gradual. His "Force of Truth" is an admirable little work, and furnishes a full illustration of the sentiment which I wish to inculcate: That grace, in the commencement, is often exceedingly faint and feeble, and yet may grow into a state of maturity and comparative perfection. In the experience of President Edwards, as recorded by himself, we find no account of any deep and distressing convictions of sin at the commencement of his religious course; though, afterwards, perhaps few men ever attained to such humbling views of the depth and turpitude of the depravity of the heart. But his experience differs from that of those mentioned above, in that his first views of divine things were clear and attended with unspeakable delight. "The first instance

that I remember of that sort of inward, secret delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was, on reading those words, 1 Timothy 1:17, 'Now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.' As I read these words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as those words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in him for ever." "From that time I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. After this, my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered. There seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet, cast or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and his love seemed to appear in every thing." The difference between this and many other cases of incipient piety, is very striking. And yet these views and exercises do not come up to the standard which some set up in regard to Christian experience, because they are so abstract, and have such casual reference to Christ, through whom alone God is revealed to man as an object of saving faith. And if there be a fault in the writings of this great and good man on the subject of experimental religion, it is, that they seem to represent renewed persons as at the first, occupied with the contemplation of the attributes of God with delight, without ever thinking of a Mediator. But few men ever attained, as we think, higher degrees of holiness, or had made more accurate observations on the exercises of others. His work on the Affections is too abstract and tedious for common readers; but is an excellent work, although I think his twelve marks might with great advantage be reduced to half the number, on his own plan. The experimental exercises of religion are sure to take their complexion from the theory of doctrine entertained, or which is inculcated at the time. The variety which appears in the exercises of real converts does not depend alone on the different degrees of vigour, in the principle of spiritual life, but on many other circumstances; some of which will now be noticed. The benefit of sound doctrinal instruction to the new-born soul has already been mentioned, but demands a more particular consideration. What degree of knowledge is absolutely necessary to the existence of piety cannot be accurately determined by man, but we know that genuine faith may consist with much ignorance and error. Suppose two persons, then, to have received the principle of spiritual life in equal vigour; but let the one be ignorant and the other well instructed, it is easy to see what a difference this will make in the exercises of the two converts; and also in the account which they are able respectively to give to others of the work of grace on their hearts. It is here taken for granted, that nothing but divine truth can be the object of holy affections, or furnish the motives from which true Christians are bound to act; and that faith in all its actings has respect to revealed truth. But that which is unknown can neither be the object of faith or love, and that which is known obscurely, and viewed indistinctly, can never operate with the same effect as that which is clearly understood. Accordingly, our missionaries inform us, that we ought not to expect the same consistency or maturity in the religion of real converts from heathenism, as from religiously educated persons in our own country. It is a lamentable fact that in this land of churches and of Bibles, there are many who know little more of the doctrines of Christianity, than the pagans themselves. The proper inference from the fact stated is, that they

are egregiously in error, who think that the religious education of children, is useless, or even injurious; and their opinion is also condemned who maintain that it matters little what men believe provided their lives are upright. All good conduct must proceed from good principles; but good principles cannot exist without a knowledge of the truth. "Truth is in order to holiness;" and between truth and holiness there is an indissoluble connexion. It would be as reasonable to expect a child born into an atmosphere corrupted with pestilential vapour, to grow and be healthy as that spiritual life should flourish without the nutriment of the pure milk of the word, and without breathing in the wholesome atmosphere of truth. The new man often remains in a dwarfish state, because he is fed upon husks; or, he grows into a distorted shape by means of the errors which are inculcated upon him. It is of unspeakable importance that the young disciple have sound, instructive, and practical preaching to attend on. It is also of consequence that the religious people, with whom he converses, should be discreet, evangelical, and intelligent Christians; and that the books put into his hands should be of the right kind. There is what may be called a sectarian peculiarity in the experimental religion of all the members of a religious denomination. When it is required, in order that persons be admitted to communion, that they publicly give a narrative of the exercises of their minds, there will commonly be observed a striking similarity. There is a certain mould into which all seem to be cast. By the way, this requisition is unwise; few persons have humility and discretion enough to be trusted to declare in a public congregation, what the dealings of God with their souls have been. When ignorant, weak, and fanciful persons undertake this, they often bring out such crude and ludicrous things, as greatly tend to bring experimental religion into discredit. The practice seems also to be founded on a false principle, namely, that real Christians are able to tell with certainty whether others have religion, if they hear their experience. Enthusiasts have always laid claim to this discernment of the spirits, and this enthusiasm is widely spread through some large sects; and when they meet with any professing piety, they are always solicitous to hear an account of their conviction, conversion, &c. A free intercourse of this kind among intimate friends, is no doubt, profitable; but a frequent and indiscriminate disclosure of these secret things of the heart, is attended with many evils. Among the chief is, the fostering of spiritual pride, which may often be detected when the person is boasting of his humility. In those social meetings, in which every person is questioned as to the state of their souls, the very sameness of most of the answers ought to render the practice suspicious. Poor, weak, and ignorant persons, often profess to be happy, and to be full of the love of God, when they know not what they say. It is wonderful how little you hear of the spiritual conflict in the account which many professors give of their experience. The people know what kind of answers is expected of them, and they come, as near as they can to what is wished; and it is to be feared that many cry "peace," when there is no peace; and say that they are happy, merely because they hear this from the lips of others. Hypocrisy is a fearful evil, and every thing which has a tendency to produce it should be avoided. Among some classes of religious people, all doubting about the goodness and safety of our state is scouted as inconsistent with faith. It is assumed as indubitably true, that every Christian must be assured of his being in a state of grace, and they have no charity for those who are distressed with almost perpetual doubts and fears. This they consider to be the essence of unbelief; for faith, according to them, is a full persuasion that our sins are forgiven. No painful process of self-examination is therefore requisite, for every believer has possession already of all that could be learned from such examination. Among others, doubting, it is to be feared, is too much encouraged; and serious Christians are perplexed

with needless scruples originating in the multiplication of the marks of conversion, which sometimes are difficult of application, and, in other cases, are not Scriptural, but arbitrary, set up by the preacher who values himself upon his skill in detecting the close hypocrite, whereas he wounds the weak believer, in ten cases, where he awakens the hypocrite in one. I once heard one of these preachers, whose common mode was harsh, and calculated to distress the feeble minded, attempt to preach in a very different style. He seemed to remember that he should not "bruise the broken reed," nor "quench the smoking flax." A person of a contrite spirit heard the discourse with unusual comfort, but at the close the preacher resumed his usual harsh tone, and said, "Now you hypocrites will be snatching at the children's bread." On hearing which, the broken hearted hearer felt himself addressed, and instantly threw away all the comfort which he had received. And though there might be a hundred hypocrites present, yet not one of them cared any thing about the admonition. In some places, anxious inquirers are told that if they will hold on praying and using the means, that God is bound to save them; as though a dead, condemned sinner could so pray as to bring God under obligation to him, or could secure the blessings of the covenant of grace, by his selfish, legal striving. These instructions accord very much with the self-righteous spirit which is naturally in us all; and one of two things may be expected to ensue, either that the anxious inquirer will conclude that he has worked out his salvation, and cry peace; or that he should sink into discouragement and charge God foolishly, because he does not hear his prayers, and grant him his desires. There is another extreme, but not so common among us. It is, to tell the unconverted, however anxious, not to pray at all—that their prayers are an abomination to God, and can answer no good purpose, until they are able to pray in faith. The writer happened once to be cast into a congregation where this doctrine was inculcated, at the time of a considerable revival, when many sinners were cut to the heart and were inquiring, what must we do to be saved? He conversed with some who appeared to be under deep and awful convictions; but they were directed to use no means, but to believe, and they appeared to remain in a state of perfect quiescence, doing nothing, but confessing the justice of their condemnation, and appearing to feel that they were entirely at the disposal of Him, who "has mercy on whom he will have mercy." The theory, however, was not consistently carried out, for while these persons were taught not to pray, they were exhorted to hear the gospel, and were frequently conversed with by their pastor. But this extreme is not so dangerous as the former, which encourages sinners to think that they can do something to recommend themselves to God, by their unbelieving prayers. The fruits of this revival, I have reason to believe, were very precious. Even among the same people and under the same minister, the exercises of the awakened in a revival are very different. In some seasons of this sort, the work appears to be far deeper and more solemn than in others.

CHAPTER IV("tw:///self?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Causes of diversity in experience continued.—Effect of temperament.—Melancholy.—Advice to the friends of persons thus affected.—Subject continued.—Illustrative cases.—Causes of melancholy and insanity

We have before shown how the principle of spiritual life is affected in its appearance by two circumstances—the degree of vigour given to it in its commencement, and the degree of knowledge and maturity of judgment which one may possess above another. We now come to another pregnant cause of the great variety which is found in the exercises and comforts of real

Christians, and that is the difference of temperament which is so familiar, and which so frequently modifies the characters, as well as the feelings of men in other matters. There can be no doubt, I think, that the susceptibility of lively emotion is exceedingly different in men under the same circumstances. Persons of strong affections and ardent temperament, upon an unexpected bereavement of a beloved wife or child, are thrown into an agony of grief which is scarcely tolerable; while those of a cold, phlegmatic temperament, seem to suffer no exquisite anguish from this or any other cause. Not that they possess more fortitude or resignation, for the contrary may be the fact; but their susceptibilities are less acute. And this disparity appears in nothing more remarkably than in the tendency to entertain different degrees of hope or fear in similar circumstances. For, while some will hope whenever there is the smallest ground for a favourable result, others are sure to fear the worst which can possibly happen; and their apprehensions are proportioned to the magnitude of the interest at stake. Now is it wonderful, that men's religious feelings should be affected by the same causes? When two exercised persons speak of their convictions, their sorrows and their hopes it is not to be expected, that with the same truths before their minds, those of a sanguine temperament will experience more sensible emotions, and, upon the same evidence, entertain more confident hopes than those of a contrary disposition? And, of necessity, the joy of the one will be much more lively than that of the other. Thus, two persons may be found, whose experience may have been very similar as to their conviction of sin, and exercise of faith and repentance; and yet the one will express a strong confidence of having passed from death unto life; while the other is afraid to express a trembling hope. Of these two classes of Christians, the first is the most comfortable, the latter the safest, as being unwilling to be satisfied with any evidence but the strongest. But there is not only a wide difference from this natural cause of the liveliness of the emotions of joy and sorrow, and of the confidence of the hopes entertained, but usually a very different mode of expression. Sanguine persons, from the very impulse of ardent feeling, have a tendency to express things in strong language constantly verging on exaggeration. They are apt to use superlatives and strong emphasis, as wishing to convey a full idea of their feelings, while those of a colder temperament and more timid disposition, fall below the reality, in their descriptions, and are cautious not to convey to others too high an idea of what they have experienced. This diversity, as the cause is permanent, characterizes the religious experience of these respective classes of Christians through their whole pilgrimage, and may be equally manifest on a dying bed. Hence it appears how very uncertain a knowledge of the internal state of the heart we obtain from the words and professions of serious persons. It should also serve to shake the vain confidence of those who imagine that they can decide with certainty whether another is a truly converted person, merely from hearing a narrative of his religious experience; and that is, that two persons may employ the same words and phrases to express their feelings, and yet those feelings may be specifically different; each may say, "I felt the love of God shed abroad in my heart," which in the one case may be the genuine affection described in these words; while in the other it may be a mere transport of natural feeling; a mere selfish persuasion of being a favourite of heaven; or a high state of nervous exhilaration, produced by a physiological cause. Both these persons may be sincere, according to the popular acceptance of that term; that is, both have really experienced a lively emotion, and both mean to express the simple fact; and yet the one is a real Christian, while the other may be in an unregenerate state. Another thing which ought to destroy this foolish persuasion, that we can certainly determine the true spiritual condition of another person by hearing from him a narrative of his experience, and that is that any words or

phrases which can be used by a really pious man, may be learned by a designing hypocrite. What is to hinder such an one from using the very language and imitating the very manner in which true Christians have been heard to relate their experience? What can prevent deceivers from catching up the narrative of godly exercises so abundantly found in religious biography, and applying it to themselves, as though they had experience of these things? While only two classes of Christians have been mentioned, yet in each of these there are many subordinate divisions, to describe all of which would be tedious and not for edification. The reader can readily apply the general principles to every variety of experience, modified by this cause. In the preceding remarks, the healthy, constitutional temperament has alone been brought into view; but by far the most distressing cases of conscience, with which the spiritual physician has to deal, are owing to a morbid temperament. As most people are inclined to conceal their spiritual distresses, few have any conception of the number of persons who are habitually suffering under the frightful malady of melancholy. With some, this disease is not permanent, but occasional. They have only periodical paroxysms of deep religious depression; and they may be said to have their compensation, for the dark and cloudy day, by being favoured with one of peculiar brightness, in quick succession. If their gloom was uninterrupted, it would be overwhelming, but after a dark night, rises a lovely morning without the shadow of a cloud. This rapid and great alteration of feeling is found in those who possess what may be called a mercurial temperament. It is connected with a nervous system peculiarly excitable and exceedingly liable to temporary derangement. A rough east wind is sufficient to blow up clouds which completely obscure the cheerful sunshine of the soul; while the wholesome zephyrs as quickly drive all these gloomy clouds away. Such persons always have a stomach easily disordered, and one ounce of improper food, or one too much of wholesome food is cause sufficient to derange the nerves and depress the spirits. The want of refreshing sleep, or watchfulness is another cause of the same effects; and in its turn, is an effect from disordered nerves. But physical causes are not the only ones which produce this painful state of feeling. It is often produced, in a moment, by hearing some unpleasant intelligence, or by the occurrence of some disagreeable event. But, as was hinted, when these people of nervous temperament are relieved from a fit of depression, their sky is uncommonly free from clouds; their hopes are lively, their spirits buoyant, and nothing can trouble them. These alternations of day and night, of sun-shine and darkness, must of necessity affect the feelings in regard to all matters, temporal and spiritual, for as in a dark night every object appears black, so when the mind is overcast with gloomy clouds every view must partake of the same aspect. To many persons this description will be unintelligible; but by others, it will be recognized, at once, as a just view of their own case. But when religious melancholy becomes a fixed disease, it may be reckoned among the heaviest calamities to which our suffering nature is subject. It resists all argument and rejects every topic of consolation, from whatever source it may proceed. It feeds upon distress and despair, and is displeased even with the suggestion or offer of relief. The mind thus affected seizes on those ideas and truths which are most awful and terrific. Any doctrine which excludes all hope is congenial to the melancholy spirit, and it seizes on such things with an unnatural avidity, and will not let them go.

There is no subject on which it is more vain and dangerous to theorize than our religious experience. It is therefore of unspeakable importance that ministers of the gospel, who have to deal with diseased consciences, should have had some experience themselves in these matters. This, no doubt, is one reason why some, intended to be "sons of consolation" to others, have been

brought through deep waters, and have been buffeted by many storms, before they obtained a settled peace of mind. It is a proper object of inquiry, why, in our day, so little is heard about the spiritual troubles, of which we read so much in the casuistical treatises of writers of a former age. It can scarcely be supposed that the faith of modern Christians is so much stronger than that of believers who lived in other days, that they are enabled easily to triumph over their melancholy fears and despondency. Neither can we suppose that Satan is less busy in casting his fiery darts, and in attempts to drive the children of God to despair. There is reason to fear, that among Christians of the present time, there is less deep, spiritual exercise, than in former days; and as little is said on this subject in public discourses, there may be greater concealment of the troubles of this kind than if these subjects were more frequently discussed. It is observable that all those who have experienced this sore affliction and have been mercifully delivered from them, are very solicitous to administer relief and comfort to others who are still exposed to the peltings of the pitiless storm; and these are the persons who feel the tenderest sympathy with afflicted consciences, and know how to bear with the infirmities and waywardness which accompany a state of religious melancholy. It is also remarkable, that very generally, they who have been recovered from such diseases, attribute no small part of their troubles to a morbid temperament of body, and accordingly, in their counsels to the melancholy, they lay particular stress on the regular, healthy state of the body.

About the close of the seventeenth century, the Rev. Timothy Rogers, a pious and able minister of London, fell into a state of deep melancholy; and such was the distressing darkness of his mind, that he gave up all hope of the mercy of God, and believed himself to be a vessel of wrath, designed for destruction, for the praise of the glorious justice of the Almighty. His sad condition was known to many pious ministers and people throughout the country, who, it is believed, were earnest and incessant in their supplications in his behalf. And these intercessions were not ineffectual; for it pleased God to grant a complete deliverance to his suffering servant. And having received comfort of the Lord, he was exceedingly desirous to be instrumental in administering the same comfort to others, with which he himself had been comforted. He therefore wrote several treatises with this object in view, which are well calculated to be of service to those labouring under spiritual distress. One of these is entitled, "Recovery from Sickness," another "Consolation to the Afflicted," and a third, "A Discourse on Trouble of Mind, and the Disease of Melancholy." In the "preface" to this last, the author gives directions to the friends of persons labouring under religious melancholy, how to treat them. The substance of these, I will now communicate to the reader. "1. Look upon your distressed friends as under one of the worst distempers to which this miserable life is obnoxious. Melancholy incapacitates them for thought or action: it confounds and disturbs all their thoughts and fills them with vexation and anguish. I verily believe, that when this malign humour is deeply fixed and has spread its deleterious influence over every part, it is as vain to attempt to resist it, by reasoning and rational motives, as to oppose a fever, or the gout, or pleurisy. One of the very worst attendants of this disease is, the want of sleep, by which in other distresses men are relieved and refreshed; but in this disease, either sleep flies far away, or is so disturbed, that the poor sufferer, instead of being refreshed, is like one on the rack. The faculties of the soul are weakened, and all their operations disturbed and clouded; and the poor body languishes and pines away, at the same time. And that which renders this disease more formidable is, its long continuance. It is a long time often before it comes to its height; and usually as tedious in its declension. It is, in every respect, sad and overwhelming; a state of darkness that

has no discernible beams of light. It generally begins in the body, and then conveys its venom to the mind. I pretend not to tell you what medicines will cure it, for I know of none. I leave you to advise with such as are skilled in physic, and especially to such doctors as have experienced something of it themselves; for it is impossible to understand the nature of it in any other way than by experience. There is danger, as Mr. Greenham says, 'that the bodily physician will look no further than the body, while the spiritual physician will totally disregard the body, and look only at the mind.'

"2. Treat those who are under this disease with tender compassion. Remember also, that you are liable to the same affliction; for however brisk your spirits and lively your feelings now, you may meet with such reverses, with such long and sharp afflictions, as will sink your spirits. Many, not naturally inclined to melancholy, have, by overwhelming and repeated calamities, been sunk into this dark gulf.

"3. Never use harsh language to your friends when under the disease of melancholy. This will only serve to fret and perplex them the more, but will never benefit them. I know that the counsel of some is, to rebuke and chide them, on all occasions; but I dare confidently say, that such advisers never felt the disease themselves; for if they had, they would know that thus they do but pour oil into the flames, and chafe and exasperate their wounds, instead of healing them. Mr. Dod, by reason of his mild, meek, and merciful spirit, was reckoned one of the fittest persons to deal with those thus afflicted. Never was any person more tender and compassionate as all will be convinced, who will read the accounts of Mr. Peacock and Mrs. Drake, both of whom were greatly relieved by his conversation.

"4. If you would possess any influence over your friends in this unhappy state of mind, you must be careful not to express any want of confidence in what they relate of their own feelings and distresses. On this point, there is often a great mistake. When they speak of their frightful and distressing apprehensions, it is common for friends to reply, 'that this is all imaginary'—'nothing but fancy,' 'an unfounded whim.' Now the disease is a real one, and their misery is as real as any experienced by man. It is true, their imagination is disordered, but this is merely the effect of a deeper disease. These afflicted persons never can believe that you have any real sympathy with their misery, or feel any compassion for them, unless you believe what they say.

"5. Do not urge your melancholy friends to do what is out of their power. They are like persons whose bones are broken, and who are incapacitated for action. Their disease is accompanied with perplexing and tormenting thoughts; if you can innocently divert them, you would do them a great kindness; but do not urge them to any thing which requires close and intense thinking; this will only increase the disease. But you will ask, ought we not to urge them to hear the word of God? I answer, if they are so far gone in the disease as to be in continual, unremitting anguish, they are not capable of hearing, on account of the painful disorder of their minds. But if their disorder is not come to such a distressing height, you may kindly and gently persuade them to attend on the preaching of the word; but beware of using a peremptory and violent method. The method pursued by Mr. Dod, with Mrs. Drake, should be imitated. 'The burden which overloaded her soul was so great, that we never durst add any thereunto, but fed her with all encouragements, she being too apt to overcharge herself, and to despair upon any addition of fuel to that fire which was inwardly consuming her. And so, wherever she went to hear, notice was given to the minister officiating,

that he had such a hearer, and by this means she received no discouragement from hearing.'

"6. Do not attribute the effects of mere disease to the devil; although I do not deny that he has an agency in producing some diseases; especially, by harassing and disturbing the mind to such a degree, that the body suffers with it. But it is very unwise to ascribe every feeling and every word of the melancholy man to Satan; whereas, many of these are as natural consequences of bodily disease, as the symptoms of a fever, which the poor sufferer can no more avoid, than the sick man can keep himself from sighing and groaning. Many will say to such an one, 'Why do you so pore over your case and thus gratify the devil?' whereas, it is the very nature of the disease to cause such fixed musings. You might as well say to a man in a fever, 'Why are you not well, why will you be sick?' Some, indeed, suppose, that the melancholy hug their disease, and are unwilling to give it up, but you might as well suppose that a man would be pleased with lying on a bed of thorns, or in a fiery furnace. No doubt the devil knows how to work on minds thus diseased, and that by shooting his fiery darts, he endeavours to drive them to utter despair. But if you persuade them that all which they experience is from the devil, you may induce the opinion in them, that they are actually possessed of the evil one; which has been the unhappy condition of some whose minds were disordered. I would not have you to bring a railing accusation, even against the devil, neither must you falsely accuse your friends by saying that they gratify him.

"7. Do not express much surprise or wonder at any thing which melancholy persons say or do. What will not they say, who are in despair of God's mercy? What will not they do, who think themselves lost, for ever? You know that even such a man as Job cursed his day, so that the Lord charged him 'with darkening counsel by words without knowledge.' Do not wonder that they give expression to bitter complaints; the tongue will always be speaking of the aching tooth. Their soul is sore vexed, and although they get no good by complaining; yet they cannot but complain, to find themselves in such a doleful case. And they can say with David, 'I am weary with my groaning: all the night make I my bed to swim, I water my couch with my tears;' yet they cannot forbear to groan and weep more, until their very eyes be consumed with grief. Let no sharp words of theirs provoke you to talk sharply to them. Sick people are apt to be peevish, and it would be a great weakness in you, not to bear with them, when you see that a long and sore disease has deprived them of their former good temper.

"8. Do not tell them any frightful stories, nor recount to them the sad disasters which have overtaken others. Their hearts do already meditate terror, and by every alarming thing of which they hear, they are the more terrified, and their disordered imagination is prepared to seize upon every frightful image which is presented. The hearing of sad things always causes them more violent agitations. Yet you must avoid merriment and levity in their presence, for this would lead them to think that you have no sympathy with them, nor concern for them. A mixture of gravity and affableness will best suit them; and, if I might advise, I would counsel parents not to put their children, who are naturally inclined to melancholy, to learning, or to any employment, which requires much study; lest they should at length be preyed upon, by their own thoughts.

"9. Do not, however, think it needless to talk with them. But do not speak as if you thought their disease would be of long continuance; for this is the prospect which appears most gloomy to the melancholy. Rather encourage them to hope for speedy deliverance. Endeavour to revive their spirits by declaring, that God can give them relief in a moment, and that he has often done so with

others; that he can quickly heal their disease, and cause his amiable and reconciled face to shine upon them.

10. It will be useful to tell them of others, who have been in the same state of suffering, and yet have been delivered. It is, indeed, true, that they who are depressed by such a load of grief, are with difficulty persuaded, that any were ever in such a condition as they are. They think themselves to be more wicked than Cain or Judas, and view their own cases to be entirely singular. It will, therefore, be important to relate real cases of deliverance from similar distress and darkness. Several such cases have been known to me, as that of Mr. Rosewell, and also Mr. Porter, both ministers of the gospel. The latter was six years under the pressure of melancholy; yet both these experienced complete deliverance, and afterwards rejoiced in the light of God's countenance. I myself, was near two years in great pain of body, and greater pain of soul, and without any prospect of peace or help; and yet God hath recovered me by his sovereign grace and mercy. Mr. Robert Bruce, minister in Edinburgh, was twenty years in terrors of conscience, and yet delivered afterwards. And so, of many others, who after a dark and stormy night, were blessed with the cheerful light of returning day. Mr. Fox, in his book of Martys, gives an account of a certain Mr. Glover, who was worn and consumed with inward trouble, for five years, so that he had no comfort in his food, nor in his sleep, nor in any enjoyment of life. He was so perplexed, as if he had been in the deepest pit of hell, and yet this good servant of God, after all these horrid temptations and buffetings of Satan, was delivered from all his trouble, and the effect was such a degree of mortification of sin, that he appeared as one already in heaven.

"11. The next thing which you are to do for your melancholy friends, is to pray for them. As they have not light and composure to pray for themselves, let your eyes weep for them in secret, and there let your souls melt in fervent holy prayers. You know that none but God alone can help them. Mr. Peacock said to Mr. Dod, and his other friends, 'Take not the name of God in vain, by praying for such a reprobate.' Mr. Dod replied, 'If God stir up your friends to pray for you, he will stir up himself to hear their prayers.' You ought to consider that nothing but prayer can do them good. It is an obstinate disease that nothing else will overcome. Those who can cure themselves by resorting to wine and company, were never under this disease.

"12. Not only pray for them yourself, but engage other Christian friends, also, to pray for them. When many good people join their requests together, their cry is more acceptable and prevalent. When the church united in prayer for Peter, in chains, he was soon delivered, and in the very time of their prayers. All believers have, through Christ, a great interest in heaven, and the Father is willing to grant what they unitedly and importunately ask, in the name of his dear Son. I myself have been greatly helped by the prayers of others, and I heartily thank all those especially, who set apart particular days to remember at a throne of grace, my distressed condition. Blessed be God that he did not turn away his mercy from me, nor turn a deaf ear to their supplications!

"13. Put your poor, afflicted friends, in mind, continually, of the sovereign grace of God, in Jesus Christ. Often impress on their minds, that He is merciful and gracious; that as far as the heavens are above the earth, so far are his thoughts above their thoughts; his thoughts of mercy above their self-condemning, guilty thoughts. Teach them as much as you can, to look unto God, by the great Mediator, for grace and strength, and not too much to pore over their own souls, where there is so much darkness and unbelief. And turn away their thoughts from the decrees of God. Show

them what great sinners God has pardoned, and encourage them to believe and to hope for mercy. When Mrs. Drake was in her deplorable state of darkness, she would send a description of her case to distinguished ministers, concealing her name, to know whether such a creature, without faith, hope, or love to God or man—hard-hearted, without natural affection, who had resisted and abused all means, could have any hope of going to heaven? Their answer was, that such like, and much worse, might, by the mercy of God, be received into favour, converted and saved; which did much allay her trouble. ‘For,’ said she, ‘the fountain of all my misery hath been, that I sought that in the law, which I should have found in the gospel; and for that in myself, which was only to be found in Christ.’ ‘From my own experience, I can testify,’ says Rogers, ‘that the mild and gentle way of dealing with such is the best.’ ” A volume might be written on the subject of religious melancholy, and such a volume is much needed; but it would be difficult to find a person qualified for the undertaking. We have some books written by pious casuists; and the subject is handled in medical treatises on insanity; but, to do it justice, physiological knowledge must be combined with an accurate acquaintance with the experience of Christians. Burton’s “Anatomy of Melancholy,” is one of the strangest books I ever read. For curious learning and classical quotations, it cannot be surpassed. And there is much originality of remark, and frequent strokes of wit in the work, but very little valuable information on the subject of which it treats. The author seems to have been himself troubled with fits of melancholy, and, enjoying much learned leisure, amused his melancholy hours by searching after and heaping up much learning, out of the common track. The spiritual physician, who has the cure of diseased souls, takes much less pains to inquire minutely and exactly into the maladies of his patients, than is observable in physicians of the body. I have often admired the alacrity and perseverance with which medical students attend upon anatomical and physiological lectures; although often, the exhibitions are extremely repulsive to our natural feelings. The patience and ingenuity, with which the men of this profession make experiments are highly worthy of imitation. Many of our young preachers, when they go forth on their important errand, are poorly qualified to direct the doubting conscience, or to administer safe consolation to those troubled in spirit. And in modern preaching, there is little account made of the various distressing cases of deep affliction under which many serious persons are suffering. If we want counsel on subjects of this kind, we must go back to the old writers; but as there is now small demand for such works, they are fast sinking into oblivion; and their place is not likely to be supplied by any works which the prolific press now pours forth. It is, however, a pleasing circumstance, that the writings of so many of our old English divines have recently been reprinted in London. But still many valuable treatises are destined to oblivion. The only object which I have in view, in introducing this subject, is to inquire, what connexion there is between real experimental religion and melancholy. And I must, in the first place, endeavour to remove a prevalent prejudice, that in all religious persons there is a strong tendency to melancholy. Indeed, there are not a few who confound these two things so completely, that they have no other idea of becoming religious, than sinking into a state of perpetual gloom. Such persons as these are so far removed from all just views of the nature of religion, that I shall not attempt, at present, to correct their errors. There are others, who entertain the opinion, that deep religious impressions tend to produce that state of mind called melancholy; and not only so, but they suppose that in many cases, insanity is the consequence of highly raised religious affections. The fact cannot be denied, that religion is often the subject which dwells on the minds of both the melancholy and the insane. But, I am of opinion, that we are here in danger of reversing the order of nature, and putting the effect in the place of

the cause. Religion does not produce melancholy, but melancholy turns the thoughts to religion. Persons of a melancholy temperament seize on such ideas as are most awful, and which furnish the greatest opportunity of indulging in despondency and despair. Sometimes, however, it is not religion which occupies the minds and thoughts of the melancholy, but their own health, which they imagine, without reason, to be declining; or their estates, which they apprehend to be wasting away, and abject poverty and beggary stare them in the face. Not unfrequently this disease alienates the mind entirely from religion, and the unhappy victim of it refuses to attend upon any religious duties, or to be present where they are performed. Frequently it assumes the form of monomania, or a fixed misapprehension in regard to some one thing. The celebrated and excellent William Cowper laboured, for years, under one of the most absurd hallucinations, respecting a single point; and in that point, his belief—though invincible—was repugnant to the whole of his religious creed. He imagined, that he had received from the Almighty a command, at a certain time, when in a fit of insanity, to kill himself; and as a punishment for disobedience, he had forfeited a seat in paradise. And so deep was this impression, that he would attend on no religious worship, public or private; and yet at this very time took a lively interest in the advancement of Christ's kingdom; and his judgment was so sound on other matters, that such men, as John Newton and Thomas Scott, were in the habit of consulting with him on all difficult points. The case of this man of piety and genius, was used by the enemies of religion, and particularly by the enemies of Calvinism, as an argument against the creed which he had embraced; whereas his disease was at the worst, before he had experienced any thing of religion, or had embraced the tenets of Calvin. And, let it be remembered, that it was by turning his attention to the consolations of religion, that his excellent physician was successful in restoring his mind to tranquillity and comfort; and the world will one day learn, that of all the remedies for this malady, the pure doctrines of grace are the most effectual to resuscitate the melancholy mind. This is, in fact, a bodily disease, by which the mind is influenced and darkened. Thus it was received by the ancient Greeks; for the term is compounded of two Greek words which signify black bile. How near they were to the truth, in assigning the physical cause which produces the disease, I leave to others to determine. Casuists have often erred egregiously, by referring all such cases to mental or moral causes. It is probable, even when the disease is brought on by strong impressions on the mind, that, by these physical derangement occurs. To reason with a man against the views which arise from melancholy, is commonly as inefficacious, as reasoning against bodily pain! I have long made this a criterion, to ascertain whether the dejection experienced was owing to a physical cause; 'for, in that case, argument though demonstrative, has no effect. Still such persons should be affectionately conversed with; and their peculiar opinions and views should rarely be contradicted. Cases often occur, in which there is a mixture of moral and physical causes; and these should be treated in reference to both sources of their affliction. Melancholy is sometimes hereditary, and often constitutional. When such persons are relieved for a while, they are apt to relapse into the same state, as did William Cowper. The late excellent and venerable James Hall, D. D. of N. C., was of a melancholy temperament; and, after finishing his education at Princeton, he fell into a gloomy dejection, which interrupted his studies and labours for more than a year. After his restoration, he laboured successfully and comfortably in the ministry for many years, even to old age; but at last was overtaken again, and entirely overwhelmed by this terrible malady. Of all men, that I ever saw, he had the tenderest sympathy with persons labouring under religious despondency. When on a journey, I have known him to travel miles out of his way to converse with

a sufferer of this kind; and his manner was most tender and affectionate in speaking to such.

I have remarked, that persons who gave no symptoms of this disease until the decline of life, have then fallen under its power; owing to some change in the constitution at that period, or some change in their active pursuits. I recollect two cases of overwhelming melancholy in persons, who appeared in their former life, as remote from it as any that I ever knew. The first was a man of extraordinary talents, and eloquence; bold and decisive in his temper, and fond of company and good cheer. When about fifty-five or six years of age, without any external cause to produce the effect, his spirits began to sink, and feelings of melancholy to seize upon him. He avoided company, but I had frequent occasion to see him, and sometimes he could be engaged in conversation, when he would speak as judiciously as before; but he soon reverted to his dark melancholy mood. On one occasion he mentioned his case to me, and observed with emphasis, that he had no power whatever to resist the disease, and said he, with despair in his countenance, "I shall soon be utterly overwhelmed." And so it turned out, for the disease advanced until it ended in the worst form of mania, and soon terminated his life. The other was the case of a gentleman who had held office in the American army, in the revolutionary war. About the same age, or a little later, he lost his cheerfulness, which had never been interrupted before, and by degrees, sunk into a most deplorable state of melancholy, which as in the former case, soon ended in death. In this case, the first thing which I noticed, was, a morbid sensibility of the moral sense, which filled him with remorse, for acts, which had little or no moral turpitude attached to them.

I would state then, as the result of all my observation, that religion, in its regular and rational exercise, has no tendency to melancholy, or insanity, but the contrary; and that, religion is the most effectual remedy for this disease, whatever be its cause. But melancholy persons are very apt to seize on the dark side of religion, as affording food for the morbid state of their minds. True Christians, as being subject to like diseases with others, may become melancholy; but not in consequence of their piety: but in this melancholy condition, they are in a more comfortable, as well as in a safer state, than others; they may relinquish all their hopes; but they cannot divest themselves of their pious feelings.

I have said nothing respecting the supposed tendency of strong religious feelings to produce insanity, for what has been said respecting melancholy is equally applicable to this subject. Indeed, I am of opinion, that melancholy is a species of insanity; and in its worst form, the most appalling species; for, in most cases, insane persons seem to have many enjoyments, arising out of their strange misconceptions, but the victim of melancholy is miserable; he is often suffering under the most horrible of all calamities, black despair. When a child, I used to tremble when I read Bunyan's account, in his Pilgrim, of the man shut up in the iron cage. And in the year 1791, when I first visited the Pennsylvania Hospital, I saw a man there who had arrived a few days before, said to be in a religious melancholy, and to be in despair. He had made frequent attempts on his own life, and all instruments, by which he might accomplish that direful purpose, were carefully removed. Having never been accustomed to see insane persons, the spectacle of so many, deprived of reason, made an awful impression on my mind, but although some were raving and blaspheming, in their cells, and others confined in strait-jackets, the sight of no one so affected me, as that of this man in despair. Although near half a century has elapsed since I beheld his sorrowful countenance, there is still a vivid picture of it in my imagination. We spoke to him, but he returned no answer; except that he once raised his despairing eyes; but immediately

cast them down again. Whether this man had been the subject of any religious impressions, I did not learn. But this one thing, I must testify, that I never knew the most pungent convictions of sin to terminate in insanity; and as to the affections of love to God, and the lively hope of everlasting life producing insanity, it is too absurd for any one to believe it. I do not dispute, however, that enthusiasm may have a tendency to insanity; and some people are so ignorant of the nature of true religion as to confound it with enthusiasm. I will go further and declare, that, after much thought on the subject of enthusiasm, I am unable to account for the effects produced by it, in any other way, than by supposing that it is a case of real insanity. Diseases of this class are the more dangerous, because they are manifestly contagious. The very looks and tones of an enthusiast are felt to be powerful by every one; and when the nervous system of any one is in a state easily susceptible of emotions from such a cause, the dominion of reason is overthrown, and wild imagination and irregular emotion govern the infatuated person, who readily embraces all the extravagant opinions, and receives all the disturbing impressions which belong to the party infected. Without a supposition such as the foregoing, how can you account for the fact, that an educated man and popular preacher, and a wife, intelligent and judicious above most, having a family of beloved children, should separate from each other; relinquish all the comforts of domestic life, and a pleasant and promising congregation, to connect themselves with a people who are the extreme of all enthusiasts—the Shakers? But such facts have been witnessed in our own times, and in no small numbers. In a town in New Hampshire, the writer, when in the neighbourhood, was told of the case of a young preacher, who visited the Shaker settlement, out of curiosity, to see them dance, in which exercise their principal worship consists: but, while he stood and looked on, he was seized with the same spirit, and began to shake and dance too; and never returned, but remained in the society. But, there being no demand for his learning or preaching talents, whatever they might be—and he being an able bodied man, they employed him in building stone fences. This species of infatuation, which is called enthusiasm, is apt to degenerate into bitterness and malignity of spirit, towards all who do not embrace it, and then it is termed fanaticism. This species of insanity, as I must be permitted to call it, differs from other kinds in that it is social, or affects large numbers in the same way, and binds them together by the link of close fraternity. It agrees with other kinds of monomania, in that the aberration of mind relates to one subject, while the judgment may be sound in other matters. No people know how to manage their agricultural, horticultural, and mechanical business more skilfully, and successfully than the Shakers. And the newer sect of Mormonites, would soon settle down to peaceable industry, if the people would let them alone. This country promises to be the theatre of all conceivable forms of enthusiasm and fanaticism; and as long as these misguided people pursue their own course, without disturbing other people, they should be left to their own delusions, as it relates to the civil power; but if any of them should be impelled by their fanatical spirit, to disturb the peace, they should be treated like other maniacs. The causes of melancholy and insanity, whether physical or moral, cannot easily be explored. The physician will speak confidently about a lesion of the brain, but when insane persons have been subjected to a post-mortem examination, the brain very seldom exhibits any appearance of derangement. The casuist, on the other hand, thinks only of moral causes, and attributes the disease to such of this class as are known to have existed, or flees to hypothesis, which will account for every thing. There is a remarkable coincidence, however, which has fallen under my observation, between those who assign a moral and those who assign a physical cause for melancholy and madness, in regard to one point. Some forty or fifty years ago, the writer, about

the same time, read Shepard's "Sincere Convert," and Robe on "Religious Melancholy," and he noticed, that they both ascribe the deep and fixed depression of spirits, frequently met with, to a secret, criminal indulgence. Well, in the statistics of several insane asylums and penitentiaries which have been published recently, the most of the cases of insanity are confidently ascribed to the same thing, as its physical cause. This increasing evil is of such a nature that we cannot be more explicit. Those who ought to know the facts, will understand the reference. It must, after all, be admitted that the claims of intemperance, in the use of intoxicating drinks, to a deleterious influence on the reason, stand in the foremost rank; but the madness produced by this cause is commonly of short duration. I do not speak of that loss of reason which is the immediate effect of alcohol on the brain; but of that most tremendous form of madness called delirium tremens. I have said that it was short, because it is commonly the last struggle of the human constitution, under the influence of a dreadful poison, which has now consummated its work—and death soon steps in and puts an end to the conflict.

After spending so much time in speaking of melancholy as a disease, I anticipate the thoughts of some good people, who will be ready to say, what, is there no such thing as spiritual desertion—times of darkness and temptation, which are independent of the bodily temperament? To which I answer, that I fully believe there are many such cases; but they deserve a separate consideration, and do not fall within the compass of my present design. The causes, symptoms, and cure of such spiritual maladies are faithfully delineated by many practical writers; and although these cases are entirely distinct from melancholy, they assume, in many respects, similar symptoms, and, by the unskilful casuist, are confounded with it. These two causes, as I have before intimated, may often operate together, and produce a mixed and very perplexed case, both for the bodily and spiritual physician.

After all that has been said, the fact, with which we commenced, is that religious exercises are very much modified by the temperament; and in some cases, by the idiosyncrasy of the individual. The liquor put into an old cask, commonly receives a strong tincture from the vessel. Old habits, although a new governing principle is introduced into the system, do not yield at once; and propensities, apparently extinguished, are apt to revive, and give unexpected trouble. It is a comfortable thought, that those bodies cannot go with the saints to heaven, until they are completely purified. What proportion of our present feelings will be dropped with the body, we cannot tell. How a disembodied spirit will perceive, feel, and act, we shall soon know by consciousness; but, if ever so many of the departed should return and attempt to communicate to us their present mode of existence, it would be all in vain; the things, which relate to such a state, are inconceivable, and unspeakable. What Paul saw in the third heaven he dare not, or he could not communicate; but he did not know whether he saw these wonderful things in the body or out of the body. This was a thing known, as he intimates, only to God.

CHAPTER V("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Effect of sympathy illustrated.—Cautions in relation to this subject—A singular case in illustration

The causes, already considered, which modify religious experience, relate to Christians as individuals: but man is constitutionally a social being; and religion is a social thing; so that we cannot have a complete view of this subject, without considering them as they stand connected with others; and, especially, as they are influenced by one another. There is a mysterious bond,

called sympathy, by which not only human beings, but some species of animals are connected. It is much easier, on this subject, to state facts than to account for them. A man cannot go into any company without being sensible of some change in his feelings. Whatever passion agitates those around him, he involuntarily participates in the emotion; and the mere external expression of any feeling, often produces the same expression in himself, whether it be yawning, smiling, crying, or coughing, and this must be effected by an assimilation of the mind of the beholder, to the state of mind which produced the external act. The wilder and stronger the passions which agitate others, the more are we affected by them. This operation of mutual sympathetic excitement, when many persons are brought together under some agitating influence, produces a stream of emotion which cannot easily be resisted; and far above what any one of the crowd would have felt, if the same cause had operated on him alone. Hence the ungovernable fury of mobs, carrying desolation, and often murder in their train; and yet the ring-leaders, had they been alone, would have experienced no such violence of passion; and hence the danger, in large cities, of permitting multitudes of undisciplined people to assemble promiscuously. A mob is an artificial body, pervaded by one spirit; by the power of sympathy; for which the French have an appropriate phrase, *esprit du corps*. If there be any thing in animal magnetism, which has of late made so much noise, beside sheer imposture, it must be grafted on this principle; for the extent to which human beings may influence each other, by contact or proximity, in certain excitable states of the nervous system, has never been accurately ascertained. In those remarkable bodily affections, called the jerks, which appeared in religious meetings some years ago, the nervous irregularity was commonly produced by the sight of other persons thus affected; and if, in some instances, without the sight, yet by having the imagination strongly impressed by hearing of such things. It is a fact, as undoubted as it is remarkable, that, as this bodily affection assumed a great variety of appearances, in different places, nothing was more common, than for a new species of the exercise, as it was called, to be imported from another part of the country, by one or a few individuals. This contagion of nervous excitement is not unparalleled; for whole schools of young ladies have been seized with spasmodic or epileptic fits, in consequence of a single scholar being taken with the disease. There are many authentic facts ascertained in relation to this matter, which I hope some person will collect and give to the public, through the press. It will not be thought strange then, that sympathy should have a powerful influence in increasing and modifying the feelings which are experienced in religious meetings; nor is it desirable that it should be otherwise. This principle, no doubt, is liable to abuse, and when unduly excited, may be attended with disagreeable and injurious effects, but without it, how dull and uninteresting would social worship be? When a whole assembly, in listening to the same evangelical discourse, or praising God in the same divine song, or sitting together around the same sacramental table, are deeply affected, they form, as it were, one body, and the whole mass is melted down and amalgamated into one grand emotion. They seem to have but one heart and one soul; and as harmoniously as their voices mingle in the sacred song of praise to the Redeemer, do their feelings amalgamate in one ascending volume, towards heaven. The preacher, who is privileged to address such an assembly, seems to have before him one great body, having many eyes, but one soul. Hence we see the reason, why a company thinly scattered over a large house, always appears cold and uncomfortable; while the same persons brought near together, in a small house, have an entirely different appearance; and also we see why social meetings in private houses, are felt by sincere Christians to be more profitable, often, than the more solemn assemblies of the church. And, upon the same principle, all worshippers feel

more animated when surrounded by a multitude. But, it is in times of revival, or general awakening, that the power of this principle manifests itself most evidently; and it is no evidence of a spurious work, that the sympathies of the people are much awakened, or that many are led to seriousness by seeing others affected. God often blesses this instinctive feeling in this very way. But, is it not to be expected that, at such a time, many will be affected by mere sympathy? And will not such as are thus affected, be in great danger of being deceived, by taking these tender emotions of sympathy to be the exercises of true repentance, especially, as they fall in with those convictions of conscience, which all who hear the gospel experience? Is it then judicious, by impassioned discourses, addressed to the sympathies of our nature, to raise this class of feelings to a flame? or to devise measures, by which the passions of the young and ignorant may be excited to excess? That measures may be put into operation, which have a mighty influence on a whole assembly, is readily admitted; but are excitements thus produced really useful? They may bring young people, who are diffident, to a decision, and as it were, constrain them to range themselves on the Lord's side, but the question which sticks with me, is, does this really benefit the persons? In my judgment, not at all, but the contrary. If they have the seed of grace, though it may come forth slowly, yet this principle will find its way to the light and air, and the very slowness of its coming forward, may give it opportunity to strike its roots deep in the earth. If I were to place myself on what is called an anxious seat, or should kneel down before a whole congregation to be prayed for, I know that I should be strangely agitated, but I do not believe that it would be of any permanent utility. But if it should produce some good, effect, am I at liberty to resort to any thing in the worship of God which I think will be useful? If such things are lawful and useful, why not add other circumstances to increase the effect? Why not require the penitent to appear in a white sheet, or to be clothed in sackcloth, with ashes on his head? and these, remember, are Scriptural signs of humiliation? And on these principles, who can reasonably object to holy water, to incense, and the use of pictures or images in the worship of God. All these things come into the church upon this same principle, of devising new measures to do good; and if the anxious seat is so powerful a means of grace, it may soon come to be reckoned among the sacraments of the church. The language of experience is, that it is unsafe and unwise to bring persons, who are under religious impressions, too much into public view. The seed of the word, like the natural seed, does not vegetate well in the sun. Be not too impatient to force into maturity the plant of grace. Water it, cultivate it, but handle it not with a rough hand. The opinion, entertained by some good people, that all religion obtained in a revival is suspicious, has no just foundation. At such times, when the Spirit of God is really poured out, the views and exercises of converts are commonly more clear and satisfactory, than at other times, and the process of conversion more speedy. But doubtless, there may be expected a considerable crop of spurious conversions, and these may make the greatest show; for the seed, on the stony grounds, seems to have vegetated the quickest of any. And this is the reason that, after all revivals, there is a sad declension in the favourable appearances; because that which has no root must soon wither. In looking back, after a revival season, I have thought, how would matters have been if none had come forward, but such as persevere and bring forth fruit. Perhaps things would have gone on so quietly, that the good work would not have been called a revival. But ministers cannot prevent the impressions which arise merely from sympathy—neither should they attempt it; but, when they are about to gather the wheat into the garner, they should faithfully winnow the heap; not that they can discern the spirits of men, but the word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The church is

no place of safety for the unconverted. Hundreds and thousands are shielded from salutary convictions, by their profession and situation in the church. Let ministers be “wise as serpents,” as well as “harmless as doves.” “Be not many masters, (διδασκαλοι) knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation.” “They watch for souls as they that must give account,”—awful account! From what has been said about the power of sympathy, some may be ready to conclude, that all experimental religion, and all revivals may be accounted for, on this principle, without the necessity of supposing any supernatural agency to exist; and if no effects were produced but those excitements which often mingle with religious exercises, this would be no irrational conclusion. But under the preaching of the gospel we find a permanent change of moral character taking place: so great a change, that, even in the view of the world who observe it, the subject appears to be “a new man.” An entire revolution has taken place in his principles of action as well as in his sentiments respecting divine things. Now those who would ascribe all experimental religion to mere natural feelings, artificially excited, must believe that there are no such transformations of character as have been mentioned; and that all who profess such a change are false pretenders. But this ground is manifestly untenable; for no facts are more certain than such reformations; and if there be men of truth and sincerity in the world, they are to be found among those who have undergone this moral transformation. Surely there are no phenomena now taking place in our world half so important and worthy of consideration, as the repentance of an habitual sinner; so that he utterly forsakes his wicked courses, and takes delight in the worship of God and obedience to his will. Let it be remembered, that these are effects observed only where the gospel is preached, and in some instances, numerous examples of such conversions from sin to holiness occur about the same time, and in the same place. No series of miracles could give stronger evidence of the divine origin and power of the gospel, than the actual and permanent reformation of wicked men; and the skeptic may be challenged to account for such effects on any natural principles. But it may still be asked how the person who is the subject of these new views and exercises, can know that they are the effects of a supernatural agency? It is readily admitted that we cannot be conscious of the agency of another spirit on ours, because our consciousness extends only to our own thoughts, and often when new feelings arise in our minds we are unable to trace them to their proper cause. In this case, if we had no revelation from God, we might not be able with certainty to account for such effects; but in the word of God we are distinctly and repeatedly informed, that God by his Spirit will continue to operate on the minds of men, to turn them from iniquity, and to cause them to engage with delight in his service; and when we find these very effects taking place, in connexion with the means appointed to produce them, we can have no doubt about their divine origin; and our faith is confirmed in this doctrine of divine agency by observing the wonderful change produced by the preaching of the gospel upon the most depraved and degraded of the heathen. The transformation of character, in thousands of instances now existing, is enough to produce conviction in any mind, not rendered obdurate by the prejudices of infidelity. It may be objected, that, in many instances, the change professed is not permanent, but temporary, and they who appear saints to day, may be found wallowing in the mire of iniquity, to morrow. These are facts which we cannot gainsay; but we do deny that they go to invalidate the argument from the examples of a permanent and thorough change which do really take place. If there were only one real, sound conversion, and reformation, in a hundred of those who may be religiously impressed, still, the conclusion in favour of a divine influence, would be valid. In the spring we behold the trees clothed and adorned with millions of blossoms, which

never produce mature fruit; but when in autumn, we find here and there, apples, large, sweet, and mellow, do we hesitate to believe that this is a good tree which produces good fruit? For reasons already given, it ought not to be expected that all serious impressions should eventuate in a sound conversion. External appearances may be the same to our view, where the causes are entirely diverse. This is especially to be expected when a great many are affected at once, and meet in the same assembly. And if these transient appearances did not take place under the preaching of the gospel, our Saviour's doctrine of the various effects of the word would not be verified. Ministers of the gospel cannot be blamed for these temporary impressions; unless they use unauthorized means to work upon the sympathies of their hearers. That, through ignorance, vanity and enthusiastic ardour, many preachers in our day, have attempted to produce such excitements, cannot be denied, and by the true friends of vital piety, is greatly lamented. Perhaps nothing has so much prejudiced the minds of sensible men against experimental religion, as the extravagance and violence of those factitious excitements which have been promoted, in various places, by measures artfully contrived to work upon the passions and imagination of weak and ignorant people. And as the preacher must have his reward of glory for his efforts, all this must be so brought out, that their number may be counted and published to the world. Alas! alas! poor human nature! I believe that all respectable denominations, among us, are becoming more and more sensible, that something more is requisite in the ministry than fiery zeal. Some who, within our remembrance, disparaged a learned ministry, are now using noble exertions to erect seminaries, and encourage their young preachers to seek to be learned. This is a matter of rejoicing, and augurs well for the American Church hereafter. I should be unwilling to bring before the public all the scenes that I have witnessed under the name of religious worship. But as the subject of sympathy is still under consideration, I will relieve the reader by a short narrative. Being in a part of the country where I was known, by face, to scarcely any one, and hearing that there was a great meeting in the neighbourhood, and a good work in progress, I determined to attend. The sermon had commenced before I arrived, and the house was so crowded that I could not approach near to the pulpit, but sat down in a kind of shed connected with the main building where I could see and hear the preacher. His sermon was really striking and impressive, and in language and method, far above the common run of extempore discourses. The people were generally attentive, and, so far as I could observe, many were tenderly affected, except that in the extreme part of the house, where I sat, some old tobacco-planters kept up a continual conversation in a low tone, about tobacco-plants, seasons, &c. When the preacher came to the application of his discourse he became exceedingly vehement and boisterous, and I could hear some sounds in the centre of the house which indicated strong emotion. At length, a female voice was heard, in a piercing cry, which thrilled through me and affected the whole audience. It was succeeded by a low murmuring sound from the middle of the house; but, in a few seconds, one and another arose in different parts of the house, under extreme and visible agitation, casting off bonnets and caps, and raising their folded hands, they shouted to the utmost extent of their voice; and in a few seconds more, the whole audience was agitated, as a forest when shaken by a mighty wind. The sympathetic wave, commencing in the centre, extended to the extremities; and at length it reached our corner, and I felt the conscious effort of resistance as necessary as if I had been exposed to the violence of a storm. I saw few persons through the whole house who escaped the prevailing influence; even careless boys seemed to be arrested and to join in the general outcry. But, what astonished me most of all was, that the old tobacco-planters, whom I have mentioned, and who, I am persuaded,

had not heard one word of the sermon, were violently agitated. Every muscle of their brawny faces appeared to be in tremulous motion, and the big tears chased one another down their wrinkled cheeks. Here I saw the power of sympathy. The feeling was real, and propagated from person to person by the mere sounds which were uttered; for many of the audience had not paid any attention to what was said; but nearly all partook of the agitation. The feelings expressed were different, as when the foundation of the sacred temple was laid; for while some uttered the cry of poignant anguish, others shouted in the accents of joy and triumph. The speaker's voice was soon silenced, and he sat down and gazed on the scene with a complacent smile. When this tumult had lasted a few minutes, another preacher, as I suppose he was, who sat on the pulpit steps, with his handkerchief spread over his head, began to sing a soothing and yet lively tune, and was quickly joined by some strong female voices near him; and in less than two minutes the storm was hushed, and there was a great calm. It was like pouring oil on the troubled waters. I experienced the most sensible relief to my own feelings from the appropriate music; for I could not hear the words sung. But I could not have supposed that any thing could so quickly allay such a storm; and all seemed to enjoy the tranquillity which succeeded. The dishevelled hair was put in order, and the bonnets, &c. gathered up, and the irregularities of the dress adjusted, and no one seemed conscious of any impropriety. Indeed, there is a peculiar luxury in such excitements, especially when tears are shed copiously, which was the case here. But I attended another meeting in another place where there had been a remarkable excitement, but the tide was far on the ebb; and although we had vociferation and outcrying of a stunning kind, I did not hear one sound indicative of real feeling, and I do not think that one tear was shed during the meeting.

CHAPTER VI("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Erroneous views of regeneration.—The correct view.—The operation of faith.—Exercises of mind, as illustrated in President Edwards' narrative.—The operations of faith still further explained

It is proper now to inquire, what are the precise effects of regeneration, or the exercises of a newly converted soul. As the restoration of depraved man to the image of God, lost by the fall, is the grand object aimed at in the whole economy of salvation, it can easily be said, in the general, that by this change a principle of holiness is implanted, spiritual life is communicated, the mind is enlightened, the will renewed, and the affections purified and elevated to heavenly objects. Such general descriptions do not afford full satisfaction to the inquiring mind; and as we have taken into view many of those circumstances which diversify the exercises of grace, in different subjects, let us now endeavour to ascertain, with as much precision as we can, what are those things which are essential to the genuineness of this work, and which, therefore, will be found in every sincere Christian. But in this attempt, great difficulty must be met in conveying our ideas with precision. Even those terms which are most used in the Holy Scriptures, to designate the essential exercises of piety are differently understood, and when used, convey different ideas to different persons. I will endeavour, however, to avoid this difficulty, as much as possible, by defining the terms which I employ. I have all along admitted, that the mode of the Spirit's operation, in regeneration, is altogether inscrutable: and an attempt to explain it, is worse than folly. We may, however, without intruding into things unseen, or attempting to dive into the unsearchable nature of the divine operations, say, that God operates on the human mind, in a way perfectly consistent with its nature, as a spirit, and a creature of understanding and will. On this principle some suppose, that there can be no other method of influencing a rational mind but by the exhibition of truth, or the

presentment of motives: any physical operation, they allege, would be unsuitable. Their theory of regeneration, therefore, is, that it is produced by the moral operation of the truth, contemplated by the understanding and influencing the affections and the will, according to the known principles of our rational nature. But respecting what is necessary to bring the truth fairly before the mind, the abettors of this theory, divide into several parts. The Pelagian, believing human nature to be uncontaminated, and needing nothing but a correct knowledge of the truth, rejects all supernatural aid, and maintains, that every man has full ability to perform all good actions; and to reform what is amiss by simply attending to the instructions of the word, and exercising his own free will, by which he is able to choose and pursue what course he pleases. The semi-Pelagian agrees with the views given, except in one particular. He believes that the truth, if seriously contemplated, will produce the effects stated, but that mankind are so immersed in the world of sensible objects, and so occupied and filled with earthly thoughts and cares, that no man will, or ever does contemplate the truth so impartially and steadily, as to produce a change in his affections and purposes, until he is influenced by the Holy Spirit; and, according to him, the only need of divine agency, in regeneration, is to direct and fix the attention on divine things. This being done, the truth, as contained in the divine word, and as apprehended by the natural understanding, is adequate to produce all the desired effects on the active principles of our nature. There is still a third party, who attribute regeneration to the simple operation of the truth on the mind, whose views are neither Pelagian nor semi-Pelagian. They hold, that the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God, and that if a man should ever so long contemplate the truth with such views as natural reason takes of it, it would never transform him into the divine likeness: but that, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the sinner must obtain new, spiritual views of divine things, by which he is renovated or regenerated: yet, these deny that any operation on the mind itself is necessary, as they allege that these spiritual views of truth will certainly draw after them the exercise of those affections, in which holiness essentially consists. Now, in my judgment, this theory is defective, only in one point, and that is, it supposes the mind, which is already in possession of doctrinal knowledge of the truth, to have this same truth presented to it in an entirely new light, without any operation on the soul itself. Just as if a man was blind, but standing in the clear shining of the sun's rays. These he feels, and can talk philosophically about the sensation of light and colours; while he has not in his mind the first simple perception of any object of sight. Could this man be made to perceive the visible objects around him, without an operation on the eyes to remove the obstruction, or to rectify the organ? The case of the soul is entirely analogous. Here is light enough, the truth is viewed by the intellect of unregenerate man, but has no transforming efficacy. The fault is not in the truth, which is perfect, but the blindness is in the mind, which can only be removed by an influence on the soul itself; that is, by the power of God creating "a new heart" to use the language of Scripture. The apostle Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." Two things are always necessary to distinct vision; the medium of light, and a sound organ; either of these without the other, would be useless; but combined, the beauties of nature, and the glory of God in the visible world, are seen with delight. It is so in the spiritual world. The truth is necessary; but until the mind is brought into a state in which it can perceive it in its beauty and glory, it is heard, and read, and contemplated, without any transforming effect—without drawing the affections to God, or subduing the power of selfish and sensual desires. The fault being in the percipient being, there must be such an exertion of divine power as will remove it, and this is regeneration. Then, all the effects of the truth will take place, as

according to the former theory. But I seem to hear the common objection, that if the soul be the subject of any operation, this must be physical, and what is this but to make man a mere machine, or to deal with him as if he were a block? I believe that a more ambiguous, unhappy word could not be used than physical; the best way to get clear of the mists which surround it, is to drop its use altogether in this connexion. Indeed, it is a term which properly belongs to another science—to natural philosophy. If the operation must have a name, let it receive it from the nature of the effect produced; this being spiritual, let it be called a spiritual operation; or, as the effect produced, is confessedly above the powers of unassisted nature, let us call it supernatural, which is the precise technical term, used by the most accurate theologians. Can the Almighty, who made the soul, operate upon it in no other way than by a mechanical force? Cannot he restore its lost power of spiritual perception and susceptibility of holy feeling, without doing any violence to its free and spiritual nature? But I shall be told, that there neither is, nor can be, any moral or spiritual nature, or disposition prior to volition, in the mind—for morality consists, essentially, in choice; and to suppose morality to have any other existence, than in the transient act, is an absurdity. If this be sound moral philosophy, then my theory must fall. This is a question not requiring or admitting of much reasoning. It is a subject for the intuitive judgment of the moral faculty. If there are minds so constituted, that they cannot conceive of permanent, latent dispositions in the soul, both good and evil, I can do no more than express my strong dissent from their opinion, and appeal to the common sense of mankind.

Some of my most serious readers, I know, will object to my theory of the mind's operations, in one important particular. They are so far from thinking that any illumination of the mind will produce holy affections, that it is a radical principle in their philosophy of religion, that light always increases or stirs up the enmity of an unregenerate heart; that the more unholy beings know of God, the more they will hate him, as is supposed to be proved by the experience of thousands under conviction of sin; and by the case of the devils who believe and tremble, but never love. The difference between me and these persons is not so great as at first view it seems. Their error consists, if I am right, in making too wide a severance between the understanding and the will; between the intellect and the affections. I am ready to admit, that all the knowledge which you can communicate to a man remaining unregenerate, may have the tendency of increasing or stirring up his enmity to God and his law; but, observe, that I make illumination the first effect of regeneration. And I hold that no unregenerate man is, while in that state, any more capable of spiritual perception than a blind man is of a perception of colours. The blind man, however, has his own ideas about colours, and may understand their various relations to each other, and all the laws which regulate the reflexion and refraction of light as well as those who see. This was remarkably exemplified in the case of Dr. Sanderson, who, though blind from his early infancy, delivered an accurate course of lectures, on light and colours, in the University of Oxford. Just so, an unregenerate man may be able to deliver able lectures on all the points in theology, and yet not have one glimpse of the beauty and glory of the truth, with which he is conversant. The Sacred Scriptures represent all unconverted men, as destitute of the true knowledge of God. If there be a clear truth in the laws of mental operation, it is, that the affections are in exact accordance with the views of the understanding. If men are unaffected with the truth known, it must be because they do not know it aright: neither can they perceive it in its true nature until they are regenerated. Did any man ever see an object to be lovely and not feel an emotion corresponding with that quality? And what unconverted man ever beheld in Christ, as represented in Scripture, the beauty and glory of

God? Hence that doctrine is not true, which confines depravity or holiness to the will; and which considers the understanding as a natural and the will a moral faculty. The soul is not depraved, or holy by departments; the disease affects it, as a soul; and of course, all faculties employed in moral exercises, must partake of their moral qualities. There is, however, no propriety in calling either of them a moral faculty; for although both understanding and will are concerned in every moral act; yet not one hundredth part of the acts of either partakes of a moral nature. The will is just as much a natural faculty as the understanding; and the understanding is as much a moral faculty as the will. But in strict propriety of speech, the only faculty which deserves to be called a moral faculty is conscience; because, by it only are we capable of moral perceptions or feelings.

I am afraid that I have gone too far into abstruse distinctions, for most of my readers; but there are thousands of plain, private Christians, in our country, who can, not only enter into such disquisitions, but will relish them.

I come now to what I intended when I began this subject, to describe as exactly as I can, what are the exercises of the new heart, or the regenerate man. And here my appeal is to no theories, but to experience, combined with the word of God. Every man, on whom this divine operation has passed, experiences new views of divine truth. The soul sees that, in these things, which it never saw before. It discerns, in the truths of God, a beauty and excellence, of which it had no conception until now. Whatever may be the diversity in the clearness of the views of different persons, or in the particular truths brought before the mind, they all agree in this, that there is a new perception of truth; whether you ascribe it to the head or the heart, I care not. It is a blessed reality, and there are many witnesses of sound mind, and unquestionable veracity, who are ready to attest it as a verity, known in their own delightful experience. But, as the field of truth is very wide, and divine things may be perceived under innumerable aspects and relations, and as there is no uniformity in the particular objects which may first occupy the attention of the enlightened mind, it is impossible to lay down any particular order of exercises which take place. The case may be illustrated by supposing a great multitude of blind persons restored to sight by an act of divine power. Some of them would be so situated, that the first object seen would be the glorious luminary of day; another might receive the gift of sight in the night, and the moon and stars would absorb his wondering attention; a third might direct his opened eyes to a beautiful landscape; and a fourth might have but a ray of light shining into a dark dungeon without his knowing whence it came. Of necessity, there must be the same endless variety in the particular views of new converts; but still they all partake of new views of divine truth; and the same truths will generally be contemplated, sooner or later; but not in the same order, nor exhibited to all with the same degree of clearness. Now, according to the views which I entertain, this spiritual knowledge granted to the regenerated soul is nothing else but saving faith; for knowledge and belief involve each other. To know a thing and not believe it is a contradiction; and to believe a thing and not know it is impossible. Faith is simply a belief of the truth, when viewed as distinct, and discriminated from all other mental acts. Some will be startled at this nakedness of faith; and many will be ready to object, that it is to make faith to be no more than a bare assent of the understanding to the truth: well, if it be uniformly accompanied by all holy affections and emotions what is the difference? But I deny that as described, it is a naked assent of the understanding, as those words are commonly understood. The wide distinction between the understanding and will, which has very much confounded our mental philosophy, has come down to us from the schoolmen. But in making the

distinction, they made simple verity, the object of the understanding. And that is what we commonly mean by bare assent; it relates to the simple truth; but the will, has respect, they said, to good—every species of good. Now the faith of which I have spoken, at the same time contemplates the truth, and the beauty, excellency, and goodness of the object, and also its adaptedness to our necessities: all these things are comprehended in the views which the Holy Spirit gives to the mind. Therefore, though faith be a simple uncompounded act, a firm belief, or persuasion, it comprehends the objects ascribed both to the understanding and will. Here I shall be met by a definition of faith, which makes the act simple also, but considers that act to be trust or confidence. This the reader will remember is Dr. Dwight's definition of Faith. And the only objection to it, is, that it is too narrow to comprehend all that belongs to the subject. Trust is nothing else than the firm belief or persuasion of the truth of a promise. When we say that we trust, or have confidence in a person, it relates to some promise. This definition comprehends all acts of faith, which have a promise of God for their object, and these are certainly the most important acts, and accompanied with the most sensible emotions. But all divine truth is not in the form of a promise. The whole word of God is the proper object of a true faith; and a large part of divine revelation is taken up with histories, prophecies, doctrines, and precepts. The Christian believes all these, as well as the promises.

Here faith is the first act of the regenerated soul; and the most important act, for it draws all holy affections and emotions in its train. But though it sweetly mingles with every other grace, it is distinct from them all. All its diversified acts arise from the nature of the truths believed, and men may enumerate and name as many of these acts as they please; still the nature of faith remains simple. It is a firm persuasion or belief of the truth, apprehended under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It necessarily works by love and purifies the heart, for divine things thus discerned, cannot but excite the affections to holy objects, by which sinful desires and appetites will be subdued; and when we are persuaded of the truth of God's gracious promises, there will always be a sweet repose of soul because the promises contain the very blessings which we need; and to be assured that there are such blessings for all who will receive them, and especially if the soul is conscious that it is exercising faith, will produce sweet consolation—"There is joy and peace in believing."

According to the view of faith now given, there is nothing mysterious about it. To believe in divine truth is an act of the mind, precisely the same as to believe in other truth; and the difference between a saving faith and a historical or merely speculative faith, consists not in the truths believed: for in both they are the same; nor in the degree of assent given to the proposition, but in the evidence on which they are respectively founded. A saving faith is produced by the manifestation of the truth, in its true nature to the mind, which now apprehends it, according to the degree of faith, in its spiritual qualities, its beauty, and glory, and sweetness; whereas a historical or speculative faith may rest on the prejudices of education, or the deductions of reason; but in its exercise, there is no conception of the true qualities of divine things. The humblest, weakest believer possesses a knowledge of God, hidden from the wisest of enlightened men. According to that saying of Christ, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them to babes." On the subject of experimental religion our dependence must not be on the theories of men, but on the unerring word of God, and on the facts which have been observed in the experience of true Christians. In the exercises of new converts there is, in some respects, a remarkable similarity, and in others a

remarkable variety. All are convinced of sin, not only of life but of heart. All are brought to acknowledge the justice of God, in their condemnation, and to feel that they might be left to perish, without any derogation from the perfections of God; and that they have no ability to bring God under any obligations to save them, by their prayers, tears, or other religious duties. All true Christians, moreover, love the truth which has been revealed to their minds, and are led to trust in Christ alone for salvation; and they all hunger and thirst after righteousness, and resolve to devote themselves to the service of God, and prefer his glory above their chief joy. But, beside those varieties already described, as arising from several causes, there is often much difference in their exercises, arising from the particular truths which they are led to contemplate when their eyes are first opened. I do not mean to go over the ground which we have already passed, otherwise than by a statement of facts from authentic sources, which may serve to corroborate and illustrate the statements already given. Perhaps no man, who has lived in modern times, has had a better opportunity to form an accurate judgment of facts of this kind, than President Edwards; and few men, who ever lived, were better qualified to discriminate between true and false religion. It is a thing much to be prized, that this great and good man has left a record of that most remarkable revival which took place in Northampton, New England, in the year 1734 and onwards. This narrative was written soon afterwards, and was communicated to Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse, who united in a preface which accompanied the narrative, when published in London. In this account, carefully drawn up, we have a satisfactory account of the exercises of the subjects of the work, with the varieties which were observed in the experience of different persons. The leading facts have here been selected from the narrative, so as to occupy the least possible room. To any, who take an interest in this subject, these facts cannot but be gratifying; and however the narrative may have been perused by some, yet it will not be disagreeable to them to have some of the prominent traits of the religious exercises, at that time, presented to them in a condensed form. Mr. Edwards informs us, "that there was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world;" and although he does not pretend to know the precise number of converts, he is of opinion that it could not be less, in a judgment of charity, than three hundred. Our object is not to abridge the narrative, but merely to select the account of the variety of exercises experienced, as there given. "There is a great variety," says he, "as to the degree of trouble and fear, that persons are exercised with, before they attain any comfortable evidence of pardon and acceptance with God. Some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more hope and encouragement than others. Some have had ten times less trouble than others, in whom the work yet appears the same in the issue.... The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery have, for the most part, been increasing, the nearer they have approached to deliverance. Sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the Spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness, yet they appear very deeply exercised with that fear, and in great earnestness to obtain conviction again. Many times, persons under great awakenings were concerned because they thought they were not awakened, but miserably hard-hearted, senseless, sottish creatures still, and sleeping on the brink of hell.... Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them, a little before the day dawns on their souls. The depravity of the heart has discovered itself in various exercises, in the time of legal convictions. Sometimes it appears as in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy. Many, in such circumstances, have felt a great spirit of envy towards the godly; especially towards those thought to have been recently converted. As they are

gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, more desperately wicked instead of growing better.... When awakenings first begin, their consciences are commonly more exercised about their outward vicious courses, but afterwards are much more burdened with a sense of heart sins, the dreadful corruption of their nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief, their rejection of Christ, the stubbornness of their will, and the like.... Very often, under first awakenings, they set themselves to walk more strictly, confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger. And sometimes, at first setting out, their affections are so moved, that they are full of tears, in their confessions and prayers, which they are ready to make much of, as if they were some atonement, and conceive that they grow better apace, and shall soon be converted; but their affections and hopes are short-lived, for they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again. When they reflect on the wicked working of their hearts against God, they have more distressing apprehensions of his anger, and have great fears that God will never show mercy to them; or perhaps, that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and are often tempted to leave off in despair.... When they begin to seek salvation, they are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves. They are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do, to bring themselves to see spiritual things aright, and towards putting forth gracious exercises in their own souls. When they see unexpected pollution in themselves, they go about to wash their own defilements and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, till God shows them that it is in vain; and that their help is not where they have sought it. But some persons continue to wander in such a labyrinth ten times as long as others, before their own experience will convince them of their own insufficiency—so that it is not their own experience at last, that convinces them, but the Spirit of God. There have been some who have not had great terrors, but yet have had a very quick work. Some, who have not had very deep convictions before their conversion, have much more of it afterwards. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method, in his proceedings with sinners, under legal convictions. There is in nothing a greater difference in different persons, than with respect to the time of their being under trouble: some, but a few days, and others for months and years. As to those in whom legal convictions seem to have a saving issue, the first thing that appears after their trouble, is a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, from a sense of their exceeding sinfulness. Commonly, their minds, immediately before the discovery of God's justice, are exceedingly restless—in a kind of struggle or tumult; and sometimes in mere anguish; but commonly, as soon as they have this conviction, it immediately brings their minds to a calm and unexpected quietness and composure; and most frequently, then, though not always, the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken off; or a general hope arises, that some time God will be gracious, even before any distinct, particular discoveries of mercy. Commonly, they come to a conclusion, that they will lie at God's feet and wait his time.... That calm of spirit which succeeds legal conviction, in some instances, continues some time before any special and delightful manifestation is made to the soul, of the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel. But, very often some comfortable and sweet views of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the Gospel, immediately follows, or in a very little time. And in some, the first sight of their desert of hell, of God's sovereignty in regard to their salvation, and a discovery of all-sufficient grace, are so near, that they seem to go together. The gracious discoveries, whence the first special comforts are derived, are, in many respects, very

various. More frequently, Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners; but some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes, manifested in the Gospel and shining forth of Jesus Christ. Some view the all-sufficiency of the grace of God—some chiefly, the infinite power of God and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them—and some look most to the truth and faithfulness of God. In some, the truth and certainty of the Gospel, in general, is the first joyful discovery they have: in others, the certain proof of some particular promise. In some, the grace and sincerity of God, in his invitations, very commonly, in some particular invitation, is before the mind. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ; and others with the sufficiency of his blood, as offered to make an atonement for sin; and others again, with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In many, the excellency and loveliness of Christ chiefly engage their thoughts, while in some, his divinity; being filled with the idea, that He is indeed the Son of the living God; and in others, the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.... There is often in the mind, some particular text of Scripture, holding forth some particular ground of consolation; at other times, a multitude of texts, gracious invitations, and promises, flowing in one after another, filling the soul more and more with comfort and satisfaction. Comfort is first given to some while reading some portion of Scripture; but in others, it is attended with no particular Scripture at all. In some instances, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul at once; while others have their minds fixed on some one thing; and afterwards a sense of others is given; in some, with a slower, in others, a swifter succession.

"It must be confessed, that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of in the first sensible act of grace—though most commonly he is—but sometimes he is the object of the mind only implicitly. Thus when persons have evidently appeared stripped of their own righteousness, and have stood condemned, as guilty of death, they have been comforted with a joyful and satisfactory evidence, that the mercy and grace of God is sufficient for them—that their sins, though never so great, shall be no hindrance to their being accepted—that there is mercy enough in God for the whole world, &c.—while they give no account of any particular or distinct thought of Christ; but yet it appears, that the revelation of mercy, in the gospel, is the ground of their encouragement and hope, yet such persons afterwards obtain distinct and clear discoveries of Christ, accompanied with lively and special actings of faith and love towards him. Frequently, when persons have had the gospel ground of relief opened to them, and have been entertaining their minds with the sweet prospect, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted. The view is joyful to them as it is in its own nature glorious; gives them quite new and delightful ideas of God and Christ, and greatly encourages them to seek conversion, and begets in them a strong resolution to devote themselves to God and his Son. There is wrought in them a holy repose of soul in God through Christ, with a secret disposition to fear and love him, and to hope for blessings from him in this way, yet they have no conception that they are now converted; it does not so much as come into their minds. They know not that the sweet complacency they feel in the mercy and complete salvation of God, as it includes pardon and sanctification, and is held forth to them through Christ, is a true receiving of this mercy, or a plain evidence of their receiving it. Many continue a long time in a course of gracious exercises and experiences, and do not think themselves to be converted, but conclude otherwise; and none knows how long they would continue so, were they not helped by particular instructions. There are undoubted instances of some who lived in this way for many years together. Those who, while under legal convictions,

have had the greatest terrors, have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort; nor has the light always been most speedily communicated; but yet I think the time of conversion has been most sensible in such persons. Converting influences commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the certainty and reality of the great things of religion; though in some, this is much greater, sometime after conversion, than at first." The religious exercises, contained in the preceding statement, will not be new to those who have been at all conversant with revivals. Such will recognise, in the account, what they have observed, and will be gratified to find the same facts which they have observed, recorded and published by such a master in Israel. Almost the only remark which I feel disposed to make, is, that it is too commonly supposed that the time of receiving comfort, is always the time of regeneration; whereas, this might rather be termed the time of conversion; for then the exercises of the renewed soul came to a crisis, and faith, which was before weak and obscure, shines forth with vigour. Perhaps it is the prevalent opinion among orthodox writers, that the first views of the renovated soul are views of Christ; and when mere legal convictions are immediately followed by such views and their attendant consolations, this opinion may be correct; but in many cases, it is reasonable to believe, that the convictions experienced are those of the true penitent. And as, in almost all cases here recorded and observed by others, there is a distinct view and approbation of God's justice in the condemnation of the sinner, I cannot but think, agreeably to what was stated in a former number, that the soul has passed from death unto life, before these feelings are experienced; and that may help to account for the remarkable calm which now succeeds the dark and stormy night. This revelation of Jesus Christ in the believer, may be compared to the birth of a child into the light of this world; but its conception was long before. And so this interesting point in experience is the new birth, but the principle of spiritual life commonly exists before. Besides, comfort is no sure evidence of a genuine birth; some who become strong men in the Lord are born in sorrow, like Benoni. They weep before they are able to smile; but, in the spiritual birth, joy and sorrow often sweetly mingle their streams.

There are two reasons why faith, though one of the simplest exercises of the mind, is represented as having so many different acts; the one is, the great variety in the truths believed; and the other, that, commonly, various exercises are included in the account of faith, which do always accompany or follow a true faith, but do not appertain to its essence. As faith has all revealed truth for its object, the feelings produced in the mind correspond with the particular nature of the truth which is, at any time, in the contemplation of the mind. If, to the soul under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the law is viewed in its spirituality and moral excellence, while there will be experienced an approbation of the will of God thus expressed, yet a lively sense of the sinfulness of our hearts and lives, must be the predominant feeling. This discovery of the purity of the law, and deep feeling of the evil of sin, commonly precedes any clear view of Christ, and the plan of salvation; and has given rise to the prevalent opinion, that repentance goes before faith in the natural order of pious exercises. But, according to our idea of faith, as given above, it must necessarily precede and be the cause of every other gracious exercise. Commonly, indeed, when we speak of faith, we describe its maturity; but there are often many obscure but real acts of faith, before the soul apprehends the fulness, and excellency, and suitableness of Christ. And in many cases, when some view of the plan of salvation is obtained, the single truth believed is, the ability of Christ to save; and even the full persuasion of this gives rise to joy, when the soul has been long cast down with gloomy forebodings of everlasting misery, and with the apprehension that, for such a sinner, there was no salvation. As faith does no more than bring the truth before the mind in its true

nature, every act of faith must, of course, be characterized by the qualities of the truth thus presented, and by its adaptation to the circumstances and convictions of the sinner. All those acts of faith which bring the extent and spirituality of the law of God fully into view must be accompanied with painful emotions, on account of the deep conviction of disconformity to that perfect rule which cannot but be experienced, when that object is before the mind. But all those invitations, promises, and declarations which exhibit a Saviour, and the method of recovery, when truly believed, under a just apprehension of their nature, must be accompanied, not only with love, but joy, and hope, and a free consent to be saved in God's appointed way; and when the previous distress and discouragement have been great, and the views of gospel truth clear, the joy is overflowing, and as long as these views are unclouded, peace flows like a river. But even in the discoveries which faith makes of Christ, there is a great variety in the extent and combination of divine truth which comes before the mind at any one time. Probably no two persons, in believing, have precisely the same truths in all their relations, presented to them; and not only so, but it is hardly credible, that the same believer, in his various contemplations of divine truth, takes in exactly the same field of view at different times. Hence it appears, that the whole power of faith is derived from the importance, excellence, amiableness, and suitableness of the truths believed. And when faith is "imputed for righteousness," it is not the simple act of faith which forms a righteousness. If any exercise of the renewed mind could constitute a righteousness, it would be love—which according to its strength, is "the fulfilling of the law;" but when the soul by faith is fully persuaded that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; this righteousness of the Surety, when received by faith, is imputed; and by this alone, which is perfect, can God be just in justifying the ungodly. "Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith: but worketh by love." "By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true, whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently, upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of faith are, accepting and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace." This quotation, taken from a formulary, known to many of my readers, contains as just and comprehensive a view of the nature of a saving faith as could be given in words. But another reason why so many divine acts are attributed to faith is, because other exercises are included in the description of faith, which though they always accompany it, ought not to be confounded with it. It was, two hundred years ago, a question much agitated among the divines of Holland, whether love or charity entered into the essence of faith? And in our own country, faith and love have not been kept distinct. A very prevalent system of theology makes the essence of faith to be love. Much evil arises from confounding what are so clearly distinguished in the word of God. If faith and love were identical, how could it be said that "faith works by love?" The apostle Paul speaks of faith, hope, and charity, or love, as so distinct, that, although they are all necessary, they may be compared, as to excellency—"The greatest of these is charity." The celebrated Witsius, in his "Economy of the Covenants," in describing faith, among the various acts which he attributes to this divine principle, reckons "love of the truth," and "hungering and thirsting after Christ." Now, it is an abuse of language to say that faith loves or desires; faith works by love, and excites hungering and thirsting desires after Christ. But, it may be asked, if these graces are inseparably connected, why

be so solicitous to distinguish them? First, because in so doing, we follow the sacred writers; secondly, because it has a bad effect to use a Scriptural word to express what it was never designed to express; and, thirdly, because of the special office of faith in a sinner's justification; in which neither love, nor any other grace has any part, although they are the effects of faith. When love is confounded with a justifying faith, it is very easy to slide into the opinion that as love is the substance of evangelical obedience, when we are said to be justified by faith, the meaning is, that we are justified by our own obedience. And accordingly, in a certain system of divinity, valued by many, in this country, the matter is thus stated: faith is considered a comprehensive term for all evangelical obedience. The next step is—and it has already been taken by some—that our obedience is meritorious, and when its defects are purged by atoning blood, it is sufficient to procure for us a title to eternal life. Thus have some, boasting of the name of Protestants, worked around, until they have fallen upon one of the most offensive tenets of Popery. But, it would be difficult to bring a true penitent to entertain the opinion, that his own works were meritorious, or could, in the least, recommend him to God. The whole of God's dealings with the souls of his own people effectually dispels from their minds every feeling of this kind. The very idea of claiming merit is most abhorrent to their feelings. But while it is of importance to distinguish faith from every other grace, yet it is necessary to insist on the fact, that that faith, which does not produce love and other holy affections, is not a genuine faith. In the apostles' days, a set of libertines arose, who boasted of their faith, but they performed no good works to evince the truth of their faith. Against such the apostle James writes, and proves that such a faith was no better than that of devils, and would justify no man; that the faith of Abraham and other believers, which did justify, was not a dead faith, but living; not a barren faith, but productive of good works, and proved itself to be genuine by the acts of duty which it induced the believer to perform. While then faith stands foremost in the order of gracious exercises, because it is necessary to the existence of every other, love may be said to be the centre, around which all the virtues of the Christian revolve, and from which they derive their nature. Love, of some kind, is familiar to the experience of all persons; and all love is attended with some pleasure in its exercise; but it varies on account of the difference of the objects of affection. Divine love is itself a delightful and soul-satisfying exercise. The soul which has tasted the goodness of God, is convinced, that nothing more is necessary to complete felicity, than the perfection of love. This supposes, however, that our love to God is ever accompanied with some sense of his love to us. Love, unless reciprocated, would not fill up the cup of human happiness. But to love, and be beloved, this is heaven. And “we love Him because he first loved us.” In the first exercises of a renewed mind, love to God and man are both brought into action; but often the prospect of deliverance from eternal misery which threatened, may absorb the attention. It is indeed a marvellous deliverance, to be snatched from the verge of hell, and assured of everlasting life; what a tumult of feeling must it create? But notwithstanding this, it frequently happens, that in the first discoveries of the plan of salvation, the soul loses sight of its own interest, and is completely occupied in contemplating and admiring the wisdom, love, and justice of God, as exhibited in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, the believer, when these spiritual discoveries are afforded, thinks nothing of the nature of those acts which he is exercising; and it may not be till long afterwards, that he recognises these outgoings of soul to be true love to the Saviour.

There are two affections, distinct from each other in their objects, which are included under the term love; the one terminates on the goodness or moral excellence of its object, and varies

according to the particular view, at any time enjoyed, of the divine attributes. This comprehends all pious affections and emotions arising from the contemplation of the affections of God; and some of them, such as reverence and humility, would not fall under the name of love, when taken in a strict sense; but when used as a general term for our whole obedience, it must comprehend them all. This may, for convenience, be called the love of complacency, in which the rational soul delights in the character of God as revealed in his word. The other affection, called love, has not the character of the person beloved for its object, but his happiness. It may be intensely exercised towards those in whose moral qualities there can be no complacency, and is called the love of benevolence. God's love to sinners is of this kind; and this is the kind of love which Christians are bound to exercise to all men in the world, even to those that hate and persecute them. Though the love of benevolence may exist without the love of complacency, yet the converse cannot be asserted. No one ever felt love to the character of another without desiring his happiness. Before conversion, the soul is sordidly selfish, but no sooner does this change take place, than the heart begins to be enlarged with an expansive benevolence. The whole world is embraced in its charity. "Good will to man" is a remarkable characteristic of the "new creature;" and this intense desire for the salvation of our fellow men, and ardent wish that they might all become interested in that Saviour, whom we have found to be so precious, is the true source of the missionary spirit, and is the foundation, often of laborious and long continued exertions to prepare for the holy ministry; and prompts and inclines delicate females to consent to leave all the endearments of home, for arduous labour in a foreign, and sometimes a savage land.

But, however lively the affection of love in the exercises of the real Christian, he never can lose sight of his own unworthiness. Indeed, the brighter his discoveries of the divine glory, and the stronger his love, the deeper are his views of the turpitude of sin; the more he is elevated in affection and assured hope, the deeper is he depressed in humility and self-abasement. His penitential feelings, from the nature of the case, keep pace with his love and joy; and when his tears flow in copious showers, he would be at a loss to tell, whether he was weeping for joy or for sorrow. He might say, for both; for in these pious exercises, these opposite emotions sweetly mingle their streams; and so delightful is this mingling of affections naturally opposite, that the person could hardly be persuaded, that the sweet would be as agreeable, without, as with the bitter. One hour spent under the cross, while the soul is thus elevated—thus abased—thus joyful—and thus sorrowful—is better than a thousand of earthly delights. Observe, Bunyan does not make the burden of Christian fall off instantly on his entering in at the strait gate; but when, as he travelled, he came in sight of the cross. Then, in a moment, those cords which had bound it to his back, and which none could loose, were burst asunder, and his burden fell off, and never was fastened on him again; although he lay so long in the prison of Giant Despair. The feelings of a renewed heart, are never afterwards the same as under legal conviction. There are scenes, in the experience of the lively Christian, of which the wise men of the world never dream; and which, if they were told of them, they would not believe; and these things, while they are hidden from the wise and prudent, are revealed unto babes. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. The soul, which has thus returned from its wanderings to the bishop and shepherd, feels under the strongest obligations to live for God—to deny itself—to forsake the world—to do any thing—be any thing—or suffer any thing, which may be for the honour of its divine Master. Hence a new life commences—a new spirit is manifested—and the new man, maugre all his remaining ignorance and imperfection, gives lucid evidence to all who carefully observe him, that he has been with

Jesus, and has been baptized with the Holy Ghost; and, the more frequently these views and exercises are reiterated, the more spiritual and heavenly is his conversation. This is a light which cannot be hid, and which ought to shine more and more unto the perfect day. Hear then the exhortation of the apostle Jude, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

CHAPTER VII("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Considerations on dreams, visions, &c.—Remarkable conversion of a blind infidel from hearing the Bible read

There are many professors of religion in our country, who, if they should peruse this work would imagine a great defect in the account given of a sinner's conversion, because nothing has been said about dreams and visions, or voices and lights, of a supernatural kind. During the various religious excitements which extended over the southern States, under the preaching of different denominations, there was mingled with the good influence by which sinners were converted and reformed, no small degree of enthusiasm, which led the people to seek and expect extraordinary revelations; which were supposed to be granted in dreams or visions. Indeed, at one time, the leaders in a very general excitement, which occurred in Virginia, about the commencement of the Revolutionary war, were impressed with the idea, that they possessed precisely the same gifts and powers which had been bestowed upon the apostles; and this enthusiastic idea would have spread widely, if they had not failed, in some private attempts, to work miracles. But the opinion, that certain persons had an extraordinary call from God to preach, and that they needed neither learning nor study, to enable them to preach the gospel, continued to prevail for a long time, and this species of enthusiasm is not entirely passed away even to this day. Such preachers were much in the habit of declaiming in every sermon, against letter-learned and college-bred ministers, and they seldom failed to inform their hearers, that they had selected the subject of discourse, after entering the pulpit; and some of them even gloried that they had never learned to read, as they believed, that all learning interfered with the inspiration of the Spirit, which they were confident that they possessed. While this notion of an extraordinary call and immediate inspiration was common, it is not surprising that the people should have entertained wild opinions respecting the nature of conversion. As it was customary to give the narratives of religious experience in public; not only in the presence of the church, but of a promiscuous assembly, there was a strong temptation to tell an extraordinary story; and the more miraculous it was, the higher evidence it was supposed to afford of being the work of God; concerning the genuineness of which the subject never expressed a doubt. Seldom was a narrative of experience heard, which did not contain something supernatural; such as a remarkable prophetic dream; an open vision; a sudden and brilliant light shining around, as in the case of Paul; or an audible voice, calling them by name; or uttering some text of Scripture; or some other encouraging words. Sometimes, however, the cause of experimental religion was sadly dishonoured by the ludicrous stories of poor ignorant people—especially the unlettered slaves; for this religious concern seized upon them with mighty force, and many of them, I doubt not, were savingly converted. The philosophy of dreams is very little understood: and it is not our purpose to entertain, or perplex the reader with any theories on the subject. Dreams have by some been divided into natural, divine, and diabolical. The wise man says, "A dream cometh through the multitude of business." Most dreams are undoubtedly the

effect of the previous state of the mind, and of the peculiar circumstances and state of the body, at the time. Most persons find their thoughts, in sleep, occupied with those things which gave them concern when awake; and every cause which disorders the stomach or nerves, gives a character to our dreams. Most persons have experienced the distress of feverish dreams. But there are sometimes remarkable dreams, which leave on the mind the strong impression that they have a meaning, and portend coming events. And that there have been dreams of this description, we learn from the authority of the Bible; and these prophetic dreams were not confined to the servants of God, as we learn from the instances of the butler and baker, in the prison of Pharaoh, and from the remarkable dream of Pharaoh himself. All these must have proceeded from some supernatural influence, as, when interpreted by Joseph, they clearly predicted future events, of which the persons dreaming had not the least knowledge. So, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, contained a symbolical representation of future events of great importance, which, however, neither he nor his wise men understood, but which was interpreted by Daniel, by divine inspiration. Why God so frequently made his communications to his servants by dreams, is not easily explained. Perhaps, the mind is better prepared for such revelations, when external objects are entirely excluded; or, it might have been to obviate that terror and perturbation to which all men were subject, when an angel or spirit appeared to them. Whether God ever now communicates any thing by dreams is much disputed. Many, no doubt, deceive themselves, by fancying that their dreams are supernatural; and some have been sadly deluded by trusting to dreams; and certainly people ought not to be encouraged to look for revelations in dreams; but there is nothing inconsistent with reason or Scripture, in supposing that, on some occasions, certain communications, intended for the warning or safety of the individual himself, or of others, may be made in dreams. To doubt of this, is to run counter to a vast body of testimony in every age. And if ideas, received in dreams, produce a salutary effect, in rendering the careless, serious, or the sorrowful comfortable in the view of divine truth, very well; such dreams may be considered providential, if not divine. But if any are led by dreams, to pursue a course repugnant to the dictates of common sense or the precepts of Scripture, such dreams may rightly be considered diabolical. Some persons have supposed that they experienced a change of mind while asleep. They have gone to rest with a heart unsubdued and unconverted, and their first waking thoughts have been of faith and love. Some have sunk to sleep, worn down with distress, and in their sleep have received comfort, as they supposed, from a believing view of Christ. Such changes are suspicious; but if they are proved to be genuine by the future life of the person, we should admit the possibility of God's giving a new heart, just as he does to the infant. Or, truth may be as distinctly impressed on persons' minds in sleep, as when they are awake. Some persons appear to have their faculties in more vigorous exercise, in some kinds of sleep, than when their senses are all exercised. The Rev. John Fletcher, vicar of Madely, relates that he had a dream of the judgment day, the effect of which was a deep and abiding impression of eternal things on his mind. As the scene was vividly painted on his imagination, and the representation of truth was as distinct and coherent as if he had been awake, it may be gratifying to the reader to have the account of it, set before him. He had been variously exercised about religion before this. "I was," says he, "in this situation, when a dream, in which I am obliged to acknowledge the hand of God, roused me from my security. On a sudden, the heavens were darkened, and clouds rolled along in terrific majesty, and a thundering voice like a trumpet, which penetrated to the bowels of the earth, exclaimed, 'arise ye dead and come out of your graves.' Instantly the earth and the sea gave up the dead which they contained, and the universe was

crowded with living people who appeared to come out of their graves by millions. But what a difference among them! Some, convulsed with despair, endeavoured in vain to hide themselves in their tombs, and cried to the hills to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them from the face of the holy Judge, while others rose with seraphic wings above the earth which had been the theatre of their conflicts and their victory. Serenity was painted on their countenances, joy sparkled in their eyes, and dignity was impressed on every feature. My astonishment and terror were redoubled when I perceived myself raised up with this innumerable multitude into the vast regions of the air, from whence my affrighted eyes beheld this globe consumed by the flames, the heavens on fire, and the dissolving elements ready to pass away. But what did I feel, when I beheld the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, in all the splendour of his glory, crowned with the charms of his mercy, and surrounded with the terrors of his justice; ten thousand thousands went before him, and millions pressed upon his footsteps. All nature was silent. The wicked were condemned, and the sentence was pronounced—the air gave way under the feet of those who surrounded me, a yawning gulf received them and closed upon them. At the same time He that sat upon the throne exclaimed, ‘Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Happy children of God, I cried, ‘You are exalted in triumph with your Redeemer,’ and my dazzled eyes will soon lose sight of you, in the blaze of light which surrounds you. Wretch that I am, what words can express the horrors of my situation! A fixed and severe look from the Judge, as he departed, pierced me to the heart, and my anguish and confusion were extreme, when a brilliant personage despatched from the celestial host, thus addressed me, ‘Slothful servant, what dost thou here? Dost thou presume to follow the Son of God, whom thou hast served merely with thy lips, while thy heart was far from him? Show me the seal of thy salvation and the earnest of thy redemption. Examine thy heart, and see if thou canst discover there a real love to God, and a living faith in his Son? Ask thy conscience what were the motives of thy pretended good works? Dost thou not see that pride and self-love were the source of them? Dost thou not see that the fear of hell rather than the fear of offending God, restrained thee from sin?’ After these words he paused; and regarding me with a compassionate air, seemed to await my reply. But conviction and terror closed my mouth, and he thus resumed his discourse, ‘Withhold no longer from God the glory which is due him. Turn to him with all thy heart, and become a new creature. Watch and pray was the command of the Son of God; but instead of having done this by working out thy salvation with fear and trembling, thou hast slept the sleep of security. At this very moment dost thou not sleep in that state of lethargy and spiritual death, from which the word of God, the exhortations of his servants, and the strivings of his grace have not been sufficient to deliver thee? Time is swallowed up in eternity. There is no more place for repentance. Thou hast obstinately refused to glorify God’s mercy in Christ Jesus—go then, slothful servant and glorify his justice.’ Having uttered these words he disappeared, and, at the same time, the air gave way under my feet—the abyss began to open—dreadful wailings assailed my ears, and a whirlwind of smoke surrounded me. The agitation of my mind and body awoke me, the horror of which nothing can equal, and the mere recollection of which still makes me tremble. O how happy I felt on awaking to find that I was still in the land of mercy, and the day of salvation! O my God, I cried, grant that this dream may continually influence my sentiments and my conduct! May it prove a powerful stimulus to excite me to prepare continually for the coming of my great Master!” By this dream Mr. Fletcher was convinced that he had been indulging vain hopes, and that his mind was still unrenewed. His conviction of this truth, however, did not rest entirely, nor

chiefly on what had been told him in his dream, but he now set to work in sober earnest to examine his religious principles and motives, by the Scriptures; and the more he examined the more fully was he convinced that he was yet in an unconverted state. From this time he began with all earnestness to seek for justification through the blood of Christ; and never rested until he found peace with God by a living faith in the truth and promises of God. The dream of John Newton, which he had long before his conversion, when in the harbour of Venice, is probably known to most of our readers.—“I thought,” says he, “that it was night, and my watch upon the deck—a person came to me and brought me a ring, with an express charge to keep it carefully; assuring me that while I preserved that ring, I should be happy and successful; but if I lost or parted with it, I must expect nothing but trouble and misery. I accepted the present and the terms willingly, not in the least doubting my own care to preserve it, and highly gratified to have my happiness in my own keeping. I was engaged in these thoughts, when a second person came to me and observing the ring on my finger, he took occasion to ask me some questions concerning it. I readily told him its virtues, and his answer expressed a surprise at my weakness, in expecting such effects from a ring. I think he reasoned with me sometime on the impossibility of the thing; and at length urged me in direct terms to throw it away. At first, I was shocked at the proposal; but his insinuations prevailed. I began to reason and doubt, and at last plucked it off my finger, and dropped it over the ship’s side into the water, which it had no sooner touched, than I saw, at the same instant, a terrible fire burst out from a range of mountains (the Alps) which appeared at some distance behind the city of Venice. I saw the hills as distinct as if awake, and that they were all in flames. I perceived too late my folly, and my tempter, with an air of insult, informed me that all the mercy God had in reserve for me was comprised in the ring which I had wilfully thrown away. I trembled and was in great agony, and stood self-condemned, when a third person, or the same who gave me the ring, came to me and demanded the cause of my grief. He blamed my rashness, and asked me if I thought I should be wiser, if I had my ring again. I could hardly answer, but thought it gone beyond control. He went down under the water, and soon returned, bringing the ring with him—the moment he came on board, the flames were extinguished. I approached to receive the ring, but he refused to restore it, saying ‘If you should receive this ring again, you would soon bring yourself into the same distress—you are not able to keep it; but I will preserve it for you, and whenever it is needful will produce it in your behalf.’ Upon this I awoke in a state of mind not to be described. I could hardly eat or sleep or transact necessary business for two or three days, but the impression soon wore off, and in a little time I totally forgot it, and I think it hardly occurred to my mind till several years afterwards.”

I will conclude this unsubstantial discussion by citing the words of that remarkable young sage of remote antiquity, Elihu, the reprover of both Job and his friend, and the sublime defender of God and his dispensations. “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed. Then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction.”

Sometime in the year 1811, as well as he remembers, the substance of the following narrative was put into the hands of the writer, by the Rev. Dr. William M. Tennent, of Abington, Pennsylvania, when this excellent man was on his death-bed, and near his end. It will be seen that it was drawn up with a view to publication as soon as the subject of the memoir, who was then alive in Dr. Tennent’s congregation, should be called home to his rest. That event occurred some time since;

and in communicating this memoir to the public, the writer considers himself as fulfilling an implied promise, when he accepted the manuscript.

Having, however, ascertained that Mrs. Ann Snowden, of Philadelphia, was the lady at whose house this gentleman resided, and that she was the person by whom the Scriptures were read; and knowing, also, that she was both pious and intelligent, the writer requested her to put down on paper an exact account of this pleasing and remarkable event; which she did with the utmost readiness. From these authentic sources, the following narrative is derived; and will be given with very slight verbal alterations, in the very words of the respected persons named.

Dr. Tennent's memoir is prefaced by the following words:

"Unfinished memoir of George Inglis, who has been a member of the Presbyterian church in Abington from 1790 till the present time, 1810. It is expected, that some fit person into whose hand these sketches of his character may fall, will, after his decease, prepare them for the press; as it is hoped the Church of Christ may derive some advantage from them." The narrative then proceeds as follows: "George Inglis was born in the city of Philadelphia, A. D. — of honourable parentage, and received a liberal education in the university of that city, which was completed between his 16th and 17th year. Having served a regular apprenticeship to a merchant, he entered into the mercantile business, and settled in the island of Jamaica, where he continued about eleven years. Very early in life he begun to drink in iniquity like water, discovered strong prejudices against serious persons and serious things; associated with the gay, libertine, and dissipated; never read the Scriptures except so much of them as enabled him to construe his Greek lessons, whilst in college. His propensities to sinful indulgences increased with his years, and in the island where he resided, temptations being increased, and the means of restraint from vicious courses diminished, he became more and more confirmed in the habits of sin, until at length he was given up to almost every species of iniquity. Amidst his open and avowed enmity to God and religion, at the close of the afore mentioned period, an awful tornado fell upon that part of the island where he resided, by which he lost the greater part of his property, and was compelled to return to the continent. This happened during the revolutionary war. All this made no alteration in his morals for the better; but the more he was corrected, the more hardened he grew; casting off the fear of God, and putting to defiance the scourges of Jehovah. Thus he continued till some years afterwards. Being in the town of Manchester, Virginia, without any natural (known) cause, to produce the effect, he was smitten by the immediate hand of God, whilst in the possession of good health, with the total loss of sight within a few days. In this situation his mind was all distraction. His cry was to man only for help; but to God his Maker, who giveth songs in the night to the afflicted and oppressed, he had not learned to cry. This lesson, however, he was taught not long afterwards."

Thus far the narrative has been given in the words of Dr. Tennent; it will now be proper to hear Mrs. Snowden's account of the conversion of this man, as she was the only human instrument made use of in bringing him to the knowledge of the truth. It is in the form of a letter addressed to the writer.

"Rev. and Dear Sir—I will now endeavour to fulfil the promise made to you some time ago, by giving such information as is within my recollection, respecting the case of Mr. George Inglis. That gentleman, a native of Philadelphia, had received a classical education, and with it every indulgence which a father's partiality could bestow. Brought up in the gay world, it is to be feared

there was but little attention paid to his immortal interests. After spending the time necessary to acquire the knowledge of mercantile affairs, he left the city for the West Indies, where he was, for a while, successful in business, and found himself in circumstances to visit England; and, while in London, throwing aside every restraint, he indulged himself in all the amusements and levities of that gay metropolis. Returning to America, he engaged in business in the state of Virginia. After residing some time there, it pleased the Lord to deprive him of his sight; an affliction at that time looked upon by him as insupportable, for he saw not the hand from whence it came, but after he was made sensible that he was a brand snatched from the burning, often have I heard him bless the chastisement as that of a tender Father.

“Mr. Inglis had weak eyes from an early age, but his blindness came on him suddenly. Finding no relief from the physicians where he resided, he left Virginia for Philadelphia; and upon the application of his friends, was received, with his servant, into my house, as a boarder. I found him a man of strong passions, impatient under sufferings, and not willing to submit to restraints of any kind. When the physicians of the city were consulted, they gave his friends no hope of the recovery of his eyesight: him they soothed with the promise of a further consideration of his case. A few weeks after he came to my house, a gentleman, very much celebrated as an oculist, came to the city. Mr. Inglis applied to him for advice. He did not tell him that his was an incurable case, but said that he would see him again. He bore this very impatiently, observing to me that life was now becoming an intolerable burden; but that he had this consolation, that he had it in his power at any time to lay it down. It was but to increase the quantity of opium (he was in the habit of taking opium) and all his sufferings would be at an end; and that, after seeing the doctor once more, if he found there was no hope of his recovering his sight, he would certainly take that method of putting an end to his existence. I remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his behaviour; alleging, that he had no more right to take away his own life, than he had to take away the life of his neighbour; asking him if he had considered the consequences of rushing uncalled into the presence of his Maker. His answer was, that he had considered it well; and advocated his opinion on this principle, that he was by a merciful Creator placed on this earth to enjoy the good things of this life as far as it was in his power honestly to obtain them. That the duties required of him were, to be as useful to his friends in particular, and society at large, as his circumstances would admit of—that having lost his sight, he should no longer enjoy any happiness here, would become a burden to his friends, and could be of no use in the world. He alleged, that the purposes for which life was given to him were now defeated; of course there would be no impropriety in laying it down. I made some remarks on what he had advanced as his sentiments, and to strengthen what I said, quoted some passages of Scripture. These he treated in a very light manner—spoke of the Bible as the work of a man, contrived to keep the vulgar in awe—with many other observations too common with men of deistical principles. I then inquired if he had ever read the Bible; he frankly acknowledged that he had not since he left school. Upon asking him if he had not read the works of those that were opposed to the Scriptures, he admitted that he had. If so, I observed, he must have formed his opinions from the avowed enemies of that sacred book. Was this a fair method of proceeding? Was it just? That I thought he would not act thus, on any other occasion. This book you acknowledge you have not read since you were a boy. All that you know about it, you have from the enemies of the Christian religion. Taking these things into consideration, I hope you will no more speak against the Bible, as it is a book that you have never read since you were capable of forming a judgment of its contents. He apologized for what he had said, in a handsome manner,

acknowledged that he was wrong in speaking as he had done, and expressed a wish to have it read to him. This I declined, and gave my reasons for so doing, which were, that a man so prejudiced, as he appeared to be, was not likely to profit by the reading of the Bible; that he would most probably cavil at, and perhaps ridicule it; in so doing, he would wound my feelings without benefitting himself; for I considered it as the word of God; and my hopes of eternal salvation rested on the truths contained in it. He then assured me on the word of a gentleman, that if I would read to him, whatever his opinions might be, he would carefully avoid saying any thing that might have a tendency to wound my feelings, or give offence, in the smallest degree. There was an earnestness in his manner of addressing me which satisfied my mind, that he was sincerely desirous to have the Scriptures read to him; and the next day was fixed upon for that purpose. It appeared to me that he waited impatiently for the arrival of the appointed hour, for, no sooner did the time come, than he sent for me. Before we began, I observed to him, that as in the New Testament he would find the fulfilment of the promises of the Saviour, I would point out those promises as they should occur in reading the Old Testament; and which it would be necessary for him to take notice of as we proceeded. Beginning then with the first chapter of Genesis, before we had gone through the chapter, he stopped me to express his admiration of the language. 'It was sublime beyond any thing he had ever read.' While I was reading, he was all attention; and when the time arrived when I was under the necessity of leaving off, it was with regret that he observed that I had finished; putting me in mind, at the same time, of my promise to attend to him, on the next day. I think it was on the second day of my reading to him, that he cried out, 'What a wretch am I to have spoken against such a book! a book that I knew nothing of, having never given it an attentive perusal.' I went on for a few days, reading to him according to the plan laid down, which was one hour every day; when the distress of his mind greatly increased. There was now no more said about a second visit to the doctor—no complaints—no murmurings, on account of the loss of sight. He now saw the hand of God in the dispensation of his providence, and would acknowledge that it was less, far less, than he deserved. My family duties preventing me from being with him as much as I wished, I now called in the aid of some of my religious friends, among whom was Mr. Joseph Eastburn, to converse with him and to assist in reading to him. Several religious books were now occasionally read to him, among which were Boston's Fourfold State, Newton's Works, Hervey's Dialogues, &c. The descriptive parts of the last mentioned author, were at his request passed over, except where it more fully served to explain the doctrines of free grace—a subject to him of the deepest interest. Though totally deprived of sight, and unaccustomed to go out, he now neglected no opportunity of hearing the word of God; attending sermons on Sabbaths, and weekly societies as often as was in his power. As might be expected, his natural disposition, sometimes getting the better of the good resolutions he had formed, would betray him into a fretfulness that was troublesome to his friends, and occasioned much uneasiness to himself. On such occasions I have heard him lament deeply over his sinful nature, accusing himself of ingratitude to that God who had mercifully stopped him in his career of vice, by depriving him of the light of day, and enlightening his darkened mind, and had enabled him to understand the truths contained in his blessed word. I do not recollect how long he staid with me, but it was something less than a year, when his friends thought it would be best to remove him to the country; and boarding was obtained for him in the neighbourhood of the Rev. Dr. Tennent, of Abington."

Dr. Tennent, in the memoir already quoted, after mentioning some circumstances which have been given in detail in the former number, goes on to say, "It pleased God, by these means to

bring him to very serious and deep impressions of his moral character, and to constrain him, after some time, to attempt to pray. This [change] was effected in the gentleness, kindness, and tenderness of infinite mercy, and without those horrors which often precede the conversion of high-handed and daring sinners. In his case, all was mercy, without extraordinary terror. He was embraced in the arms of redeeming love, and delivered from the fiery pit without beholding its awful flames. In his first attempt to supplicate the Deity, he was principally affected with a sense of the baseness of his conduct, and vile ingratitude for the mercies bestowed, and this exercise was accompanied with an involuntary flow of tears, and a desire to call God his Father, and afterwards to mention the blessed name of Jesus, the Saviour. Probably, this was the beginning of his new birth, and the hour of his conversion; which was not long afterwards confirmed by a remarkable vision of two books, with a glorious light shining in the midst of them, as he was lying in his bed; which he apprehended to be the Old and New Testaments of the living God, presenting to, and impressing on his mind this sacred declaration, but without a voice, "This is the way," and filling his soul at the same time, with inexpressible joy."

What is here related, is no doubt strictly true, but there is no propriety in calling it "a vision," since it can easily be accounted for by a vivid impression on the imagination. A vision is something supernatural seen with the bodily eyes; but this man was totally blind; the objects so clearly discerned must then have been from impressions on the imagination. But in saying this, it is not intended to deny that the cause was the Spirit of God. This divine agent can, and does produce vivid impressions on the imagination, which have so much the appearance of external realities, that many are persuaded that they do see and hear what takes place only in their own minds.

"In the year 1790, Mr. Inglis was removed to Abington, and became a boarder in the house of the Rev. William M. Tennent, and soon afterwards was admitted to the communion of the church, in that place, with which he hath walked steadfastly in the faith ever since; exemplifying in a striking and high degree the power of God's grace to the 'new creation.' From the beginning of his turn to God, there was abundant proof that 'old things had passed away and that all things had become new.' Before a blasphemer, but now a worshipper of the true God. Before, a drunkard, and a Sabbath-breaker, unclean, a ridiculer of holy things, and indulgent habitually in all ungodliness and wickedness—led captive by the prince of the power of the air, who ruleth in the children of disobedience, but now, freed from his bonds and made by sovereign grace to rejoice in the liberty of the gospel. Before, a hater of good men and good things, but now a lover of both. He was made to hunger and thirst after righteousness—after the bread of life—after the knowledge of His will; and seemed only to be happy when he had a glimpse of his glory. For more than a year after his conversion, he could not bear to hear any other book read to him than the Holy Scriptures; and the most practical authors on religion. He shunned all political conversation, the reading of newspapers, and whatever might divert his thoughts from holy meditations and a further knowledge of his Redeemer.

"Whilst residing in his first permanent lodgings in the country, it may not be improper to mention a second remarkable vision which he had. Walking in the garden one day, as he usually did for sacred meditation, he was suddenly arrested and overcome with a most affecting view of his Saviour, as suspended on the cross, and bearing his very sins. In this vision of redeeming love he was so lost that he knew not where he was—overwhelmed with unutterable joy, and the most affecting gratitude for the discharge of the immense debt which he owed to the justice of a holy

God. The impressions then made are still kept in strong remembrance. How long he was in this state he knew not, but was finally conducted to the house, after having called for a guide—full of joy and gladness: a second remarkable proof of his interest in gospel redemption.”

We will simply repeat our objection to the use of the word “vision” to represent what was nothing more than a strong, believing view of the scene of the crucifixion, accompanied, no doubt, with a vivid imagination of the bleeding, dying Saviour, suffering for his sins.

“The writer will only add, that he has frequently, within the term of twenty years, heard Mr. Inglis say, he would not if it had been within the power of a wish, have had his natural sight restored, having found his eyes such an avenue to sin. His whole conduct, since his conversion has corresponded with his profession as a Christian disciple. He has, in the view of his brethren where he resides, made a visible growth in grace, even in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He has, with others travelling to the same blessed country, been on the mount and in the valley—an humble, meek, patient, self-denying Christian, rejoicing in the hopes of a better country—weeping on account of his own unfruitfulness—looking for strength to vanquish his enemies, and hoping for victory by the merits of the great Redeemer. Hitherto steadfast, may he hold fast unto the end! and may many such be added unto the Lord! Blessed be God for the gift of his Son, for the revelation of his incomprehensible love and grace, and for the crown of glory which is laid up for all who are looking and longing for his second appearance!” The foregoing account was written about thirty years ago, and Mr. Inglis, who was then in years, did not depart this life until two or three years since. As the Rev. Robert Steel succeeded Dr. Tennent, as pastor of the Presbyterian church at Abington, I requested him to give me notice of the old gentleman’s death, with an account of his state of mind in his latter days. This he did, and I regret that I have mislaid his letter, so that I cannot at present put my hands on it. But I confess that I was much disappointed in not finding something more memorable in the closing scene of one who had been so manifestly snatched “as a brand from the burning.” As well as I recollect, Mr. Steel represents that the spirituality and ardour of Mr. Inglis’s religion considerably declined in his latter years; that he became somewhat worldly minded, and appeared to be too much concerned about his little property; and that he had nothing remarkable in the exercises of his mind, while on his deathbed; but no one, I believe, ever doubted the reality of the change which he had experienced: neither was he ever left to do any thing to bring discredit on the profession which he had made.

One reflection which occurred to me on reading Mr. Steel’s letter was, that it is not desirable for a Christian to live to be very old; especially when all active service in the cause of Christ is precluded. Old age is a peculiarly unfavourable season for growth in grace. Many of the natural auxiliaries to piety are then removed; and at the same time, many infirmities cluster around us; so that a declension in religion is not uncommon in the protracted years of the aged.

Another solemn reflection was, that a man is never too old nor too decrepit to be covetous. Covetousness is peculiarly the vice of the aged, and when indulged, strikes its roots deeper, the older we grow. What Christ says to all, may with emphasis be addressed to the aged, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness.” The writer remembers to have seen and conversed with the old gentleman in the church at Abington, soon after Dr. Tennent’s death. At that time he was always in his place in the house of God, and attracted attention by his venerable and solemn appearance. It was agreed that his taste and judgment in regard to preaching were uncommonly sound and good;

but nothing would pass with him in which Christ was not made conspicuous. Purely evangelical preaching was that in which he delighted; and at that period, his conversation was in a strain of warm and pious feeling. My closing remark is, that we should despair of the conversion of no one; and we should use all our efforts to prevail on skeptical men to read the Bible. The Bible has converted more infidels than all the books of “evidences” which exist.

CHAPTER VIII("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Religious Conversation.—Stress laid by some on the knowledge of the time and place of Conversion.—Religious experience of Halyburton

It is often a question among serious people, whether every person, who is a real Christian, knows not only that he is such, but the time and place of his conversion. This subject has already been partially discussed in these essays, but demands a more particular and extended consideration.

It is well known to all, that the Christian denominations, which exist in this country, differ from one another in their views of various doctrines and rites of religion; but the fact is not so well known, that the religious experience of the individuals of the several denominations is as various as their doctrines and external forms of worship. To those who view these things at a distance, and superficially, all religious people appear alike; and many, when they hear of a number converted, take it for granted that they have all passed through the same train of exercises, to whatever sect they belong. There are some serious people, well indoctrinated in the Scriptures, who, while they hold a sound theory respecting the nature of regeneration, never speak of their own religious exercises; believing that such exposures are not for edification, as they tend to foster spiritual pride and vain glory, and afford a temptation to hypocrisy, which is commonly too strong for the deceitful heart. Among such professors, you hear nothing of conviction and conversion; and when any of this class fall into a distressing case of conscience which urges them to seek spiritual counsel, they always propose the case in the third person. They will talk to you by the hour and the day, about the doctrines of religion, and show that they are more conversant with their Bibles, than many who talk much of their religious feelings. There are two objections to this practice. The first is, that it has the effect of keeping out of view the necessity of a change of heart. The second is, that it is a neglect of one effectual means of grace. Religious conversation, in which Christians freely tell of the dealings of God with their own souls, has been often a powerful means of quickening the sluggish soul, and communicating comfort. It is in many cases, a great consolation to the desponding believer, to know that his case is not entirely singular; and if a traveller can meet with one who has been over the difficult parts of the road before him, he may surely derive from his experience some solitary counsel and warning. The Scriptures are favourable to such communications. “Come and hear,” says David, “all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.” “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.” Paul seldom makes a speech or writes a letter, in which he does not freely speak of his own religious joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. There is, no doubt, an abuse of this means of grace, as of others; but this is no argument against its legitimate use, but only teaches that prudence should govern such religious intercourse. The opposite extreme is not uncommon in some denominations; as where professors are publicly called upon, and that periodically, for their experience; or where, when professors are met, it is

agreed that every one, in turn, shall give a narrative of his or her experience, in religion. Such practices are not for edification. There are, however, cases in which it may be expedient—it may be delightful—for a few select friends to enter into a full detail of the dealings of God with their souls, respectively. The writer, in another place, published an account of such a conference in Holland, which he received from the late Rev. Dr. Livingston, of New Brunswick. A company of pious friends having met for religious conversation, the subject which came up was the striking similarity of the experience of God's people in all ages, and in all countries; when some one observed, that there were present, four persons from the four quarters of the world, respectively, and who had embraced religion in their native country. One was from the Dutch settlements in the East Indies, a second from the Cape of Good Hope, the third a young nobleman of Holland, and the fourth Dr. Livingston himself, from the United States of America. It was then proposed as an illustration of the subject of conversation, that each should give a narrative of his Christian experience. The company in attendance expressed the highest gratification, and were no doubt greatly edified. It is much to be lamented, that many persons who are fond of religious conversation, deal so much in cant phrases, and assume an air so affected and sanctimonious. This is the thing which disgusts grave and intelligent Christians; and often occasions the wicked to ridicule or blaspheme. "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Be not public nor indiscriminate in your communications of this kind. "Take heed that you cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and then turn again and rend you."

It is a fact, that what passes for conversion in one sect, will be condemned as altogether insufficient in another. A few years since there was, what was called a great revival, in a Presbyterian congregation, in New Jersey. The Presiding Elder of the Methodist Society, for that district, having classes of his Church, mingled with the people of that congregation, so that he had the opportunity of conversing with a number of the subjects of this work, gave it as his opinion, to a person who communicated the fact to me, that none with whom he spoke, were converted, for he did not meet with one who would say, that he knew his sins were pardoned. On the other hand, many of the conversions which take place at camp meetings, and other meetings, where there is much excitement, though the subjects do profess to know that their sins are pardoned, are not believed to be cases of sound conversion by Presbyterians; and they are confirmed in this opinion, often, by the transitory nature of the reformation produced. We have known instances of persons professing conversion at a camp-meeting, and filling the camp with their rejoicing, who relapsed into their old habits of sin, before reaching their own dwellings. In these strong excitements of the animal sensibilities, there is great danger of deception. When feelings of distress are wound up to a very high pitch, there often occurs a natural re-action in the nervous system, by which the bodily sensations are suddenly changed, and this, attended with some text of Scripture impressed on the mind, leads the person to believe, that he was in that moment converted, when in reality no permanent change has been effected. It is one thing to be persuaded of the truth of the gospel, and quite another to be certain that I have believed, and that my sins are pardoned. Mr. Wesley was for several years in the ministry, and a missionary to America before he had this joyful sense of the forgiveness of sins, and he seems to intimate, that until this time he was an unconverted man; and most of his followers make this joyful sense of pardoned sin, the principal evidence of conversion, and one which all must experience. Most serious, intelligent readers, however, will be of opinion, that Mr. Wesley was as humble and sincere a penitent, before this joyful experience, as afterwards; and that it is a dangerous principle to make a man's opinion of his own state, the

criterion by which to judge of its safety. Certainly, we should greatly prefer to stand in the place of some broken-hearted, contrite ones, who can scarcely be induced to entertain a hope respecting their acceptance, to that of many who boast that they never feel a doubt of their own safety. Men will not be judged in the last day by the opinion which they had of themselves. For the confidence, it would seem, never forsakes some to the last, who nevertheless will be cast into outer darkness. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity." In early life, the writer knew some high professors of his own denomination, who could tell the day and hour when God had mercy on them. One of these, a fair spoken, plausible man, who had spent the former part of his life in pleasure and dissipation, gave such an account of his conversion as was adapted to produce envy and discouragement in professors who had been less favoured; and not only could designate the month and day of the month, but the hour of the day, when he obtained reconciliation with God. No one doubted of his piety—but mark the event. This high professor, a few years afterwards, was excommunicated from the church, for manifest perjury! Another, whose experience was remarkable and his conversion sudden, became a preacher, then a fanatic—and finally an infidel. This man told me, that though often in great spiritual distress, he never doubted of the goodness of his state. They who believe that a man may be a saint to-day and a devil to-morrow, not in appearance only, but in reality, easily account for these apostasies, but we are inclined to hold fast by what the beloved disciple says about such, in his time. "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

Few men in later times appear to have arisen to greater eminence in piety than Henry Martyn, the missionary. The strength of the principle of holiness, in his case, was manifested in his habitual spirituality of mind, and the constant exercise of self-denial; yet, as far as is related, his incipient exercises of religion were no how strongly marked, but seem to have been rather obscure and feeble. The same is the fact respecting those two distinguished men of God, Philip and Matthew Henry, the father and the son. The early exercises of these men were not in any respect remarkable. Indeed, they both became pious when very young; and we rarely get a very distinct and accurate account of the commencement of piety in early life. But no one, who is acquainted with the lives of these eminent ministers, will deny that they grew up to an uncommon degree of piety, which in the experience of both, though characterized by genuine humility, was free from any mixture of gloom or austerity. True religion can rarely be found exhibiting so cheerful a mien and so amiable an aspect, and yet, with these men every thing became a part of their religion; to this one object their whole lives were devoted. I have derived much satisfaction, and I hope, profit, from the account which Halyburton gives of his religious experience; especially, because the account was given when the writer was advanced in years, and when his judgment was fully matured. Many youthful narratives of pious exercises are very fervent, but they are frothy, and marked with that kind of ignorance and self-confidence which arise from inexperience. Halyburton is an example of a person brought up under religious discipline and instruction, and under constant restraint, whose convictions of sin were nevertheless exceedingly pungent and awful. His conversion too was sudden, and his first exercises of faith clear and strong. "I cannot," says he,

“be very positive about the day or the hour of this deliverance; nor can I satisfy many other questions about the way and manner of it. As to these things I may say with the blind man, ‘One thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see.’ It was towards the close of January, or the beginning of February, 1698, that this seasonable relief came; and, so far as I can remember, I was at secret prayer, in very great extremity, not far from despair, when the Lord seasonably stepped in and gave this merciful turn to affairs. When I said there was none to save, then ‘his arm brought salvation.’ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, ‘shined into my mind,’ to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That which afforded me relief was a discovery of the Lord, as manifested in his word. He said to me, ‘thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.’ He let me see that there are forgivenesses with him, that with him is mercy and plenteous redemption. He made all his goodness pass before me, and proclaimed his name, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Who will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom he will show mercy. This was a strange sight to one who before looked on God as a ‘consuming fire’ which I could not see and live. He brought me from Sinai and its thunderings, to Mount Zion, and to the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that cleanseth from all sin, and speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. He revealed Christ in his glory. I now with wonder beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And I was made, by this sight, to say, ‘Thou art fairer than the sons of men.’ ... And I was hereby further satisfied, that not only was there forgiveness of sins and justification by free grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God—but I saw moreover, with wonder and delight, how God by this means might be just even in justifying the ungodly. who believe in Jesus. How was I ravished with delight when made to see that the God in whom a little before I thought there was no help for me, or any sinner in my case—if indeed there were any such—notwithstanding his spotless purity, his deep hatred of sin, his inflexible justice and righteousness, and his unimpeachable faithfulness pledged in the threatenings of the law, might not only pardon, but without prejudice to his justice or his other attributes, might be just, even in justifying the ungodly.... And the Lord further opened the gospel-call to me, and let me see that even to me, was ‘the word of this salvation sent.’ All this was offered unto me, and I was invited to come and freely take of the waters of life, and to come in my distress unto the blessed rest.... He, to my great satisfaction, gave me a pleasing discovery of his design in the whole, that it was, ‘that no flesh might glory in his sight,’ but that he who glories, should glory only in the Lord; and that he might manifest the riches of his grace, and be exalted in showing mercy, and that we in the end might be saved. The Lord revealed to my soul the full and suitable provision, made in this way against the power of sin—that as there is righteousness in him, so there is strength, even ‘everlasting strength’ in the Lord Jehovah, to secure us against all enemies.... When this strange discovery was made of a relief, wherein full provisions were made for all the concerns of God’s glory and my salvation in subordination thereto, my soul was, by a sweet and glorious power, carried out to rest in it, as worthy of God, and every way suitable and satisfying in my case. ‘They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.’ All these discoveries were conveyed to me by the Scriptures only. It was not indeed by one particular promise or testimony of Scripture, but by the concurring light of a great many, seasonably set home, and most

plainly expressing the truths above mentioned. The promises and truths of the Bible, in great abundance and variety, were brought to remembrance, and the wonders contained in them, were set before my eyes in the light of the word. 'He sent his word and healed me.' ... But it was not the Bible alone that conveyed the discovery; for most of these passages whereby I was relieved, I had formerly in my distress, read and thought upon, without finding any relief in them. But now the Lord shined into my mind by them. Formerly, I was acquainted only with the letter, which profits not, but now the Lord's words were spirit and life, and in his light I saw light. God opened my eyes to see wonders out of his law. There was light in his words; a burning light by them shone into my mind, not merely some doctrinal knowledge, but 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The light, that I now had, shone from heaven; it was not a spark kindled by my own endeavours, but it shone suddenly about me; it came by the word of God, a heavenly means. It opened heaven and discovered heavenly things, even the glory of God; and it led me up as it were to heaven. Its whole tendency was heavenward. It was a true light, giving manifestations of God, even the one true God, and the one Mediator between God and man; and giving a true view of my state with respect to God.... It was a pleasant and a sweet light: it had a heavenly satisfaction in God attending it. It led to a pleasure in the fountain whence it came. It was a distinct and clear light, not only representing spiritual things, but manifesting them in their glory. It put all things in their proper place, in due subordination to God, and gave distinct views of their genuine tendency. It was a satisfying light. The soul rested in the discoveries that it made and was satisfied; it could not doubt of what it saw, and that things were as they were represented. It was a quickening, refreshing and healing light; when 'the Sun of Righteousness' arose, there was 'healing under his wings.' It was a great light: it made discoveries which were easily distinguished from any former discoveries it had ever made; and it was a powerful light. It dissipated that thick darkness which had overspread my mind, and made all those frightful temptations, which had formerly disturbed me, fly before it. It was composing: not like a sudden flash of lightning, which fills the soul with fear and amazement, but it composed and quieted my soul and put all my faculties, as it were, in their due posture, and gave me the exercise of them. It destroyed not, but improved my former knowledge. But, as the true idea of light is not conveyed by the ear; so no words can convey the idea of light to the blind. And he who has eyes, will need no words to describe it. It is like the new name that none knows, save he that has it.

"The first discernible effect of this light was, an approbation of God's way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, to the glory of his grace. And this I take to be the true Scriptural notion of justifying faith; for it not only answers the Scripture descriptions of it, by receiving, coming, looking, trusting, believing, &c., but it really gives God that glory which he designed by all this contrivance—the glory of his wisdom, grace, mercy, and truth. Now this discovery of the Lord's name brought me to trust in him, and glory only in the Lord. I found my soul fully satisfied in these discoveries, as pointing out a way of relief, altogether and in all respects suitable to the need of a poor, guilty, self-condemned, self-destroyed sinner, driven from all other reliefs. In this I rested, as in a way of full peace, comfort, security, and satisfaction, as providing abundantly for all those ends I desired to have secured. And this approbation was not merely for a time; but ever after in all temptations it discovered itself, by keeping in me a fixed assent and adherence of mind to this truth, and full persuasion of it, that God hath granted unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

“The next remarkable effect of this discovery was, that it set me right as to my chief end, and made me look to the glory of God, for which formerly I had no real concern. Now mine eye was made, in some measure, single in eyeing the Lord’s honour. It manifested itself in frequent desires, that the Lord might be honoured and glorified, in my life, or by my death. It kept my soul fixed in the persuasion that it was every way meet that I should take shame and confusion to myself as what only belonged to me; and that the glory of my salvation was only and entirely the Lord’s due.

“A third discernible effect was, that I was led to look upon his yoke to be easy and his burden light; and to count that his commandments were not grievous, but ‘right concerning all things.’—This was very contrary to my former temper. I now came to a fixed persuasion that the law was not only just, such as I could make no reasonable exception against, but holy, and such as became God; and good, such as was every way suited to my true interest and peace, and advantage—which I could never think before. The duties to which my heart was most averse had now become agreeable and refreshing.

“A fourth remarkable effect of this discovery was, the exercise of evangelical repentance, which was very different, in many respects, from that sorrow with which I was before acquainted. It differed in its rise. Sorrow before flowed from the discovery of sin as it brings on wrath; now it flowed from a sense of sin as containing wretched unkindness to one, who was himself astonishingly kind to an unworthy wretch. I looked on him whom I had pierced, and did mourn. Sorrow formerly wrought death, alienated my heart from God, and thus dispirited me for duty, and made me fear hurt from him; but this sorrow filled my heart with kindness to God and to his ways, sweetened my soul, and endeared God to it. It flowed from a sense of his favour to an unworthy wretch that deserved none, and was thus a godly sorrow leading to kindness to God, and a drawing near him, but with much humble sense of my own unworthiness, like the returning prodigal. The more God manifested of his kindness, the more still did this feeling increase: when he was pacified, then was I ashamed and confounded. The sorrow I had before looked on as a burden: it was nothing but selfish concern for my own safety, and a fear of the righteous resentment of God. But this sorrow was sweet and pleasant, as being the exercise of filial gratitude; and I took pleasure in the surprising manifestations of God’s favour to one so unworthy, and in acknowledging my own unworthiness. This sorrow was a spring of activity, and I was glad to be employed in the meanest errand that might give opportunity to evidence how deeply I was grieved for my former disobedience. It resulted in a return to the way of life, and to such a course, as upon a review, I did not repent of, but delighted in, and in which I desired continually to advance. It wrought carefulness to avoid sin, anxiety to please God, indignation against sin, fear of offending God again, vehement desire of having sin removed, the Lord glorified, and obedience promoted.

“A fifth discernible effect was, an humble, but sweet and comfortable hope, and persuasion of my own salvation, answerable to the clearness of the discovery. When the Lord gave me this view of the way of salvation, he satisfied me, that it was a way full of peace and security, the only way which I might safely venture. Hereby I was freed from the disquieting fear that the ground of my trust would fail. I was satisfied I could not fail, otherwise than by missing the way. While I held fast and reposed with satisfaction on what I was convinced was safe, I could not but be quiet and composed about the result. This shows how nearly allied faith and assurance are; though they are not the same, no wonder the one should be taken for the other. This discovery, manifested that

salvation was in the way of self-denial, and trust in the Lord alone; for nothing so soon marred this hope, as the least appearance of self, and stirring of pride. Whenever the glory of the Lord appeared and he spake peace, I was filled with shame, and the deeper this humiliation was, the more the humble confidence of my safety increased.

“A sixth discernible difference was, with respect to the ordinances of the Lord’s appointment. I was drawn to follow them as the Lord’s institutions, and his appointed means of our obtaining discoveries of his beauty. I desired ‘to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.’ I was brought to exercise more liveliness when the Lord discovered himself; ‘my soul then followed hard after him.’ When the Lord enlarged me and caused me to approach to him and see his glory, he still humbled me, discovered self, and put me in opposition to it. I was now acquainted, in some measure, with that boldness and freedom of access, with humble confidence, to God as on a throne of grace, manifesting himself in Christ. In a word, I was in some measure, sensible of the Lord’s hiding or manifesting himself, according as I performed my duty, and of the necessity of the exercise of grace, particularly faith, in all approaches to God.”

Although in the preceding authentic narrative of religious experience, we have entered more into detail than usual, yet we are persuaded, that the serious reader will not think the account too long or too particular. I have not met with any account of Christian experience which is so full and satisfactory as this; and when it is known to have been written by a man of sound understanding, and most exemplary piety, at a late period of life, when his judgment was matured by much experience, it cannot but furnish a decisive proof of the reality of experimental religion, which cannot be gainsayed. In these exercises there is not a tincture of enthusiasm. Indeed, holy affections thus produced by the contemplation of truth is the very opposite of enthusiasm; which always substitutes human fancies or impulses for the truths of God, which it uniformly undervalues. In this case, we see also, how high the exercises of Scriptural piety may rise, without degenerating into any extravagance. Many Christians seem not to know or believe that such spiritual discoveries of the beauty of holiness and the glory of the Lord, are now attainable: but still there are some, and often those of the humbler class of society, who are privileged with these spiritual discoveries, and prize them above all price. The language of such is, “One day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of sin.” “Return unto thy rest O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” It is delightful to trace the effects of God’s truth in producing every holy affection, when it is discerned by the light of the Holy Spirit. Faith is almost identified with this view; love flows out sweetly and spontaneously; evangelical repentance is enkindled; the soul is clothed with humility; zeal for God’s glory is predominant; his ordinances are sought with desire, and found to be channels which freely communicate with the rich fountain of grace beneath the throne of God. So far are right views of free grace from leading those who entertain them to indulge in indolence, or be careless about holy living, that they impart the only true cause of activity and diligence in the work of the Lord. In the foregoing account, the reader may learn the nature of true religion more clearly than from many sermons and long treatises; but the humble, doubting Christian must not make the measure of grace which this favoured saint enjoyed, the standard by which to judge of the reality of his own religious experience. The same light may shine with vastly different degrees of clearness, from the meridian blaze down to the faint crepuscular dawn, but the rays come from the same source; and that which is now but just discernible in the midst of shades of departing night,

will go on to increase, until it shines more and more to the perfect day. Let not the extraordinary clearness and distinctness discourage those who are sincerely desirous to see “the beauty of the Lord,” but let them rather take fresh courage in a pursuit, which from this example, they find may be crowned with glorious success. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

CHAPTER IX("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Christian experience of R—— C——.—Narrative of Sir Richard Hill's experience

The following extracts, from a narrative of the Christian experience of R—— C——, will serve to illustrate some points which have heretofore been treated; particularly the gradual manner in which some persons are brought to the knowledge of the truth; and the extreme difficulty of ascertaining, in many cases, where common grace ends and special grace commences.

“I grew up,” says the narrator, “to manhood with very little thought of religion, and without experiencing any serious impressions, except the alarm occasionally produced by the death of a companion, or relative. Whilst I habitually cherished a strong dislike to strict religion, which frowned upon a life of pleasure and amusement, I entertained a strong prejudice in favour of Christianity in general, and that particular denomination to which my parents and ancestors belonged. I call this a prejudice, for I knew nothing of the evidences of the truth of Christianity, and had only a very vague and confused notion of what the Scriptures contained; except that, when a child, I had read, frequently, many portions of the historical parts of the Bible. In this state of mind, I was exposed to the common objections of infidels; which arose from reading history, and finding that all nations had their respective religions, in which they believed as firmly as we did in ours; and the thought occurred, often, ‘Why may they not be in the right, and we in the wrong? but, about this time, infidelity began to prevail, and its abettors to be bold in declaring their opinions. My mind was so completely unfurnished with arguments in favour of Christianity that the only thing on which I could fix was, that it had come down from my ancestors, and the people with whom I was conversant, generally believed in it. But this was far from satisfying my mind. I began to feel uneasy for fear that we were all wrong in our belief; but the thought was never pleasing to my mind. As to books of evidence, I knew nothing about them, and cannot remember that I had ever heard of such works. And I was so situated that I had no one to whom I could apply for instruction. The only person with whom I had any communication, on literary subjects, was a gentleman, who though he said nothing to me on the subject, was deeply imbued with skeptical opinions. Being separated from the companions of my youth, and placed in a secluded situation, where, except on particular occasions, I saw little company, and where there were few opportunities of hearing instructive preaching, I was cast upon my own thoughts, and my reflections were often not very pleasing. One day—it was the Lord’s day—as I was looking over some books, which I had in a trunk, my eye caught the words, ‘Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion.’ I had often seen the same book, and never so much as thought what the subject of it was; but in my present perplexity, I seized it with avidity, and began to read. The work was, the celebrated treatise of Soame Jenyns, Esq. I never removed from where I was sitting until I had finished it, and as I proceeded, the light of evidence poured in upon my mind with such power of demonstration, that at the conclusion, I had the idea of the room being full of resplendent light. I enjoyed a pleasure which none can appreciate

but those who have been led to the contemplation of the truth, in like perplexing circumstances. Not only were all my doubts removed, but I wanted no more evidence. My conviction of the truth of Christianity was complete. I believe it could not have been increased.

“But still I knew scarcely anything of the method of salvation, revealed in the gospel. I entertained the common legal notions of thousands of ignorant people, ‘that at a convenient time I would become good,’ never doubting, for a moment, of my ability to do all that was requisite. The only thing which gave me uneasiness was, the fear of a sudden death, which would not afford me the opportunity of repenting and making my peace with God. But the hope prevailed, that I should die a lingering death, and be in my senses, and then I would do all that was requisite to prepare me for heaven; while at the same time, I had no definite idea, what that preparation was. During this period, I was exposed to few temptations; but still some sins had dominion over me. One day a child brought to me a small book and said that Mrs. T. requested that I would read it, and return it soon, as it was borrowed. The title, was, ‘Jenks on Justification by Faith.’ I read the book through at a single sitting, and again a new light sprung up in my mind. The author, in the introduction, gives an account of his ignorance of the true method of a sinner’s justification, until he had been for years a preacher. He was a minister of the church of England. I now found that I likewise had been all my life ignorant of the way of salvation; for I entertained the same legal and unscriptural notions which he proves to be utterly erroneous. Although these new views seem to have been merely intellectual, yet they afforded me a great satisfaction. I had now a distinct knowledge of the gospel method of justification, which I ever afterwards retained. Another copy of this book I have never seen.

“The preaching, to which I had access, was mostly of a wild, fanatical kind, and the way in which I heard the new birth described, tended to prejudice me against the doctrine of regeneration. I had never before heard any thing about this change, and yet I was sure that I knew some very good and religious people. I began to be troubled to know, whether sober, intelligent Christians believed in this doctrine. It also became a subject of discussion in the little circle with which I was conversant; and I found that one person in the company professed to have experienced this change: another was convinced of its reality, but professed to be merely an inquirer; a third was of opinion, that it related to the conversion of Jews and infidels, and that there was no other regeneration, except in baptism; and the fourth, was the skeptical gentleman, already mentioned, who was incredulous about the whole matter. In these conversations, I, being young and ignorant, took no part, but I listened to them with intense interest. I had recourse to such books as I had access to, but could find nothing that was satisfactory; for my range of religious books was very narrow, and few of these of an evangelical cast. The person of my acquaintance, who professed conversion, one day gave me a narrative of the various steps and changes experienced in this transition from darkness to light. As I entertained a favourable opinion of the veracity and sincerity of the individual, I began to think there might be something in it. Although I had experienced no remarkable change thus far, I knew that the subject of religion had become one of much more frequent thought, and excited much more interest in my mind than formerly. One evidence of which was, that I commenced secret prayer, a duty utterly neglected until this time, except when some one of the family was dangerously sick. I had selected a retired spot, surrounded by a thick growth of trees and bushes, on the margin of a brook. Here I made a kind of arbour, over a little plat of green grass, and in the summer evenings I would resort to this sequestered spot. It was on

the afternoon of a Sunday, I was reading a sermon on the long-suffering and patience of God, in waiting with delaying sinners; and so many things applied so exactly to my own case, that I became so much affected with a sense of the divine goodness and forbearance, in sparing me, and waiting so long with me, while I was living in neglect of him, that I felt impelled to go out and weep. I was reading the sermon aloud to the family, by request. I laid down the book abruptly, and hastened to my retirement, where I poured out a flood of tears, in prayer. And, suddenly, I was overwhelmed with a flood of joy. It was extatic beyond any thing which I had ever conceived; for though I thought religion a necessary thing, I never had an idea that there was any positive pleasure in its exercises. Whence this joy originated, I knew not. The only thing which had been on my mind was, the goodness and patience of God, and my own ingratitude. Neither can I now say how long it continued; but the impression left was, that I was in the favour of God, and should certainly be happy for ever. When the tumult of feeling had subsided, I began to think that this was conversion—this was the great change, of which I had recently heard so much. It occurred to me, when walking home, that if this was indeed the change called the new birth, it would be evinced by my forsaking all my sins. This suggestion appeared right, and I determined to make this the test of its reality. All the evening, my mind was in a delightful calm; but the next day my feelings had returned into their old channel. I was grieved at this, and resorted to the same place where I had experienced such a delightful frame, in hopes, that by some kind of association, the same scene would be renewed; but though there was the place and all the objects of yesterday, the soul-ravishing vision was not there; and after a feeble attempt at prayer, and lingering for some time, I returned without meeting any thing which I sought and desired. It was not long before I was subjected to the test which I had fixed; a temptation to a besetting sin was presented, and I had no strength to resist, but was instantly overcome. This failure gave me inexpressible pain, on reflection. I did not know how dear were my cherished hopes until they were wrested from me. I never felt a keener regret at any loss which I ever experienced.”

“Although I was constrained to admit, that I was not a regenerated person, I was sensible of a considerable change in my views and feelings on the subject of religion. I had no longer any doubt of the necessity of regeneration, and entertained some consistent notions of what its effects must be. I had, as before stated, acquired evangelical views of the way in which a sinner must be justified; and entertained different feelings from what I had formerly towards religious people. Formerly they were objects of dread and aversion, now I felt a sincere regard, and high respect for the same characters; and was pleased, when I heard of any of my friends becoming religious, or more serious than before. I had now an opportunity of hearing an able minister preach an evangelical sermon on the text, ‘For our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,’ &c., and I cannot tell the gratification I experienced, in hearing the doctrine of justification, which I had fully embraced, preached distinctly and luminously from the pulpit: but when I looked around on the audience, I had the impression, that they were all, or nearly all, ignorant of what he was saying, and were still trusting to their own works. It gave me pleasure, also, now, to converse on the doctrines of religion; and I felt a real abhorrence of vicious courses. This was my state of mind when Providence cast my lot where a powerful revival had been in progress for some time. I had witnessed something of this kind in a wild, fanatical sect; where bodily agitations were common and violent; but this was a different scene. The principal conductor and preacher was a man of learning and eloquence; and his views of experimental religion, as I think, most correct and scriptural. If he erred, it was on the safe side, in believing in the thorough conversion of but a small

number of those who appeared impressed. In entering into this scene, I experienced various new, and conflicting feelings. The young converts spoke freely, in my presence, of their conviction and conversion; but often with a degree of levity, which surprised me. In their conversations I could take no part, and although my general purpose was to consider myself an unawakened, unconverted sinner; yet when I heard the marks of true religion laid down, and especially by the distinguished preacher, before mentioned, I could not prevent the thought arising continually, 'If this is religion, then you have experienced it.' This seemed to me to be the suggestion of a false hope, by the enemy, to prevent my falling under conviction. Still the idea was continually presented to my mind, and with the appearance of truth. I took occasion to state the matter to the clergyman above alluded to, as soon as I could gain access to him; for I was diffident and timid, and had never opened my case to any one, freely. I told him all my former exercises, and stated distinctly, that they had not been sufficient to break the habit of sinning, to which I was addicted. As soon as I mentioned this part, he said, in a peremptory tone, 'then surely your exercises were not of the nature of true religion; and you must seek a better hope or you will never be admitted into heaven.' This decisive answer drove away, from that moment, every idea of my being in a state of grace; and I felt relieved from what I had myself considered a temptation, to entertain a false hope. Now I began to seek conviction, as a necessary preliminary to conversion; and hoped that every sermon which I heard, would be the means of striking terror into my soul. I read the most awakening discourses, went to hear the most arousing preachers; endeavoured to work on my own mind by imagining the awful realities of the judgment, and the torments of the damned. I strove to draw the covering from the pit, that I might behold the lake of fire, and hear the wailings of the damned. But the more I sought these awful feelings of conviction, the further they seemed to fly from me. My heart seemed to grow harder every day. I was sensible of nothing but insensibility. I became discouraged; and the more, because I was obliged to remove from the scene of the revival, to a place where there was no concern about religion, in the people generally; and where, I expected the preaching to be cold and lifeless. I spent a day before my departure, in secret, and in solemn reflection on my deplorable and hopeless case. I ran over all the kind dispensations of God's providence towards me, and reflected on the many precious means of grace, which I had recently enjoyed, without effect. The conclusions which seemed now to be forced on my mind was, that God had given me up to a hard heart, and that I never should be so happy as to obtain religion. This conclusion had, to my mind, all the force of a certainty; and I began to think about the justice of God in my condemnation: and no truth ever appeared with more lucid evidence to my mind. I fully justified God in sending me to hell. I saw that it was not only right, but I did not see how a just God could do otherwise. And I seemed to acquiesce in it, as a righteous and necessary thing. At this moment, my mind became more calm than it had been for a long time. All striving and effort on my part ceased, and being in the woods, I recollected that it was time for me to return to the house, where I expected to meet some friends. Here I found a minister waiting for me, whom I had seen but never spoke to. He took me aside, and began to represent the many privileges which I had enjoyed, and expressed a hope that I had received some good impressions. I told him that it was true, that I had been highly favoured; but that I had now come to a fixed conclusion that I should certainly be for ever lost; for under all these means, I had not received the slightest conviction, without which my conversion was impossible. He replied, by saying, 'that no certain degree of conviction was necessary—that the only use of conviction was, to make us feel our need of Christ as a Saviour; and appealed to Me, whether I did not feel, that I stood in need of a

Saviour.' He then went on to say, 'Christ is an advocate at the right hand of God, and stands ready to receive any case which is committed to his hands, and however desperate your case may now appear to be, only commit it to him and He will bring you off safely, 'for He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.' Here, a new view broke in on my mind. I saw that Christ was able to save even me, and I felt willing to give my cause into his hands. This discovery of the bare possibility of salvation, was one of the greatest deliverances I ever experienced. I was affected exceedingly with the view, which I had of this truth, so as to be unable to speak. Hope now sprung up in my desolate soul—not that I was pardoned or accepted. Such a thought did not occur—but that it was yet possible, that I might be, hereafter, and I was resolved never to give over seeking, until I obtained the blessing. All that evening I was sweetly composed, and precious promises and declarations of the word of God came dropping successively into my mind, as if they had been whispered to me. I never could have believed, unless I had experienced it, that the mere possibility of salvation would produce such comfort.

About this time, next morning, probably—when I retired to the woods—where my secret devotions were usually performed, I experienced such a melting of heart from a sense of God's goodness to me, as I never felt before or since. It seemed as if my eyes—so hard to weep commonly—were now a fountain of tears. The very earth was watered with their abundance. Indeed, my heart itself seemed to be dissolved, just as a piece of ice is dissolved by the heat of the sun. Of the particular exercises of this melting season, my memory does not retain a distinct recollection.

"For some months I attended to religious duties, with various fluctuations of feeling. Sometimes I entertained a pleasing hope that I was indeed a Christian—a renewed person; but, at other times, I was not only distressed with doubts, but came to the conclusion, that I was still in my sins. The only thing which I deem it important to mention during this period, was, a deeper discovery of the wickedness of my own heart. This conviction of deep-rooted, inherent depravity, distressed me much; but I obtained considerable relief from reading Owen on 'Indwelling Sin.' This book exhibited the state of my heart much better than I could have done myself. Still, however, I was much dissatisfied with myself, because after so long a time, I had made so little progress. On one occasion, at the close of the exercises of the Sabbath, I was so deeply sensible that my soul was still in imminent danger of perdition, that I solemnly resolved to begin a new and more vigorous course of engagedness to secure my salvation. I had spent much time in reading accounts of Christian experience, and those which lay down the marks and evidences of true religion, such as 'Owen on Spiritual Mindedness,' 'Edwards on the Affections,' 'Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ,' 'Newton's Letters,' 'Pike and Hayward's Cases of Conscience,' &c. I also conversed much with old and experienced Christians, as well as with those of my own age. But all these having, as it then seemed to me, very little facilitated my progress, and the evils of my heart seeming rather to increase, I hastily resolved to lay aside all books, except the Bible, and to devote my whole time to prayer and reading, until I experienced a favourable change. In pursuance of this purpose, I withdrew into a deeply retired spot, where I knew I should be free from all intrusion from mortals, and began my course of exertion with fasting and strong resolution never to relinquish my efforts, until I found relief. For five or six hours I was engaged alternately in reading the Scriptures and attempting to pray; but the longer I continued these exercises, the harder did my heart become, and the more wretched my feelings, until at length I was exhausted and discouraged, and began to despair of help, and was about returning from my chosen retirement, in gloomy despondence,

when it occurred to me with peculiar force, that if I found I could do nothing to help myself, yet I might call upon God for mercy. Accordingly, I fell down before him, and said little more than is contained in the publican's prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' but this I uttered with a deep and feeling conviction of my utter helplessness. The words were scarcely out of my mouth, when God was pleased to give me such a manifestation of his love in the plan of redemption through Christ, as filled me with wonder, love, and joy. Christ did indeed appear to me as altogether lovely, and I was enabled to view Him as my Saviour, and to see that his sufferings were endured for me. At no time before had I the full assurance of being in the favour of God; but now every doubt of this was dissipated. I could say, for the first time with unwavering confidence, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' And this assurance of God's favour arose not from any suggestion or impulse directly made to my mind, but from the clear view, that Christ, as a Saviour, was freely offered, and from a conscious assurance, that I did truly accept the offer. I now opened my Bible and began to read at the 18th chapter of John and onward. Every word and sentiment appeared glorious. I seemed to be reading a book which was perfectly new, and, truly, the sacred pages seemed to be illuminated with celestial light. And I rejoiced to think that the Sacred Scriptures would always be read in the same manner. How little did I know of the spiritual warfare! After my feelings had a little subsided, but while the glorious truths of the Gospel were still in full view, I made a formal and solemn dedication of myself to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and having writing materials with me, I wrote down the substance of this covenant, and subscribed it with my hand.

"I now believed, assuredly, that I was reconciled to God through Jesus Christ; but being naturally inclined to be suspicious of myself, I resolved to make the Holy Scriptures the test of the genuineness of my exercises, and to leave the final determination to the fruits produced, as our Lord says, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' I remembered that it was written, that faith works by love and purifies the heart. I hoped, therefore, that I should now be delivered from those evils of the heart with which I had been lately so much affected. But, alas! in a few days, I found that the 'old man' was not dead, but had power to struggle in a fearful manner. I must acknowledge, therefore, that, after a few weeks, I was much in the same spiritual condition in which I was before this remarkable manifestation."

Here the narration breaks off abruptly. It will not escape the notice of the attentive reader, that in this account all circumstances are avoided which could lead to the discovery of the writer. The true reason of this, I have reason to believe is, that the writer is still alive, and has no desire to be made conspicuous. It would be attended with no advantage to explain by what means this imperfect narrative came into my possession. The use which I make of it is not contrary to the wishes of the writer, while the injunction is peremptory, that no hint shall be given to the public, by which it may be conjectured who it is.

It may be remarked, in the first place, on this narrative, that sometimes persons are brought along very gradually in their acquisition of the knowledge of the truth. One discovery is made at one time, and another truth is revealed at another time; and between these steps there may be a long interval. It may again be remarked, that commonly before a person comes to the knowledge of a truth, the need of information is sensibly felt; and the appropriate means of communicating it are provided. A book, a sermon, a casual conversation, may be intimately connected with our salvation. Those, who commence a religious life, though they may appear sincere, should always be urged to go forward; there is much before them which they have not yet experienced. If they

are not yet in the right way they may arrive at it. In looking over the various exercises here detailed, I am utterly at a loss to say when the work of grace commenced. Perhaps, scarcely any two persons, taken at random, would agree in this point; for, while some would scarcely admit, that there was any exercising of saving faith until the last manifestation here described, others would be for carrying back to the very beginning of the exercised soul's serious attention to religion. However this matter may be decided, one thing, I think, is evident, that it is a great practical error to suppose, that nothing, connected essentially with the sinner's conversion, is experienced or done, until the moment of his conversion. He may have to unlearn many erroneous opinions, taken up through prejudice or inclination. He must learn the truth of the Christian religion, if unhappily he has adopted skeptical notions. He must learn to know what the Bible teaches, as to man's duty, and the true method of salvation. God's methods of bringing his chosen into the paths of truth and holiness are often wonderful. They are, at every step, led in a way which they knew not. How remarkably true is this, as it relates to conviction of sin? When the sinner is most convinced, he thinks he has no conviction at all. And in regard to conversion, what a different thing does it turn out to be in experience, from what it was conceived to be beforehand. Whilst the anxious saint was expecting something miraculous, or entirely out of the way, he experiences a new train of thought, new and pleasing views of truth, with corresponding emotions, by which the mind is so occupied, that it has no time nor inclination to scrutinize the nature or cause of these pleasing exercises. He believes and hopes without asking himself the question, are these the views and feelings of a renewed soul? Afterwards, he can look back and see that faith was exercised in these very acts, and that the peace which he then enjoyed was the peace of reconciliation through our Lord Jesus Christ. But when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, as described in the last part of this narrative, the distressed soul is made sensible at once of its happy state, and is made to rejoice in the smiles of the divine favour. Then he can no more doubt that God is reconciled and has lifted upon him the light of his countenance, than that the sun is shining at mid-day. All Christians, however, are not favoured with these bright discoveries, but always walk in a degree of darkness, or at best in a mere crepuscular light; yet they fear the Lord and obey the voice of his servants. I have known instances of some persons changing their opinion of the time of their own conversion, several times, and fixing it at different periods of their experience, as their sentiments became more correct and mature; and those converts who shine forth more brightly at first, are not always they who appear best after the lapse of years. The following narrative of the experience of Sir Richard Hill, written by himself, is found in his life, by the Rev. Edwin Sidney, and has been inserted in the Christian Observer of London, for September, 1839. We make no apology for its length, as we are confident that all who have a taste for this kind of reading, will be gratified to have the whole of this interesting account, without curtailment.

"It would not be an easy matter for me to ascertain the time, when the first dawnings of divine light began to break in upon my soul; but I remember particularly that, when I was about eight or nine years of age, being then at a neighbouring school, and repeating the catechism one Sunday evening with some other boys, to the master, I found my heart sweetly drawn up to heavenly objects, and had such a taste of the love of God, as made every thing else appear insipid and contemptible. This was but a transitory glimpse of the heavenly gift; and I was no sooner withdrawn with the rest of my school-fellows, than my religious impressions vanished, and I returned to folly with the same eagerness as before. But God did not leave me to myself; I had frequent checks of conscience, and the thoughts of death sometimes came forcibly into my mind. I

remained about two years at the school before mentioned, after which I was removed to Westminster, where my convictions still pursued me, and forced me to several superficial repentances and resolutions; but these, being all made in my own strength, soon came to nothing.

“When I had been about four or five years at Westminster, I was to be confirmed with several more of my school-fellows. I looked upon this as going into a new state, and therefore made the most solemn resolutions of becoming a new creature. But, alas! my happiness and conversion were far from beginning here, as I had fondly imagined. The adversary, now finding that he was not likely to make me continue any longer in a state of practical wickedness by his former stratagems, began to attack me on another side, viz. by suggesting horrible doubts concerning the very fundamentals of all religion—as the being of a God—the immortality of the soul, and the divine origin of the Scriptures. I endeavoured to reason myself into the belief of these truths, but all in vain. However, I thought I might easily get some book that should convince me of their certainty. Accordingly, I borrowed Dr. Beveridge’s *Private Thoughts*, of a clergyman’s widow, with whom I boarded, she having first read to me a few pages in that excellent work. It was, to the best of my remembrance, whilst she was reading, that such glorious instantaneous light and comfort were diffused over my soul, as no tongue can express; the love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. However, these comforts, I think, did not last above half an hour at most, but went off by degrees, when the same doubts succeeded; upon which I again had recourse to Bishop Beveridge’s *Thoughts*, or to conversation on the subject of religion; and for several times, as I did this, I experienced the same manifestations of divine love, which were sometimes of longer, sometimes of shorter duration.

“At length I began to be tired of this state of uncertainty, especially as the comforts I had before felt began to be few and faint. Add to this the bad example of my school-fellows, and the despair I began to be in of obtaining satisfaction of the truth of what is called natural as well as revealed religion, contributed not a little to make me lay aside my inquiries, and to fall into many sins that youth and strong passions prompted me to; and this I did with the more eagerness, as I was desirous of laying hold of every opportunity of turning my thoughts from within myself.

“I believe I might now be about eighteen years of age, when, having gone through the school at Westminster, I was entered at Magdalen College, Oxford, where I continued between four and five years. After which I went abroad for about two years more, returning to England in 1757, being then about the age of twenty-three or twenty-four. During my residence at Oxford and in foreign parts, notwithstanding all the wretched pains I took to lull conscience asleep, still my convictions pursued me; yea, the more I endeavoured to put from me the thoughts of my soul by drinking deeper draughts of iniquity, the more strongly did the insulted Spirit plead with me, and often in the very act of sin, would so embitter my carnal gratifications and strike me with such deep remorse, that, oh! horrid to think! I have even been ready to murmur, because God would not let me alone, nor suffer me to sin with the same relentless satisfaction which I observed in my companions.

“But He that hath loved me with an everlasting love, had all this while thoughts of mercy towards me, and would not take his loving kindness utterly away from me. He therefore waited that he might be gracious unto me, and followed me with such loud and constant convictions as often brought me upon my knees, and sometimes forced me to break off my sins for a month, or a quarter of a year together, for, though I still remained full of doubts as to the truth of religion, yet I

thought that, if there was a God and a future state, and if Jesus Christ was indeed the true Messiah and the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him, I could by no means be saved in the state I was in; and that, being uncertain whether these things were so or not, it was the highest infatuation to leave the eternal happiness or misery of my soul at a peradventure, especially as I could be no loser by admitting the truths of religion, and living under their influence; whereas, were I to continue in sin under the supposition of their being false, I might find myself fatally mistaken, when it would be too late to recant or retrieve my error. But, notwithstanding I came to this conclusion, and plainly saw its reasonableness, yet were my religious fits of no long continuance, but every temptation that offered itself hurried me impetuously away, and I became seventimes more the child of hell than before. Nevertheless, every new fall increased my anguish of spirit, and set me upon praying and resolving; insomuch, that I frequently bound myself under the most solemn imprecations.

“But alas! alas! I was, all this while, as ignorant of my own weakness, as of Him on whom my strength was laid; and therefore no wonder all my attempts to make myself holy, were attended with no better success than if I had tried to wash the Ethiopian white, and answered no other end than to distress my soul a thousand times more than if I had never made such solemn vows; for, all this while, I had no other notion of religion than that it consisted in something which I was to do in order to make God amends for my past sins, and to please him for the time to come, in consideration of which I should escape hell and be entitled to everlasting life.

“In this manner I went on vowing and breaking my vows, sinning, and repenting, till my most merciful God and Saviour, seeing that all his gracious calls would not overrule the horrible perverseness of my will, instead of giving me up, as in just judgment he might have done, or pronouncing against me that dreadful sentence, ‘Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?’—I say, instead of this, he began to deal with me after a far more violent method than he had hitherto done, filling my soul with the most unimaginable terrors, insomuch that I roared for the very disquietness of my heart. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in me, the poison whereof drank up my spirits, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.

“From this time, which was about October, 1757, I may say that sin received its mortal blow, (I mean its reigning power, for God knows the body of sin yet is far from being done away,) and I set myself to work with all the earnestness of a poor perishing mariner, who is every moment in expectation of shipwreck. I fasted, prayed, and meditated; I read the Scriptures, communicated, and gave much alms. But these things could bring no peace to my soul; on the contrary, I now saw, what I never had seen before, that all my works were mixed with sin and imperfection. Besides this, Satan furiously assaulted me with suggestions that I had committed the upardonable sin against the Holy Ghost; and had let my day of grace slip; that therefore my prayers were cast out of God, and were an abomination to him, and that it was too late to think of mercy, when it was the time of judgment.

“It is beyond the power of conception, much more of expression to form an idea of the dreadful agonies my poor soul was now in. What to do, or to whom to have recourse, I knew not; for, alas, I had no acquaintance with any body who seemed to have the least experience in such cases. However, those about me showed the greatest concern for my situation, and offered their remedies for my relief, such as company, physic, exercise, &c., which, in order to oblige them, I

complied with; but my disorder not being bodily, but spiritual, was not to be removed by these carnal quackeries, as they were soon convinced.

"I recollected, however, that once, if not oftener, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, then tutor to two neighbouring young gentlemen, but since vicar of Madely, in this county, had, in my hearing been spoken of in a very disrespectful manner, for things which seemed to me to savour of a truly Christian spirit. I therefore determined to make my case known to him, and accordingly wrote him a letter, without mentioning my name, giving him some account of my situation, and begging him for God's sake, if he had a word of comfort to offer to my poor, distressed, despairing soul, to meet me that very night at an Inn in Salop, in which place I then was. Though Mr. Fletcher had four or five miles to walk, yet he came punctually to the appointment, and spoke to me in a very comfortable manner, giving me to understand that he had very different thoughts of my state from what I had myself. After our discourse, before he withdrew, he went to prayer with me; and among other petitions that he put up in my behalf, he prayed that I might not trust in my own righteousness, which was an expression, that, though I did not ask him its import, I knew not well what to make of.

"After my conversation with Mr. Fletcher, I was rather easier, but this decrease of my terrors was but for a few days' duration; for, though I allowed that the promises and comforts he would have me apply to myself belonged to the generality of sinners, yet I thought they were not intended for me, who had been so dreadful a backslider, and who, by letting my day of grace slip, had sinned beyond the reach of mercy. Besides I concluded that they could be made effectual to none but such as had faith to apply them; whereas I had no faith, consequently they could avail me nothing. I therefore wrote again to Mr. F., telling him, as nearly as I can remember, that however others might take comfort from the Scripture promises, I feared none of them belonged to me, who had crucified the Son of God afresh, and sinned wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth. I told him also, that I found my heart to be exceeding hard and wicked; and that, as all my duties proceeded from a slavish dread of punishment, and not from the principles of faith and love, and were withal so very defective, I thought it was impossible God should ever accept them. In answer to this, the kind and sympathising Mr. F. immediately wrote me a sweet and comfortable letter, telling me that the perusal of the account I had given him had caused him to shed tears of joy to see what great things the Lord had done for my soul, in convincing me experimentally of the insufficiency of all my own doings to justify me before God, and of the necessity of a saving faith in the blood of Jesus. He also sent me 'The Life and Death of Mr. Halyburton, Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews,' which book I read with the greatest eagerness, as the account Mr. H. therein gives of himself, seemed in a very particular manner to tally with my own experience. I therefore thought that what had been, might be; that the same God who had showed himself so powerfully, on the behalf of Mr. H., and delivered him out of all his troubles, was able to do the same for me.

"You will wonder how I could hold out under all these pressures; the half of which, I might say, has not been told; and indeed it was impossible I could have held out, had it not been that, at those very times when I thought all was over with me, there would, now and then, dart in upon me some comfortable glimmering of hope, which kept me utterly from fainting.

“In this situation I continued from September 1757, to January 1758, when the Vinerian Professor of Oxford being to read a course of lectures upon the Common Law, I resolved to set out for that place, not through any desire I had to attend the lectures, for I had no heart for any such thing, but because I knew I should have chambers to myself in college, and thereby have an opportunity of being much alone, and of giving way to those thoughts, with which my heart was big, as also of seeking the Lord with greater diligence, if peradventure I might find him. Accordingly, when I arrived at the University, though to save appearances, I dragged my body to several of the lectures, yet my poor heavy-laden soul engrossed all my attention; and so sharp was the spiritual anguish I laboured under, that I scarcely saw a beggar in the streets, but I envied his happiness, and would most gladly have changed situations with him, had it been in my power. O, thought I, these happy souls have yet an offer of mercy, and a door of hope open to them, but it is not so with me; I have rejected God so long, that now God has rejected me as he did Saul; my day of grace is past, irrecoverably past, and I have forever shut myself out of all the promises.

“All this while, one thing that greatly astonished me was, to see the world about me so careless and unconcerned, especially many that were twice my age amongst the Doctors of Divinity, and fellows of the college. Surely, thought I, these people must be infatuated indeed, thus to mind earthly things and to follow the lusts of the flesh, when an eternity of happiness or misery is before them, when they know not how short a time they have to live, and their everlasting state depends on the present moment.

“It was now the season of Lent, the first or second Sunday in which, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is always administered in Magdalen College Chapel. I therefore besought the Lord with strong cryings, that he would vouchsafe me some token for good, some sense of his love towards me, and willingness to be reconciled to me, that I might wait upon him at his table without distraction, and partake of those blessings which that ordinance is instituted to convey to the souls of true believers.

“And O, for ever and for ever blessed be his holy name, he did not reject the prayer of the poor destitute; he heard me what time the storm fell upon me, and, I make no doubt, had heard, and, in his purpose at least, answered me, from the first day he inclined my heart to understand, and to seek after him. But he knew better than I did myself, when it was meet to speak peace to my soul, and therefore waited that he might be gracious unto me; first, in order to convince me the more deeply of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the desert thereof; secondly, to show me more experimentally my own weakness and the insufficiency of any righteousness of my own to recommend me to his favour; thirdly, to make me prize more highly, and hunger and thirst more earnestly, for Jesus Christ, and the salvation that is in him. These ends being in some measure answered, on Saturday, February 18th, to the best of my remembrance, the night before the sacrament, it pleased the Lord, after having given me, for a few days before, some taste of his love, first to bring me into a composed frame of spirit, and then to convey such a thorough sense of his pardoning grace and mercy to my poor soul, that I, who was just before trembling upon the brink of despair, did now rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory! The love of God was shed abroad in my heart through the Holy Ghost that was given unto me, even that perfect love which casteth out fear; and the Spirit itself bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God.

“For some time after these sensible manifestations of God’s love were withdrawn, my mind was composed and my hope lively; but I had still, at seasons, secret misgivings and many doubts as to the reality of my conversion, which put me seriously to examine my state, whether the Scripture marks of a work of grace were really to be found in me or not; and in these examinations I had great help from those excellent books, Guthrie’s Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, and Palmer’s Gospel New Creature. Add to this, that being now in London, I had there the opportunity of hearing that faithful minister of Christ, the Rev. Mr. Romaine, whose discourses were so exactly descriptive of, and adapted to, my own experience, that they afforded me a good confirmation that I was indeed passed from death unto life, and from the power of Satan unto God.

“During my stay in London, it pleased God to make me acquainted with many of his people, to whom my heart was immediately knit with the closest affection; yea, so great was my love to all those, in whom I discerned the Divine image of the Lord Jesus, that the yearnings of Joseph’s heart towards his brethren will but very faintly express it. Be they who or what they would, high or low, rich or poor, ignorant or learned, it mattered not; if I had reason to believe they were born of God and made partakers of a divine nature, they were equally dear to me; my heart was open to receive them without reserve, and I enjoyed the sweetest fellowship and communion with them, whilst all other company was insipid and irksome.

“For about two years after this, I was, in a good measure, relieved from those piercing terrors and that deep distress with which I was before overwhelmed. This, you will say, was living upon frames and experiences, more than upon the exceeding great and precious promises made to returning sinners in Christ Jesus. It is true it was so, and of this God soon convinced me; for I now began to doubt whether these great comforts I had set so high a value upon, might not be all delusion, or proceed from the workings of my own spirit; and if so, my case was just as bad as ever. My day of grace might still be past, and nothing yet remain for me but ‘a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.’

“This was in April, 1759, soon after my return from London into Shropshire, where I had not been long before I wrote to Mr. Fletcher, giving him an account of my state. After this it pleased the Lord to remove my burthen, and to exchange these sharp terrors of the spirit of bondage, for the sweet reviving comforts of the spirit of adoption, showing me the rich treasures of Gospel promises, and that they, and not my own frames, were to be the ground of my hope and my stay in every time of need. Since this time, I may say with Bishop Cowper, that my soul has never experienced the like extremity of terror; and though I have had many ups and downs, many grievous temptations and sharp conflicts, much aridity of soul, deadness, and strong corruptions to fight against, yet have I always found the Lord to be a very present help in trouble; his grace has been sufficient for me in every hour of need, and I doubt not but all his dealings with me, however thwarting to my own ideas of what was fit and meet for me, have some way or other been subservient to my spiritual interest, since his most sure promise is that all things work together for good, to them that love God ‘and’ are the called according to his purpose.”

CHAPTER X("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Imperfect sanctification.—The spiritual warfare

It may be difficult to account for the fact, that when the power of God was as sufficient to make the sinner perfect, in the new creation, as to implant a principle of spiritual life, he should have left the work imperfect; and that this imperfection, according to our views of Scripture, and of the fact as made known by experience, should continue through the whole period of human life, to whatever extent it may be protracted. Some, indeed, seem to suppose, that the remainders of sin in believers are seated in the body, and therefore as long as this sinful body continues, this inbred corruption will manifest itself, more or less. This opinion seems to have been imbibed, at a very early period of the history of the church, and was probably derived from the Platonic philosophy, which considers matter to be the origin of evil. From this view of the seat of indwelling sin, men, in all ages, who entertained it, have been led to lay great stress on fasting and other bodily austerities, by which the body was enfeebled and emaciated. But, the principle assumed being false, all that is built upon it must be false likewise. The body, though infected with the pollution of sin, through its connexion with the soul, is not, and cannot be the source of iniquity. Mere matter, however curiously organized and animated, is apart from the soul, no moral agent, and therefore not susceptible of moral qualities. Sin must have its origin and seat in the free rational soul, and the appetites and passions, which have their seat in the body, partake of the nature of sin, by their excess and irregularity, and by their cravings, often influence the will to choose that which is not good, or is not the best. Still, however, the body is a great clog to the soul, and the appetites and passions, which are seated in the body, being very urgent in their cravings for gratification, greatly disturb the exercises of piety, and sometimes prevail against the higher principles which by grace have been implanted. As the body is also subject to various diseases, these, on account of the close connexion between the soul and body, mightily affect the mind, and often create a great hinderance to devotion, and the exercises of piety. Where two opposite principles exist in the same soul, there must be a perpetual conflict between them, until "the weaker dies." But as the "old man," though crucified, never becomes extinct in this life, this warfare between the flesh and spirit never ceases until death. As these opposite moral principles operate through the same natural faculties and affections, it is a matter of course, that as the one gains strength, the other must be proportionably weakened; and experience teaches that the most effectual way to subdue the power of sin, is, to cherish and exercise the principle of holiness. But, if the love of God grows cold, or declines in vigour, then the motions of sin become more lively, and the stirring of inbred corruption is sensibly experienced. Just then, in the same proportion, will the principle of evil be diminished, as the principle of grace is strengthened. Every victory, over any particular lust, weakens its power; and by a steady growth in grace, such advantage is obtained over inbred sin, that the advanced Christian maintains the mastery over it, and is not subject to those violent struggles which were undergone when this warfare commenced. Young Christians, however, are often greatly deceived by the appearance of the death of sin, when it only sleeps, or deceitfully hides itself, waiting for a more favourable opportunity to exert itself anew. When such an one experiences, in some favoured moment, the love of God shed abroad in his heart, sin appears to be dead, and those lusts which warred against the soul, to be extinguished; but when these lively feelings have passed away, and carnal objects begin again to entice, the latent principle of iniquity shows itself; and often that Christian who had fondly hoped that the enemy was slain and the victory won, and in consequence, ceased to watch and pray, is suddenly assailed and overcome by the deceitfulness of sin. Christians are more injured in this warfare, by the insidious and secret influence of their enemies lulling them into the sleep of carnal security, than by all their open and

violent assaults. No duty is more necessary, in maintaining this conflict, than watchfulness. Unceasing vigilance is indispensable. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation,"—"and what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." Lawful pursuits are more frequently a snare than those which are manifestly sinful. It is a duty "to provide things honest in the sight of all men," but while this object is industriously pursued, the love of the world gradually gains ground. The possession of wealth is viewed as important. Eternal things are out of view, or viewed as at a great distance, and the impression from them is faint. Wordly entanglements and embarrassments are experienced; the spiritual life is weakened. A sickly state commences, and a sad declension ensues. Alas! for the Christian now. Where is the burning zeal with which he commenced his course? Where now are the comforts of religion, with which he was so entirely satisfied, that the world was viewed as an empty bauble? Where now is his spirit of prayer, which made this duty his delight? Where his love of the Bible, which drew him aside often from wordly business to peruse its sacred instructions? O! what a change! Reader, it is, perhaps, thy own case. "Thou art the man" who has thus fallen, and left thy first love. "Repent, therefore, and do the first works," lest some heavy judgment fall upon thee. God holds a rod for his own children, and when the warnings and exhortations of the word, and the secret whispers of the Spirit are neglected, some painful providence is sent—some calamity, which has so much natural connexion with the sin, as to indicate that it is intended as a chastisement for it. These strokes are often very cutting and severe, but they must be so to render them effectual. "No chastening for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Our heavenly Father afflicteth not willingly, but "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." The followers of Dr. Hawker, in England, who are ultra Calvinists, entertain the opinion, that "the law in our members" is not, in the least, affected or weakened, by our regeneration or sanctification, but that through life, it remains the very same, no how weakened in its strength, by any progress in the divine life which the Christian may make. But this is contrary to the word of God, which speaks of "dying daily unto sin"—of "mortifying the deeds of the body"—"crucifying the flesh," &c. The same opinion, or one near akin to it, was held by Mr. William Walker, of Dublin, which he brings to view in his able "address to the Wesleyan Methodists." His opinion, however, I think, was, that there is no such thing as a progressive work of sanctification which word properly means a consecration to God. In a former chapter, I mentioned the different views of different denominations of Christians respecting the nature of the soul's exercises in conversion, but this difference is far more considerable as it relates to the spiritual conflict and sanctification. It is far from the wish of the writer to give offence to any body of Christians, much less to provoke controversy. This is no proper field for controversy. In the midst of this militant state, there ought to be one peaceful ground, where all true followers of Jesus might sit down together and compare their experiences of the loving kindness and faithful dealings of their Lord and Master. But surely it ought not to be offensive to any body of Christians simply to state what their views are in regard to experimental religion, and how far they agree or differ from those of other Christians. If there be mistakes, or erroneous views, on any side, they should be considered and corrected. And the writer of these essays will be thankful to any one who will kindly point out any mistakes in regard to matters of fact into which he may happen to fall. There has long been a difference of opinion respecting the true interpretation of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, respecting Paul's description of the spiritual conflict, whether he describes the exercises of a convinced sinner, whom he personates; or whether he does not express honestly

the feelings of his own heart, and describe the painful conflict between the powers of sin and holiness which was going on in his own bosom. The latter, undoubtedly, is the obvious meaning, for the apostle speaks in the first person, and gives no notice of introducing a person of another character; and some of the expressions here employed, are as strongly descriptive of a regenerate heart as any in the Bible. Who, but a regenerate man, can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man!" And the closing words show clearly enough, that the apostle was detailing the exercises of his own soul; for he give thanks to God for giving him the victory, in this severe conflict, but still intimates that the two irreconcilable principles continued, according to their respective natures, to operate within him. "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin." Arminius began his career of departure from the commonly received opinions of the reformed churches, by writing a book in exposition of the 7 of the Romans; and it is a remarkable coincidence that Faustus Socinus, in Poland, was engaged at the same time in writing a book on the same subject, and to support the same views. This subject is excellently treated in one of President Dickinson's Letters; and more largely by "Frazer on Sanctification." The same subject is also treated accurately and judiciously by Dr. Hodge, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. It is understood that the followers of Mr. John Wesley, hold, in conformity with his recorded opinion, that sanctification is not a gradual and progressive work, which remains imperfect in the best, in this life, but that, like regeneration, it is instantaneous, and that the result is a complete deliverance from indwelling sin; so that from that moment they are perfectly holy, and sin no more—unless they fall from this high state of grace—in thought, word, or deed. Here then there can be no similarity between the religious experience of an Arminian, who has attained sanctification, and a Calvinist, who is seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one is conscious of no sin, inward or outward, of nature or of act, and must have perpetual joy—a heaven on earth; while the other is groaning under a deep sense of inherent depravity, which works powerfully against his will, and continually interrupts and retards his progress. His frequent language is, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Here, indeed, we have a wide difference in the religious experience of professing Christians; and it must be acknowledged, that if the experience of the Arminian is in accordance with the word of God, he has greatly the advantage over the contrite, broken hearted penitent, whose complaints are so great that they often cause him to wet his couch with tears. How to reconcile these widely different views of our condition as sanctified sinners, I know not. There must be a grand mistake somewhere; and I sincerely pray to God, that if my views on this subject are erroneous, they may be corrected! The Christian is a soldier, and must expect to encounter enemies, and to engage in many a severe conflict. The young convert may well be likened to a raw recruit just enlisted. He feels joyous and strong, full of hope and full of courage. When the veteran Christian warns him of coming dangers and formidable enemies, and endeavours to impress on his mind a sense of his weakness and helplessness without divine aid, he does not understand what he says. He apprehends no dangers or enemies which he is not ready to face, and is ready to think that the aged disciples, with whom he converses, have been deficient in courage and skill, or have met with obstacles which are now removed out of the way. He views the contests, of which they speak, as the young soldier does the field of battle at a distance, while he is enjoying his bounty-money, and marches about with a conscious exultation, on account of his military insignia, and animated with martial music. The young Christian is commonly treated by his Lord with peculiar tenderness.

He is like the babe, dandled on the knee, and exposed to no hardships. His frames are lively, and often joyous, and he lives too much upon them. His love to the Saviour and to the saints is fresh and fervent, and his religious zeal, though not well regulated by knowledge, is ardent. He often puts older disciples to the blush by the warmth of his affections, and his alacrity in the service of his Redeemer, and it is well, if he does not sometimes indulge a censorious spirit, in judging those who have been long exercised in the spiritual life. This is indeed the season of his "first love" which began to flow in the day of his espousals; and though occasionally dark clouds intercept his views, these are soon forgotten, when the clear sunshine breaks forth to cheer him on his way. During this period he delights in social exercises, especially in communion with those of his own age, and in prayer, and in praise, and spiritual conversation, his heart is lifted up to heaven, and he longs for the time, when he may join the songs of the upper temple. But ere long the scene changes. Gradually the glow of fervent affections subsides. Worldly pursuits, even the most lawful and necessary, steal away the heart; and various perplexing entanglements beset the inexperienced traveller. He begins to see that there were many things faulty in his early course. He blames his own weakness or enthusiasm; and, in avoiding one extreme he easily falls into the opposite, to which human nature has a strong bias. He enters into more intercourse with the world, and, of course, imbibes insensibly some portion of its spirit. This has a deadening effect on his religious feelings; and his devotions are less fervent and less punctual; and far more interrupted with vain, wandering thoughts, than before; and he is apt to fall into a hasty or formal attendance on the daily duties of the closet; and a little matter will sometimes lead him to neglect these precious seasons of grace. A strange forgetfulness of the presence of God, and of his accountableness for every thought, word, and action, seizes upon him. Close self-examination becomes painful, and when attempted, is unsuccessful. New evils begin to appear springing up in the heart. The imagination, before he is aware, is filled with sensual imagery, which affording carnal pleasure, the train of his thoughts is with difficulty changed. A want of prompt resolution is often the occasion of much guilt, and much unhappiness. Pride is sure to lift its head when God is out of view; and it is wonderful how this and kindred evils will get possession and grow, so as to be visible to others, while the person himself is not aware of the disease. Anger, impatience, fretfulness, envy, undue indulgence of the appetites, love of riches, fondness for dress and show, the love of ease, aversion to spiritual duties, with numerous similar and nameless evils are now bred in the heart, and come forth to annoy and retard the Christian in his course. His pride makes him unwilling to open his ear to friendly and fraternal reproof; such words fall heavily on him, and wound his morbid sensibility, so that a conflict takes place between a sense of duty and unmortified pride. He inwardly feels that the rebuke of a brother is just and should be improved to the amendment of the evil pointed out; but pride cannot brook the thought of being exposed and humbled; and he tries to find something in the manner or circumstances which can be censured; or suspicion will ascribe it to a bad motive. If in this spiritual conflict, pride should gain the victory, alas how much sin follows in its train;—resentment towards a kind brother, hypocrisy in concealing the real dictates of conscience, and approbation of the inner man; and a neglect of all efforts at improvement. The person thus circumstanced, is instinctively led to endeavour to persuade himself that he has done right. Still, however, the language of his better part is that of self-condemnation. But he hushes it up, and assumes an air of innocence and boldness, and thus the Spirit is grieved. Who can describe the train of evils which ensue, on one defeat of this kind? The mind becomes dark and desolate; communion with God is interrupted, and a course of backsliding commences, which sometimes

goes on for years, and then the wanderer is not arrested and brought back without severe chastisement. In such cases the judgments of God against his own straying children are fearful; and if any experience them not, who have thus declined, it is because they are not children, “for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

Worldly prosperity has ever been found an unfavourable soil for the growth of piety. It blinds the mind to spiritual and eternal things, dries up the spirit of prayer, fosters pride and ambition, furnishes the appropriate food to covetousness, and leads to a sinful conformity to the spirit, maxims, and fashions of the world. Some few have been enabled to pass this ordeal, without serious injury; and have come forth like the three children from Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace, without the smell of fire on their garments; but this could not have been unless the Son of Man had been with them. Such persons use all their health, influence, and wealth in promoting the kingdom of Christ; but generally, God in mercy, refuses to give worldly prosperity to his children. He hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith; that is, he hath commonly chosen poverty as the safest condition for his children. His are “an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” But the poor have their conflicts and temptations, as well as the rich. They are continually tempted to discontent, to envy at the prosperity of the rich, and sometimes to use unlawful means to satisfy their craving wants. On account of the dangers of both these conditions, Agur prayed, “Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord; or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain.” But in whatever state Providence has placed us, we should therewith be content. Certainly when Christians make haste to be rich, they are not governed by the wisdom which cometh from above. No wonder that they pierce themselves through with many sorrows, and are often in danger of eternal perdition. If we sought wealth from no other motive but to use it for God’s glory, it would do us no harm; for this principle would regulate the pursuit; so that it would not be detrimental to the kingdom of God within us. The enemies of the Christian have been commonly divided into three classes, the world, the flesh, and the devil; but though these may be conceived of, and spoken of separately, they resist the Christian soldier by their combined powers. The devil is the agent, the world furnishes the bait or the object of temptation, and the flesh, or our own corrupt nature, is the subject on which the temptation operates. Sometimes, indeed, Satan injects his fiery darts, enkindled in hell, to frighten the timid soul, and drive it to despair; but in this he often overshoots his mark, and drives the poor trembling soul nearer to his Captain, whose broad shield affords ample protection. And we are not to suppose that we are not often led astray by the enticements of sin within us, without the aid of Satan; but we need not be afraid of charging too much evil upon this arch adversary. He is ever on the alert, and is exceedingly cautious in his approaches. Long experience has doubtless greatly increased his power and subtlety, unless he should be more restrained than formerly. Some people make a mock of Satan’s temptations, as though they were the dreams of superstitious souls. Not so Paul, and Peter, and John—not so Luther, and Calvin, and Zuingli. Not so any who understand the nature of the spiritual warfare. It is to the great injury of many professors, that they are not constantly on the watch against the wiles of the devil. If you wish to know where he will be likely to meet you, I would say, in your closet, in the church, on your bed, and in your daily intercourse with men. A single thought which suddenly starts up in your mind, will show that the enemy is near, and is suggesting such thoughts, as without his agency never can be accounted for. “Watch, therefore,” “resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Narrative of G—— A—— S——, an Episcopal Clergyman.—Narrative of a young Officer in the Army

The following is the religious experience of G—— A—— S——, an Episcopal Clergyman in H——, which he recently communicated to the author of these essays, to be used as he might think proper.

"I entered the military academy at West Point, in the summer of 1825; the second year of the present Bishop McIlvaine's residence there as chaplain. I sat under his preaching 'as with the Spirit of God,' with eyes that did not see, and ears that did not hear. The Bishop departed, the curse was still upon my soul. Finally, I became much involved in the spirit of infidelity, together with several others. One evening, in particular, I trembled at the thoughts of our conversation: in the darkness of our minds, we had denied all. A few days afterwards, one of my companions, noted for his brightness of intellect, called at my room, and said, I have been reading ——'s 'Evidences of the Christian Religion,' and it has almost persuaded me to be a Christian. I well remember with what great delight I received the communication, resolving to get the book, and 'see if those things were so;' not however, with any view or desire of becoming a Christian, at present. In due time, the book was procured, I retired to my room, my heart as hard as the mill-stone, the heavens over my head as brass, and the earth beneath my feet as iron. I opened to the introduction, the most blind of unbelievers; all around me were perfect clouds and darkness. I began to read, I had proceeded half way through the introduction, and was suddenly impressed, that the religion of Christ was of God. I did not doubt its truth more than I did my life: yet I was entirely without argument. At that time I could have given no reason, yet I did not doubt. I felt a perfect belief that an Omnipresent Spirit did it. Before, I hardly believed there was a God: now I felt it as by a two-edged sword. It was a most awfully sublime moment; yet I had not the least fear. I did not even think of sin. The next impression was, that I was undergoing a conversion. This, I would not then: the thought was very pleasant, that now I knew Christ died for the world; and that at some future time, I would go further in his love. I was happy, sublime; no terror; a thought did not enter my mind of the consequence of delay. To avoid the progress of conversion, I threw down the book perfectly satisfied, for I had attained to one of the most splendid pieces of consciousness imaginable; a sight beyond the veil, within eternity, worth thousands of worlds to me. I turned to think of something else. And oh! the horrors of hell, how they came flooding in upon my soul. I felt that an Omnipotent hand was guiding them there. Commensurate with my agony, was my awful sense of sinfulness; a conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come, rose before my eyes in immense reality. I felt no anguish, no fear, no sin, until I resolved not to attend to these things at present. My anguish of soul became insupportable, it thickened and darkened, I could not endure it longer. And with the sole view of escaping my present misery, I resolved to yield to the will of that Mighty Being who was rending my soul. I instantly caught up the book, and offered a prayer for mercy. The intensity of my anguish began immediately to subside. The wrath of God seemed to mitigate, in a few moments, I settled down into a state of deep and solemn conviction of sin; a state more tolerable than the former; but still one of gloom so thick that it could be felt. A mountain weight pressed upon my soul; how to remove it I knew not, for the spirit still held me bound. I did not know but this was to continue through life. I endeavoured to lose my feelings, and feel at ease, but I could not. I knew nothing of the way of salvation; I had no spiritual guide; but in order to keep my present sorrow as

light as possible, I continued to read and pray for mercy. Thus I continued in the wilderness for about a week: when, sitting by my fireside, dwelling upon my despair, a sudden light came down from heaven; I saw the open gate—‘the way, the truth, and the life’—a new song was put into my mouth, and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory! Unspeakable gratitude be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for ever and ever.’ I have thought that two particulars in the above are worthy of notice. 1st. The motives that actuated me. 2d. That being perfectly ignorant of the way of salvation, the Spirit was a perfect teacher.”

There are several things very remarkable in the preceding narrative. The delight at finding an infidel companion convinced, or almost convinced of his error; the desire to see the book which had produced this effect; the sudden persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion, by a sudden impression on the mind, the elevated happiness experienced on account of having discovered the truth, the determination still not to become a Christian at present, the horror and anguish consequent on this resolution, the relief obtained by resuming attention to religion, and finally, the discovery of the way of salvation through Christ, when the moment before, no idea was entertained of such a way, are all remarkable circumstances; and to some, may seem to savour of enthusiasm. But we cannot prescribe limits to the Holy Spirit, in his ways of leading benighted souls into the path of life. Still, it may be asked, how could there be a rational conviction of the truth of Christianity, when the individual knew no reasons or arguments in favour of it? To which it may be answered, that Christianity has a light of its own, independent of all external evidences; and if the Spirit of God cause one ray of this divine light to irradiate the mind the truth becomes manifest. This person was on the borders of atheism. By an awful impression on his mind, God caused him to feel and know that He existed, and held him in his hand; and at the same time, let a ray of light from Divine Revelation into his mind. Suppose a number of human beings to be educated in a dark cavern, where they never saw the light of heaven; but being visited by one and another who testified to them the existence of the celestial luminaries, the candid among them, upon weighing the evidence, would acknowledge the existence of such bodies; although, of necessity, their conceptions of these objects would be very inadequate. But some, depending on their own reason, might reject the testimony as a mere fabrication, since what was related was totally contrary to all their own experience. Suppose then that the guardian of these subterranean inhabitants, should take one of these skeptics to a point where a single ray of light from the sun should be let in upon his eyes, how wonderful the sensation, how sublime the emotion, how strong now the persuasion of the existence of such a bright luminary! The doubts of such an one, however deep and inveterate, would be dissipated in a moment; not by argument; where we possess intuition, argument is superfluous. So, in the case before us, one ray of divine light produced instantaneously, the undoubted persuasion of the divine existence, and that the Christian religion was from God. The next ray of light opened to the astonished view of the man, the awful sinfulness of his character, and discovered to him that he was in the hands of an angry God, from whose terrors he could not escape; and the third cast a clear light on the way of salvation, filling the soul with joy unspeakable. The only thing which seems contrary to our common theory is, that the person supposed, that he was taught the method of salvation by the Spirit without any aid from the external teaching of the word. Now, this is very possible; but it would be of the nature of inspiration and not mere illumination. I am, therefore, of opinion, that there was within the knowledge of the individual so much acquaintance with Christ and his mediatorial work, that, agreeably to his usual method, the Spirit took of the things of Christ, and

showed it unto him. And although now, when inspiration has ceased, the Spirit makes no new revelations to men; yet he often brings to their remembrance truths once known, but which may have been long forgotten. According to John 14:26 : see also John 16:8-14. One single evangelical text may be made the object of saving faith.

It is exceedingly gratifying to be made acquainted with such cases. It shows that the Holy Spirit, who operates where and when he will, is often at work on the minds of those whom we would least suspect to be thus visited. Here a thoughtless cadet at our military academy, falls into infidelity, yea, atheism; is surrounded by companions in the same state of mind. Providence throws a book of "Evidences" in his way; and, while he reads, a new light darts into his mind; not from the book, but from the Father of lights, and this infidel young man becomes a preacher of that very gospel, which he aimed to destroy. *Laus Deo*. The writer of the following narrative, is a young officer of high promise, belonging to the American army. It is a pleasing thing to find that men, who, by their profession, are commonly far removed from the usual means of grace, are not beyond the reach of the divine mercy. It is much to be desired that both our army and navy should be supplied with a competent number of pious and exemplary chaplains; but this want seems to be very little felt, and therefore is very imperfectly provided for. When men of either of these professions embrace religion, they are commonly remarkable for the eminence of their piety. The fact is, that they are exposed to so much ridicule and opposition, that unless their religious impressions were strong, and their resolutions firmly fixed, they would not be able to stand up against the opposing current. This narrative will at least encourage the hearts of pious parents, who have sons in exposed situations, not to despair of their conversion, but to be incessant in their prayers, that God would graciously follow them with the strivings of his Holy Spirit, and in due season bring them to the foot of the cross. And may it not be a good opportunity to remind all praying persons, that in the variety of their intercessions, the young men in our army and navy should not be forgotten. As long as such institutions are needed, they who are set for the defence of our country, by sea and land, should not be forgotten in the prayers of Christians and of the Church.

"I entered the Military Academy in 1828. As was customary with my parents, I was furnished with a Bible, with the injunction to read it often, and make it the rule of my life. Like most other youths, however, I kept it in my trunk; and I blush while I say it, I do not believe that during the whole time I was there, four years, I took it out to read more than six times; and then, probably, I had a desire to, if I did not actually conceal the act from my room-mates around me. How strange the aversion to that good Book, and yet how general this antipathy in the thoughtless around us! I must confess, however, that though my aversion to it was strong, I had a firm belief in its truth, and though in such a body of young men, I could not, but now and then, hear an effort on the part of one or another around me, to convince himself of its untruth, yet, I must say, that I never could get rid of the fear of God in my heart, or of the firm conviction of the truth of His word. Still, however, I graduated an impenitent sinner; and being let loose from scholastic restraint, and left to my own guidance, like most other youths under the same circumstances, I followed the ways of pleasure and worldly gratification.

"After graduating, in 1832, I went home. But, alas, how changed! My father and brother had both gone during my absence, to that bourne from which no traveller returns. Their spirits had fled—it is hoped to heaven. I did not see them in their dying hours; but their spirits, though gone, still speak. I was told of the anxiety they both expressed; just before death, on my account; and in particular the

reply of my father, to the question asked him, if he had any word to send to me: 'No, only to read my letters,' was his reply. Yes, father, I have read those letters, and long shall they be treasured up in recollection of thy solicitude. But I must continue my narrative. Though the scenes at home, this visit, were impressive, yet they did not result in producing within me the conviction that I was a sinner. I left my home again as impenitent as I had come. This time my sister furnished me with a Bible, with the prayer written in it, that I 'would make it the rule of my conduct and the guide of my life.' As before, I stowed it away in my trunk; thence scarcely, if ever at all, to come out. Probably for years together, I did not so much as look into it, and during all this time, except when at home, I was as much a stranger to the church, as I was to the Bible. Indeed, what is more shameful, in 1836, I, in some unaccountable way lost my Bible; so that, from that time till the latter part of the year 1838, or during an interval of two years, I was entirely without one: and during all this time, besides having no Bible, (I did not dream of buying one,) I was so situated, at least for much the greater portion of the time, that I could not have access to any church. I was serving with the army, against the Indians at the South, and every one knows how ill calculated an active life in the field is to produce serious impression. Still, I may say, during all this time I had the fear of God before my eyes; though not to the extent as to cause me to love and serve Him, or to cut off any of my darling pleasures. And yet how good the Lord was! Though I went on sinning, day after day, and was often thrown into discussion with infidels around me, who strove their utmost to argue or laugh me out of what they would call my early prejudices, and though I indulged in reading infidel productions, Tom Paine's work among the number, yet still His Spirit would strive with me, and would not give me entirely over to my own devices.

"I returned North in the fall of 1838, and again saw my widowed mother; she who had nurtured me with a Christian's care, and had early instilled into me those religious principles and feelings, which, by the grace of God, had never been entirely lost to me, and to which under the same spiritual influence, I must attribute my having been kept from utterly falling away. I saw her again, exhibiting as before, the chastening influences of the religion she professed. The same calm and resigned countenance; the same sweet smile of welcome, still showed the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit upon her heart. I thought I could see the workings of her feelings in my behalf; and I could not but imagine that in every look she gave me, she offered up a prayer on my account.

"I left her for a station North. I may say I went away this time with better feelings than I ever did before. I had had, by this time, some experience of the world, and had already thought of the nothingness of its pleasures; and, besides, the calm, peaceful, and happy deportment of my mother, made me anxious to become a partaker also of religion. I went away with the firm determination of at least looking more into the Bible, and thus to take the first step towards making myself better. Another sister, this time, on my leaving her, presented me with a Testament. This, when I got to my station, I read, or attempted to read, every evening. I tasked myself to one chapter. But a late return from a party, or ball, would cause me to defer it till the morning! and then if the breakfast bell should arouse me from my slumbers, I would neglect it till the evening. And so, between the parties and balls, and indolence in the morning, my reading of the Testament was very irregular. But still, I had a great respect for religion, and admired the truths of the gospel. I would always uphold good principles of conduct in those around me, and would as often reprobate those that were bad. But all my ideas of virtue were founded on a wrong basis. I believed that it was in the power of every individual, of himself, to do good and eschew evil. And, therefore, when

I did see good principles in those around me, my admiration was upon the individual himself and not upon the Holy Spirit which restrained him; and when I saw wickedness in those around me, my condemnation, (and my self-righteousness could not make it too strong,) was upon the individual, and not upon the sin which impelled him.

“But still, though I strongly criticised the conduct of others; upholding the good and denouncing the bad; yet I felt that I was not a Christian, in the Bible sense of the term. I knew this from my utter inability to pray. On retiring, I had often attempted to realize the overshadowing presence of a God above me; but all was hard, dark, and impenetrable. I could not realize the existence of an all merciful Saviour. During all this time, I regularly attended divine service, at least once a day, every Sunday. I was delighted to either hear or read a good sermon. But I heard, or read it, more with the feelings of a critic than of an humble follower of the lowly Jesus, desiring the sincere milk of the Word. And so, whenever the preacher expatiated upon the beauties of virtue, though I received pleasure from his discourse, yet I had none of the consciousness that virtue was to be followed because God had commanded it; but because it seemed to be a necessary element in society; and, perhaps, because its votary reciprocally recommended himself to society, by its pursuit. I recollect, in particular, that Dr. Chalmer’s sermons afforded me great satisfaction. But the beautiful imagery in them, as well as his elegant diction, probably pleased me quite as much as the truths he inculcated.

“Things went on in this way, for nearly a year, when at the close of this time, I began to feel myself strongly tempted by the evil one, though, at the time, I did not attribute it to this unseen Spirit. Probably, it is better to say, (to use the language I would have then used,) I was uneasy, discontented, looked at things awry, extracted more of the bitter than the sweet from the things and circumstances around me; or, in other words, was extremely miserable. I could experience no joy from the things of earth, and of the joys of heaven, I knew nothing of them.

“But thanks to a good and righteous God, he was pleased to let me into this state, to show me that all my hopes of happiness from earthly things were vain. I was in the act of throwing myself on the settee, when I carelessly took up the Bible, which happened to be lying near me. The first chapter I opened at, was the 1st Epistle general of Peter, chapter 1st. But how shall I describe my feelings, the moment I cast my eyes upon its pages! My heart was melted into deep contrition. I felt the love of God shed abroad in my whole being. I was convinced that I had the Holy Spirit at work within me. I was affected to tears at his goodness. I wept like a child. I felt that I had been a sinner. My ingratitude came like a flood upon me. I was overcome with gratitude for his mercy. It completely possessed my whole being. I rejoiced in the thought, that though I had been a wanderer from him, yet that he was a good and kind Saviour, and was ready to forgive me all the injuries I had done him. I could indeed say, with deep conviction, as I read the passage which presented itself to me: ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the dead.’ Indeed, this whole chapter seemed to be perfectly adapted to my state. I recollect, in particular, the eighth verse was singularly pleasing to me. ‘Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.’

“Another remarkable circumstance connected with this display of divine goodness, was, the wonderful acuteness of intellect I felt myself to have, in reading the word of God. And not only

could I perceive things in the gospel that I never saw before, but I felt my whole character changed. I felt not only a strong love to God, but to every body around me. I could have wept over the bosom of my bitterest enemy. Oh, the joys of that moment! But, alas, how vain and impotent are the attempts of man, unless the Holy Spirit of God remains with him. I recollect very well, that I thought I would go and see the minister, and tell him what had passed. But not acting up to the suggestion immediately, I neglected it, and soon again, sad to say, I had relapsed into my former forgetfulness of the Lord. The fear of the ridicule of the world had been too strong for my faith, and I felt, too, that I could not yet give up the world, and declare myself on the Lord's side. But still he would not let me go. He would not give me up. I was removed shortly afterward to another station, and here I can see the all gracious design of Providence in this change. I was by this means thrown into the society of several pious officers. One in particular, whom I valued very highly, and who, the very evening he conversed with me upon the goodness of God, in twice leading him back from signal relapses into sin, was seized with the fever, that in five days carried him to his grave, was in particular of great service to me, under the divine blessing, in confirming me in my resolves to renounce the world, and cleave unto the Lord; and so indeed were all the others. Suffice it to say, that not many months after, I came among them, I openly proclaimed myself on the Lord's side, and sealed the covenant by partaking of the emblems of his body and blood. And it is an additional source of happiness for me to state, that it was not long after that, the partner of my bosom, also renounced the world, and joined me in the race set before us in the gospel.

"The foregoing narrative, I have thought would be of some interest to you. But if it serve no other purpose than to show you how good the Lord has been to me, it will answer its end."

CHAPTER XII("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

The spiritual conflict.—Various exhibitions of it.—Evil thoughts.—A case in illustration

WE have spoken of the Christian's enemies, in the general, it is now intended to enter into a more particular view of the conflict which is experienced by the pilgrim to Zion. Swarms of vain thoughts may be reckoned among the first and most constant enemies of the servant of God. The mind of man is like a fountain which is continually sending forth streams. There is not a moment of our waking time when the rational soul is entirely quiescent. How it may be in our sleeping hours, this is not the place to inquire—as we are not in that state engaged in this warfare. Perhaps, this is saying too much. I believe that sin may be committed in sleep; for there is often a deliberate choice of evil, after a struggle between a sense of duty and an inclination to sin. And often the same vain and impure thoughts, which were too much indulged in waking hours, infest us when asleep, and may find much readier entertainment than when we have all our senses about us. It is difficult indeed, to say when moral agency is suspended, so as to render the person inculpable for his volitions; and many know that they consent to temptations in sleep, when they abhor the evil as soon as they are awake. And, in other cases, inclination is indulged, where there is not the least sense of the moral turpitude of the act. But, in other cases, persons in sleep consent to sin with a clear apprehension of the evil of the thing to which they consent; here, there must be some guilt; for, if there was not an evil nature, prone to iniquity, such volitions would not take place. Two things are in our power, and these we should do: first, to avoid evil thoughts and such pampering of the body as have a tendency to pollute our dreams; and, secondly, to pray to God to preserve us from evil thoughts, even in sleep. Particularly, we should pray to be delivered from the influence

of Satan during our sleeping hours. Mr. Andrew Baxter, in his work on the soul, is of opinion that dreams can in no way be accounted for, but by the agency of other spirits acting on ours. While I do not adopt this theory of dreaming, I am inclined to believe, that, some how or other, both good and evil spirits have access to our minds in sleep. They actually seem to hold conversation with us, and suggest things of which we had never thought before. To return from this digression—it may be safely asserted that no human mind, in this world, is free from the incursion of vain thoughts. The proportion of such thoughts depends on the circumstances of the individual, and the degree of spirituality and self-government to which he has attained. The question very naturally arises here, is the mere occurrence of vain or wicked thoughts sinful? This is a nice question in casuistry, and should not be answered inconsiderately. It is said in Scripture, “the thought of foolishness is sin;” but by thought, in this place, we should probably understand “intention.” The wise man would teach that sin may be committed in the mind without any external act; a doctrine abundantly taught in other parts of Holy Writ. Or, we may understand it to mean that, when thoughts of evil are entertained and cherished in the mind, there is sin. But as our thoughts are often entirely involuntary, arising from we know not what causes, it cannot be that every conception of a thing wrong is itself sinful. If I conceive of another person stealing, or murdering, or committing adultery, if my mind abhors the deed, the mind is not thereby polluted. Thoughts may not in themselves be sinful, and yet they may become so, if they fill and occupy the mind to the exclusion of better thoughts. Ideas of present scenes and passing transactions, are not, in themselves, sinful, because necessary, and often required by the duties which we have to perform; but if the current of these thoughts is so continuous that they leave no room for spiritual meditations, they become sinful by their access. Again, as every Christian has set times for prayer and other devotional exercises; if the mind, on such occasions, wanders off from the contemplation of those objects, which should occupy it, such forgetfulness of God’s presence, and vain wandering of the thoughts is evidently sinful. And here is an arena on which, many a severe conflict has been undergone, and where, alas, many overthrows have been experienced by the sincere worshipper of God. How our perfectionists dispose of this matter, and what their professed experience is, I know not. I suppose, however, that they are, at best, no more exempt from wandering thoughts than other Christians; and if so, they must practise a double hypocrisy, first, in persuading themselves that there is no sin in all this; and, secondly, in denying, or concealing from others, their real experience on this subject. But is it not true, that from the very laws of association of ideas, there will often be an involuntary wandering of the thoughts? This is admitted; and it is conceded, also, that it may be impossible, in all cases, to determine with precision which of our straying thoughts contracts guilt, and how much blame to us, when our thoughts suddenly start aside from the mark like a deceitful bow. There are, however, some plain principles which sound casuistry can establish. If, when the thoughts thus start aside, they are not immediately recalled, then there is sin; for the mind has this power over its thoughts, and, when it is not exercised, it argues negligence, or something worse. Again, if this deviation of our thoughts would have been prevented by a solemn sense of the divine presence and omniscience, then it is sinful; for such impressions should accompany us to the throne of grace. And, finally, if the true reason of these erratic trains of thought, at such seasons, is owing to a secret aversion to spiritual things, and a preference, at the moment, to some carnal or selfish indulgence—then, indeed, there is not only sin, but sin of enormous guilt. It is the direct acting of enmity against God. There are many, it is to be feared, who take little or no account of their thoughts; and who, if they run through the external

round of duties, feel satisfied. Multitudes are willing to be religious and even punctilious in duty, if no demand is made upon them for fixedness of attention, and fervency and elevation of affection. The carnal mind hates nothing so much as a spiritual approach to God, and the remainders of this enmity, in the pious, is the very "law in their members, which wars against the law of the mind." This is the very core of their inbred sin, from which all evil thoughts proceed, on account of which they need to be humbled in the dust, every day that they live. There is much reason to fear, however, that many who appear to be serious Christians, are not at all in the habit of watching their thoughts, and ascertaining the evil that is in them. I knew a person, nearly half a century ago, who, being greatly troubled with wandering thoughts in times of devotion, was solicitous to know whether any other person was troubled in the same way, and to the same degree, with such swarms of vain thoughts. He carefully wrote down what he experienced in this way, and then took it to two serious professors, of whose piety he had a good opinion, and, without intimating that it was his own experience, inquired whether they were acquainted with any thing like this. They both acknowledged that they were often interrupted with wandering thoughts in prayer; but, in the degree described in the paper, they were not, and could not believe that any real Christian was. There may be, and no doubt is, a constitutional difference among men in regard to this matter. In some minds the links of association are so strong, that, when a particular idea is suggested, the whole train must come along, and thus the object previously before the mind is lost sight of, and will not be recovered without a resolute effort. An old writer says, "what busy flies were to the sacrifices on the altar, such are vain thoughts to our holy services; their continued buzzing disturbs the mind and distracts its devotion." St. Bernard complained much of these crowds of vain thoughts, he said—"Introeunt and exeunt," they pass and repass, come in and go out, and will not be controlled. "Amovere volo, nee valeo," I would fain remove them, but cannot. This is in perfect accordance with Paul's experience, "when I would do good, evil is present with me." And Chrysostom says, "that nothing is more dreadful to the godly than sin. This is death—this is hell." Therefore, though nothing amiss be discerned by man, yet is he afflicted, deeply afflicted on account of his rebellious thoughts, which being in the secret closet of the heart, can only appear unto God. The old writer, before mentioned, introduces a struggling soul, mourning on this account. "O the perplexing trouble of my distracting thoughts! How do they continually disturb the quiet of my mind, and make my holy duties become a weariness of my soul? They cool the heart, they damp the vigour, they deaden the comfort of my devotions. Even when I pray God to forgive my sins, I then sin whilst I am praying for forgiveness; yea, whether it be in the church, or in the closet, so frequently and so violently do these thoughts withdraw my heart from God's service, that I cannot have confidence he hears my suit, because I know by experience, I do not hear myself; surely therefore God must need be far off from my prayer, whilst my heart is so far out of his presence, hurried away with a crowd of vain imaginations." To whom he applies the following consolations: "1. These vain thoughts, being thy burden, shall not be thy ruin; and though they do take from the sweetness, they shall not take from the sincerity of thy devotions. 2. It is no little glory which we give to God in the acknowledgment of his omnipresence and omniscience, that we acknowledge Him to be privy to the first risings of our most inward thoughts. 3. It is much the experience of God's children, even the devoutest saints, that their thoughts of God and of Christ, of heaven and holiness, are very unsteady and fleeting. Like the sight of a star through an optic glass, held by a palsied hand, such is our view of divine objects. 4. Know thou hast the gracious mediation of an all-sufficient Saviour to supply thy defects, and procure an acceptance of thy

sincere though imperfect devotions. 5. As thou hast the gracious mediation of an all-sufficient Saviour to supply thy defects, so hast thou the strengthening power of His Holy Spirit to help their infirmities; which strength is made perfect in weakness.—When thou art emptied it shall fill thee; when thou art stumbled, it shall raise thee. The experience of God's saints will tell thee, that they have long languished under this cross of vain thoughts: yet, after long conflict, have obtained a joyful conquest, and from mourning doves have become mounting eagles." The conflict with vain and wandering thoughts is common to all Christians, and is the subject of their frequent and deep lamentations: but there are other conflicts, which seem to be peculiar to some of God's children, or are experienced in a much greater degree by some than others. These arise from horribly wicked thoughts, blasphemous, atheistical, or abominably impure, which are injected with a power which the soul cannot resist, and sometimes continue to rise in such thick succession, that the mind can scarcely be said to be ever entirely free from them. I have known persons of consistent piety and sound intellect, who have been infested with the continual incursion of such thoughts, for weeks and months together: so that they had no rest during their waking hours; and even their sleep was disturbed with frightful dreams; and whilst thus harassed, they had no composure to attend on religious duties; but when they attempted to pray, Satan was present with his terrific suggestions; and when they presented themselves with God's people, in his house, they found no comfort there; for the thought was continually introduced into their minds, that there was no truth in the Bible, or any of its doctrines. And it is wondered what new and unthought of forms of blasphemy and infidelity do, in such cases arise; so that the ideas which occupy their minds are often inexpressible, and indeed not fit to be expressed, in words. These may emphatically be called "the fiery darts of the wicked one." They may be compared to balls or brands of fire cast into a house full of combustibles. The object of the enemy, by such assaults, is, to perplex and harass the child of God, and to drive him to despair; and as many, who are thus tempted, are ignorant of Satan's devices, and of the "depths" of his subtlety, and charge upon themselves the fault of all these wicked thoughts, the effect aimed at, does actually take place. The tempted, harassed soul is not only distressed above measure, but, for a season, is actually cast down to the borders of despair. We know of no affliction, in this life, which is more intolerable than such a state of temptation, when continued long. It, no doubt, is true, that there are certain states of the physical system which favour the effect of these temptations; but this does not prove that these thoughts do not proceed from Satan. This arch-fiend is deeply versed in the physiology of human nature; and wherever he discovers a weak point, there he makes his assault. The melancholic, and persons wasted and weakened with excessive grief, are peculiarly susceptible of injury from such temptations; as is that class of doubting, mourning Christians, who are for ever disposed to look on the dark side of the picture; and who are wont "to write bitter things against themselves" On uninstructed minds, the effect often is to induce the belief, that they have sinned the sin unto death, by blaspheming the Holy Ghost; or, that they have sinned beyond the reach of mercy, and that God has abandoned them to be a prey to sin and Satan. But it is not upon ignorant, weak, and diseased persons only that these furious assaults are made; such a man as Luther, was in frequent conflicts of this kind; and he was so persuaded that these were the temptations of the devil, that he speaks of his presence with as much confidence as if he had seen him by his side. A friend of the writer, who is yet alive, was for months so harassed by these fiery darts of the wicked one, that I never saw any human being in a more pitiable condition of extreme suffering; and although there was no intermission, during his waking hours, there were seasons when these

blasphemous suggestions were injected with peculiar and terrifying violence. Knowing this person to be discreet, as well as pious, I requested, by letter, some account of this dreadful state of mind, if there was a freedom to make the communication. In answer, I received recently, a letter, from which the following is an extract: "I feel a singular reluctance to speak of my religious experience. I have felt that my case was a very remarkable one. I have thought, at times, that no one could recount a similar experience. It has appeared to me so uncommon, that I have refrained from disclosing the peculiar exercises of my mind to the most intimate friend. I know not that I ever opened to you my case, with the exception of that distressing point to which you refer, and even then I think I was not very particular. That was a season far more distressing than any I ever experienced—I well remember mine afflictions and my misery; the wormwood and the gall.' My deliverance from it was an unspeakable mercy. I have no doubt that the state of my health had some connexion with the mental sufferings I then endured. My constitution, which had always been feeble, had given to my disposition a proneness to melancholy; and in my bereaved and desolate state I was peculiarly susceptible of gloomy impressions. My nervous system was deeply affected. Sleep at one time forsook my pillow for successive nights. It was under these circumstances that I sunk into the darkness and distress which you witnessed. In all this there was nothing very remarkable. I think very many can record a similar experience. It was not the fact that in a feeble state of health I was dark and comfortless in spirit, that has so much tried me, but the peculiarity of my case seemed to consist in the nature of my spiritual conflicts. You may, perhaps, recollect that I stated to you that my chief distress arose from blasphemous suggestions—unnatural, monstrous, and horrid, which seemed to fill the mind, and hurry away my thoughts, with a force as irresistible as a whirlwind. I strove against them—I prayed against them; but it was all in vain. The more I strove, the more they prevailed. The very effort to banish them appeared to detain them. My soul all this while was wrapped in midnight darkness, and tossed like the ocean in a storm. It seemed to me as if I was delivered over to the powers of darkness, and that to aggravate my wretchedness, some strange and awfully impious association would be suggested by almost every object that met my eye. You ask me to describe my deliverance. It was gradual. A return of domestic comforts, a restoration of health, and an occupation of the mind with duty, were the means which God was pleased to bless to the removal of this distressing experience. For twelve or thirteen years I have had no return of this state of mind, except to a partial extent; yet I have, at times, been greatly harassed with these fiery darts of the wicked one, which I can truly say, are my sorest affliction. I have always remarked, that these painful exercises of mind have attended seasons of special examination and prayer. When I have thought most of my obligation to God, and endeavoured to meditate most on divine things, then it has been, that my mind has suffered most from the intrusion of thoughts, at which my soul is filled with anguish, and from which I desire deliverance more than from death. This fact is mysterious to me. I cannot but think I love God. I am sure I do desire an entire consecration to Christ. It is my daily prayer to attain holiness. I esteem the way of salvation glorious; and justification through the alone righteousness of Christ is a precious doctrine. But did ever any Christian experience such trials, is a question which I am ready often to ask. I know of no uninspired writer that has come nearer a description of what I have experienced than John Bunyan and John Newton. The hymn of the latter, commencing with 'I asked the Lord that I might grow,' &c., contains many thoughts remarkably accordant with my experience.

“You see, I have nothing to relate, that is instructive or cheering—and yet I sometimes feel thankful for the terrible conflicts which I endure, for there is nothing which so constantly drives me to a throne of grace—nothing that strips me so entirely of self-dependence, and creates within me such longing after holiness. I am much inclined to think that Satan is far less dangerous when he comes as ‘a roaring lion’ and frightens the soul with his horrid blasphemies, than when ‘he transforms himself into an angel of light,’ and seduces our affections gradually and secretly away from God, and attaches them sinfully to the world.

“P. S.—The most discouraging fact in all my experience has been, what I have already alluded to—the rushing in of a tide of unutterably impious thoughts or imaginations, at a time when I have sought the most elevated and glorious views of God, breaking up my peace and comfort, when I have tried to fix my mind most intently on spiritual objects. Is the onset of the enemy to drive one from a close communion with God? or is it to be traced to a law of association recalling past experiences?

“If I had more confidence in my religious experience I think I could suggest many thoughts that might be useful to Christians under temptation; and especially, when suffering under certain physical disorders. One thing, I am free to say, useful occupation is essential to the restoration and peace of some minds.”

Many other eminent servants of God have experienced, in various forms, the same conflicts with the great adversary: and when we describe these temptations as not unfrequent in the experience of the children of God, we do not speak without authority. Paul says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” From this passage, it is evident, that our spiritual foes are numerous, and powerful, and that the believer’s conflict with them is violent: it is a “wrestling,” or a contention which requires them to put forth all their strength, and to exercise all their skill. Therefore, it was, that the apostle, who was himself engaged in this conflict, urges it upon Christians to put on the panoply of God. Against such enemies, armour, offensive and defensive, is requisite. And blessed be God, there is a magazine, from which such armour may be drawn. Hear Paul’s enumeration of the several parts of this panoply: “The girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness,—sandals of gospel peace,—the shield of faith.” This he places highest, as being an indispensable defence against “the fiery darts of the wicked”—“the helmet of salvation,” “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” To all which must be added prayer and watchfulness. As one of God’s methods of comforting and strengthening his mourning children is, by good books, I will embrace this opportunity of recommending to those engaged in the spiritual warfare, “Gurnall’s Christian Armour.” In such cases, there is almost a necessity of referring to old authors; for, some how or other, our modern sermons and tracts touch but seldom on these things, which filled so many of the pages of our fathers. The soul struggling with the intrusion of wicked thoughts may be supposed to express its feelings in language like the following: “O my wretchedly wicked heart, which is the fountain from which proceed such streams of abominable thoughts! Sure if I had ever been washed in the fountain of Christ’s blood, or at all purified by his Spirit, so foul a corruption could never cleave unto my soul. Woe is me! for so far am I from being a holy temple of the Lord, that my heart rather seems to be the cage of every unclean bird, and even a den of devils. The flames of hell seem to flash in my face, and the amazing terrors of cursed blasphemies torture my soul and wound my conscience even unto

death. I would rather choose to die ten thousand deaths than undergo the fears, and frights, and bitter pangs of my amazing thoughts and dreadful imaginations. In every place, in every action—in the church and in the closet—in my meditations and in my prayers, these abominable and tormenting thoughts follow and harass me; so that I loathe myself and am a burden to myself. ‘O wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!’ Alas! I perish, whilst ashamed to speak what I abhor to think, I must needs despair of a cure, not knowing how to lay open my sore.” To a complaint of this kind, the pious Robert Mossom, addresses the following grounds of consolation:

1. “The horrid blasphemies which affright thy soul, though they are thy thoughts, yet are they Satan’s suggestions; and not having the consent of thy will, they bring no guilt upon thy conscience. It is agreeable to the truth of God’s word, and the judgment of all divines, ancient and modern, that where the will yields no consent, there the soul may suffer temptation, but act no sin. Again, ‘The importunity and frequency of these suggestions which weary the soul, resisting, shall bring a greater crown of glory in its overcoming,’ True it is, that, ‘he that is born of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.’ But how toucheth him not? Is it meant of wicked temptations? No, sure, but of wilful transgressions. He toucheth him not so as to leave the impress of sin and guilt upon the soul. It is no sin to be tempted; for Christ our Lord and Saviour, was tempted, ‘but without sin.’ To admit the temptation with allowance or delight, that is sin.

2. “That these foul and frightful suggestions have not the consent of thy will appears by this, that thou hast a loathing and abhorring of them; which speaks the greatest aversion, and so is far from a consenting of the will. What is forcibly cast into the mind cannot be said to be received with our consent. It is out of our power to prevent Satan from suggesting evil thoughts. These arise not from thy own corrupt nature: they are brats laid at thy door, not thine own lawful children. These are the buffetings of Satan. Paul had ‘a messenger of Satan to buffet him,’ which was as a ‘thorn in his flesh,’ constantly pricking and keeping him uneasy, and tempting him to impatience; and he prayed earnestly and repeatedly to be delivered from this cross, but his request was not granted; yet he received an answer more gracious and beneficial than the removal of the thorn would have been; for God said unto him, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ ” The heart assailed by Satan, is like a city besieged, within which there lie concealed many traitors, who, as far as they dare, will give encouragement and aid to the enemy without. And this creates the chief difficulty in the case of many temptations; for although there is not a full consent, or a prevailing willingness, yet there is something which too much concurs with the temptation; except in shocking blasphemies, which fill the soul with terror. The soul afflicted with these temptations is apt to think its case singular, it is ready to exclaim, “Never were any of God’s children in this condition. It must be some strange corruption which induces the enemy thus to assault me, and some awful displeasure of God towards me, which makes him permit such a temptation.” To which it may be replied, “Afflictions, of this kind, are no new thing; and that with the real children of God. Such cases are not uncommon, in every age, and occur in the pastoral experience of every faithful minister. Some persons have, for years, been so afflicted with these temptations, that they have pined away and have been brought near the gates of death; and these, too, persons of no ordinary piety. Take then the following directions: 1. Learn to discriminate between the temptation and the sin of temptation. 2. Examine with care, what transgressions may have occasioned this sore affliction. 3. Humble yourself before God with fasting and prayer, and supplicate the throne of grace to obtain

the mercy of God through the merits of thy Saviour, for the full and free pardon of whatever sin has occasioned these temptations; beseeching God to rebuke Satan; and then make an unreserved resignation of thyself into the hands of Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the flock, that he may keep thee as a tender lamb, from the paw and teeth of the roaring lion. 4. If still these thoughts intrude, turn your mind quickly away from them; they are most effectually subdued by neglect. 5. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted," do as children with their parents when they see any thing frightful: they cling closer and hold faster. So do thou with thy God and Saviour. Satan's aim is to drive you from God into some desperate conclusions, or into some ruinous act; but thou mayest disappoint this subtle adversary, by running to Christ as your refuge, and cleaving to him with humble, believing confidence; and when Satan sees this, he will soon cease from the violence of his temptations. And when the devil hath left thee, angels will come and minister unto thee; especially the angel of the covenant, Christ Jesus. He shall rejoice thy soul with the quickening graces and cheering comforts of his Spirit.

CHAPTER XIII("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Growth in grace.—Signs of it.—Practical directions how to grow in grace.—Hindrances to it

When there is no growth there is no life. We have taken it for granted, that among the regenerate, at the moment of their conversion, there is a difference in the vigour of the principle of spiritual life, analogous to what we observe in the natural world; and no doubt the analogy holds, as it relates to growth. As some children, who were weak and sickly in the first days of their existence, become healthy and strong, and greatly outgrow others who commenced life with far greater advantages; so it is with the "new man;" some who enter on the spiritual life with a weak and wavering faith, by the blessing of God on a diligent use of means, far outstrip others who, in the beginning, were greatly before them.

It is often observed, that there are professors who never appear to grow, but rather decline perpetually, until they become, in spirit and conduct, entirely conformed to the world, from whence they professed to come out. The result, in regard to them, is one of two things; they either retain their standing in the Church, and become dead formalists, "having a name to live while they are dead;" "a form of godliness, while they deny the power thereof;" or they renounce their profession and abandon their connexion with the Church, and openly take their stand with the enemies of Christ, and not unfrequently go beyond them all in daring impiety. Of all such we may confidently say, "they were not of us, or undoubtedly they would have continued with us." But of such I mean not now to speak further, as the case of backsliders will be considered hereafter. That growth in grace is gradual and progressive is very evident from Scripture; as in all those passages where believers are exhorted to mortify sin and crucify the flesh, and to increase and abound in all the exercises of piety and good works. One text on this subject will be sufficient: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And this passage furnishes us with information of the origin and nature of this growth. It is knowledge; even the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Just so far as any soul increases in spiritual knowledge, in the same degree it grows in grace. Persons may advance rapidly in other kinds of knowledge, and yet make no advances in piety; but the contrary. They may even have their minds filled with correct theoretical knowledge of divine truth; and yet its effect may not be to humble, but to "puff up." Many an accurate and profound theologian has lived and died without a ray of saving light. The

natural man, however gifted with talent, or enriched with speculative knowledge, has no spiritual discernment. After all his acquisitions, he is destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But it should not be forgotten, that divine illumination is not independent of the word, but accompanies it. Those Christians, therefore, who are most diligent in attending upon the word in public and private, will be most likely to make progress in piety. Young converts are prone to depend too much on joyful frames, and love high excitement in their devotional exercises; but their heavenly Father cures them of this folly, by leaving them for a season to walk in darkness, and struggle with their own corruptions. When most sorely pressed and discouraged, however, he strengthens them with might in the inner man. He enables them to stand firmly against temptation; or, if they slide, he quickly restores them, and by such exercises they become much more sensible of their entire dependence, than they were at first. They learn to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, and to distrust entirely their own wisdom and strength, and to rely for all needed aid on the grace of Christ Jesus. Such a soul will not readily believe that it is growing in grace; but to be emptied of self-dependence, and to know that we need aid for every duty, and even for every good thought, is an important step in our progress in piety. The flowers may have disappeared from the plant of grace, and even the leaves may have fallen off, and wintry blasts may have shaken it, but it now is striking its roots deeper, and becoming every day stronger, to endure the rugged storm. One circumstance attends the growth of a real Christian, in grace, which renders it exceedingly difficult for him to know the fact, upon a superficial view of his case, and that is, the clearer and deeper insight which he obtains into the evils of his own heart. Now this is one of the best evidences of growth, but the first conclusion is apt to be, "I am growing worse every day"—"I see innumerable evils springing up within me which I never saw before." This person may be compared to one shut up in a dark room, where he is surrounded by many loathsome objects. If a single ray of light be let into the room, he sees the more prominent objects; but if the light gradually increase, he sees more and more of the filth by which he has been surrounded. It was there before, but he perceived it not. His increased knowledge of the fact is a sure evidence of increasing light. Hypocrites often learn to talk by rote of the wickedness of their hearts; but go to them and seriously accuse them of indulging secret pride, or envy, or covetousness, or any other heart sins, and they will be offended. Their confessions of sin are only intended to raise them in the opinion of others, as truly humble persons; and not that any should believe that corruption abounds within them. Growth in grace is evinced by a more habitual vigilance against besetting sins and temptations, and by greater self-denial, in regard to personal indulgence. A growing conscientiousness in regard to what may be called minor duties, is also a good sign. The counterfeit of this is, a scrupulous conscience, which sometimes haggles at the most innocent gratifications, and has led some to hesitate about taking their daily food. Increasing spiritual-mindedness is a sure evidence of progress in piety; and this will always be accompanied by deadness to the world. Continued aspirations to God, in the house and by the way, in lying down and rising up, in company and in solitude, indicates the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency all progress in sanctification is made. A victory over besetting sins by which the person was frequently led away, shows an increased vigour in the renewed principle. Increasing solicitude for the salvation of men, and sorrow on account of their sinful and miserable condition, and a disposition tenderly to warn sinners of their danger, evince a growing state of piety. It is also a strong evidence of growth in grace, when you can bear injuries and provocations with meekness, and when you can from the heart desire the temporal and eternal welfare of your bitterest enemies. An entire and confident reliance on the promises and

providence of God, however dark may be your horizon, or however many difficulties environ you, is a sign that you have learned to live by faith; and humble contentment with your condition, though it be one of poverty and obscurity, shows that you have profited by sitting at the feet of Jesus. Diligence in the duties of our calling, with a view to the glory of God, is not an evidence to be despised. Indeed, there is no surer standard of spiritual growth, than a habit of aiming at the glory of God in every thing. That mind which is steady to the main end, is as good evidence of being touched by divine grace, as the tendency of the needle to the pole proves that it has been touched by the magnet. Increasing love to the brethren is a sure sign of growth; for as brotherly love is a proof of the existence of grace, so exercising brotherly love is of vigour in the divine life. This love, when pure, is not confined within those limits which party spirit circumscribes, but overleaping all the barriers of sects and denominations, it embraces the disciples of Christ wherever it finds them. A healthy state of piety is always a growing state; that child which grows not at all must be sickly. If we would enjoy spiritual comfort, we must be in a thriving condition. None enjoy the pleasures of bodily health, but they who are in health. If we would be useful to the Church and the world we must be growing Christians. If we would live in daily preparation for our change, we must endeavour to grow in grace daily. The aged saint, laden with the fruits of righteousness, is like a shock of corn fully ripe, which is ready for the garner; or like a mature fruit, which gradually loosens its hold of the tree, until at last it gently falls off. Thus the aged, mature Christian, departs in peace. As growth in grace is gradual, and the progress from day to day imperceptible, we should aim to do something in this work every day. We should “die daily unto sin and live unto righteousness.” Sometimes the children of God grow faster when in the fiery furnace than elsewhere. As metals are purified by being cast into the fire, so saints have their dross consumed and their evidences brightened, by being cast into the furnace of affliction. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try some of you, as though some strange thing happened unto you,” but rejoice, because “the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory.”

We shall here present some practical directions how to grow in grace, or make progress in piety.

1. Set it down as a certainty that this object will never be attained without vigorous, continued effort; and it must not only be desired and sought, but must be considered more important than all other pursuits, and be pursued in preference to every thing which claims your attention.
2. While you determine to be assiduous in the use of appointed means of sanctification, you must have it deeply fixed in your mind, that nothing can be effected in this work without the aid of the Divine Spirit. “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase.” The direction of the old divines is good; use the means as vigorously as if you were to be saved by your own efforts, and yet trust as entirely to the grace of God, as if you made use of no means whatever.
3. Be much in the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and strive to obtain clear and consistent views of the plan of redemption. Learn to contemplate the truth in its true nature, simply, devoutly, and long at a time, that you may receive on your soul the impression which it is calculated to make. Avoid curious and abstruse speculations respecting things unrevealed; and do not indulge a spirit of controversy. Many lose the benefit of the good impression which the truth is calculated to make,

because they do not view it simply in its own nature, but as related to some dispute, or as bearing on some other point. As when a man would receive the genuine impression which a beautiful landscape is adapted to make, he must not be turned aside by minute inquiries respecting the botanical character of the plants, the value of the timber or the fertility of the soil; but he must place his mind in the attitude of receiving the impression which the combined view of the objects before him, will naturally produce on the taste. In such cases the effect is not produced by any exertion of the intellect; all such active striving is unfavourable, except in bringing the mind to its proper state. When the impression is most perfect, we feel as if we were mere passive recipients of the effect. To this there is a striking analogy in the way in which the mind is impressed with divine truth. It is not the critic, the speculative or polemic theologian, who is most likely to receive the right impression, but the humble, simple-hearted, contemplative Christian. It is necessary to study the Scriptures critically, and to defend the truth against opposers; but the most learned critic and the most profound theologian must learn to sit at the feet of Jesus in the spirit of a child, or they are not likely to be edified by their studies.

4. Pray constantly and fervently for the influences of the Holy Spirit. No blessing is so particularly and emphatically promised in answer to prayer as this; and if you would receive this divine gift, to be in you as a well of water springing up to everlasting life, you must not only pray, but you must watch against every thing in your heart or life which has a tendency to grieve the Spirit of God. Of what account is it to pray, if you indulge evil thoughts and imaginations almost without control; or if you give way to the evil passions of anger, envy, pride and avarice, or bridle not your tongue from evil speaking? Learn to be conscientious; that is, obey the dictates of your conscience uniformly. Many are conscientious in some things, and not in others; they listen to the monitor within, when he directs to important duties; but in smaller matters, they often disregard the voice of conscience, and follow present inclination. Such cannot grow in grace.

5. Take more time for the duties of the closet, and for looking into the state of your soul. Redeem an hour daily from sleep, if you cannot obtain it otherwise; and as the soul's concerns are apt to get out of order, and more time is needed for thorough self-examination, than an hour a day, set apart, not periodically, but as your necessities require, days of fasting and humiliation before God. On these occasions, deal faithfully with yourselves. Be in earnest to search out all your secret sins, and to repent of them. Renew your covenant with God, and form holy resolutions of amendment in the strength of divine grace, and if you find upon examination, that you have been living in any sinful indulgence, probe the festering wound to the core, and confess your fault before God, and do not rest until you have had an application of the blood of sprinkling. You need not ask why you do not grow, while there is such an ulcer within you. Here, it is to be feared, is the root of the evil. Sins indulged are not thoroughly repented of and forsaken; or the conscience has not been purged effectually, and the wound still festers. "Come to the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and uncleanness." Bring your case to the great Physician.

6. Cultivate and exercise brotherly love more than you have been accustomed to do. Christ is displeased with many of his professed followers, because they are so cold and indifferent to his members on earth; and because they do so little to comfort and encourage them; and with some, because they are a stumbling block to the weak of the flock; their conversation and conduct not being edifying, but the contrary. Perhaps these disciples are poor, and in the lower walks of life, and therefore you overlook them, as beneath you. And thus would you have treated Christ himself,

had you lived in his time; for he took his station among the poor and afflicted; and he will resent a neglect of his poor saints with more displeasure than he would of the rich. Perhaps they do not belong to your party or sect, and you are only concerned to build up your own denomination. Remember how Christ condescended to treat the sinful woman of Samaria, and the poor woman of Canaan, and remember what account he has given of the last judgment, when he will assume to himself all that has been done, or neglected to be done, to his humble followers. There should be more Christian conversation and friendly intercourse between the followers of Christ. In former days, "They that feared the Lord spake often one unto another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name."

7. If you are in good earnest to make greater progress in piety, you must do more than you have done for the promotion of God's glory and of Christ's kingdom on earth. You must enter with livelier, deeper feeling, into all the plans which the Church has adopted to advance these objects. You must give more than you have done. It is a shame to think how small a portion of their gains some professors devote to the Lord. Instead of being a tithe, it is hardly equal to the single sheaf of first fruits. If you have nothing to give, labour to get something. Sit up at night and try to make something, for Christ hath need of it. Sell a corner of your land and throw the money into the treasury of the Lord. In primitive times many sold houses and lands, and laid the whole at the Apostles' feet. Do not be afraid of making yourselves poor by giving to the Lord, or to his poor. His word is better than any bond, and he says, "I will repay it." Cast your bread on the waters, and after many days you will find it again. Send the Bible—send missionaries—send tracts to the perishing heathen.

8. Practise self-denial every day. Lay a wholesome restraint upon your appetites. Be not conformed to this world. Let your dress, your house, your furniture, be plain and simple, as becometh a Christian. Avoid vain parade and show in every thing. Govern your family with discretion. Forgive and pray for your enemies. Have little to do with party politics. Carry on your business on sober, judicious principles. Keep clear of speculation and surety-ships. Live peaceably with all men as much as in you lies. Be much in ejaculatory prayer. Keep your heart with all diligence. Try to turn to spiritual profit every event which occurs; and be fervently thankful for all mercies.

9. For your more rapid growth in grace, some of you will be cast into the furnace of affliction. Sickness, bereavement, bad conduct of children and relatives, loss of property, or of reputation, may come upon you unexpectedly, and press heavily on you. In these trying circumstances, exercise patience and fortitude. Be more solicitous to have the affliction sanctified, than removed. Glorify God while in the fire of adversity. That faith which is most tried, is commonly most pure and precious. Learn from Christ how you ought to suffer. Let perfect submission to the will of God be aimed at. Never indulge a murmuring or discontented spirit. Repose with confidence on the promises. Commit all your cares to God. Make known your requests to him by prayer and supplication. Let go your too eager grasp of the world. Become familiar with death and the grave. Wait patiently until your change cometh; but desire not to live a day longer than may be for the glory of God.

If we are on the watch we often may find good things when they were least expected. It is seldom that I consult an almanac for any purpose, but wishing, the other day, to see when the moon would change, I opened the calendar at the current month, and the first thing which struck my eye was the heading of a paragraph in the very words which I had selected as the subject of this essay—"Hinderances to Growth in Grace." Of course I preserved the short paragraph, and I was so well pleased with what I read, that I resolved to take it for my text—and here it is, word for word:

"The influence of wordly relatives and companions—embarking too deeply in business—approximations to fraud for the sake of gain—devoting too much time to amusements—immoderate attachment to a wordly object—attendance on an unbelieving or unfaithful ministry—languid and formal observance of religious duties—shunning the society and religious converse of Christian friends—relapse into known sin—oversight and of course non-improvement of graces already attained."

Now, all this is very good and very true; the only objection is, that several of the particulars mentioned should rather be considered as the effects of a real declension in religion than the mere hinderances to growth; although it is true, that nothing so effectually hinders our progress as an actual state of backsliding. It seems desirable to ascertain, as precisely as we can, the reasons why Christians commonly are of so diminutive a stature and of such feeble strength in their religion. When persons are truly converted they always are sincerely desirous to make rapid progress in piety; and there are not wanting exceeding great and gracious promises of aid to encourage them to go forward with alacrity. Why then is so little advancement made? Are there not some practical mistakes very commonly entertained, which are the cause of this slowness of growth? I think there are, and will endeavour to specify some of them. And first, there is a defect in our belief of the freeness of divine grace. To exercise unshaken confidence in the doctrine of gratuitous pardon is one of the most difficult things in the world; and to preach this doctrine fully without verging towards antinomianism is no easy task, and is therefore seldom done. But Christians cannot but be lean and feeble when deprived of the proper nutriment. It is by faith, that the spiritual life is made to grow, and the doctrine of free grace, without any mixture of human merit, is the only true object of faith. Christians are too much inclined to depend on themselves, and not to derive their life entirely from Christ. There is a spurious legal religion, which may flourish without the practical belief in the absolute freeness of divine grace, but it possesses none of the characteristics of the Christian's life. It is found to exist in the rankest growth in systems of religion which are utterly false. But even when the true doctrine is acknowledged, in theory, often it is not practically felt and acted on. The new convert lives upon his frames, rather than on Christ; and the older Christian still is found struggling in his own strength; and failing in his expectations of success, he becomes discouraged first, and then he sinks into a gloomy despondency, or becomes, in a measure, careless, and then the spirit of the world comes in with resistless force. Here, I am persuaded, is the root of the evil; and, until religious teachers inculcate clearly, fully, and practically, the grace of God as manifested in the gospel, we shall have no vigorous growth of piety among professing Christians. We must be, as it were, identified with Christ—crucified with him, and living by him, and in him by faith, or rather have Christ living in us. The covenant of grace must be more clearly and repeatedly expounded in all its rich plenitude of mercy, and in all its absolute freeness.

Another thing which prevents growth in grace, is, that Christians do not make their obedience to Christ comprehend every other object of pursuit. Their religion is too much a separate thing, and they pursue their wordly business in another spirit. They try to unite the service of God and Mammon. Their minds are divided, and often distracted with earthly cares and desires, which interfere with the service of God; whereas they should have but one object of pursuit, and all that they do and seek, should be in subordination to this. Every thing should be done for God and to God; whether they eat or drink, they should do all to his glory. As the ploughing and sowing of the wicked is sin, because done without regard to God and his glory; so the secular employments and pursuits of the pious should all be consecrated, and become a part of their religion. Thus they would serve God in the field and in the shop, in buying and selling, and getting gain—all would be for God. Thus their earthly labours would prove no hinderance to their progress in piety; and possessing an undivided mind, having a single object of pursuit, they could f not but grow in grace, daily. He whose eye is single shall have his whole body full of light.

Again, another powerful cause of hinderance in the growth of the life of God in the soul, is, that we make general resolutions of improvement, but neglect to extend our efforts to particulars; and we promise ourselves that in the indefinite future, we will do much in the way of reformation, but are found doing nothing each day in cultivating piety. We begin and end our days without aiming or expecting to make any particular advance on that day. Thus our best resolutions evaporate without effect. We merely run the round of prescribed duty, satisfied if we do nothing amiss, and neglect no external service which we feel to be obligatory. We resemble the man who purposes to go to a certain place, and often resolves with earnestness that he will some day perform the journey, but never takes a step towards the place. Is it at all strange that that person who on no day makes it his distinct object to advance in the divine life, at the end of months and years is found stationary? The natural body will grow without our thinking about it, even when we are asleep, but not the life of piety, which only increases by, and through the exercises of the mind, aiming at higher measures of grace. And, as every day we should do something in this good work, so we should direct our attention to the growth of particular graces; especially of those in which we know ourselves to be defective. Are we weak in faith? let us give attention to the proper means of strengthening our faith; and, above all, apply to the Lord to increase our faith. Is our love to God cold and hardly perceptible, and greatly interrupted by long intervals in which God and Christ is not in all our thoughts? let us have this for a daily lamentation at the throne of grace—let us resolve to meditate more on the excellency of the divine attributes, and especially on the love of God to us—let us be much in reading the account of Christ's sufferings and death, and be importunate in prayer, until we receive more copious effusions of the Holy Spirit; for the fruit of the Spirit is love, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. And so we should directly aim at cultivating and increasing every grace; for the divine life, or "new man," consists of these graces, and the whole cannot be in health and vigour, while the constituent parts are feeble and in a state of decay. The same remarks are applicable to the mortification of sin; we are prone to view our depravity too much in the general, and under this view to repent of it, and humble ourselves on account of it; whereas, in order to make any considerable progress in this part of sanctification, we must deal with our sins in detail. We must have it as a special object, to eradicate pride and vain glory, covetousness, indolence, envy, discontent, anger, &c. There should be appropriate means used, suited to the extirpation of each particular vice of the mind. It is true, indeed, that if we water the root we may expect the branches to flourish; if we invigorate the

principle of piety, the several Christian virtues will flourish; but a skilful gardener will pay due attention both to the root and the branches; and, in fact, these graces of the heart are parts of the root, and it is by strengthening these, that we do invigorate the root. The same is true, as it relates to the remaining principle of sin; we must strike our blows chiefly at the root of the evil tree, but those inherent vices which were mentioned, and others, should be considered as belonging to the root, and when we aim at their destruction particularly, and in detail, our strokes will be most effectual.

I shall mention, at present, but one other cause of the slow growth of believers in piety, and that is the neglect of improving in the knowledge of divine things. As spiritual knowledge is the foundation of all genuine exercises of religion; so growth in religion is intimately connected with divine knowledge. Men may possess unsanctified knowledge and be nothing the better for it; but they cannot grow in grace without increasing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Being," says Paul, "fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." "Grow in grace," says Peter, "and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mr. Edwards remarks, that the more faithful he was in studying the Bible, the more he prospered in spiritual things. The reason is plain, and other Christians will find the same to be true.

CHAPTER XIV("tw:///self?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Backsliding.—The Backslider restored

There is a perpetual, and there is a temporary backsliding. The first is the case of those who, being partially awakened and enlightened by the word accompanied by the common operations of the Spirit, make a profession of religion, and, for a while, seem to run well, and to outstrip the humble believer in zeal and activity; but having no root in themselves, in the time of temptation, fall totally away, and not only relinquish their profession, but frequently renounce Christianity itself, and become the bitterest enemies of religion. Or, seduced by the pride of their own hearts, they forsake the true doctrines of the gospel, and fall in love with some flattering, flesh-pleasing form of heresy; and spend their time in zealous efforts to overthrow that very truth, which they once professed to prize. Or, thirdly, they are overcome by some insidious lust or passion, and fall into the habitual practice of some sin, which at first they secretly indulge, but after awhile cast off all disguise, and show to all that they are enslaved by some hurtful and hateful iniquity. Persons who thus apostatize from the profession and belief of Christianity, or who fall into a habitual course of sinning, are commonly in the most hopeless condition of all who live in the midst of the means of grace. When they openly reject Christianity, their infidelity is commonly accompanied by contempt and a malign temper, which often prompts them to blasphemy; and are, according to our apprehension, in great danger of committing the unpardonable sin; and some who in these circumstances are actuated by inveterate hatred to the truth, and who make use of their tongues to express the feelings of enmity which rankle in them, do often fall into this unpardonable sin. The case of such seems to be described by Paul, in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." Some suppose that the Apostle here describes the character of the true Christian, and that he merely supposes

the case, if such should fall away, what would be the fearful consequence; but this seems to us a forced construction. It seems more reasonable to believe that he is describing a case which may, and often does occur, and that the description applies to such professors as had received the miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, and yet apostatized: and by crucifying the Son of God afresh he probably alludes to the manner in which those who went back to the Jews, were required to execrate the name of Christ in the Synagogues, and to profess that he deserved to be crucified as he had been, and thus put him to an open shame. But whether such apostates do actually commit the unpardonable sin or not, seems in most cases to be of little consequence, for they commonly die in their sins, and all sin unrepented of is unpardonable. In some cases, however, apostates stop short of infidelity and blasphemy, and while they stand aloof from religion, content themselves with decency, and do not treat religion with disrespect; yet it will be found on examination, that the hearts of such are extremely callous, their consciences are seared as with a hot iron. The Spirit of God, evidently has left them, and strives no more with them; and they often die as they have lived, fearfully insensible, having "no bands in their death." But sometimes conscience is let loose upon them in their last hours, and they are left to die in the horrors of despair. In the days of the apostles, they seem to have had some way of knowing when a man had committed "the sin unto death," and for such, Christians were not to pray, as their destiny was irretrievably fixed; but such knowledge cannot be possessed now, and we may therefore pray for all, as long as they are in the place of repentance. But when we speak of backsliding, we commonly mean those sad departures of real Christians from God, which are so common, and often so injurious to the cause of religion. These cases are so common, that some have thought that all Christians had their seasons of backsliding; when they left their first love, and lost the sweet relish of divine things, and were excluded from intimate communion with God. But, however common backsliding may have been among Christians, there is no foundation for the opinion, that it is common to all; we find no such declension in the experience of Paul or John; and in the biographies of some modern saints we find no such sad declension. We could refer to many recorded accounts of personal experience, but it will be sufficient to mention Mr. Baxter, Col. Gardiner, G. Whitefield, and Mr. Brainerd. No doubt all experience short seasons of comparative coldness and insensibility, and they who live near to God have not always equal light, and life, and comfort, in the divine life. Those fluctuations of feeling, which are so common, are not included in the idea of a state of backsliding. This occurs when the Christian is gradually led off from close walking with God, loses the lively sense of divine things, becomes too much attached to the world and too much occupied with secular concerns; until at length the keeping of the heart is neglected, closet duties are omitted or slightly performed, zeal for the advancement of religion is quenched, and many things once rejected by a sensitive conscience, are now indulged and defended.

All this may take place, and continue long before the person is aware of his danger, or acknowledges that there has been any serious departure from God. The forms of religion may be still kept up, and open sin avoided. But more commonly backsliders fall into some evil habits; they are evidently too much conformed to the world, and often go too far in participating in the pleasures and amusements of the world; and too often there is an indulgence in known sin, into which they are gradually led, and on account of which they experience frequent compunction, and make solemn resolutions to avoid it in future; but when the hour of temptation comes, they are overcome again and again, and thus they live a miserable life, enslaved by some sin, over which, though they sometimes struggle hard, they cannot get the victory. There is in nature no more

inconsistent thing than a backsliding Christian. Looking at one side of his character, he seems to have sincere, penitential feelings, and his heart to be right in its purposes and aims, but look at the other side, and he seems to be “carnal, sold under sin.” O wretched man! how he writhes often in anguish, and groans for deliverance, but he is like Sampson shorn of his locks, his strength is departed, and he is not able to rise and go forth, at liberty, as in former times. All backsliders are not alike. Some are asleep, but the one now described is in a state of almost perpetual conflict, which keeps him wide awake; sometimes when his pious feelings are lively he cannot but hope that he loves God and hates sin, and is encouraged; but oh, when sin prevails against him, and he is led away captive, he cannot think that he is a true Christian. Is it possible that one who is thus overcome, can have in him any principle of piety? Sometimes he gives up all hope, and concludes, that he was deceived in ever thinking himself converted; but then again, when he feels a broken and contrite heart, and an ardent breathing and groaning after deliverance, he cannot but conclude, that there is some principle above mere nature, operating with him. The sleeping backslider is one who, by being surrounded with earthly comforts, and engaged in secular pursuits, and mingling much with the decent and respectable people of the world, by degrees, loses the deep impression of divine and eternal things; his spiritual senses become obtuse, and he has no longer the views and feelings of one awake to the reality of spiritual things. His case nearly resembles that of a man gradually sinking into sleep. Still he sees dimly, and hears indistinctly, but he is fast losing the impression of the objects of the spiritual world, and sinking under the impression of the things of time and sense. There may be no remarkable change in the external conduct of such a person; except that he has no longer any relish for religious conversation, and rather is disposed to waive it. And the difference between such an one, and the rest of the world becomes less and less distinguishable. From any thing you see or hear, you would not suspect him to be a professor of religion, until you see him taking his seat at the Lord’s table. Such backsliders are commonly awakened by some severe judgments, the earthly objects on which they had too much fixed their affections are snatched away, and they are made bitterly to feel that it is an evil thing to forget, and depart from the living God.

There is still another species of backsliding, where by a sudden temptation, one who appeared to stand firm, is cast down. Such was the fall of Peter, and many others have given full evidence, that a man’s standing is not in himself; for frequently men are overcome in those very things in which they were least afraid, and had most confidence in their own strength. These cases are usually more disgraceful than other instances of backsliding, but they are less dangerous; for, commonly, where there is grace they produce such an overwhelming conviction of sin, and shame of having acted so unworthily, that repentance soon follows the lapse, and the person, when restored, is more watchful than ever against all kinds of sin, and more distrustful of himself. Such falls may be compared to a sudden accident by which a bone is broken, or put out of joint, they are very painful, and cause the person to go limping all the remainder of his life, but do not so much affect the vitals, as more secret and insidious diseases, which prey inwardly, without being perceived.

There are many persons, who never made a public profession of religion, who for a while, are the subjects of serious impressions, whose consciences are much awake, and whose feelings are tender. They seem to love to hear the truth, and in a considerable degree fall under its influence, so as to be almost persuaded to be Christians; and for a season give to the pious, lively hopes of their speedy conversion. They are such as the person to whom Christ said, “thou art not far from

the kingdom of God.” But through the blinding influence of avarice or ambition, or some other carnal motive, they are led away and lose all their serious thoughts and good resolutions. Such persons usually lose their day of grace. I have seen an amiable young man, weeping under the faithful preaching of the gospel, and my hopes were sanguine, that I should soon see him at the table of the Lord, but alas! I believe that, on that very day, he quenched the Spirit, and has been going further and further from the Lord ever since! The backsliding believer can only be distinguished from the final apostate by the fact of his recovery; at least, when Christians have slidden far back, no satisfactory evidence of the genuineness of their piety can be exhibited; nor can they have any which ought to satisfy their own minds. In the course of pastoral visitation I once called upon a habitual drunkard who had been a flaming professor. I asked him what he thought of his former exercises of religion. He said, that he was confident that they were genuine; and expressed a strong confidence that the Lord would recover him from his backsliding state. Now here was the very spirit of Antinomianism. Whether he was ever recovered from his besetting sin, I cannot tell; but I rather think that he continued his intemperate habits to the very last. I have often remarked how tenaciously the most profane and obstinate sinners will cleave to the hope of having been once converted, if they have ever been the subjects of religious impressions. One of the profanest men I ever heard speak, and one of the most outrageous drunkards, when asked on his death-bed, to which he was brought by intemperance, respecting his prospects beyond the grave, said, that when a very young man, he had been among the Methodists, and thought that he was converted; and though he had lived in the most open and daring wickedness for more than twenty years since that time, yet he seemed to depend on those early exercises. Miserable delusion! But a drowning man will catch at a straw. An old captain, whom I visited on his death-bed, seemed to be trusting to a similar delusion. He related to me certain religious exercises which he had when he first went to sea, but of which he had no return ever since, though half a century had elapsed. I have met with few persons who had neglected to cherish and improve early impressions, who were ever afterwards hopefully converted. They are generally given up to blindness of mind and hardness of heart. But some of these are sometimes brought in, in times of revival; or, at a late period, driven to the gospel refuge, by severe affliction. The conviction of a Christian backslider is often more severe and overwhelming than when first awakened. When his eyes are opened to see the ingratitude and wicked rebellion of his conduct, he is ready to despair, and to give up all hopes of being pardoned. He sinks into deep waters where the billows of divine displeasure roll over him; or he is like a prisoner, in a horrible pit, and in the miry clay. All around him is dark and desolate, and he feels himself to be in a deplorably helpless condition. His own strivings seem to sink him deeper in the mire; but, as his last and only resource, he cries out of the depths unto God. As his case is urgent he cries with unceasing importunity, and the Lord hears the voice of his supplications, and brings him up out of the horrible pit, and places his feet upon a rock, and establishes his goings, and puts a new song into his mouth, even of praise to the Redeemer. The freeness of pardon to the returning backslider is a thing which is hard to be believed, until it is experienced. No sooner is the proud heart humbled, and the hard heart broken into contrition, than Jehovah is near with his healing balm. To heal the broken in heart, and to revive the spirit of the contrite ones is the delight of Immanuel. And he receives the returning penitent without reproaches. He pardons him freely, and sheds abroad his love in his heart, and fills him with the joy of the Holy Ghost. It is, in fact, a new conversion; there is but one regeneration. We never hear of a sinner being born a third time—but we remember that Christ said unto Peter, “when thou art

converted strengthen thy brethren.” Indeed, the exercises of the soul on these occasions may be so much more clear and comfortable than on its first conversion, that the person is disposed to think that this is the real commencement of spiritual life, and to set down all his former experience as spurious; or, at least, essentially defective. Christians, when recovered from backsliding, are commonly more watchful, and walk more circumspectly than they ever did before. They cannot but be more humble. The remembrance of their base departure from God fills them with self-loathing. Whenever spiritual pride would lift up its head, one thought of a disgraceful fall will often lay the soul in the dust. And whether the backslider’s sins have been open or secret, the recollection of his traitorous behaviour fills him with shame and self-abhorrence. When such persons have so conducted themselves as to bring upon them the censures of the church, so as to be separated from the communion of his people, at first, it is probable, resentment would be felt towards the officers of the church who performed this painful duty; but after reflection, these resentments are turned against themselves, and they pass much heavier censures on themselves than the church ever did. Judicious, seasonable discipline is a powerful means of grace, and often would be the effectual means of recovering the backslider, if exercised as it should be. Indeed, this may be said to be one main design of its appointment. If whenever there is an appearance of declension in a church member, the pastor, or some other officer of the church, would go to the person, and, in the spirit, and by the authority of Christ, would address a serious admonition to him, and then a second, and a third, and if these were unheeded, then to bring him before the church, backsliding, in most cases, would be arrested before it proceeded far. But every member of the church has a duty to perform towards erring brethren. When they see them going astray, they should not act towards them as if they hated them, but should in any wise rebuke them. Christian reproof from one Christian to another seems to be almost banished from our churches. There is a quick eye to discern a brother’s faults, and a ready tongue to speak of them to others; but where do we now find the faithful reprover of sin, who goes to the man himself, without saying a word to any one, and between themselves, faithfully warns, exhorts, and entreats a straying brother to return. The serious discipline of formal accusations, and witnesses, &c., by such a course would be, in a great measure, rendered unnecessary; but the practice is, to let the evil grow until it has become inveterate, and breaks out into overt acts, and then there is a necessity to pay attention to the matter, and to put in force the discipline of the church. But even this often proves salutary, and is a powerful means of reclaiming the offender; or, if he persists in his evil courses, it serves to separate an unworthy member from the communion of saints. But when church officers and private Christians utterly fail in their duty towards backsliding brethren, God himself often makes use of the means of his own, which does not require the intervention of men. He smites the offender with his rod, and causes him to smart in some tender part. He sends such afflictions as bring his sins forcibly before his conscience. He deprives him of the objects for the sake of which he forsook the Lord.—It may be the wife of his youth, or a beloved child, on which his affections were too fondly fixed, so as to become idolatrous. Or, if it was the love of the world which was the seductive cause of his backsliding, “riches are caused to make to themselves wings and flee away like the eagle to heaven.” Or, was the love of ease and indulgence of the sensual appetites the cause of his delinquency, the stroke falls on his own body. He is brought low by sickness, and is tried upon his bed with excruciating pains, until he cries out in his distress, and humbly confesses his sins. Or, if he was carried away by an undue love of the honour that cometh from men, it is not unlikely that his reputation, which he cherished with a fondness which caused him to neglect the

honour of his God, will be permitted to be tarnished by the tongue of slander, and things may be so situated, that although innocent, he may not have it in his power to make the truth appear. Children, too much indulged, become, by their misconduct, fruitful causes of affliction to parents; and thus they are made to suffer in the very point where they had sinned. Look at the case of Eli and of David. All afflictions, however, are not for chastisement, but sometimes for trial; and those whom God loves best are most afflicted in this world. They are kept in the furnace, and that heated seven times, until their dross is consumed, and their piety shines forth as pure gold, which has been tried in the fire. But we are now concerned only with those afflictions which are most effective to bring back the backslider; the virtue of which the Psalmist acknowledges when he says, "It is good for me to be afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray." It may be truly said, that many who had backslidden never would have returned had it not been for the rod; other means seemed to have lost their power, but this comes home to the feelings of every one. Whether a believer is ever permitted to go out of the world in a backslidden state, is a question of no practical importance; but it seems probable that Christians die in all conditions in which any of this character are ever found. No one has any right to presume, that if he backslides, death may not overtake him in that unprepared condition. Backsliding then is a fearful evil; may we all be enabled to avoid it; or if fallen into it, to be recovered speedily from so dangerous a state!

CHAPTER XV("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

The rich man and the poor.—The various trials of believers

They are not the happy whom the blinded would think to be such. This man of successful enterprise, and increasing wealth had some enjoyment while busily occupied in making a fortune; but now when he has arrived at a higher pitch of wealth than his most sanguine hopes had anticipated, he is far from being happy, or even contented. The desire of acquisition has grown into an inveterate habit, and he cannot stop in his career; he must find out some new enterprise; he must engage in some new speculation; and before all is over, it is well if he loses not all he had gained; and being accustomed to live high, he is unprepared to meet poverty; and to preserve his family from such a mortifying change of circumstances, he contrives ways and means to defraud his creditors. This man is not happy in his prosperity, and under a reverse of fortune, he is truly miserable. He has put away a good conscience, which is the most essential ingredient in that peace which Christ gives to his disciples. His reputation too, if not tarnished, remains under a dark cloud of suspicion, which never can be removed. Abroad, he meets with neglect and sometimes contempt, from those on whom he once looked down; at home he has before him the sad spectacle of a family degraded from their former rank, and under all the feelings of mortified pride, struggling to conceal their poverty from the gaze and contempt of an unpitied world. But even if no reverse is experienced, and the man continues to be successful in all his enterprises; and if at the close of his career, he can calculate millions, in the bank, or in real estate; and his only remaining difficulty is, how to dispose of such a mass of wealth. He has a son, it is true, but he is a base profligate, and in a single year, would, by reckless speculation, or at the gaming table, dissipate the whole which has been so carefully hoarded up. And yet this man could scarcely be induced to give a dollar to any benevolent object, lest he should lessen the amount which he was by every means raking together, for this unworthy son. He has daughters, too, whose husbands in selecting them had more respect to their fortunes, than to any personal qualifications, and these are impatient, that the old man should live so long, and hold the purse-strings with so close a

gripe. Though they will go through all the ceremonial of deep grief, and mourn as decently, and as long as fashion requires; yet no event is heard with more heart-felt pleasure, than that their aged relative is at last obliged to give up all his possessions. Are the rich happy? not such as have been described. But there are a favoured few who seem to have learned the secret of using wealth so as to do much good, and to derive from it much enjoyment. They are desirous of making increase too, but it is all for the Lord; not to be hoarded, until they are obliged to leave it, and then to be distributed among benevolent societies. No; they are continually contriving methods of making it produce good, now. They are parsimonious to themselves, that they may be liberal to the poor; and may be able to enrich the treasury of the Lord. Such men are blessed, in their deed; and though unostentatious in their charities, their light cannot be hid. A few rich men of this description have lived in England, and even our new country, records with gratitude, the names of a few benefactors of the public; and we trust in God that the number will be multiplied. Reader, go and do likewise.

But, more commonly, the elect of God are not called to glorify him in this way. Wealth is a dangerous talent, and is very apt so to block up the way to heaven, that they who do press in, have, as it were, to squeeze through a gate as difficult of entrance as the eye of a needle to an elephant: and alas! many professors who bid fair for heaven, when in moderate circumstances, when become rich, are found “drowned in perdition”—“pierced through with many sorrows.” Poverty and suffering are by infinite wisdom judged best for the traveller to Zion. Let the Lord’s people be contented with their condition, and thankful that they are preserved from snares and temptations, which they would have found it difficult to withstand. God will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but with the temptation provides a way for their escape. The rich are exposed to suffering as well as the poor; though his sufferings may be of a different kind. The poor man may be forced by necessity to live on coarse bread; the rich also, while tantalized with the daily sight of the finest of the wheat, is obliged for the sake of his health to live upon bran. The poor man lies on a hard bed, because he can afford to get no better; the rich man lies as hard to preserve himself from aches and pains, which are the natural fruit of luxury. The poor man has little of the honours of the world, but then he is envied by none, and passes along in obscurity, without being set up as a mark to be shot at, by envy and malignity, which is often the lot of the rich. When sickness comes, the rich man has some advantages, but when oppressed with painful sickness neither a bed of down, nor rich hangings and carpets, contribute any thing to his relief; and in such a time of distress, the privations of the poor, though the imagination readily magnifies them, add much to the pain produced by disease. But we have dwelt too long on this comparison between the real sufferings of the rich and the poor. More after all depends upon the submission and patient temper of mind, than upon external circumstances; and, indeed, so short is the time of man’s continuance upon earth, and so infinite the joys or miseries of the future world, that to make much of these little differences would be like estimating the weight of a feather, when engaged in weighing mountains. Who thinks it a matter of any concern, whether the circumstances of persons who lived a thousand years ago were affluent or destitute? except, so far as these external enjoyments and privations contributed to their moral improvement, or the contrary? If we could be duly impressed with the truths which respect our eternal condition, we should consider our afflictions here as scarcely worthy of being named. Thus the apostle Paul seemed to view his own sufferings, and those of his fellow Christians, when he said, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Compared with the sufferings of others, those of the apostle were neither few nor small; but in the view of eternity by faith, he calls them “these light afflictions which are but for a moment;” and he had learned the happy art, not only of being contented, in whatever state he was, but of rejoicing in all his tribulations; not that tribulation, considered in itself, could be a matter of rejoicing, for who ever found pain and reproach to be pleasant? But he rejoiced in these things on account of their salutary effects, “for,” says he, “tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” The primitive Christians were encouraged to bear patiently and joyfully, their present sufferings, on account of the rich and gracious reward which awaited them in the world to come. Upon the mere principle of contrast, our earthly sorrows will render our heavenly joys the sweeter. But this is not all,—hear the words of Jesus himself, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” Peter also testifies, “and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye,”—“for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. For Christ once suffered, the just for the unjust.” He was also of the same opinion with his brother Paul, that Christians ought to rejoice in all their sufferings for righteousness sake. “Beloved,” says he, “think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of God resteth on you.” “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.” Let Zion’s mourners lift up their heads and rejoice, for though weeping may endure for the night, joy cometh in the morning! Let all Christians manifest to others the sweetness and excellency of religion, by rejoicing continually in the Lord. The perennial sources of their spiritual joy can never fail—for while God lives and reigns, they ought to rejoice, since Christ has died, and ever lives to make intercession for them, they have ground of unceasing joy. While the throne of grace is accessible, let the saints rejoice; let them rejoice in all the promises of God, which are exceeding great and precious, and are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus to the glory of God. In one sense, all our sufferings are the fruits of sin, for if we had never sinned, we should never have suffered: but, in another sense, the sufferings of believers are produced by love, “whom the Father loveth, he chasteneth and scourgeth every son which he receiveth.” As in the economy of salvation, God leaves his chosen people to struggle with the remainders of sin in their own hearts; so he has ordained, that their pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan, shall be through much tribulation. From the beginning the saints have generally been a poor and afflicted people, often oppressed and persecuted, and when exempt from sufferings from the hands of men, they are often visited with sickness, or have their hearts sorely lacerated by the bereavement of dear friends, are punished with poverty, or loaded with obloquy and reproach. There seems to be an incongruity in believers enjoying ease and prosperity, in this world, when their Lord was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” It seems, indeed, to be a condition of our reigning with Him, that we should suffer with Him. When James and John, under the influence of ambition, asked for the highest places in his kingdom, he said to them, “can ye drink of the cup which I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” they seem not to have understood his meaning, for, with self-confidence, they answered, “we are able.” He replied, “ye shall, indeed,

drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.” For the Christian to seek great things for himself here, does not become the condition of a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus. The early Christians were called to endure much persecution, but they did not count their lives dear unto them. When the apostles, after our Lord’s ascension, were publicly beaten for preaching that the Saviour was risen, they rejoiced together that they were counted worthy to suffer such things for his name’s sake. It is a striking peculiarity in the religion of Christ, that, in the conditions of discipleship, “taking up the cross” is the first thing. He never tempted any to follow him with the promise of earthly prosperity, or exemption from suffering. On the contrary, he assures them that in the world they should have tribulation. He does, indeed, promise to those who forsake father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, a compensation of a hundred fold more than they left; but he permits them not to fall into the delusion that this hundred fold was to consist in earthly good things, for he immediately adds, “with persecution.” Whosoever will not take Christ with his cross, shall never sit with him on his throne. “No cross, no crown,” holds out an important truth in few words. Christ, in his intercessory prayer, does request, for his disciples, that they may be kept from the evil, which is in the world, but he means from the “evil one,”—from the evil of sin, and from temptations above their strength to endure. The reasons why Christ has chosen that his people should be afflicted, and often sorely persecuted, are not difficult to be ascertained. In the former essay, it was shown that the rod is one of God’s means for recovering backsliders from their wanderings; but afflictions are also employed to prevent Christians from backsliding. In prosperity, pride is apt to rise and swell; carnal security blinds their eyes; the love of riches increases; spiritual affections are feeble; and eternal things are viewed as far off, and concealed by a thick mist. These circumstances are, indeed, the common precursors of backsliding; but to prevent this evil, and to stir up the benumbed feelings of piety, the believer is put into the furnace. At first, he finds it hard to submit, he is like a wild bull in a net. His pride and his love of carnal ease resist the hand that smites him; but severe pain awakes him from his sleep, and he finds himself in the hands of his heavenly Father, and sees that nothing can be gained by murmuring or rebelling. His sins rise up to view, and he is convinced of the justice of the divine dispensations. His hard heart begins to yield, and he is stirred up to cry mightily to God for helping grace. Although he wishes, and prays for deliverance from the pressure of affliction; yet he is more solicitous that it should be rendered effectual to subdue his pride, wean him from the love of the world, and give perfect exercise to patience and resignation, than that it should be removed. He knows that the furnace is the place for purification. He hopes and prays that his dross may be consumed; and that he may come forth as gold, which has passed seven times through the refiner’s fire.

Paul attributes a powerful efficacy to afflictions; so as to place them among the most efficacious means of grace. “For,” says he, “our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” “Furthermore, we have had fathers of the flesh, which corrected us and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live. For they, verily, for a few days, corrected us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.” When faith is in very lively exercise, believers can rejoice even in tribulation. Not that they cease to feel the pain of the rod—for then it would cease to be an affliction—but while they experience the smart, they are convinced that it is

operating as a salutary though bitter medicine; and they rejoice in the prospect, or feeling of returning health. But, again, God pours not the rich consolations of his grace into a heart that is not broken. "He sendeth the rich empty away." "The whole need not a physician;" but when by affliction he has broken the hard heart, and emptied it of self-confidence, he delights to pour in the joy of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, it often occurs, that the believer's most joyful seasons are his suffering seasons. He has, it is true, more pungent pain, than when in prosperity and ease, but he has also richer, deeper draughts of consolation. Though sorrow and joy are opposite, there is a mysterious connexion between them. Sorrow, as it were, softens and prepares the heart for the reception of the joy of the Lord. As the dispensations of God towards his children, are exceedingly diverse, in different ages, so his dealings with individual believers, who live at the same time, are very different. Why it is so we cannot tell; but we are sure, that he has wise reasons for all that he does. In some cases, pious persons appear to pass through life with scarcely a touch from his rod; while others, who to us do not appear to need more chastisement than those, are held the greater part of their life under the heavy pressure of affliction, with scarcely any intermission. Here is a Christian man who has nearly reached the usual termination of human life, and has hardly known what external affliction is, in his own experience. Prosperity has attended him through his whole course. But there is a desolate widow who has been bereaved of her husband and children, and has neither brother nor sister, nephew nor niece, and for eight years has been confined to her bed, by wasting and painful disease, and has no hope of relief on this side of the grave. Such a disparity is striking; but we see only the outside of things. There are sore afflictions of the mind, while the body is in health. That man may have had severer chastisement than this afflicted, desolate widow. I have heard an aged Christian declare, that though he had experienced much sickness, lost many dear friends, and met with many sore disappointments in life, his sufferings on these accounts were not to be compared with the internal anguish which he often endured, and of which no creature had the least conception. This shows that we are not competent to form an accurate judgment of the sufferings of different persons. Besides, when affliction has been long continued, we become, in a measure, accustomed to it; and, as it were, hardened against it; but when we judge of such cases, we transfer our own acute feelings to the condition; which are no correct standard of the sufferings of the patient, under a lingering disease. The widow, to whom I referred, was not a fictitious, but a real person. I once visited her, and conversed with her, and found her serene and happy; desiring nothing but a speedy departure, that she might be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; but she was not impatient; she was willing to remain and suffer just as long as God pleased. Her heart was truly subdued to the obedience of Christ. There was only one earthly object for which she seemed to feel solicitude, and that was for the little forsaken, and almost desolate church of which she was a member. For a series of years, disaster after disaster had fallen upon this little flock. Their house of worship had been accidentally burnt, they had been so long without a pastor, that they dwindled down to a few disheartened and scattered members, and only one aged elder remained. Seldom was there an occasional sermon in the place, as they had no convenient house of meeting on the Sabbath. Now, although this poor widow could not have attended, if there had been preaching every Lord's day, yet that little church lay as a burden on her mind; and I heard a minister who knew the circumstances say, that as once a poor wise man saved a city, so this poor, pious widow, by her prayers; saved a church from extinction. For before her death, a neat, new church was erected, and a pastor settled, and a number of souls hopefully converted, and gathered into the church. I was once on a visit to a

friend, who requested me to accompany her to see a sick woman, supposed to be near her end. The house was not a cabin, but a mere wreck of a once comfortable dwelling. Every appearance of comfort was absent. The partitions appeared to have been taken down, and the whole house was turned into one large room. There was no glass in the windows—but that mattered not, it was summer. Upon entering this desolate place, I saw the sick woman lying on a miserable bed, unable to raise her head from the pillow, and attended only by an aged mother above eighty years of age, and a little daughter about seven or eight. Here, indeed, seemed to be the very picture of wretchedness; and I was told that the brute of a husband generally came home drunk, and never gave her a kind or soothing word.—Hear the conclusion—I verily thought before I left the house, that this was the happiest woman I ever saw. Her devout and tender eye was sweetly fixed on heaven. Her countenance was serene, and illumined with a heavenly smile.

CHAPTER XVI("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Death-bed of the Believer

We have arrived now, at a very solemn part of our subject. The writer feels that it is so to himself, as he knows that he must soon be called to travel the road which leads to the narrow house, appointed for all living. If after having gone through this scene, he were permitted to return, and finish these papers on religious experience, by narrating what the soul suffers in passing the gate of death; and more especially, what are its views and feelings, the moment after death, he would be able to give information which at present no mortal can communicate. The thought has often occurred, when thinking on this subject, that the surprise of such a transition as that from time to eternity, from the state of imprisonment in this clay tenement, to an unknown state of existence, would be overwhelming even to the pious. But these are short-sighted reflections. We undertake to judge of eternal things, by rules only suited to our present state of being, and our present feelings. That the scene will be new and sublime, beyond all conception, cannot be doubted; but what our susceptibilities and feelings will be, when separated from the body, we cannot tell. Is it not possible, that our entrance on the unseen world, may be preceded by a course of gradual preparation for the wonderful objects which it contains, analogous to our progress through infancy in the present world? That knowledge of future things will be acquired gradually, and not instantaneously, we are led to believe from the constitution of the human mind, and from all the analogies of nature. The soul may therefore have to go to school again, to learn the first elements of celestial knowledge; and who will be the instructors, or how long this training may continue, it would be vain to conjecture. Whether in this gradual progress in the knowledge of heavenly things, our reminiscence of the transactions in which we were engaged upon earth, will be from the first vivid and perfect, or whether these things will at first be buried in a sort of oblivion, and be brought up to view gradually and successively, who can tell us? But I must withdraw my imagination from a subject, to which her powers are entirely inadequate. Though I have been fond of those writings of Dick, Taylor, and Watts, which give free scope to reasonings from analogy, in regard to the future condition of the believer, yet I am persuaded, that they add nothing to our real knowledge. Their lucubrations resemble the vain efforts of a man born blind to describe to his fellow sufferers, the brilliance of the stars, the splendours of the sun, or the milder beauties of a lovely landscape. While he seems to himself to approach nearest to the object, he in fact is most remote from any just conceptions of it. This brings to recollection, what has often appeared highly probable, in regard to the developement of our mental powers; that as in infancy some of our most important

faculties, as for example, reason, conscience, and taste, are entirely dormant, and gradually and slowly make their appearance afterwards; so, probably, this whole life is a state of infancy in relation to that which is to come, and there may exist now, in these incomprehensible souls of ours, germs of faculties never in the least developed in this world, but which will spring into activity as soon as the soul feels the penetrating beams of celestial light; and which will be brought to maturity just at the time when they are needed. The capacity of the beatific vision may now be possessed by the soul, deeply enveloped in that darkness which conceals the internal powers of the mind even from itself, except so far as they are manifested by their actual exercise. How shallow then, is all our mental philosophy, by which we attempt to explore the depths of the human mind? But are these conjectural speculations for edification? Do they bring us any nearer to God, and to our beloved Redeemer? I cannot say, that they do. At the best, they are no more than an innocent amusement; and in indulging them, we are in great danger of becoming presumptuous, and even foolish, by supposing that we possess knowledge, when in fact our brightest light is but darkness. Vain man would be wise. Let us then cease from man—let us cease from our own unsubstantial dreams, and lay fast hold of the sure word of prophecy as of a light shining in a dark place. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to these, there is no light in them,” or as some render the passage, “light shall never rise to them.” One simple declaration of the word of God is worth more to a soul descending into the valley and shadow of death, than all the ingenious and vivid imaginings of the brightest human minds.

Considering the absolute and undoubted certainty of our departure out of life, it seems passing strange that we should be so unconcerned. If even one of a million escaped death this might afford some shadow of a reason for our carelessness; but we know that “it is appointed unto men once to die.” In this warfare there is no discharge, and yet most men live as if they were immortal. I remember the foolish thought which entered my childish mind when my mother informed me that we all must die. I entertained the hope that before my time came some great change would take place, I knew not how, by which I should escape this dreaded event. I have nothing to do with the death of the wicked at present. The dying experience of the believer is our proper subject, and we read that one object of Christ’s coming into the world was “to deliver such as were all their life time in bondage through fear of death.” Death, in itself considered, is a most formidable evil, and can be desirable to none. The fear of death is not altogether the consequence of sin; the thing is abhorrent to the constitution of man. Death was held up in terror to our first parents when innocent, to prevent their transgression, and having entered the world by their sin in whom we all sinned, this event has been, ever since, a terror to mortals—“The King of terrors.” Man instinctively cleaves to life, so does every sentient being. There are only two things which can possibly have the effect of reconciling any man to death. The first is, the hope of escaping from misery which is felt to be intolerable: the other, an assurance of a better, that is a heavenly country. The captain of our salvation conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, by dying himself. By this means, he plucked from this monster his deadly sting, by satisfying the demands of God’s holy law. “For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.” All those, therefore, who are united to Christ, meet death as a conquered and disarmed enemy. Against them he is powerless. Still, however, he wears a threatening aspect, and although he cannot kill, he can frown and threaten, and this often frightens the timid sheep. They often do not know that they are delivered from his tyranny, and that now he can do nothing but falsely accuse and roar like a hungry lion disappointed of his prey. There are still some who all their life time are subject to

bondage “through fear of death.” Their confidence is shaken by so many distressing doubts, that though sincerely engaged in the service of God, they can never think of death without sensible dread; and often they are afraid, that when the last conflict shall come, they will be so overwhelmed with terror and despair, that they shall prove a dishonour to their Christian profession. I recollect a sickly, but pious lady, who with a profusion of tears, expressed her anxiety and fear in the view of her approaching end, and there seemed to be ground for her foreboding apprehensions; because, from the beginning of her profession, she had enjoyed no comfortable assurance, but was of the number of those who, though they “fear God, and obey the voice of his servant, yet walk in darkness and have no light” of comfort. But mark the goodness of God, and the fidelity of the Great Shepherd. Some months afterwards I saw this lady on her death-bed, and was astonished to find that Christ had delivered her entirely from her bondage. She was now near to her end and knew it, but she shed no tears now but those of joy and gratitude. All her darkness and sorrow were gone, and her heart glowed with love to the Redeemer, and all her anxiety now was to depart and be with Jesus. There was, as it were, a beaming of heaven in her countenance. I had before tried to comfort her, but now I sat down by her bed-side to listen to the gracious words which proceeded from her mouth, and could not but send up the fervent aspiration, “O let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers.” Then I knew that there was one who had conquered death, and him who has the power of death, for Satan, to the last moment, was not permitted to molest her. No arguments have ever so powerfully operated on my mind, to convince me of the reality and power of experimental religion, as witnessing the last exercises of some of God’s children. Some of these scenes, though long past, have left an indelible impression on my memory; and I hope a salutary impression on my heart.

Another lady, and a near relative of the former, I had often observed passing along her way, humble, gentle, silent, evidently seeking no conspicuity, but rather to remain unnoticed and unknown. She had a few chosen female friends, with whom she freely communicated, for her heart was affectionate, and her disposition sociable—to these she poured out her inmost soul, and received from them a similar return. She was crushed under a habitual feeling of domestic affliction; but not of that kind which freely utters its complaints, and engages the sympathy of many; but her sorrows were such as her delicacy of feeling, did not permit her even to allude to; the conduct of an imprudent father, weighed heavily on her spirits; but towards him—and her mother being dead, she kept his house—she was assiduously respectful; and while he made himself the laughing stock of his acquaintances, she endeavored to make his home comfortable; but often, I thought, that her lively sensibility to the ridicule and reproaches which fell upon him, would be an injury to her delicate constitution; and the more so, because this was a subject on which she would not converse, even with the intimate, confidential friends, before mentioned. It was evident, that her health was slowly giving way, and that the disease which carries off nearly one half the adults in this land, was secretly consuming her vitals. But she never complained, and seemed rather to become more cheerful, as her eye became more brilliant and her cheeks more pallid. She was for a long time after this, seen occupying her humble retired place in the house of God, and still went her accustomed rounds among her poor and sick neighbours, and doing every thing to render home comfortable to her restless, unhappy parent. At length, however, her strength failed, and she was obliged to confine herself to the house, and before long to her bed. Being informed of this, as being her pastor, I visited her. Hitherto her extreme modesty and retired habits, had prevented me from having much personal acquaintance with this excellent woman. I was

accompanied to the house by one of her intimate friends, who still lives, and if she should see this paper will readily recognise the portrait of her beloved friend. The house was a cottage, and all its furniture of home manufacture; but upon the whole there was impressed a neatness and order, which indicated a superior taste in her who had long had the sole management. I did not know but that from her habitual reserve and silence, she would be embarrassed in her feelings, and reserved in her communications; but I was happily disappointed. She received me with an affectionate smile, and a cordial shake of the hand, and said that she was pleased that I had thought it worth my while to come and see a poor dying woman. Not many minutes were spent in compliments, or general remarks; she entered freely and most intelligently, into a narrative of her religious exercises, which had commenced at an early period of her life, but expatiated in the sweetest manner, on the divine excellencies of the Saviour; not as one that was speaking what she had learned from others, or from the mere exertion of her own intellect; but as one that felt in the heart every word which she uttered. There was a gentleness, a suavity, and a meek humility expressed in every tone of her voice, and the same depicted on every lineament of her countenance. Though, when in health, she was never reckoned beautiful, yet there was now in her countenance, animated with hope and love, and religious joy, or rather peace, a beauty of countenance which I never saw equalled. It was what may without impropriety be called, spiritual beauty. I found what I had not known before, that her mind had been highly cultivated by reading, and this was manifest in the propriety, and indeed I may say, elegance of her language. Not that she aimed at saying fine things. Such an idea never entered her humble mind: but possessing, naturally, a good understanding, which she had carefully improved by reading, especially the best religious authors, and being now animated with a flow of pious affection, which seemed never to ebb; all these things gave her language a fluency, a glow, and a vividness, which was truly remarkable. I have often regretted that I had not put down, at the time, her most striking expressions, but the mere words could convey no more than the shadow of such a scene. It has often been remarked, that the speeches of great orators, when written and read, have scarcely a resemblance to the same speech, delivered with all the pathos, the grace, and the varied intonations and gestures of the orator. The same may more truly be said of the sayings of the dying Christian; we may catch the very words, but the spirit, the secret and solemn tones, free from all affectation, the heavenly serenity of countenance, and the nameless methods of manifesting the pious affections of the heart, never can be preserved, nor distinctly conveyed, by words, to others. The mind of this young lady possessed a uniform serenity, undisturbed with fears, doubts, or cares. Every thing seemed right to her submissive temper. It was enough, that her heavenly Father appointed it to be so. For many weeks she lay in this state of perfect tranquillity, as it were on the suburbs of heaven; and I believe no one ever heard a complaint from her lips. Even that grief which had preyed on her health, when able to go about, had now ceased to cause her pain. Hers was, in my apprehension, the nearest approximation to complete happiness which I ever saw upon earth; yet there was no violence of feeling, no agitation, no rapture. It was that kind of happiness which, from its gentleness and calmness, is capable of continuance. As it was her request that I should visit her often, I did so as frequently as the distance of my residence, and other avocations, would permit. Not, as I often said, with any expectation of communicating any good to her, but of receiving spiritual benefit from her heavenly conversation. O! how often did I wish that the boldest infidels—and they were rampant at that time—could have been introduced into the chamber of this dying saint. I often, especially after

witnessing this scene, endeavoured to describe to such as attended preaching, the power of religion to sustain the soul in the last earthly conflict; but they were incredulous as to the facts, or ascribed them to some strange enthusiasm which buoyed up the soul in a preternatural manner. But here there was no enthusiasm—nothing approaching to what may be called a heated imagination. All was sober—all was serene—all was gentle—all was rational; and, although five and forty years have passed since this scene was witnessed, the impression on my mind, is distinct and vivid. The indescribable countenance, calm but animated, pale with disease, but lighted up with an unearthly smile. The sweet and affectionate tones of voice—the patient, submissive, cheerful, grateful temper, are all remembered with a vividness and permanence with which I remember nothing now. When I think of such scenes, I have often thought and said, “if this be delusion, then let my soul for ever remain under such delusion.”

If the foregoing was a sample of the death-bed exercises of all Christians, then would I say, that his last days are his best days, and the day of death happier than the day of birth. This, however, is far from being a true view of the general fact. It is a select case—one of a thousand—upon the whole, the happiest death I ever witnessed. I have, indeed, seen dying persons agitated with a kind of delirious rapture; in which the imagination has been so excited, that the person looked and spoke, as if the objects of another world were actually present to the view. In such case, the nervous system loses its tone, and when the general feelings are pious, and the thoughts directed heavenward, the whole system is thrilled with an indescribable emotion. And we have a number of recorded death-scenes, which partake of this character; and are greatly admired and extolled by the injudicious and fanatical. Scenes of this kind, are frequently the effect of disease, and sometimes of medicine operating on the idiosyncrasy of particular persons. Such persons may be pious, but the extraordinary exhilaration and exstasy, of which they are the subjects, ought not to be ascribed to supernatural influence, but to physical causes. Between such experiences, and the case described above, there is no more resemblance, than between a blazing meteor, which soon burns itself out, and the steady, genial beams of the vernal sun. I once witnessed an extraordinary scene of this kind in a skeptic, who neglected religion, and scoffed at its professors, till very near the close of life; and then seemed to be agitated and exhilarated with religious ideas and feelings, leading him to profess his faith in Christ, and to rejoice, and exult in the assurance of salvation, and all this without any previous conviction of sin, or mingled at the time with deep penitential feelings. Well, why might it not have been an instance of sovereign grace, like that of the thief on the cross? It is possible. As in life, that piety which is founded on knowledge, and in which the faculties of the mind continue to be well balanced, and the judgment sound, is by far the least suspicious; so those death-bed exercises, which are of a similar character, are much to be preferred to those which are flighty; and in which reason seems to regulate the helm no longer; but an excited, and irregular imagination assumes the government of the man. According to this rule, some glowing narratives of death-scenes will be set aside as, if not spurious, yet not deserving to be admired and celebrated as they often are.

CHAPTER XVII("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \ "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Death-bed Exercises of Andrew Rivet

I propose now to give a summary view of the recorded experiences of several eminent persons on their death bed; and as comparisons among the living are odious, so also among the dead, I will

endeavour to act the part of an impartial and faithful narrator, but having given my analysis I will leave my readers to judge respecting the genuineness and the devotion of the persons whose exercises shall be introduced. Our accounts of the death-scenes of the apostles are too brief to enable us to say much about them; but judging from their epistles, we may conclude, that they met death, not only with firmness, but with joy. Not one of them ever expresses the least fear of death; but on the contrary, Paul speaks with exultation of the prospect before him, for he exclaims, "For I am now ready to be offered up and the time of my departure is at hand," "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day, and not to me only but to all who love his appearing;" and Peter who knew that he was to go out of the world by a violent death; as Christ had showed him; yet he seems to be no how troubled about it, but when old, speaks of it with the utmost composure. "Yea, I think it meet," says he, "as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." No doubt, John, the beloved disciple, sweetly fell asleep, with love upon his lips and in his heart. His whole soul seems to have been dissolved into love, and to such a man death could have no terrors. His brother James, who was slain by the sword of Herod, is the only one of the apostles of whose death we have an account in the sacred word; except the awful account of the suicide of the traitor. Of the circumstances of the death of James, who seems to have been one of the most distinguished, and always when a selection was made to witness any particular scene, he was one of them; the historian, with characteristic brevity, says, "Now about that time, Herod the king, stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James, the brother of John with the sword." From this we may learn, that in order to go safely to heaven, it is not necessary, that we should have a laudatory obituary on earth. I have often been shocked with the thought, that while a man's eulogy is pronounced upon earth, the poor soul may be writhing and blaspheming in the torments of hell! Among the primitive members of the Church, Stephen was the first martyr, and his death was—I will not say heroic—for heroes know nothing of Christ or heaven—but I will say it was Christian, which is a much better style of dying, than any of the heathen gods or goddesses knew any thing about. He was well prepared, for he had just before been favoured with a direct view into heaven, and saw Christ on the right hand of God. No wounds on the body would be felt by one absorbed in such a heavenly vision. O how little can they harm us who can do no more than kill the body! They rushed upon the man and hurried him to the place of execution and stoned him, "calling on the name of God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." There was nothing wanting here to render this a glorious death. And as he is called the protomartyr, so his death was a prototype of the deaths of succeeding martyrs. The accounts given of the joys and triumphs of some of them, approximate to miracle; but we know not how insensible to bodily pain, the soul may be rendered, which is overflowing with the love of Christ. This is the true secret of their ambition to be crucified or burnt, or cast to the wild beasts. But as these martyrs seem to have been another race of men from us, and lived in times very different from ours, let us come down and contemplate the dying Christian in circumstances similar to our own; and see what grace can do, in these latter days. And I propose to select the experiences of men of different countries. The accounts which I shall bring forward are not new: to some of my readers they may all be familiar; but as the men were eminent in the church, and distinguished for talents, their

biographies being commonly known, will answer the end in view, better than the death-bed exercises of unknown persons, of whose lives we could have no satisfactory information. The first person of whose dying exercises I propose to give a condensed narrative is Andrew Rivet, a Frenchman by birth and education; but who spent the greater part of his life in Holland; where at Leyden, he was professor of theology. The learned need not be informed, that in that age when theology was more thoroughly studied, than in any other since the apostles' days, Andrew Rivet had no superior, whether you contemplate him as an exegetical or polemical theologian. His acquaintance with the Christian fathers was most exact and extensive; and he knew how to estimate their labours, and what deference was due to their authority, of which he gave full evidence, in the work entitled *Critici Sacri*, which is now the best guide on this subject, which the young theologian can follow. Rivet's theology was as sound as it was extensive. His great learning did not turn his head or lead him into heresy; but it will be seen by the following narrative, abridged from Middleton, how little value he set on all his learning compared with the teaching of the divine Spirit.

Having preached a sermon on Christmas day, he was, immediately afterwards, taken ill, with a constipation of the bowels. Of a beloved niece, who attended on him, he asked what she thought of his disease, which he thought would prove mortal,—she answered, that she was of the same opinion, but that he had nothing to fear, having been long prepared to follow God, when he should call—and that his life had already been long, and nothing left to be desired, but that it should be crowned with a happy and glorious end! “Thou speakest right,” said he, “and I pray thee always address thyself to me with like speeches, and while my sickness continues, depart not from me, day nor night. Promise me now that thou wilt keep a cheerful countenance, and that thou wilt speak nothing to me but what may administer joy and support to me. Although I fear not death, yet I fear the trial of those pains which I have always had a very sharp feeling of.” Then, suddenly turning his speech unto God, he said, “great God, thou art my Father, thou hast given me both life and a new life; thou hast taught me from my youth, and I have declared thy wonderful works, forsake me not now in my old age. Hitherto, through thy peculiar favour, thou hast preserved me sound in my body and my faculties, and the functions of my mind have not been impaired, so that a little before I was oppressed by this disease, I found myself as apt and ready for the exercise of my vocation, as in my flourishing youth. O, Lord God! if it be thy will that I should longer attend upon thy service, thou canst assuage my disease in one moment; but if thou hast decreed otherwise, thy will be done. This one thing I beg with most inward affections, that thou wilt make me conformable to thy good will—let not thy good Spirit depart from me, that in this conflict thy strength may make me a conqueror; accomplish this, O Lord, for thine own sake, and since thou hast employed me in thy work, grant that I may die an honourable death! and such as may be an example unto others: that I may stand fast in that sound doctrine which I have taught, and may make a good confession thereof before witnesses—that thereby thy church may be both instructed and edified; let me apply to myself by a lively faith, all the promises of the gospel, and let them put forth their efficacy in me, unto my joy and eternal consolation, that nothing in the world, neither affliction nor distress, may separate me from thee, or cause me to doubt of thy love and favour. Thou knowest my weakness and infirmities, permit not the grievousness of my pain to cast me into impatience or murmuring; either make my pains tolerable, or furnish me with fortitude and constancy sufficient to bear them that I may not offend with my tongue—keep thou the door of my lips!” The pains of his disease were very great, but he continued to call upon God for help and for

support. His expressions of his own sinfulness and weakness were of the most abasing kind, confessing himself to be a miserable sinner, and casting away all confidence in any good thing which he had done in his life,—he accused his own defects, and ascribed unto God all the good which he had ever done, often repeating such expressions as these: “It is God that hath wrought the work for me; shall, I allege or plead my own righteousness before Him? Far be that from me. If I should justify myself, my own mouth would condemn me. I will rather open my sin before Him in a most humble confession of it, and pray that He will increase in me the grace of true repentance; yea, let Him wear out this body with sorrow, it matters not, so He give to me a broken and a contrite spirit, which is a sacrifice acceptable unto himself. As for my part, I do most willingly offer up myself. Accept, O Lord, this imperfect sacrifice, and supply the defects thereof by the perfect righteousness of that Great High Priest, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself unto God without spot. Let me be accepted as a living sacrifice, holy, and well pleasing unto God, which is our reasonable service. Crucify, O Lord, this old man, that the body of sin may be utterly destroyed, and that I may rise to newness of life. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” He repeated the word gift and added, “it is mere grace, not of works, but of him that calleth.” “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

After a short sleep, he proceeded, in the following strain: “I am God’s, and He will save me. He hath honoured me with a holy calling, and hath not suffered his gift to be altogether useless in me, as to the edification of his church. As to myself, I can most truly affirm, that I have not served Him for filthy lucre, but with a sincere heart; and that I myself was first persuaded of the truth of the gospel, before I preached it to others. I tasted the good word of God, which, by its power, pierceth to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thou hast known my heart, O eternal God! Thou knowest that I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but have esteemed it my only honour to serve thee; and that I have delighted myself in the pleasure of obeying thy will. Such was thy goodness to me. I truly and humbly acknowledged that whatsoever good thing was in me, flowed from thy grace; but my defects ought to be ascribed to my inbred corruption. Alas! I acknowledge this with humble and serious repentance. How often have I sinned in so holy a charge, not only by omitting many things which I ought to have done, but also by doing many things amiss. Long since had I been cast off, were it not that I had to do with so good a Lord, who hath borne with me, and hath been so gracious to me, as not to exact a severe account of my words and works. Alas! O Lord my God! enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. Let me be found, not having my own righteousness, but the righteousness of thy Son; for the sake of whom I beg thy favour. Pardon, O my God! pardon the iniquity of thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. I refuse not thy discipline—I know it is necessary. Only this I earnestly beg, that it may turn to my salvation. ‘Chasten me, O Lord, but in measure, lest thou bring me to nothing.’ Let not my trial exceed my strength, lest I sin through impatience, and become a scandal to those I should edify.” With many similar expressions, for which we have not room. To Renessius, a doctor of divinity, who came to see him, he said, “I pray you testify unto all men, that I die in the faith and the doctrine which I have always delivered, both in preaching and writing; and if in some things I have erred, I pray God, that He will make perfect all my imperfections.”

He received the visits of all who expressed a desire to see him, and would have none hindered from coming to him. "Let all that will," said he, "have access to visit me. I ought to give an example of dying to other men." And to those who stood around his bed, he said, "Come see a man, who is an example of the great mercy of God. What shall I render unto him? All his benefits overwhelm me. He hath so disposed my life, that in my whole course, I have had a healthy body. He hath heaped upon me both temporal and spiritual blessings; and now, before I am rendered feeble or morose, through old age, he comes unto me and prevents me. He has both called me, and made me willing to follow at his call. And now, when the end of my life is within my view, he still affords me the perfect use of reason, that I may praise my God in the land of the living, and instruct my neighbours by my example. Pray for me, my friends, that this grace may be contained unto me, until I draw my last breath; that He will strengthen my faith, confirm my patience, and raise my hope. He hath already captivated all my affections to his will. I have cast the care of me, of mine, of life, and all my affairs, upon him. Let him do with my body as it pleaseth him, so it may but be well with my soul. * * * And now there is nothing I am concerned about, neither is my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and fulfil the ministry which I have received of the Lord; which is best done at the last."

He would not permit any clergyman who came to see him, go away without praying with him. It grieved him much that his wife, who was of feeble health, should be subjected to so much fatigue and watchfulness in attending on him. But as she was unwilling to leave him, he said, "Since thou wilt have it so, tarry; it is a pleasure to me to see thee. The Lord strengthen thee!" Friday night was spent in grievous pains, and in most ardent prayers for the church of God, for the princes, who were defenders of it, for the people that lived under their jurisdiction, and for the pastors, to whom the care of souls was committed. He seemed to be greatly interested in behalf of the United Provinces of Holland. "O God," said he, "withdraw not thy protection from these Provinces; neither remove thy candlestick away. Let not thine anger burn against them, because of that impiety and profaneness which hath made too great a progress. Rather bow their hearts unto repentance, and convert them, that thy judgments may be prevented. Let them coalesce in one body; especially, let them be joined unto thee, without whom all union is but conspiracy. Preside in their Assembly; and bend their hearts, so that all their decrees may lean to the good of the Commonwealth, and especially of the church," &c. His sufferings were exceedingly great, but he bore them with wonderful patience, and whenever there was the least interval of ease, he was engaged in prayer or exhortation. On the last day of December, which closed the current year, Mr. Rivet, after having endured indescribable agonies from the disease, and from the remedies made use of, offered up the following fervent prayer for the church:—"O Lord, it is thy possession, which thou hast purchased with thy own blood. Forsake not thy own work—let a holy jealousy be kindled in thee. Lift up on high the arms of thy power, and bring down the audacious ones, which tyrannize over thy flock. Rebuke thou the negligent that heal her wounds slightly. Reduce in the right way those that wander, and strengthen those ready to fall through division. Gather both the one and the other to thyself, into one body, building them up upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." And then making a little pause, he said, "I have been one of those builders; I have brought what I received from the Lord, that I might put to my helping hand, with others, towards the building of the temple; and I myself shall be a living stone in the house." On the first day of the year 1651, and the Lord's day, upon opening his eyes, he said, "O Lord,

thou hast granted me to see the beginning of the year. Thou hast measured out my time until the middle of this age." Having sent to the Hague for his son, he inquired respecting the weather, and being informed that the cold was sharp and severe, he prayed thus, "O my God, bring my son unto me, that I may see him, embrace him, and bless him, before I die." Then turning to his wife, he said, "dost thou think that this earnest desire to see my son proceeds from mere natural affection? Nothing less. Truly I love no man any more according to the flesh. I earnestly desire his eternal salvation, and I hope to have such discourses with him, which may increase his zeal in adorning his spiritual vocation." (His son was a minister.) "I have yet spirit and utterance sufficient for this work. Let none be hindered from coming to me. It is usual for a man in my station, by admonishing others, publicly to make profession of his own faith. Not for the sake of a little vain-glory, O Lord, thou knowest; for it little concerns me to be approved unto men, provided, I may approve myself unto God. But I desire the salvation of many, and to give testimony to the truth of those things which I have publicly taught."

Some officers of the garrison having come to see him, two or three of whom were from France, he addressed them in the following manner, "I rejoice that I have an opportunity to make a confession of my faith before you that are my countrymen; and I pray you to keep it in memory, and give testimony of it, where it shall be necessary. You see before you, a man, weak indeed, but without guile, who solemnly protesteth, that he hath never published in his writings, nor taught with his lips, any thing that did not agree with the sense of his heart, and the doctrine which hath been delivered to us by the prophets and apostles, which is the same with that laid down in the Confession of Faith of our churches, in which I have lived, and in which I purpose to die. The Lord God Almighty confirm you in that faith, so that nothing may move you from it. 'For what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and then all other things shall be added unto you. Learn to number your days, and get a wise heart. Look upon me, and let me be as an example unto you.' It is but eight days since I preached to you of man's frailty, being myself in health and lively at that time, and now you see the truth of what I said, in myself." And then taking leave of them he said, "The Lord deliver you from the allurements of the world, and give you an increase of his fear and of all spiritual gifts." When his visiters were all gone, and his own family stood around his bed, he said to his niece, "My daughter do not depart from me, but persist with me in the duty of prayer. Do not fear to rehearse all those words to me, which God shall suggest unto thy heart or mouth. This sweet and pleasing communication shall help to pass over the night with the more ease. And God will be with us and assist our good intentions. He will help our weaknesses and afford us matter of supplications, and thanksgivings. Such discourses are pleasing unto him. He attends unto them that fear him, when they talk together of those things that belong to the salvation of their souls." And then, as one in a rapture, he exclaimed, "My God, thou hast drawn me and I was drawn. Thou hast known me from my mother's womb with a merciful and efficacious knowledge. Thou hast called me by name. Thou hast bored mine ears, and I was attentive. I have declared thy message in the congregation, and thy word was sweeter than honey in my mouth. Who am I, O God, but dust and ashes, an earthen and a frail vessel, into which, notwithstanding, thou hast been pleased to pour a holy liquor, and seed of immortality. Thou livest, and thou makest me to live. I shall not die, but live for ever, with that 'life which is hid with Christ in God.' Blessed and holy is he who hath a part in the first resurrection: over him the second death shall have no power. 'Behold I am dead, and also raised from the dead. I live, but not in myself, but in the life of the Son of God, who loved

me, and gave himself for me.' Thou hast chosen me before thou gavest me a being. And it pleased thee that I should be born of believing parents, and especially of a mother eminent in holiness, who dedicated me to thy service from my tender years. With what care and affection did she instil the seeds of piety into me. And the Almighty God, who worketh in all, gave his blessing to this diligent nurture, and heard his ardent prayers; and my ministry hath been accepted of him. I am thy servant, O my God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and I have taught thy wonderful works, and thy grace unto this day; for thy gifts have not been without fruit in me. Thou usest weak instruments for the accomplishing of thy work. Thou hast pardoned, thou hast helped me, thou hast accepted the truth and sincerity of my heart. And now, O my God, seeing it is evident that thou wilt have me retire from this valley of miseries, do not thou forsake me in this last and important act. If it be thy will, that I die, that also is my will. I am ready—my heart is prepared. I give thee my heart, for that is it which thou requirest. Let this gift be approved by thee. Receive this gift which is thy own, from him to whom thou hast given all things—who gives himself to thee. O Lord, I give thee thanks; thou instructest me, thou enlightenest me, thou talkest with my soul, O Lord. Thou embracest me in the arms of thy mercy. Grant also that I may embrace thee, by a lively faith, and that I may apply unto myself the promises of the gospel, which I have proposed unto others. Let them be effectual in me, that by them I may be supported against all pains, yea, death itself."

Mr. Rivet had a brother in the ministry nearly as eminent as himself, whom he loved with a very sincere and tender affection. The niece who now attended on him, was the daughter of this brother, and that he might know the gracious dealings of God towards him in his sickness, he requested his niece to write down whatever he might say, from time to time, and communicate it to her father. "Not," says he, "that I would procure praise to myself, but I would have it known to all, that the religion which I have professed and taught in the name of God, is the true religion, and that alone which leads men unto salvation; and, particularly, I would have my brother informed of that inestimable grace which I have received of God, that he may be abundantly comforted and strengthened in his expectation of a better life, which I already enjoy. O! with how great love have I loved and esteemed him! Yea, I have loved the gifts of God in him, and shall love them to the last. I pray God, who is the giver of every good gift, that he will strengthen and make perfect his own work in him. O, Lord God, I pray not only for my brother, but for all those in France to whom thou hast committed the conduct and rule of the churches; bless their persons, sanctify their gifts, grant that they may return to the simplicity which is in Christ, and that they detract not from the glory of God to ascribe unto man what belongs to his salvation." He now broke out in an extraordinary transport, "O great and immense mercy! who can but be rapt into admiration? He gives both being and well-being,—he bestows his gifts, he supporteth, he pardoneth, he worketh in us both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure, and when himself hath given and wrought all this, yet he gives to us an eternal reward." But not satisfied with sending messages to his brother, on the 2d day of January he requested to be raised up and placed in a chair, that he might write to him; and, accordingly, he penned, with his own hand, a farewell letter, full of solemnity and tenderness; he wrote also to his nephew,—after which exertion he found himself much exhausted. But the only thing which gave him any uneasiness of mind, was, lest he should be disappointed in seeing his son. But his comforts were not uninterrupted. After his regular physicians had given him up, some persons who had known relief, in such cases, from a particular remedy, urged that it should be tried. He submitted, but while the experiment put him to great pain, it produced no change for the

better; and when it was over, his mind appeared to be perturbed and uncomfortable. "Alas!" said he, "He is departed from me that made glad my heart. I have grieved that Holy Spirit, the comforter, who had filled my soul with peace and joy. I have been so wretched and unhappy as to give ear to those who spoke to me of my returning to the world. I have been tickled with the desire of living, and how could such a thing be, after the fruits of the heavenly Canaan had been tasted?" Here he appeared much distressed, and casting his arms about the neck of his beloved niece, exclaimed, "my dear niece, help me, continue to discourse of good things to me,—call upon the Comforter to return and renew that excellent work which he had begun in me. O, return! return! conform me with thy strength before I go hence and be seen no more." He remained in this state of distress for a short time—when he was reminded of the precious promises of God; but being exhausted, he fell into a swoon. When he opened his eyes, he said to his wife, who was by him, "my dearest yoke-fellow, we have lived together in peace for thirty years, and I thank thee for thy help, which hath been a great comfort unto me, for I did cast all domestic cares on thee; continue, I beseech thee, to love my children with that pious affection which thou hast hitherto," (the children were by a former wife). Then turning to his son, who had arrived that morning, he said, "and thou my son, love and honour this dearest companion of my life, the partner of all my joys and my sorrows, who hath done the duty of a mother towards thee,—this I desire of thee, and this I command thee, as thou expectest a blessing from God upon what I have gotten for my labour,—divide it between you, without quarrelling or contention, according to what is just and right. Then taking hold of both their hands and joining them together, he said, "promise that you will maintain a holy and mutual friendship with each other,"—to which they gave their assent. Then turning to his wife, he said, "the Lord bless thee, my dear love, and strengthen thee. He is a husband to the widow, and a father of the fatherless." And to his son, "the Almighty Father bless thee, my son, guide thee in all thy ways, enrich thee with all Christian virtues, and plentifully make thee to abound in all spiritual and temporal blessings! Regard not the world, nor its deceitful hopes, for the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof. Place all thy felicity in the blessing of God. Be strong in faith, and prepared unto every good work. Let the peace of God dwell in thee, and make thee peaceable and kind." And to his niece, he said, "Farewell, my dear niece, we have a kindred in the heavens, which shall endure for ever."

After many other similar discourses, to those recorded, he again collected his family and blessed them, and desired all to retire and leave him alone. His niece, who scarcely ever went out of his sight, asked, if he wished her to withdraw also, he said, "Do not go from me, but be thou a witness of my last hours." After he had exhausted himself with conversation with his son, Mr. Hulsins, and others, he was asked how he did, he said, "Very well—I feel no pain—I am filled with the grace of God—I am not sensible of cold or heat—I fear, no more, the inconveniences of temporal life—the Spirit of God strengthens me, and affords me abundant consolations. I have no doubt of my salvation. He hath set me on high. He hath hid me in his hiding place. He hath fenced me round about, and hath perfected whatsoever concerns me. I am like a vessel filled with pure water which no agitation troubles. It is God that justifieth me, who shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again." * * * "O my God, I thank thee that thou hast given me the spirit of humility, sincerity and truth. I have not been as a tinkling cymbal. O Lord, thou knowest the secrets of my soul, and my inmost thoughts. Thou hast taught me in the school of true doctrine, and I have above all sought the glory of thy name. O Lord, I wait for the moment which thou hast determined. I believe, I persevere. I am not troubled. The Spirit of God witnesseth with my spirit that I am a

child of God.”

Though every day was expected to be his last, yet the strength of his constitution enabled him to hold out until Saturday, January 7, 1651. To the last, he continued to spend his whole time, when awake, in prayer, and in such discourses as we have recorded. On Thursday morning, when he saw the light of day, he said, “It is day-light. I shall shortly no more know the difference between day and night. I am come to the eve of that great and eternal day, and am going to that place, where the sun shall no more give light. God will be an everlasting light unto me; and already, O Lord, thou sendest the rays of that light into my soul, and openest my eyes that I may perceive them. O how powerfully dost thou work in me! While this old man decays, thou puttest on me the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created it. Deliver me from this prison, that I may celebrate thy name; yet neither do I so condemn this body, as not to think of its restoration; for I know thy dead shall live, yea my dead body. It is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown a vile body, but it will rise a glorious body; it is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised again in power. In a word, it shall be conformed to the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is become the first fruits of them that sleep. I shall see him in my flesh—mine own eyes shall see him—I shall behold his face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied with his likeness when I awake.” The whole of this day was spent in such like discourses. Among other things, he said, “The sense of divine favour increased! in me every moment. My pains are tolerable, but my joys inestimable. I am no more vexed with earthly cares. I remember when any new book came out, how earnestly I have longed after it—but now all that is but dust. Thou art my all, O Lord, my good is to approach unto thee. O, what a library have I in God! in whom is all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Thou art the teacher of spirits—I have learned more divinity in these ten days that thou hast come to visit me, than I did in fifty years before.” The last words he attempted to utter, were those of Paul, “I have fought a good fight,” &c. and when others assisted him to finish them, he said, Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII(“tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0” \l “Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-”)

Death-bed exercises and speeches of Rev. Thomas Halyburton

Having in a former chapter given an account of Halyburton’s conversion, written by himself, in mature age, it will be gratifying to the pious reader to learn how he ended his course; and how his religion sustained him in the last trying conflict. And here, as in the case of Rivet, much opportunity was given to this holy man to leave behind him an ample testimony of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the power of divine grace to support and comfort the true believer, even in the pangs of dissolution. When first seized with mortal sickness, he experienced, for a while, a terrible conflict, in which he was afraid that his faith would fail; but his God was merciful and faithful to his promises, and came to his relief. To one who came to see him, he said, “I have a great conflict, and my faith is like to fail. O that I may be kept now in this last trial, that is ensuing, from being an offence to God and his people.” When some of his brethren came to see him, he said, “I am but young, and have but little experience, but this death-bed now makes me old, and therefore I use the freedom to exhort you to faithfulness in the Lord’s work. You will never repent this. He is a good Master, I have always found him so. If I had a thousand lives, I would think them all too little to employ in his service.” But for several days he was under a cloud, and his spiritual joys had deserted him; and when a friend came in, he said, “O what a terrible conflict I had yesterday; but

now I can say, 'I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith.' Now he has filled my mouth with a new song. 'Jehovah Jireh, in the mount of the Lord.' Praise, praise is comely for the upright. Shortly I shall get a different view of God from what I have ever had, and shall be more qualified to praise him than ever. O! the thoughts of an incarnate God are sweet and ravishing. And how do I wonder at myself that I do not love him more. O that I could honour him! What a wonder that I enjoy so much composure under all my bodily trouble, and in view of approaching death. O what a mercy, that I have the use of my reason till I have declared his goodness unto me." To his wife he said, "He came to me in the third watch of the night, walking upon the waters, and he said unto me, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I was dead and am alive, and live for ever more, and have the keys of hell and death.' 'He stilleth the tempest, and O there is a sweet calm in my soul.'" To one who requested him to be careful of his health, he replied, "I'll strive to last as long as I can, and I'll get my rest ere it be long. I have no more to do with time, but carefully to measure it out for the glory of God." Then he said, "I shall see my Redeemer stand on the earth at the last day; but I hope to see him before that, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. O it will be a beautiful company, 'The spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. O for grace, grace, to be patient to the end.' " When one said, "Keep the light of the window from him," he said, "Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun—the Sun of Righteousness. O glorious light, when the Lamb is the light of the temple. We cannot have a conception of it now, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c." Seeing his youngest child, he caused them to bring her to him, and said, "Mary, my dear, the Lord bless you. The God of your father and of my father bless you.—The God that fed me all my life.—The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless you and the rest, and be your portion. That is a goodly heritage, better than if I had crowns and sceptres to leave you. My child, I received you from him, and I give you to him again." To his wife he said, "Encourage yourself in the Lord. He will keep you, even though you come into enemies' hands, surely he will cause the enemy to treat you well." He then declared his willingness to part with his dearest relatives, and said, "For this is the practical part of religion; to make use of it when we come to the strait. This is a lesson of practical divinity." When the physician came in, he addressed him in the following solemn and pungent language, "Doctor, as to this piece of work you are nearly at an end of it. I wish you to lay it to heart; death will come to your door also. And it is a business of great moment to die like a Christian; and it is a rare thing. Christ himself has told us that there are few that shall be saved even among them who are outwardly called. I wish the Lord himself may show you kindness. The greatest kindness I am now capable of showing you is, to recommend serious religion to you. There is a reality in religion, Doctor, but this is an age that hath lost the sense of it. 'He has not said to the house of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain.' Atheists will one day see whether it be so or not. I bless God that I was educated by godly parents in the principles of the Church of Scotland. I bless him that when I came to riper years, I did, on mature deliberation, make these principles my choice. I bless the Lord, I have been helped ever since to adhere to them, without wavering. I bless him that I have seen that holiness yields peace and comfort in prosperity and adversity. What should I seek more, or desire more to give in evidence of the reality of religion? Therefore I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. I am so far from altering my thoughts of religion by reason of the present contempt thrown on it, and opposition made to it, that these things endear it the more to me." After much more of the same kind, he said, "Well, Doctor, the Lord be with you, and persuade you to be in earnest. I return you thanks for your attention." After a pause, he

proceeded, "Every one that is in Christ Jesus must be a new creature: he must have union with Christ and a new nature. That is the ground-work of religion. The Christian religion is little understood by the most of us. O, the gospel of Christ, how purely was it preached in this place, when I was at the university; though I found not the sweetness of it, at that time, as I have found it since. It has fallen on me like showers on the mown grass. Verily there is a reality in religion. Few have lively impressions of it. Now get acquaintance with God. The little acquaintance I have had with God these two days, has more than ten thousand times repaid the pains I have in all my life taken about religion. It is a good thing to have God to go to, when we are turning our face against the wall. 'He is known for a refuge in the palaces of Zion, a very present help in trouble.' O there is a strange hardness in the heart of man." To his children, he said, "My children, I have nothing to say to you, but that ye be seekers of God. Fulfil my joy. Alas! that I was so long in beginning to seek God! and yet I was touched with convictions that God was seeking me, before I arrived at the years of some of you." To his eldest daughter he said, "Margaret, you seem sometimes to have convictions; beware of them—they are the most dangerous things you ever meddled with: for although you seek not God, every one of them is God's messenger; and if you despise God's messenger, it will be avenged on you. My dear, seek the Lord, and be your mother's comfort."

He requested that the 138th of Mr. Rutherford's letters should be read to him, and then said, "This is a book I would recommend to you all; there is more practical religion in that letter, than in some large volumes." When the three ministers of the place came to see him, he addressed them with great fidelity and affection:—"Dear brethren, it is not from any confidence in myself, but out of a sincere love to you, and from what I myself have experienced, that for your encouragement I presumed to say: when the Lord helped me to diligence in studying and meditating, I found him then remarkably shining upon me, and testifying his approbation of a sincere mind. There is nothing to be had with a slack hand." And to one of them who had recently entered the ministry, "Your entry into His ministry, is likely to fall on an evil day; but there is one thing for your encouragement: you have a call. The times will make hard work for you in this place; but that which makes your work the harder is, that the people are hardened under a long course of pure gospel ordinances. However, be faithful, and God will strengthen his own work. I will not say that you will get things brought to the state you desire them; but I'll tell you I have ever thought, and I'll abide by it, if ministers will ply their work, though they cannot bring sinners to the Lord, they may make their consciences, that a prophet has been among them, speak for the Lord, whether they will or not."

"Now, brethren, give diligence, hold fast what ye have, I must say a word unto my brethren, it is on my heart; I am young, but I am near the end of my life, and that makes me old. It becomes me to take advice from you, however, I only wish to exhort you to diligence in the common salvation,—I repent I did no more, but I have peace in reflecting that what I did, I did sincerely. He accepted the mite. It was the delight of my heart to preach the gospel, and it made me sometimes neglect a frail body. I even thought if I could contribute to the saving of a soul, it would be to me a star, a crown—a glorious crown. I knew this was the thing that I aimed at—I desired to decrease, that the bridegroom might increase; and to be nothing, that He might be all, and I rejoice in his exaltation." To two ministers who came in from the country, he said, "brethren, we have need to take care, with the great apostle, lest when we have preached Christ to others, we ourselves should be castaways. We have need to fear, lest it be so. Happy is the man that feareth always. Be diligent in

preaching the gospel—let it be your care not only to be diligent in composing sermons, but, above all, to scan your own hearts, to enable you to dive into consciences to awaken hypocrites, and to separate the precious from the vile—and to do it with such accuracy as not to make sad the hearts of those whom God would have made glad. The great point in religion, and in the management of your ministry, is, that you may obtain the testimony of the great Shepherd, when he shall appear. As to the work of the ministry, it was my delight and my deliberate choice; and were my days lengthened out much more, and the times as troublesome as they are likely to be, I would rather be a continued minister of God, than the greatest prince on earth. I preached the gospel of Christ with pleasure, and loved it, for my own soul's salvation was upon it, and since I lay down, I have not changed my thoughts about it. I commend it to you all to double your diligence. There may be hard conflicts; you have a prospect of difficulties between you and the grave. We all appear good when untried, but we have need to have on the whole armour of God, to watch and be sober.” To his successor in the parish which he had served before he came to the University, he said, “I have this to say, as to that congregation, that people were my choice. With much peace and pleasure I preached as I could, though not as I should, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Though, in all things, I own myself to have sinned exceedingly before the Lord, yet I have the consolation that I anxiously aimed at leading them to the Lord Jesus, and another foundation can no man lay. I hope you will build on the same foundation, for, as you will in that way save your own soul, so it is the way to save them that hear you. From experience I can say, that the pursuing this sincerely, is the way of salvation. Signify to them that if it pleases the Lord to take me away, I die, rejoicing in the faith, and in the profession of what I preached to them, under a low state of body; and, that without this I could have no comfort. I would have my people understand, that the gospel which I recommended to them, if not received, will be a witness against them.” His successor remarked, “I am persuaded you have seals to your ministry in that parish.” He answered, “we are like our Master, set for the fall and rising again of many, though we can do no more; if we are faithful, they shall know that a prophet has been among them.”

Mr. Halyburton conversed much with his friends, and most of his discourses have been preserved, but we have only room for a small part of what he uttered on his death-bed. A specimen, however, will serve to show the spirit of the man, and the state of his mind, as well as the whole. There are still some of his dying speeches so excellent, that I cannot think that their insertion will appear tedious to the pious reader. But besides his discourses with his friends and visitors, he drew up a paper in the form of a last will or testimony, in which he gives at large his views of doctrine and worship. The whole of this paper is highly worthy of attention, but we can only insert the following extract:

“Everything in God's way and in his word is glorious, honourable, and like himself. He needs none of our testimonies; but it is the least that we can do to signify our wishes to have his praises celebrated. And I, being so many ways obliged, take this solemn occasion to acknowledge, before I leave the world, these, among many other innumerable obligations; and I desire to bequeath this as my last, best legacy, to my family, even my serious and solemn advice, that they should make choice of God for their God. He has been my father's God: the God both of my wife's predecessors and mine; and he has been, we hope, our God; and I recommend him to my children, for their God; solemnly charging them, even all of them, as they will be answerable on the great day, to make it their first care, to seek after peace with God, and reconciliation through Christ

crucified; and being reconciled, to make it their constant care to please him in all thing. I beseech them with all the bowels of a father, as they love their souls, that they sit not down short of a saving acquaintance with him; that they wait diligently upon the means of grace, and attend the worship of God in all duties, especially secret and family duties, and that they carefully attend public ordinances. Beware of contenting yourselves with the mere form of these duties, but cry to the Lord for communion in them; and for the outpouring of his Spirit, whereby ye may be enabled to worship God in spirit, who is a Spirit. It is my charge to you, and that in which I am more concerned than in any thing relating to you, that you follow him fully, without turning to the right hand, or to the left. In this way I dare promise you blessedness. If you follow this way, I do bless you all, and pray that He who blesses, and they who are blessed, may bless you all. I have, often as I could, devoted all of you to God; and there is nothing I have so much at heart, as that ye may indeed be the Lord's. And if ye turn aside from this way, I would have this be a standing witness against you, in the day of the Lord. O that God himself by his grace, may, in the day of his power, determine your tender hearts to seek him early; for then will He be a good portion unto you." When some people came in to see him, he said, "For these fourteen or fifteen years, I have been studying the promises; but I have seen more of the book of God this night, than in all that time. O the wisdom that is laid up in the book of God! I know, a great deal that comes from a dying man will go for canting and raving, but I bless God, that he has preserved to me the little judgment that I had, and I have been enabled, with composure, to reflect on his dealing with me. I am sober and composed, if I ever was so. And whether men will hear or forbear, this is my testimony. The operations of the Spirit of God, are ridiculed in this day; but if we take away the operations and influences of the Spirit of God, in religion, I know not what is left. He promised the Spirit to lead us into all truth. O that this generation would awake to seek after the quickening influences of the Spirit. O for a day of the down pouring of the Spirit from on high, in a work of conversion!—For such a day as that, when the Spirit of God effectually reached our fathers, and brought forth great men, and caused others to be conquered by them! 'The residue of the Spirit is with him.' " The state of the church was much on his mind, and he was greatly concerned for Scotland, lest a dry, formal, and merely rational religion should prevail; of which he saw some symptoms. He expressed also strong apprehensions that the judgments of God were about to be inflicted on his country. The welfare of his pupils also engaged much of his attention. He often expressed a desire to have them around him, that he might give them one practical lecture from his death bed. But as this could not be done, it being vacation, he dictated a letter to the students of theology, in which he gives them solemn and useful advice. He recommended to them the perusal of the writings of the great Dr. Owen; but immediately added, "But the word of God, in dependence on the Spirit of God, must be your study and meditation, day and night. Words cannot express what I have found of God, since I came to this bed of languishing; I am bold to recommend to you this work, as the most noble, honourable, and advantageous you can be employed in. And I am this day sure, from experience, that it is better to serve the Lord in the gospel of his Son, than to serve the greatest princes on earth, in the highest station. If God help you in this service, the reward is too great to be expressed. My thoughts, my words are swallowed up, and my affection toward you is such, that my body would quite sink to speak what is in my heart, of love to you, and desire to have you acquainted with my dearest Lord, to whom I was always deeply obliged, but am now so much indebted that I fear to mention how good he has been to my soul. O choose him—cleave to him—serve him—study to know him more and more—live in communion with him. Never rest until

you reach eternal communion with him. I have desired my brother-in-law to sign this in my name. I wish nothing more than that when you have done much service to the church here, I may have the happiness of hearing you approved by the Great Shepherd." As his disease was a pulmonary consumption, he lasted long, and retained the uninterrupted exercise of his reason, and after the first severe conflict, of which mention was made, he enjoyed peace and joy without intermission, and manifested in manifold ways, and particularly by his heavenly discourse, the power of divine grace, and the eminence of that faith in Christ, by which he was so remarkably supported to the end. He lost no opportunity of seeking to benefit all who approached him, and often addressed himself to his wife and children individually, in the most tender and earnest manner. And as many ministers came to see him, he exercised great fidelity in his solemn exhortations to them, to be diligent and faithful in the work of the Lord. At length the powers of nature were exhausted, and for some days he was in a dying state. Among his last words were, "Free grace, free grace—not unto me." And when his speech had utterly failed, when one said, I hope you are encouraging yourself in the Lord, he lifted up his hands and clapped them.

CHAPTER XIX("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Dying Experience of Mr. John Janeway, the Rev. Edward Payson, and Rev. Samuel Finley, D. D.

Mr. Janeway was a young man who had just entered the holy ministry, when he was called away, and exchanged earth for heaven. He was never permitted to preach more than two sermons, before his lungs were so affected, that he was obliged to cease from his earthly labours. During his last days, he was absorbed in the contemplation of Christ and heaven. His meditations, his discourses, his whole deportment, made it evident, that he was ripening for glory. His faith had grown up to a full assurance, and he often feasted on the rich provisions of God's house, and enjoyed many foretastes of future blessedness. The Lord often called him up to the mount and let him see his glory. In the midst of earthly comforts, he longed for death, and his thoughts of the day of judgment were refreshing to him. He would say, "What if the day of judgment were come, even this hour, I would be glad with all my heart. I should behold such lightnings, and hear such thunderings as Israel did at the mount, and I am persuaded, my heart would leap for joy. The meditation of that day, hath even ravished my soul; and the thoughts of its certainty and nearness, are more refreshing to my soul, than all earthly comforts. Surely nothing can more revive my spirit, than to behold the blessed Jesus, who is the life and joy of my soul." When he began to sink rapidly under his complaint, his soul was so devoutly occupied in the contemplation of Christ and heaven, that he almost forgot his pains and sickness. His faith, his love, and his joy, exceedingly abounded. He would frequently exclaim, "Oh! that I could let you know what I feel! Oh, that I could show you what I now see! Oh, that I could express the thousandth part of that sweetness which I now find in Christ! You would then all think it worth while to make religion your chief business. Oh, my dear friends, you little think what Christ is worth upon a death-bed. I would not now for a world, nay, for a million of worlds, be without Christ and pardon. I would not for a world live any longer, and the very thought of a possibility of recovery, makes me tremble. I do tell you, that I so long to be with Christ, that I could be content to be cut in pieces, and put to the most exquisite tortures, so I might die and be with Christ. Oh how sweet Jesus is. 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.' Death do thy worst. Death has lost its terrors. Through grace, I can say death is nothing to me. I can as easily die as shut my eyes. I long to die—I long to be with Christ." He charged his friends most earnestly, not to pray for his life. "Oh the glory, the unspeakable glory which I behold—my heart is

full—my heart is full. Christ smiles, and I am constrained to smile. Can you find it in your hearts to stop me, now I am going to the complete and eternal enjoyment of Christ? Would you keep me from my crown? The arms of my blessed Saviour are open to receive me. The angels stand ready to carry my soul into his bosom. Oh, did you see but what I see, you would cry out with me, 'Dear Lord, how long.' 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.' 'Oh why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming.' ” A minister having spoken to him of the joys of heaven, he said, “Sir, I feel something of it. My heart is as full as it can hold in this lower state. I can hold no more. Oh, that I could but let you know what I feel. Who am I Lord, who am I, that thou shouldst be mindful of me? Why me, Lord, why me? and pass by thousands to look on such a wretch as I. Oh, what shall I say unto thee, thou preserver of men? Oh blessed, and for ever blessed, be free grace. Why is it Lord that thou shouldst manifest thyself unto me and not to others? 'Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight.' Thou wilt have mercy, because thou wilt have mercy. And if thou wilt look on such a worm, who can hinder? Who would not love thee, O blessed Father? Oh how sweet and gracious hast thou been to me! Oh, that He should have me in his thoughts before the foundation of the world. On one occasion, after his brother had been praying with him, his joys became unutterable, he broke out in such exclamations as these, “Oh, He is come—He is come—how sweet, how glorious, is the blessed Jesus! He is altogether lovely. How shall I speak the thousandth part of his praise? Oh for words to set forth a little part of his excellency! Come look on a dying man and wonder. Was there ever greater kindness? Were there ever more sensible manifestations of grace? Oh why me, Lord, why me? Surely this is akin to heaven, and if I were never to enjoy more than this, it is more than a sufficient recompense for all that men and devils could inflict. If this be dying, it is sweet. The bed is soft. Christ's arms, and smiles, and love, surely would turn hell into heaven. Oh that you did but see and feel what I do. Behold a dying man, more cheerful than you ever saw a man in health, in the midst of his sweetest worldly enjoyments. Oh sirs, worldly pleasures are poor, pitiful, sorry things, when compared with this glory in my soul.” He often exhorted those around him to assist him in his praises. “Oh,” said he, “help me to praise God. Henceforth, through eternity, I have nothing else to do but to love and praise the Lord. I cannot tell what to pray for, which is not already given me. I want only one thing, and that is, a speedy lift to heaven. I expect no more here. I desire no more—I can bear no more. Oh praise, praise, praise that boundless love which hath wonderfully looked upon my soul, and hath done more for me, than for thousands of his children. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. O my friends, help me, help me, to admire and praise Him who hath done such astonishing wonders for my soul. He hath pardoned all my sins and filled me with his goodness. He hath given me grace and glory, and no good thing hath He withheld from me. All ye mighty angels help me to praise God. Let every thing that hath being help me to praise Him. Praise is my work now, and will be my work for ever. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!” A few hours before his death he had his mother and brothers and sisters called around his bed, when in a most solemn and affecting manner he addressed himself in turn to each, and took leave of them. To his mother he offered his thanks for her tender love, and expressed his desire that she might see Christ formed in the hearts of all her children, and meet them all with joy at the day of judgment. Then he took his brothers and sisters in order, and offered an appropriate petition for each. He then said, “Oh, that none of us may be found among the unconverted in the day of judgment! Oh, that we may all appear with our honoured father and dear mother, before Christ with joy. Oh, that we may live to God here, and live with God hereafter. And now, my dear mother,

brothers, and sisters, farewell!" His last words were, "thy work is done—I have fought a good fight," &c. "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." After which he immediately expired. No man, in our country, has left behind him a higher character for eminent piety, than the Rev. Edward Payson. His views and exercises, when near death, will answer well to be placed by the side of those of Mr. John Janeway. When this faithful pastor found that his end was approaching he felt a strong desire to address some advice to his flock, he therefore had it announced from the pulpit, that he would be pleased to see as many of them as could make it convenient to come to his house, and appointed them a time. To them, when assembled, he spake nearly as follows: "It has often been remarked that people who have gone to the other world cannot come back to tell us what they have seen; but I am so near the eternal world, that I can see almost as clearly, as if I were there; and I see enough to satisfy myself, at least, of the truth of the doctrines which I have preached. I do not know that I should feel at all surer had I been there. It is always interesting to see others in a situation in which we know we must shortly be placed ourselves; and we all know that we must die. And to see a poor creature, when, after an alternation of hopes and fears, he finds that his disease is mortal, and death comes to tear him away from every thing he loves, and crowds him to the very verge of the precipice of destruction, and then thrusts him down headlong. There he is cast into an unknown world; no friend, no Saviour to receive him. O how different is this, from the state of a man who is prepared to die! He is not obliged to be crowded along, but the other world comes like a great magnet to draw him away from this; and he knows that he is going to enjoy—and not only knows but begins to taste it—perfect happiness, for ever, for ever, and ever. And now God is in this room. I see Him! and O, how unspeakably lovely and glorious does he appear! worthy of ten thousand hearts, if we had so many. He is here, and hears me pleading with the creatures that he has made, whom he preserves and loads with blessings, to love him. And how terrible does it appear to me to sin against this God—to set up our wills in opposition to his. It makes my blood run cold to think how miserable I should now be without religion. To lie here and see myself tottering on the verge of destruction. O, I should be distracted. And when I see my fellow creatures in this situation, I am in an agony for them, that they may escape the danger before it be too late. Suppose we should hear the sound of some one pleading earnestly with another, and we should inquire, what is that man pleading for so earnestly? O, he is only pleading with a fellow creature, to love his God, his Saviour, his Preserver, his Benefactor. He is only pleading with him, not to throw away his immortal soul; not to pull down everlasting wretchedness on his own head. He is only persuading him to avoid eternal misery and accept eternal happiness. 'Is it possible,' we should exclaim, 'that any persuasion can be necessary for this?' And yet it is necessary. O, my friends! do, do love this glorious Being. Do seek for the salvation of your immortal souls. Hear the voice of your dying minister, while he entreats you to care for your souls." On another occasion, he said, "I find satisfaction in looking at nothing that I have done. I have not fought, but Christ has fought for me. I have not run, but Christ has carried me. I have not worked, but Christ has wrought in me. Christ has done all." The perfections of God were to him a well-spring of joy, and the promises were breasts of consolation, whence his soul drew aliment and comfort. "O," exclaimed he, "the loving kindness of God. His loving kindness! This afternoon, while I was meditating, the Lord seemed to pass by and proclaim himself, 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious.' 'O how gracious!' Try to conceive of that—'his loving kindness,' as if it were not enough to say kindness, but loving kindness! What must be the loving kindness of the Lord who is himself infinite in love? It seemed, as if Christ had said to me, 'You have often wandered, and

been impatient of the way, by which I have led you; but what do you think of it now?' And I was cut to the heart, when I looked back and saw the goodness by which I had been guided, that I could ever for a moment, distrust his love?" To a minister who called upon him, he said, "That the point in which he believed ministers failed most, and in which he had certainly failed most, was in doing duty professionally, and not from the heart." He said also, "I have never valued as I ought the doctrines which I have preached. The system is great and glorious, and is worthy of our utmost efforts to promote it. The interests depending will justify us in our strongest measures. In every respect we may embark our all upon it; it will sustain us."—"I was never fit to say a word to a sinner, except when I had a broken heart myself; when I was subdued and melted into penitence, and felt just as if I had received pardon to my own soul; and when my heart was full of tenderness and pity." He seemed to be greatly affected with a view of the grace of God, in saving lost men; and especially, that it should be bestowed on one so ill-deserving as himself. "O how sovereign! O how sovereign! Grace is the only thing that can make us like God. I might be dragged through heaven, earth, and hell, and I should still be the same sinful, polluted wretch, unless God himself should renew and cleanse me." In conversation with his eldest daughter, being asked whether self-examination was not a very difficult duty for young Christians, "Yes," he replied, "and for old ones, too; because it is displeasing to the pride of the heart, because wandering thoughts are then most apt to intrude, and because of the deceitfulness of the heart. When a Christian first looks into his heart, he sees nothing but confusion—a heap of sins, and very little good, mixed up together; and he knows not how to separate them, or how to begin self-examination. But let him persevere in his efforts, and order will arise out of confusion." She mentioned to him a passage in the life of Alleine, which led him to say, "We never confess any faults that we really think disgraceful. We complain of our hardness of heart, stupidity, &c., but we never confess envy, covetousness, and revenge, or any thing that we suppose will lower us in the opinion of others; and this proves that we do not feel ashamed of coldness and stupidity. In short, when young Christians make confessions, unless there is an obvious call for it, it commonly proceeds from one of the following motives: either they wish to be thought very humble, and to possess great knowledge of their own hearts; or they think it is a fault which the other has perceived, and they are willing to have the credit of having discovered, and striven against it; or they confess some fault from which they are remarkably free, in order to elicit a compliment." His solicitude for the welfare of his people was so great, that though he had given them one solemn address, he was not contented with that, but sent for particular classes of them. On one day, he had the young men of the congregation assembled around him, when he delivered to them a peculiarly solemn, tender, and appropriate exhortation. He also sent an affectionate valedictory address to the association of ministers with whom he had been connected. The substance of it was, "A hearty assurance of the ardent love with which he remembered them even in death—an exhortation to love one another with a pure heart fervently—to love their work—to be diligent in it—to expect success, and to bear up under discouragements—to be faithful unto death, and to look for their reward in Heaven."

While speaking of the rapturous views which he had of Heaven, he was asked if it did not appear like the clear light of vision, rather than that of faith. He said, "I don't know—it is too much for the poor eyes of my soul to bear—they are almost blinded with the excessive brightness. All I want is, to be a mirror, to reflect some of those rays to those around me."—"My soul, instead of growing weaker and more languishing, as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body, and join those around the throne." When asked, whether it

was now incredible to him, that the martyrs should rejoice in the flames and on the rack, “No,” said he, “I can easily believe it. I have suffered twenty times as much as I could in being burnt at the stake, while my joy in God so abounded, as to render my sufferings not only tolerable, but welcome. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” At another time, he said, “God is now literally my all in all. While He is present with me, no event can in the least diminish my happiness; and were the whole world at my feet, trying to minister to my comfort, they could not add one drop to the cup.” “It seems as if the promise to wipe away all tears, is already accomplished, as it relates to tears of sorrow. I have no tears to shed now but tears of love, and joy, and thankfulness.” Shortly before his decease he was heard to break forth in a soliloquy, of which the following is a specimen:—“What an assemblage of motives to holiness, does the gospel present? I am a Christian; what then? I am a redeemed sinner—a pardoned rebel—all through grace, and by the most wonderful means which infinite wisdom could devise. I am a Christian; what then? Why I am a temple of God, and surely I ought to be pure and holy. I am a Christian; what then? Why I am a child of God, and ought to be filled with filial love and reverence, joy, and gratitude. I am a Christian; what then? Why I am a disciple of Christ, and must imitate him who was meek and lowly of heart, and pleased not himself. I am a Christian.—Why I am an heir of Heaven, and hastening on to the abodes of the blessed.” “It seems as if my soul had found a pair of new wings, and was eager to try them, that in her fluttering she would rend the fine knit-work of the body to pieces.” He had the choir to come in and sing for him, and chose the hymn, “Rise my soul,” &c. Soon after which he expired, October 21, 1827. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Finley, who had been for some time President of New Jersey College, upon being informed by his physicians that his disease was incurable, expressed his entire resignation, and exclaimed, “welcome, Lord Jesus.” On the Sabbath preceding his death, Dr. Clarkson, one of his physicians, told him that he observed a manifest alteration, and that he could not live many days; he said, “may the Lord bring me near himself! I have been waiting with a Canaan hunger for the promised land. I have often wondered that God suffered me to live. I have more wondered that he ever called me to be a minister of his word. He has often afforded me much strength which I have abused. He has returned in mercy. Oh, how faithful are the promises of God! O that I could see him as I have seen him before, in his sanctuary. Although I have as earnestly desired death, as the hireling pants for the evening shade, yet will I wait all the days of my appointed time. I have often struggled with principalities and powers, and have been brought to the borders of despair. Lord, let it suffice.” He then closed his eyes and sat up and prayed fervently that God would show him his glory, before he departed hence; that he would enable him to endure patiently to the end—and, particularly, that he might be kept from dishonouring the ministry. He then resumed his discourse, and said, “I can truly say that I have loved the service of God. I know not in what language to speak of my own unworthiness—I have been undutiful—I have honestly endeavoured to act for God, but with much weakness and corruption.” Then lying down again, he said, “a Christian’s death is the best part of his experience. The Lord has made provision for the whole way; provision for the soul, and provision for the body. The Lord has given me many souls, as the crowns of my rejoicing. Blessed be God—eternal rest is at hand. Eternity is but long enough to enjoy my God. This, this has animated me in my severest studies. I was ashamed to take rest here. Oh, that I could be filled with the fulness of God! that fulness which fills heaven.” Being asked whether he would choose to live or die, he said, “to die, though I cannot but feel the same strait that Paul did when he knew not which to choose. ‘For me to live, is Christ—but to die, is

gain.' But should God, by a miracle, prolong my life, I would still continue to serve him. His service has been sweet to me. I have loved it much. I have tried my Master's yoke, and will never shrink my neck from it. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light!" One said to him, "you are more cheerful and vigorous, sir." "Yes, I rise or fall, as eternal life seems nearer or further off." It being remarked that he always used the appellation, "dear Lord," in his prayers, he answered, "O, He is very dear! very precious, indeed. How pretty is it for a minister to die on the Sabbath! I expect to spend the remainder of this Sabbath in heaven." One said, "you will soon join the blessed society of heaven—you will for ever hold converse with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with the spirits of the just made perfect—with old friends, and many old fashioned people." "Yes sir," he replied, with a smile, "but they are a most polite people now." He expressed great gratitude to his friends around him, and said, "may the Lord repay you for your tenderness to me! may he bless you abundantly, not only with temporal, but with spiritual blessings." Turning to his wife, he said, "my dear, I expect to see you shortly in glory." Seeing a member of the second Presbyterian Church present, he said, "I have often preached and prayed among you, my dear sir, and the doctrines I preached are now my support, and, blessed be God, they are without a flaw. May the Lord bless and preserve your church! He designs good for it yet, I trust." To a person from Princeton he said, "give my love to the people of Princeton, and tell them that I am going to die, and that I am not afraid to die."

He would sometimes cry out, "the Lord Jesus will take care of his cause in the world." Upon waking, next morning, he exclaimed, "O, what a disappointment I have met with—I expected this morning to have been in heaven." On account of his extreme weakness, he was unable to speak much during the day, but all that he said was in the language of triumph. Next morning, with a pleasing smile on his countenance, he cried out, "O I shall triumph over every foe—the Lord hath given me the victory. Now I know that it is impossible that faith should not triumph over earth and hell—I exult—I triumph. O, that I could see untainted purity! I think I have nothing to do but die—yet, perhaps, I have—Lord show me my task." He then said, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commit my spirit—I do it with confidence—I do it with full assurance. I know that thou wilt keep that which I have committed to thee. I have been dreaming too fast of the time of my departure, for I find it does not yet come—but the Lord is faithful, and will not tarry beyond the appointed time." In the afternoon, the Rev. Mr. Spencer came to see him, and said, "I have come, dear sir, to see you confirm by facts, the gospel you have been preaching. Pray sir, how do you feel?" To which he replied, "Full of triumph—I triumph through Christ. Nothing clips my wings but the thoughts of my dissolution being prolonged—O that it were to night! My very soul thirsts for eternal rest." Mr. Spencer asked him what he saw in eternity to excite such vehement desires in his soul. He said, "I see the eternal love and goodness of God. I see the fulness of the Mediator. I see the love of Jesus. O to be dissolved and to be with him! I long to be clothed with the complete righteousness of Christ." He then requested Mr. Spencer to pray with him before they parted, and said, "I have gained the victory over the devil; pray to God to preserve me from evil, to keep me from evil in this critical hour; and to support me with his presence through the valley of the shadow of death."

He spent the remainder of the day, in taking an affectionate and solemn leave of his friends, and exhorting such of his children as were with him. On the next day, July 16, the conflict was terminated. He was no longer able to speak, but a friend having desired him to give a token by which his friends might know, whether he still continued to triumph, he lifted up his hand, and

uttered the word "yes." About nine o'clock, he fell into a sound sleep, and appeared much more free from pain than he had been for many days before. He continued to sleep, without changing his position, till about one o'clock, when he expired, without a groan or a sigh. During his whole sickness he was never heard to utter a repining word; and in taking leave of his dearest friends, he was never seen to shed a tear, or exhibit any sign of sorrow. His remains were interred in the Second Presbyterian Church, on the corner of Mulberry or Arch and Third streets; by the side of his dear friend the Rev. Gilbert Tennent. From this resting place, their dust and bones were removed to the burying ground on Arch street, when the church was removed. Mrs. Finley survived her husband many years, the latter part of which time she was entirely blind; but bore the affliction with meek and cheerful submission.

CHAPTER XX("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Remarks on Death-bed Exercises, with several illustrative examples

The cases of religious experience, at the close of life, which have been presented to the reader, furnish much reason for encouragement and hope to the real Christian. We learn from them, that death, however terrible to nature, may be completely divested of its terrors; that the Christian religion when it has been cordially embraced, has power to sustain the soul in the last conflict; that the supplies of grace may be so rich and abundant, that the bed of death may be the happiest situation which the child of God ever occupied, and his last hours the most comfortable of his whole life; that it is possible for such a flood of divine consolation to be poured into the soul, that the pains of the body are scarcely felt; by which we may understand how it was that the martyrs could rejoice in the midst of flames, and on the rack. We learn, also, that these blessed communications of the joy of the Holy Ghost, are derived to the soul, through the promises of God; and that all that is necessary to fill it with these divine consolations, is a firm and lively faith. There is, in all these extatic and triumphant feelings, nothing miraculous; nothing different from the common mode of God's dealing with his people, except in the degree. The things of eternity are more clearly apprehended; confidence in the promises is more unshaken; submission to the will of God is more unreserved, and gratitude for his goodness more fervent. Another thing suggested by such happy death-bed exercises, is, that the dying saint never entertained a more humble sense of his own unworthiness, than during this season of the anticipation of the joys of heaven. These experiences, therefore, furnish strong evidence of the truth of the doctrines of grace; indeed, free grace is the predominant theme in the minds of these highly favoured servants of God. It is also highly worthy of our marked attention, that the Lord Jesus Christ is precious to the dying believer, in proportion as his consolations abound. He attributes all that he enjoys, or hopes for, to this blessed Redeemer. And He who loved him, and died for him, is most faithful to his gracious promises, at this trying moment. Now, when heart and flesh fail, He will be the strength of their hearts. Now, he enables them to say, with confidence, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and staff comfort me." Death is, indeed, a formidable enemy when armed with his envenomed sting; but when this sting is extracted, death is harmless; death comes as a friend to release us from a body of sin and misery; "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," but when the law has received a full satisfaction, and all sin is pardoned through the blood of Christ, the sting exists no longer. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather who is risen again. "Precious in the sight of God is

the death of his saints.” The meek shall sing even on a dying bed. Here, often, the timid grow bold; the feeble, strong. Here doubts and fears which harassed the weary pilgrim, all the journey through, are dismissed for ever; and that joyful assurance is realized, which had long been ardently desired and hoped for. Where else, but among real Christians, do we witness such happy scenes, at the near approach of death? Can the infidel point to any of his associates, who could thus exult in the prospect of death? Can the man of the world exhibit any thing like this? Alas! they are driven away from all they love: they may die stupidly; they may be under an awful, blinding delusion; but the positive joys of the believer, they cannot experience. Now, as we must all die, and that soon, ought we not to take all pains, and use all possible diligence, to be ready to die the death of the righteous? When that awful hour shall arrive, worldly honours, and worldly possessions, will be nothing to us. Royal sceptres and crowns, and treasures, will be utterly unavailing; but the humble believer, however racked with pain of body, is safe in the hands of a kind Redeemer, who having himself experienced the pangs of death, knows how to sympathize with and succour his beloved disciples, when they are called to this last trial. He will not then forsake those whom he has supported through their whole pilgrimage. His everlasting arms of love and faithfulness will be placed underneath them, and he will bear them as on eagles’ wings. Truly then, for them to die, is gain! They rest from their labours, exchange darkness, sin, and sorrow, for perfect light, perfect purity, and perfect felicity. Lift up your heads, then, ye servants of God, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. With some of us, it must be near the dawn. The darkness will soon be past for ever. Let us then rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and wait till our salvation cometh. Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

But, it may be asked, do all real Christians die in such joy and triumph, as those whose experience has been related? No; this is not pretended. Some, no doubt, die under a cloud, and go out of the world in distressing doubt respecting their eternal destiny. It is to guard against such an event, that we would exhort all professors of religion, and include ourselves in the number, to begin in time to make preparation for death. Dear brethren, let us look well to the foundation of our hope; we cannot bestow too much pains and diligence in making our calling and election sure. We shall never regret, on a death-bed, that we were too much concerned to secure the salvation of our souls; or, that we were too careful in making preparation for another world. Let us remember that our time on earth is short, and that whatever is done, must be done quickly. There will be no opportunity of coming back to rectify what has been done amiss, or to supply what is wanting. “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” Let us work while it is day, knowing that the dark night cometh when no man can work. Let us then awake to righteousness. Let us watch and be sober. Let us put on the armour of light, and especially let us see to it, that we have on the wedding garment; else we shall never find admittance to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. The only robe which can bear the scrutinizing inspection of the King, is the perfect and spotless robe of Christ’s imputed righteousness. This will render us acceptable in the Beloved. With this, we must put on the robe of inherent righteousness; for “without holiness, no man shall see the Lord;” and these two, though distinct, are never separated. Only, the latter is never perfect until we come to the end of our course; and this single consideration should reconcile us to the thoughts of death; that then we shall be freed from all sin. O how blessed is that state, where we shall see no more darkly through a glass, but face to face; where we shall know no more in part, but as we are known. O bright and delightful vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Surely this is

worth dying for. But it may be asked, is there not evidence of too much excitement, in the experiences which have been narrated? May not a part at least of the elevated and exhilarated feelings be the effect of an accelerated circulation? People who die of pulmonary consumption are apt to be sanguine, and to indulge buoyant hopes even in regard to recovery. In answer, I would say, that this may be admitted to have some effect in increasing the degree of excitement; but it never can account for the bright views and unspeakable joys which some experience. And the truth is, we are poor judges of the degree of elevated excitement, which the sense of God's love will produce.

It must be confessed, that while we may admire and breathe after such an elevated and triumphant state of mind, as was experienced by those of whom some account has been given; yet we cannot so readily sympathize with such high emotions, as with a more calm and deliberate frame of spirit. Indeed, it is here as in health, when we see persons much excited in regard to religion, or any thing else, we do not place such entire confidence in what they utter, as when the same persons calmly and soberly express their sentiments. The reason is, that in all great excitements the imagination and feelings predominate over the judgment; and experience teaches that in all such cases there is a tendency to exaggeration, and to the use of strong expressions; and it cannot be doubted that, in some cases, the religious exultation experienced is somewhat delirious. The nervous system loses its tone, and although its agitations are violent, they are somewhat irregular and excessive, so as to produce an irrepressible thrilling through the soul. It is not wonderful, that while the mysterious connexion between soul and body is coming to an end, there should be something in the emotions new, and in the looks, tones, and gestures, out of the common way. This does not alter or vitiate the nature of the pious exercises of the soul, though it may modify them, and give them a peculiar aspect and expression. If any person chooses to suppose, that in some of the cases specified, while faith was triumphant, and hope full of assurance, that there might be superadded an exhilaration arising out of the peculiar state of the body, he will not have me objecting. The last exercises of that useful and devoted man, Jeremiah Evarts, were very remarkable for the degree of powerful excitement manifested; and the more remarkable, because his mind was highly intellectual, and very little subject to excitement, in common. Still it was well known to those intimate with him, that when he was aroused, his feelings were very strong.

Often, officious friends and physicians are extremely averse to have any thing said to their friends, on the subject of religion, when they are sick, lest it should disturb their minds, and so increase the violence of the disease. I would not, it is true, admit every loquacious old man or woman, into the chamber of a friend dangerously ill, but a discreet and pious counsellor is of great value at such a time. If the patient is hopefully pious, none can doubt the propriety and comfort of aiding such by holding forth to their views the rich promises of a faithful God. But even when the character of the sick is different, it often gives relief to have an opportunity of conversation with a pious friend or minister. Anxious feelings, pent up in the soul and finding no vent, are far more injurious than a free expression of them; and if the person is in danger of death, will you, can you, be guilty of the cruelty of debarring them from the only opportunity of salvation, which they may ever have? If you do, their blood will be found in your skirts. To show how erroneous the opinion is, that religious conversation tends to injure the sick by increasing his disease, I will relate a fact which fell under my own observation. A young gentleman of fortune and liberal education, had been for some

months thinking seriously about his soul's salvation; but the work had not come to any maturity, when by making too great an exertion of his bodily strength, he ruptured a large blood vessel in the lungs, and was brought to death's door; not being able to speak above a low whisper. Having been a pupil of mine, I was permitted to see him, and upon asking the state of his mind, he whispered in my ear, that he was overwhelmed with the most awful darkness and terror—not one ray of light dawned upon his miserable soul. I prayed with him and presented to him a few gospel invitations and promises, and left him, never expecting to see him alive. Next day I called, the physician coming out of his room, informed me, that while they were waiting for his last breath, a favourable change seemed unexpectedly to have taken place, and that he had revived a little. When I approached his bed, he looked joyfully in my face, pressed my hand, and said, "All is well—I have found peace—this morning, about the dawn, I had the most delightful view of Christ, and of his ability and willingness to save me." And upon inquiry, I found, that that was the moment when the favourable change took place in his symptoms. Faith and joy accomplished what no medicine could, and acted as a reviving cordial to his dying body. He so far recovered as to live a number of years afterwards; though his lungs were never sound; and his consistent walk and conversation attested the reality of his change. He soon joined himself to the communion of the church, and died in her communion.

While spending a summer in Germantown, near Philadelphia, I was sent for to visit a young man, whom I had often seen. He did not belong to my charge, but two pious ladies who did, were his friends, and had come out of the city to nurse him. He had a hemorrhage of the lungs, which left little room to hope for recovery. As he was a mild and moral man, I did not know, but that he might be a professor of religion; but upon asking him a question respecting his hope, he frankly told me that he had been skeptical for many years, and had no belief that the gospel was divine. I never felt more at a loss. The man was too weak to attend to argument, and if I could by reasoning convince him of his error, it would not be a saving faith, and he must die before this process could be gone through. I found that his infidelity afforded him no comfort in a dying hour, and that he wished he could believe in Christ. It occurred to me that the word of God contained light and energy in itself, and that if he could not attend to the external evidences, the beams of truth might shine in upon his soul, and thus generate a saving faith by the efficient aid of the Spirit. After pointing out the probable sources of his skepticism, I requested the ladies who were attending on him, to read certain portions of the gospel to him, as he could bear it—for he was very low. This was done; and next day, when I came to see him, he declared that his doubts were all scattered, and that he had hope in Christ. Afterwards, he was never able to converse; but as far as is known died in hope.

I never saw any one approach death so deliberately and composedly, as the late Rev. Robert Ray, pastor of the church of Freehold, in New Jersey. He had spent a winter at St. Augustine, with the hope of restoring his health, but came home more diseased than before he went. His lungs were deeply affected, and he foresaw that his end was approaching. But as long as he was able to speak, he caused himself to be carried to the church and to be assisted into the pulpit, where he would preach and exhort until his breath failed, when he would pant as if about to die, and then be conveyed home as he came. This was done not once or twice, but for many weeks; for he said, as he must die, he might as well die preaching; and he felt a strong desire to be the means of saving the people committed to his charge; and he hoped that a voice of affectionate warning from the

grave might have the effect of awakening some of them. As he suffered but little acute pain, he appeared until his dying day, as calm and cheerful, as a man long absent from home, would when the time came to return to his friends. He conversed as familiarly and composedly about his approaching change, as if there was nothing formidable in it. Indeed, it had no terrors for him. Even when death was upon him, having observed some of his neighbours coming in, he said, "Well, you have come to see your pastor die." He then remarked, that his feelings were very peculiar, such as he never experienced before; and without any perturbation of mind or bodily agony, he gently fell asleep.

Wishing, in these experiences of dying saints to give as great a variety as is compatible with my limits, I will now extract an account of the last illness of Mrs. Susan Huntington, of Boston, taken down by her pastor, the Rev. Dr. Wisner, after his visits to her sick room.

Tuesday, October 28, 1823. Called on Mrs. Huntington about half-past nine in the morning. Found that she had failed considerably since my last visit. To an inquiry respecting the state of her mind, she said, "I think I have felt more of the presence of Christ, than when I saw you last. I have not had those strong views and joyful feelings, with which I have sometimes been favoured. My mind is weak; I cannot direct and fix my thoughts as I once could. But I think I have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before me in the precious gospel; and He who is the foundation of that hope will never forsake me." Then, with a most interesting expression of countenance, she said, "I trust we shall meet in Heaven, and spend an eternity in praising our dear Redeemer." "I feel," said she, "that I have been very, very unfaithful; but He is merciful—his blood cleanseth from all sin: and I trust he has blotted out my sins from the book of his remembrance. O what should we do without Christ?" "As much debtors to free grace at the end of our course as at the beginning," observed her pastor. "More, far more," she replied, "for we sin against greater light and love, after we are born again. Yes, it is all free grace—if it were not, what would become of me?" It was answered, "You would have perished—justly perished." "Yes," she replied, "what a glorious plan, what a precious Saviour! O that I could love him more! Pray that I may love and glorify him for ever!" On Friday, October 31, found her more comfortable. She said, "My mind has generally been in a peaceful frame since I saw you; but I want to realize the presence and preciousness of Christ, more distinctly and constantly than my great weakness permits me to do." In answer to some remarks on the covenant of grace, she said, "Glorious covenant! precious promises! I have given myself and body to Him, in whom they are yea and amen, and I do not fear; I desire him to do with me as it shall please him."

Tuesday, November 3. To the usual inquiry, she replied, "Mrs. Graham accurately describes my feelings, when she says, 'Thus far the Lord hath brought me through the wilderness, bearing, chastising, forgiving, restoring. I am near to Jordan's flood. May my blessed High Priest and ark of the covenant, lead on my staggering steps, the little further I have to go.' " And on December 4, she breathed her last, in the faith and hope of the gospel. As in the preceding account of Mrs. Huntington, mention is made of Mrs. Graham, of New York, it may be in place to give a few particulars of this wise woman, as she may properly be called, during her last illness. Foreseeing that her end was near, she sent for Mrs. Chrystie, a dear friend, between whom and herself an agreement had been made, that whichever was first summoned away, should be attended, in her last moments, by the other. To her son-in-law, Mr. Bethune, whom she saw standing by, she said, "My dear, dear son, I am going to leave you; I am going to my Saviour." He answered, "I know that

when you do go from us, it will be to the Saviour; but, my dear mother, it may not be the Lord's time now to call you to himself." "Yes," said she, "now is the time; and Oh! I could weep for sin." Her words were accompanied with her tears. "Have you any doubts, then, my dear friend," asked Mrs. Chrystie. "O no," replied she, "I have no more doubt of going to my Saviour, than if I were already in his arms. My guilt is all transferred. He has cancelled all my debt; yet I could weep for sins against so good a God. It seems to me there must be weeping even in Heaven." When her dear friend and pastor, Dr. Mason, came to see her, they had a very interesting interview—at the close of which, he inquired if there was any thing, in particular, for which he should pray. She said, "The Lord will direct," and immediately offered up this short prayer: "Lord, direct thy servant in prayer." During her sickness, she was for much of the time lethargic, and it was often difficult to arouse her. But when at any time waked up for a moment, she would utter some sweet word—such as "peace," indicating the happy state of her mind. Dr. Mason, in his funeral sermon, said, "This may truly be called falling asleep in Jesus." All terror seemed to be removed, and her countenance was placid, and looked younger than before her illness. At a quarter past 12 o'clock, on the 27th of July, 1814, without a struggle or a groan, her spirit winged its flight from a mansion of clay to the realms of glory.

CHAPTER XXI("tw:///self?tid=5&popup=0" \l "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Death-bed exercises of Mr. Baxter, and the Rev. Thomas Scott, D. D.

Dr. Bates, in his funeral sermon, occasioned by the death of Mr. Baxter, has given us an interesting account of his last days, some part of which I will extract, as furnishing an example, not of a highly excited state of feeling, but of a truly pious, calm, submissive frame of mind. Few persons, who ever lived, have given more convincing evidence of fervent piety, throughout a long life, than this devoted servant of God. His end corresponded with the tenor of his life, and with the religion which he inculcated in his sermons.

"He continued," says Dr. Bates, "to preach so long, notwithstanding his wasted and languishing body, that the last time, he almost died in the pulpit. It would doubtless have been his joy to be transfigured in the mount. Not long after he felt the approaches of death, and was confined to his sick bed. Death reveals the secrets of the heart: then words are spoken with most feeling and least affectation. This excellent saint was the same in his life and his death: his last hours were spent in preparing others and himself to appear before God. He said to his friends, who came to see him, 'Ye come hither to learn to die. I am not the only person that must go this way. I can assure you, that your whole life, be it ever so long, is little enough to prepare for death. Have a care of this vain, deceitful world, and the lusts of the flesh. Be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God's glory for your end, and his word for your rule, and then you need never fear, but we shall meet in comfort.' Never was penitent sinner more humble, never was a sincere believer more calm and comfortable. He acknowledged himself to be the vilest dunghill worm (it was his usual expression) that ever went to heaven. He admired the divine condescension to us, often saying, 'Lord, what is man! what am I a vile worm, to the great God.' Many times he prayed 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' and thanked God that this was left on record, in the gospel, as an effectual prayer. He said, 'God may justly condemn me for the best duty I ever performed. All my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ.' After a slumber, he awaked, and said, 'I shall rest from my labour.' A minister present said, 'And your works shall follow you.' To whom he replied,

‘no works—I will leave out works, if God will grant me the other.’ When a friend was comforting him with the good many had received by his preaching and writing, he said, ‘I was but a pen in God’s hand, and what praise is due to a pen?’

“His resigned submission to the will of God, in his sharp sickness, was eminent. When extremity constrained him earnestly to pray to God for his release, by death, he would check himself, ‘It is not fit for me to prescribe—when thou wilt, what thou wilt, and how thou wilt.’ Being in great anguish, he said, ‘O how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out—the reaches of his providence we cannot fathom.’ And to his friends, ‘Do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer.’ Being often asked, how it was with the inner man, he replied, ‘I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within.’ He said, ‘flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing of it, and that though his judgment submitted, yet sense would still make him groan.’ He derived great comfort from that description in Hebrews 12:22. That he was going to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. ‘That Scripture,’ he said, ‘deserved a thousand and a thousand thoughts.’

“At another time, he said he derived great comfort and sweetness, in repeating the Lord’s prayer, and was sorry some good people were prejudiced against the use of it, for there were all necessary petitions for the soul and body contained in it. He gave excellent counsels to young ministers, that visited him, and earnestly prayed to God to bless their labours, and make them very successful in turning many souls to Christ; expressed great joy in the hopes that God would do a great deal of good by them, and that their spirits might be moderate and peaceful. He often prayed that God would be merciful to this miserable, distracted world, and that he would preserve his church and interest in it. He advised his friends to be ware of self-conceit, as a sin that was likely to ruin the nation.

“I visited him, with a very worthy friend, Mr. Mather, from New England, the day before he died. I said to him, ‘You are now approaching your long desired home,’ he answered, ‘I believe, I believe.’ He expressed great willingness to die, and during his sickness, when asked, ‘how he did,’ his reply was, ‘almost well.’ His joy was most remarkable, when, in his own apprehension, death was nearest; and his spiritual joy was at length consummated in eternal joy. On the day of his death, a great trembling and coldness extorted strong cries from him, for pity and relief from heaven; which cries and agonies continued for some time, till at length he ceased, and lay in patient expectation of his change. The last words he spoke to me, on being informed that I was come to see him, were, ‘Oh, I thank him, I thank him,’ and turning his eye to me said, ‘The Lord teach you how to die!’ To the last I never could perceive his peace and heavenly hopes assaulted or disturbed. I have often heard him greatly lament that he felt no greater liveliness in what appeared so great and clear to him, and so much desired by him. He told me he knew it should be well with him, when he was gone. He wondered to hear others speak of their sensible and passionately strong desires to die, and of their comforts of spirit, when sensible of their approaching death; when, though he thought he knew as much as they, and had as rational satisfaction as they could have, that his soul was safe, he never could feel their sensible consolations. I asked, whether much of this was not to be resolved into bodily constitution, he told me he thought it must be so. A wicked

and groundless report was circulated, that he was greatly troubled with skeptical thoughts before he died. Mr. Sylvester, who was with him during his whole sickness, declares there was not the least foundation, whatever, for such a report. But the devil seems to be greatly envious at the comfortable death of God's people, and therefore his agents are busy in circulating slanders against the saints, in regard to this matter. So, although Calvin ended his days in great tranquillity and in the full exercise of faith and enjoyment of reason, his enemies circulated the report, that he died in all the horrors of despair. Thus also, when the Rev. Augustus Toplady was near his end, it was circulated that he had renounced all those doctrines of grace, for which he was so zealous in his life. Happily the report reached him before his decease, which gave him the opportunity of contradicting it, and leaving his dying testimony in favour of those doctrines. His dying experience was of the most joyful and triumphant kind, and would do to be classed with those of John Janeway, Edward Payson, and Dr. Samuel Finley, but we have not room for it, and many others. The two Henrys, father and son, so eminent for their piety and usefulness, were carried off by sudden and painful diseases, which afforded little opportunity for much conversation. They experienced, however, much of the divine aid and support. John Howe's death was exactly in character with his life and writings.

It may be thought, that all the specimens of the experience of believers, during their last illness, have been of the favourable kind; and far above what is witnessed in the greater number of Christians, on their dying bed. It may be so. But I wish to remark, that in all my life, I have known few persons, who lived like Christians, when in health, who did not in their approach to death, manifest as much hope and fortitude, in that trying hour, as could reasonably have been expected from the character of their piety. In many cases, as I have before stated, the comfort and assurance of some timid and desponding believers, has risen far above what any of their friends dared to hope. In general the result of my observation is, that the pious find death less terrible on their near approach to the event, than when it was viewed at a distance. Some persons have naturally a much greater dread of death than others, though their piety may be more lively. Of this class was the late Dr. Thomas Scott, the author of the Commentary on the Bible. Few men of the last age, gave stronger evidence of deep-rooted and constant attachment to the Saviour, than this devoted man. In the service of his Master, he was most laborious and faithful, and it would be difficult to name any man whose evangelical labours have been attended with happier results. He contributed much, in conjunction with such men as Romaine, Newton, Cecil, and others, to extend the influence of vital religion, far and wide, through the established church of England; and his usefulness was not confined to his own country, or to the period of his life; but, in these United States, I know no writings which have been so extensively circulated, and which have so powerful an effect in correcting prevailing errors in religion, and promoting sound, evangelical views of Scriptural truth. I have selected the dying experience of this man, of undoubted and eminent piety, for the reason hinted at in the beginning of this chapter; because his exercises, though deeply serious, were not for the most of the time, remarkably comfortable; and in no part of his illness, did he express much elevated joy. I think it right to view God's people in their various states and frames, as they approach the end of their pilgrimage. A pious clergyman remarked, in relation to the exercises of Dr. Scott, that men of profound thought, and deep reflection, are not commonly so joyful on a dying bed as Christians of less understanding and less experience, and refers to Bunyan, as of the same mind, who represents Christian, his chief pilgrim, as almost overwhelmed with the waters of Jordan, while the less experienced pilgrim, Hopeful, goes over with little difficulty

or danger. I cannot say, that I can altogether concur in this remark. It may often happen, that the unlettered Christian has a livelier faith than the profoundly learned theologian, and of course will be likely to have a calmer, happier exit from the world. But if men of talents and learning possess a vigorous, evangelical faith, they are as likely to rejoice on a dying bed as any others, as is evinced by the examples of Rivet, Baxter, Horace, &c. The difference between the comforts of dying saints may be attributed, first to divine sovereignty, which distributes grace and consolation as seemeth good unto him; secondly, to bodily temperament; some persons being more fearful than others, and more prone to suspect their own sincerity; and thirdly, to the nature of the disease by which the body is brought down to the grave. It is the tendency of some diseases, while they do not disturb the intellect, to exhilarate the spirits, and enliven the imagination; while a distressing depression or perturbation is the effect of others, to say nothing of the different degrees of pain experienced by different persons. And we know that some diseases have a deplorable stupifying effect; and a fourth and frequent cause of difference in the exercises of dying persons is produced by the medicine which is administered. When physicians can do nothing to cure, they think it right to lull their patients by opiates or excite them by alcohol. I have, when sick, been more afraid of nothing than these intoxicating and stupifying, or even exhilarating drugs. O let no artificial means be ever used with me, in that dread hour, to interrupt sober and deliberate reflection! But to return to Dr. Scott; his disease was a violent fever, so that the range of his pulse was from 150 to 175 in a minute. Under such a disease it is not wonderful that he was often restless and uncomfortable in his feelings. The Rev. Daniel Wilson, (now bishop of Calcutta) in his funeral sermon observes, "That for several years preceding the event itself, his bodily infirmities had been increasing. His strength and natural spirits at times sensibly failed. His own impression was, that his departure was approaching, and he contemplated it with calmness and tranquillity." Mr. Wilson with great propriety remarks, "Before I proceed to give some particulars of his most instructive and affecting departure, I must observe, that I lay no stress on them as to the evidence of his state before God. It is the tenor of the life, not that of the few suffering and morbid scenes which precede dissolution, that fixes the character. We are not authorized from Scripture to place any dependence on the last periods of sinking nature, through which the Christian may be called to pass to his eternal reward. But though no importance is to be attached to these hours of fainting mortality, with reference to the acceptance and final triumph of the dying Christian, yet, where it pleases God to afford one of his departing servants, as in the instance before us, such a measure of faith and self-possession, as to close a holy and most consistent life, with a testimony which sealed, amidst the pains of acute disease, and in the most impressive manner, all his doctrines and instructions, during forty-five preceding years, we are called on, as I think, to record with gratitude the divine benefit, and to use it with humility, for the confirmation of our own faith and joy." His second son, writes from his bed-side, "His gloom, of which I had heard a good deal, in an indistinct manner, by no means relates to the prospects which lie before him. He is perfectly calm and cheerful in the view of dissolution, and seems disappointed at the symptoms of recovery. He thought his trials were almost over; and said, that yesterday morning he had hoped to end the sacred services of the day in heaven. Indeed, his wish is, decidedly, to depart, in the confidence that he shall be with Christ, which is far better. His dejection is manifestly nothing more than the feeling of a mind exhausted by its own exertions. His feelings on Sunday were very distressing both to himself and others, and were clearly aggravated by a degree of delirium arising from fever. Yesterday and to-day he has been quite calm, and though too weak to speak much, is evidently in a tranquil state. I brought my

eldest boy with me, that he might once more see his grandfather, and receive his last blessing. He spoke to him this morning for a few minutes in a most affecting manner, and pronounced his blessing upon him, in a way, which I trust, he will never forget. May God grant that he may walk in the steps which are leading his grandfather to glory!" In another letter, a few days afterwards, he says, "Though I can say nothing favourable respecting his health, for he appears approaching very near to his end, yet, thanks be to God, the clouds which overspread his mind are breaking away, and he talks with a placidity and cheerfulness greater than I have before seen, since I came." "Just as we had assembled for family worship, he sent to say, that he wished us to meet in his room, and join in the Lord's supper, as a means of grace through which he might receive that consolation that he was seeking. The whole family—with one exception—was present, and an old parishioner. It is impossible to describe the deeply interesting and affecting scene. The fervour displayed by my dear father, the poor emaciated form, the tears and sobs of all present, were almost more than I could bear with that degree of composure which was requisite to enable me to read the service, so as to make him hear, (Dr. S. had become very deaf.) But it was a delightful feeling, and has done more to cheer our downcast hearts, than can well be conceived. It was, moreover, a cordial to my father's spirits, who adopted the words of the venerable Simeon, in the prospect of dissolution; Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." The Rev. D. Wilson, in his funeral sermon, of which a number of editions were published, makes the following just remarks:—"The remarkable sufferings of so eminent a saint, in his last sickness, may, perhaps, at first perplex the mind of a young Christian. But such a person should remember, that the way to Heaven is ordinarily a way of tribulation, and that the greatest honour God puts on his servants, is to call them to such circumstances of affliction as display and manifest his grace. What would have crushed a weak and unstable penitent, with immature knowledge of the promises of salvation, only illustrated the faith of the venerable subject of this discourse. God adapts the burden to the strength. As to the darkness and anguish which at times rested on his mind, they were clearly the combined effects of disease and the temptations of the adversary. The return of comfort as the fever remitted, made this quite certain, and he was himself able, at times, to make the distinction. But even in the midst of his afflictive feelings, it is manifest to every real judge of such a case, that a living and a strong faith was in vigorous activity. For consolation is one thing, faith another. This latter grace often lays hold of the promises made in Christ with the firmest grasp, at the very time when hope and comfort are interrupted by the morbid state of the bodily and mental powers. Our feelings and powers, thank God, are not the foundation on which we build. Never, perhaps, was stronger faith exhibited by our Saviour himself, than when he uttered those piercing words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His daughter, in giving an account of the condition of her dying father, says, "In the time of his darkness and gloom, he prayed without ceasing, and with inexpressible fervour. He seemed unconscious of any one being near him, and gave vent to the feelings of his mind without restraint. And, Oh! what holy feelings were they! What spirituality; what hatred of sin; what humility; what simple faith in Christ; what zeal for God's glory; what submission! Never could I hear him without being reminded of Him, who being in an agony, prayed the more earnestly. 'I think nothing,' said he, 'of my bodily pains—my soul is all. I trust all will end well, but it is a dreadful conflict. I hope—I fear—I tremble—I pray. Satan tries to be avenged of me in this awful hour, for all that I have done against his kingdom through life. He longs to pluck me out of Christ's hand. Subdue the enemy, O Lord! Silence the accuser. Bruise Satan under my feet shortly.—

'Hide me, O my Saviour hide,

Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.—
Other refuge have I none.'

O, to enter eternity with one doubt on the mind—O eternity—eternity—eternity! O what a thing sin is! Who knoweth the power of his wrath? If this be the way to Heaven, what must be the way to hell? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?"

He mentioned the wonderful way in which his prayers for others had been answered, and seemed to derive some comfort from it. He rejected every attempt to comfort him by reminding him of the way in which he had served and glorified God. "Christ is all," he said, "He is my only hope." His wonderful knowledge of Scripture was a source of great comfort; and the exactness with which he repeated passage after passage, was amazing. The manner in which also he connected one with another, was admirable. His first clear consolation was after receiving the Lord's Supper, of which an account has been given. He had previously observed, "An undue stress is, by some, laid on this ordinance, as administered to the sick; and others, I think, are in danger of undervaluing it. It is a means of grace; and may prove God's instrument of conveying to me the comfort I am seeking." After he had partaken of this divine ordinance, he said to his son-in-law, "It was beneficial to me; I received Christ and he received me. I feel a composure which I did not expect last night. I have not a triumphant assurance, but something which is more calm and satisfactory. I bless God for it." And then repeated, in the most emphatic manner, Isaiah 12:1-6, "O Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me," &c. O to realize the fulness of joy—O to have done with temptation! "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—"They come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God."—"We know not what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—"The righteous hath hope in his death; not driven away—no, no, not driven away!"

"There is one feeling," said he, "which I cannot have if I would. Those that oppose my doctrine have slandered me sadly, but I cannot feel any resentment. I can only love and pity them, and pray for their salvation. I never did feel any resentment against them. I only regret that I did not more ardently long and pray for the salvation of their souls. I feel most earnest in prayer for the promotion of Christ's kingdom all over the earth. There are two causes in the world, the cause of God and of the devil; the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the devil. The cause of God will prevail all over the world, among all kindreds, and people, and tongues. It shall fill the whole earth, 'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come.' "

Waking, after a short sleep, in great calmness, he said, "This is heaven begun; I have done with darkness for ever—for ever. Satan is vanquished. Nothing now remains but salvation, with eternal glory—eternal glory." But the conflict was not yet over, for another paroxysm came on with great violence; his sufferings were extreme, and confusion and gloom prevailed. He cried earnestly to God, and said, "All my calm and comfort are gone; nothing remains of them but a faint recollection.

Well, after all, God is greater than Satan. Is not Christ all sufficient? Can he not save to the uttermost? Has he not promised to save? Lord deliver me—suffer not Satan to prevail. Pity, pity, Lord pity me!” But during all his severe sufferings of mind and body, not a word of repining or murmuring ever escaped his lips. He said with reference to his dying in this gloom, “I cannot help it. Thou art righteous, Father, glorify thy name.” And then repeated those affecting lines of Watt’s paraphrase of the fifty-first psalm,

“And if my soul were sent to Hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well;—
Yet save a humble sinner Lord,
Whose hope still hovering round thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair.”

To his wife, he said, “God be your father and your husband. I trust all mine will be kind to you. You have been a great blessing unto me. We shall, I trust, meet in heaven. I have less doubt of you, than of myself.” A message was received from the Rev. D. Wilson, his highly esteemed friend, expressing among other things, the great benefit he had been to the church. “Now this,” said he, “is doing me harm. ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ is the only ground on which I rest. If I am saved, God shall have all the glory.” Having talked too much, he was again distressed, but having obtained some rest, he awoke in the night, and said to his youngest son, who sat up with him, “What is the world and the glory of it? I would not change my hope, lean and meagre as it is, for all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, were I sure of living a thousand years longer, to enjoy them.”

I asked him on Sunday, if I should stay from church and attend on him, “O no,” he replied, “nothing gives me pleasure but what is for your good, and the thought that you pray for me.” On Monday, he said to the servant who attended him, “I thank you for all your kindness. You have been a faithful domestic, and I hope a conscientious one. If at any time I have been hasty and sharp, forgive me, and pray to God to forgive, but lay the blame upon me, not on religion.” A similar address and request he made to his curate. Thus his feelings continued to alternate for several days, until death closed the scene. But whatever were his pains, his prayers were unceasing and most earnest. During the whole scene, his patience, his kindness, his submission, his humility, and his faith, were most manifest.

CHAPTER XXII("tw://[self]?tid=5&popup=0" \ "Religious_Experience_CONTENTS-")

Preparation for Death—The state of the Soul after Death

It was intended to have added the death-bed experience of the Rev. Dr. Andrew Fuller, and of some others, but it seemed that this part of the subject had been extended far enough. Indeed, some may be ready to inquire, why so much said respecting the thoughts and speeches of dying persons? To which we would reply, that there is no subject in the world which ought to be more interesting to all men, since all men are appointed to die. Whatever other evils we may escape, “in

this war there is no discharge." It is a scene of which we can have no previous experience; and therefore, it is prudent to learn what we can from the experience of those who have gone before us. It is an important and an awful scene, and should therefore occupy many of our thoughts. If due preparation has been neglected in life and health, there is small probability that it will be made on a dying bed. If I had set down all that I have witnessed and read of the dying exercises of unconverted sinners, it would have presented an appalling object for our contemplation. Such scenes have often been exhibited in print, and are not without their use, but such narratives did not fall in with the scope of these essays. But however insipid, or even disgusting these accounts of the dying exercises of believers may be to some readers, there is a class, and a large one too, who will take a deep interest in these things, because they are now waiting till their change comes, and are looking forward with intense interest to that inevitable event of which we have been writing so much. These are the persons whom the author has had principally in view, in selecting these experiences of departing saints; and as the hopes and comforts of the children of God in life are very various, so he has endeavoured to show, that a like variety is found in their views and exercises, at the time of their departure out of the world. The writer confesses also, that in dwelling so long on this subject, he had some regard to his own edification, and preparation for death. As he knows from infallible evidence, that he will soon be required to put off this tabernacle, and to emigrate from this lower world, he was solicitous to acquire as much information as he was able from those who have gone before, what were the difficulties, sufferings, and encouragements, of pilgrims in this last stage of their journey. And, however it may be with others, he has derived instruction and encouragement, from the contemplation of such scenes as are here described. It appears to him supremely reasonable, that during the short time which remains of his life, he should be chiefly concerned in the meditation of the things of another world, and in making actual preparation for his own departure. He once supposed that the near approach of death would of itself be sufficient to arouse the mind, and impress upon it the reality and awful importance of eternal things; but he finds by sad experience, that however his judgment is convinced of the certainty of death, and its consequences, that nothing will bring these things to bear on the heart, but the illumination of the Holy Spirit. He wishes, therefore, to engage in such reading, meditation, and writing, as may have a tendency to fix his thoughts on the solemn scene before him, when he must close his eyes on the light of this world, and bid adieu to all friends and objects with which he has been conversant here. He is not of opinion, however, that the best way to make preparation for death, is to sit down and pore over the condition of our own souls, or to confine our exertions to those things which are directly connected with our own salvation. We are kept here to do our Master's work, and that relates to others as well as ourselves. We have a stewardship, of which we must give an account; and the faithful and wise steward is careful and diligent in dispensing blessings committed to him, to others; this is especially the case in regard to ministers of the gospel. We have a responsible office, and our account before the tribunal of Jesus Christ must be solemn and awful; and it will not do to relinquish the proper work of our calling, upon the pretext of seeking our own salvation. Our own seeking will be entirely unavailing, without the aid and blessing of God, and this we may expect most confidently, when we are diligently engaged in doing his work, which is always the duties of our station and calling. Active duty must be performed as long as we have strength for the work; and like the Levites, we must attend around the tabernacle and altar, when we are too old for more laborious services. Many of the faithful servants of God have expressed a strong desire not to outlive their usefulness; and some have

wished that their departure might occur in the very act of preaching. These things we may better leave to the wisdom of God, who directs all the circumstances of the death of his people, as well as of their lives. Even when by bodily infirmities, the servants of God are obliged to desist from public labours, they do not cease from serving their Master; their lives are not useless. His name is as much honoured by patient submission and cheerful resignation, as by zealous public exertion; and the greatest and most effectual work which can be performed by any on earth, they can perform—I mean the offering of prayers and intercessions, day and night, at the throne of grace. Let not the infirm and aged say, that they can now do nothing for God. They can do much; and for ought they can tell, more than they ever did in the days of their vigour. It is a beautiful sight to see men laden with fruit, even in old age. Such fruits are generally more mature than those of earlier days; and the aged saint often enjoys a tranquillity and repose of spirit, which is almost peculiar to that age. David, or whoever is the author of Psalms 71:1-24, prays most earnestly a prayer which should be daily on the lips of the aged, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.” And again, “Now when I am old and grey-headed forsake me not, until I have showed thy strength to this generation, and thy power to all that are to come.” Let the aged then tell to those that come after them, the works of divine grace which they have witnessed or which their fathers have told them. Let them be active as long as they can, and when bodily strength faileth, let them wield the pen; or if unable to write for the edification of the church, let them exhibit a consistent and shining example of the Christian temper, in kindness and good will to all; in uncomplaining patience; in contented poverty; in cheerful submission to painful providences; and in mute resignation to the bereavement of their dearest friends. And when death comes, let them not be afraid or dismayed; then will be the time to honour God by implicitly and confidently trusting in his promises. Let them “against hope believe in hope.” It is by faith that the last enemy must be conquered. He that believeth shall not be confounded, in this trying hour. The great Shepherd will not forsake his redeemed flock, for whom he has shed his blood; and though the adversary may rage and violently assault the dying saint, he shall not overcome them. Each one of them may say with humble confidence, “Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Let us not desire to make a parade and ostentatious display on a dying bed. Death has been called the honest hour, but hypocrisy may be practised even on a dying bed. Although this event often reveals secrets, and brings deceived souls to a conviction of the sandy foundation on which they have built their hopes; yet some keep on the mask to the last moment. More, however, suppress the expression of their fears and distress of mind. So much is said often about the manner in which persons meet death, that some good men have wished and requested to be left very much alone: they have feared lest they should be tempted to vain-glory, even on a dying bed; or they have feared lest their courage should fail them in the last struggle, and they should, through pain and imbecility of mind, be left to bring dishonour on their profession. The late excellent and evangelical Simeon of Cambridge, seems to have been under the influence of a feeling of this kind. But the best and safest way is submissively to commit all the circumstances of our death unto God.

We have no conception of the soul, but as a thinking, active being. The body is merely an organ or instrument by which the soul acts while connected with it; indeed, it cannot be demonstrated that the soul performs all its acts here by the use of this organ. But whether or not, is of little

consequence. We know that activity belongs to the soul, not to the body; and it would be a strange conclusion, that that which is essentially active, should cease to act, because it had been deprived of one set of organs. The only legitimate inference is that when separated from the body, the mode of action is different from what it was before. As we learn the various operations of the soul, only by experience, it is plain, that we cannot fully understand or explain, the precise mode of its action after it is separated from the body. Paul teaches us, that the soul may exist and have conscious exercises of a very exalted kind, for, he says, speaking of his rapture into heaven, "Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell;" for if the soul could not act without the body, he could have told certainly that he was in the body, when he witnessed, in the third heavens, things which it is not lawful for a man to utter. But this truth is taught more clearly and directly by Christ himself, when he said to the penitent thief, on the cross, "this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This testimony is of itself abundantly sufficient, and there is no evasion of its force, but by an interpretation so frigid and far-fetched, that it only serves to betray the weakness of the cause which it is brought to support. Paul, in another passage, speaks dearly and explicitly on this point: "Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." In the previous context this apostle intimates that when the clay tabernacle is dissolved the soul will not be found naked, but that there will be another house ready to receive it; so that it will not be unclothed, but clothed upon. "For," says he, "in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle so do groan, being burdened, not that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It would seem, then, that the soul is never without a suitable dwelling; it will not be unclothed; it only passes from one house to another—from an earthly to a heavenly habitation. But what this celestial clothing will be, of course we cannot now tell. When Stephen was dying, he cried "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." The Lord Jesus is every where near to his saints; and as he watches over his sheep during their whole passage through the wilderness; so He is especially near to them, when they come to the "valley and shadow of Death," so that they may then sing with the sweet psalmist of Israel, "When I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." But as Jesus the Lord, has his residence in heaven, where he occupies a place on the throne of God, at the right hand of the Father, and is surrounded by an innumerable host ready to execute all his commandments; so he commissions messengers to attend at the dying bed of believers, and receive the spirits of the just and conduct them to his presence. It is evident that the departing soul will need a guide and convoy, for utterly ignorant of the glorious world into which it has entered, it would not know which way to direct its course, or where to find its allotted mansion. For heaven is a wide domain—the house of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has many mansions, and every redeemed soul has provided for it, an appropriate residence, "for," says Christ, "I go to prepare a place for you." And that guardian angels are sent to perform these kind offices for departed saints, we are not left to conjecture, for we read, that as soon as Lazarus died, he "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." There is no reason for supposing that the privilege now conferred on the beggar, was peculiar to him; every saint needs the guidance and guardianship of angels as well as Lazarus; and we may conclude therefore, that angels will attend on every departing saint.

Although we cannot now understand, how the soul will act in the future world, when divested of the body of clay; we cannot doubt that its consciousness of its identity will go with it. The memory of the past, instead of being obliterated, will, in all probability, be much more perfect, than while the person lived upon earth. It is no how incredible, that memory in the future world, will present to men, every thing which they have ever known, and every transaction in which they were ever engaged. The susceptibility of joyful emotions will also accompany the soul into the invisible world; and one of the first feelings of the departed saint, will be, a lively sense of complete deliverance from all evil, natural and moral. The pains of death will be the last pangs ever experienced. When these are over, the soul will enjoy the feeling of complete salvation from every distress. What a new and delightful sensation will it be, to feel safe from every future danger, as well as saved from all past trouble. But the most important change experienced at this time, will be, a perfect purification of the soul from sin. The soul, heretofore struggling with inbred corruption, which damped its ardour, darkened its views, stupified its feelings, now can act without any moral obstruction. Who that has often complained, like Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death," but will feel this to be indeed heaven begun, when there will no more be felt any secret working of pride, or envy, or selfishness; but when it shall be pure, and sweetly conscious of its own purity. As perfection in holiness supposes a clear knowledge of spiritual objects; so we know, that we shall no more see the divine glory, as it were, by reflection from a glass, but directly, or "face to face." The soul of man, though probably greatly enlarged in its powers, may have new faculties developed, for which there was no use here, and of which it had no consciousness; yet the field of knowledge being boundless, and our minds being capable of attending only to one thing at one time, our knowledge of celestial things will be gradually acquired, and not perfected at once. Indeed, there can be no limit set to the progression in knowledge; it will be endless. And no doubt the unalloyed pleasures of the future state, will be intimately connected with this continual increase of divine knowledge. And as here, knowledge is acquired by the aid of instructors, why may not the same be the fact in heaven? What a delightful employment to the saints who have been drinking in the knowledge of God and his works for thousands of years, to communicate instruction to the saint just arrived! How delightful to conduct the pilgrim who has just finished his race, through the ever blooming bowers of paradise, and to introduce him to this and the other ancient believer, and to assist him to find out and recognize, among so great a multitude, old friends and earthly relatives. There need be no dispute about our knowing, in heaven, those whom we knew and loved here; for if there should be no faculty by which they could at once be recognised, yet by extended and familiar intercourse with the celestial inhabitants, it cannot be otherwise but that interesting discoveries will be made continually; and the unexpected recognition of old friends may be one of the sources of pleasure which will render heaven so pleasant. But as the fleshly bond of relationship is dissolved, at death, it seems reasonable to think, that the only bond of union and kindred in heaven, will be the spiritual bond, which unites all believers in one body, and to Christ their living head; therefore, we may presume, that there will be felt an ardent desire to form an acquaintance with the most remarkable personages, who have lived from Adam downward. Who, if admitted into paradise, could repress his curiosity to see, and if possible, to converse with the progenitor of our race? Doubtless, he could tell us some things which we do not fully understand. And who would not wish to see the first person who ever entered those blessed abodes from our earth? Ah, and Enoch too, who never tasted death, and who still possesses his original body, changed and glorified, it is true, but still

substantially the same. We might expect to find him in the company of Elijah, who is similarly circumstanced; and some think that the body of Moses, though it was dead and buried, was raised again, as he seems to have appeared in his own proper body on the mount of Transfiguration. And where is Abraham, that venerable saint, who in faith and obedience exceeded all other men, and obtained from God the honourable appellation of "The Father of the Faithful," and the friend of God? And who would be in heaven ever so short a time, without desiring to see Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles? And not him only, but Peter, and John, and all the college of the apostles. But methinks we are in danger of indulging our imaginations too far, and of transferring to a heavenly state, too many of the feelings and associations of our earthly condition. And I am reminded also, that as the twinkling stars are lost in the blaze of the rising sun, so there is one person in the highest heavens, visible to all who enter that place, whose glory irradiates all the celestial mansions; whose love and smiles diffuse ineffable joy through all the heavenly hosts, and in whom every believer has an absorbing interest with which no other can be compared. On his head he wears many crowns, and in his hand he holds a sceptre by which he governs the universe; but yet he exhibits, visibly, the marks of a violent death, which, for us, he once endured. His name is, The Word of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The Alpha and Omega. The Almighty. And behold, all the angels of God worship him. And the host of the redeemed, which no man can number, sing a song of praise to the Lamb, which no man can learn, except those that are redeemed from among men, for the burden of their song is "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. These are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Every redeemed soul, upon being admitted into heaven, will, for a while, be so completely absorbed in the contemplation of that divine person, that he will be incapable of paying much attention to any others. Like that Armenian princess, of whom Zenophon gives an account, who after all the rest of the company had been expressing their admiration of Cyrus, one praising one thing and one another, upon being asked what about this royal personage she admired most, answered, that she did not even look at him, because her whole attention had been absorbed in admiring him (her young husband) who had offered to die for her. But the saved sinner may say, that his attention was completely absorbed in gazing upon Him, who not only said that He would die for him, but who actually did die in his place, and by this sacrifice redeemed him from the curse of the law, and from all iniquity. The sweet and intimate intercourse which the redeemed soul will have with his Saviour cannot now be conceived: it will far transcend all the ideas which we now can form; and will be a perfection of bliss so great that nothing can be added to it in any other way, than by an increase of the capacity of the soul. But still, all that is enjoyed in this intermediate state between death and judgment, is but a part of that felicity to which the redeemed of the Lord are destined hereafter. It is only the enjoyment of a separate soul; but "the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory" laid up in heaven for the children of God is for the whole man, made up of soul and body; and as even in this world many pleasures are enjoyed by means of bodily organs, who can tell what new and ever varying delights may be let into the soul by means of bodies of a celestial mould? bodies fashioned after the model of the glorious body of Jesus Christ! If our senses now bring to our view so many glorious objects both in the heavens and the earth, how rich and delightful will be the vision of the upper heavens by the eyes of the resurrection body? Then shall we see Jesus with our bodily eyes—then shall we behold what now no tongue can describe, nor even heart conceive. The departed saints, therefore, though blessed to the full amount of their present capacity, yet are living in joyful expectation of a more glorious state. We should not think

that the redemption and resuscitation of the body is a small matter. The body is an essential part of human nature, and the glorified body will add to the felicity of the redeemed in a degree which we have no means of calculating. The inspired writers, therefore, when they speak of the blessedness of Heaven, speak sparingly of the state of the separate soul; but when they describe the resurrection, they seem to be enraptured. Hear Paul, drawing a comparison between this mortal, corrupt, and earthly body, and that immortal, pure, and spiritual body, which will be possessed by every saint. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. As we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." No sooner shall these resuscitated bodies open their immortal eyes, than they shall behold the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven. And no sooner is the judgment set, than all these shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and shall be so highly honoured as to have a place, as assessors, on the judgment seat with Him. And when the awful transactions of that day are ended, the redeemed shall accompany their Lord and Saviour to Heaven, where they shall be put in full and eternal possession of that felicity and glory which Christ has purchased for them by his precious blood. In this sublime temple, their songs shall mingle with those of the holy angels, for ever and ever. It need not be supposed that saints in Heaven will be continually employed in nothing but praise. This, indeed, will be their noblest employment; and the anthems of praise to God and the Lamb will never cease; but may we not reasonably suppose that the exercises and pursuits of the saints will be various. The wonderful works of God will open to their contemplation. They may be employed, as angels are now, as messengers to distant worlds, either as instruments of justice or mercy: for we find that the angels are employed in both these ways. While, then, one choir surrounds the throne, and elevates the celestial song of praise for redemption, others may be employed in executing the commands of their Lord; and then, in their turn, these last may keep up the unceasing praise, while the first go forth on errands of mercy or wrath. Some have divided the angels into assisting and ministering: the first are supposed to be always engaged in acts of worship, while the last are always employed in other services. But it would be much more reasonable to suppose, that they all, in turn, take their part in both these services. Here, however, it becomes us to pause, and in deep humility, on account of our ignorance and unworthiness, to put our hands on our mouths, and our mouths in the dust. We are slow to learn earthly things; how then can we comprehend those which are heavenly? But if we are the children of God, we shall have experience of these celestial employments and never ending joys. Soon, very soon, these things which are now dimly discerned by means of faith, will be realized, when every humble saint shall appear with Christ in glory, and shall never be exposed any more to danger or suffering. Let us, then, now begin the song which shall never cease to Him that saved us and washed us from our sins in his own precious blood.

PRAYER

For one who feels that he is approaching the borders of another world

O most merciful God! I rejoice that thou dost reign over the universe with a sovereign sway, so that thou dost according to thy will, in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Thou art the maker of my body, and Father of spirit, and thou hast a perfect right to dispose of me, in that manner which will most effectually promote thy glory: and I know that whatsoever thou dost,

is right, wise, and just, and good. And whatever may be my eternal destiny, I rejoice in the assurance that thy great name will be glorified in me. But as thou hast been pleased to reveal thy mercy and thy grace, to our fallen miserable world; and as the word of this salvation has been preached unto me, inviting me to accept of eternal life, upon the gracious terms of the gospel. I do cordially receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and only Redeemer, believing sincerely, the whole testimony which thou hast given respecting his divine character, his real incarnation, his unspotted and holy life, his numerous and beneficent miracles, his expiatory and meritorious death, and his glorious resurrection and ascension. I believe, also, in his supreme exaltation, in his prevalent intercessions for his chosen people, in his affectionate care and aid afforded to his suffering members here below, and in his second coming to receive his humble followers to dwell with him in heaven; and to take vengeance on his obstinate enemies. My only hope and confidence of being saved, rests simply on the mediatorial work and prevailing intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ; in consequence of which the Holy Spirit is graciously sent to make application of Christ's redemption, by working faith in us, and repentance unto life; and rendering us meet for the heavenly inheritance, by sanctifying us in the whole man, soul, body, and spirit. Grant, gracious God! that the rich blessings of the new covenant may be freely bestowed on thy unworthy servant. I acknowledge that I have no claim to thy favour, on account of any goodness in me by nature; for alas! there dwelleth in me, that is in my flesh, no good thing; nor on account of any works of righteousness done by me; for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Neither am I able to make atonement for any one of my innumerable transgressions; which I confess before thee, are not only many in number, but heinous in their nature, justly deserving thy displeasure and wrath; so that if I were immediately sent to hell, thou wouldst be altogether just in my condemnation. Although I trust, that I have endeavoured to serve thee with some degree of sincerity; yet whatever good thing I have ever done, or even thought, I ascribe entirely to thy grace, without which I can do nothing acceptable in thy sight. And I am deeply convinced, that my best duties have fallen far short of the perfection of thy law, and have been so mingled with sin in the performance, that I might justly be condemned for the most fervent prayer I ever made. And I would confess with shame and contrition, that I am not only chargeable with sin in the act, but that there is a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, aiming to bring me into captivity to the law of sin and death. This corrupt nature is the source of innumerable evil thoughts and desires, and damps the exercise of faith and love, and stands in the way of well-doing, so that when I would do good, evil is present with me. And so deep and powerful is this remaining depravity, that all efforts to eradicate or subdue it, are vain without the aid of divine grace. And when at any time I obtain a glimpse of the depth and turpitude of the sin of my nature, I am overwhelmed, and constrained to exclaim with Job, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." And now Righteous Lord God Almighty, I would not attempt to conceal any of my actual transgressions, however vile and shameful they are. But would penitently confess them before thee; and would plead in my defence, nothing but the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died, the just for the unjust, to bring us near to God. For his sake alone, do I ask or expect the rich blessings necessary to my salvation. For although I am unworthy, he is most worthy; though I have no righteousness, he has provided by his expiatory death, and by his holy life, a complete justifying righteousness, in which spotless robe I pray that I may be clothed; so that thou my righteous Judge, wilt see no sin in me, but wilt acquit me from every accusation, and justify me freely by thy grace, through the righteousness of my Lord and Saviour, with whom thou

art ever well pleased. And my earnest prayer is, that Jesus may save me from my sins, as well as from their punishment; that I may be redeemed from all iniquity, as well as from the condemnation of the law; that the work of sanctification may be carried on in my soul by thy word and Spirit, until it be perfected at thine appointed time. And grant, O Lord! that as long as I am in the body, I may make it my constant study and chief aim to glorify thy name, both with soul and body, which are no longer mine, but thine; for I am “bought with a price”—not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Enable me to let my light so shine, that others, seeing my good works, may be led to glorify thy name. O! make use of me as an humble instrument of advancing thy kingdom on earth, and promoting the salvation of immortal souls. If thou hast appointed sufferings for me, here below. I beseech thee to consider my weakness, and let thy chastisements be those of a loving father, that I may be made partaker of thy holiness. And let me not be tempted above what I am able to bear, but with the temptation make a way for escape.

O, most merciful God! “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength declineth. Now, when I am old and grey-headed, forsake me not; but let thy grace be sufficient for me; and enable me to bring forth fruit, even in old age. May my hoary head be found in the ways of righteousness! Preserve my mind from dotage and imbecility, and my body from protracted disease and excruciating pain. Deliver me from despondency and discouragement, in my declining years, and enable me to bear affliction with patience, fortitude, and perfect submission to thy holy will. Lift upon me perpetually the light of thy reconciled countenance, and cause me to rejoice in thy salvation, and in the hope of thy glory. May the peace that passeth all understanding be constantly diffused through my soul, so that my mind may remain calm through all the storms and vicissitudes of life.”

As, in the course of nature, I must be drawing near to my end, and as I know I must soon put off this tabernacle, I do humbly and earnestly beseech thee, O Father of mercies, to prepare me for this inevitable and solemn event. Fortify my mind against the terrors of death. Give me, if it please thee, an easy passage through the gate of death. Dissipate the dark clouds and mists which naturally hang over the grave, and lead me gently down into the gloomy valley. O my kind Shepherd, who hast tasted the bitterness of death for me, and who knowest how to sympathize with and succour the sheep of thy pasture, be thou present to guide, to support, and to comfort me. Illumine with beams of heavenly light the valley and shadow of death, so that I may fear no evil. When heart and flesh fails, be thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Let not my courage fail in the trying hour. Permit not the great adversary to harass my soul, in the last struggle, but make me a conqueror and more than a conqueror in this fearful conflict. I humbly ask that my reason may be continued to the last, and if it be thy will, that I may be so comforted and supported, that I may leave a testimony in favour of the reality of religion, and thy faithfulness in fulfilling thy gracious promises; and that others of thy servants who may follow after, may be encouraged by my example, to commit themselves boldly to the guidance and keeping of the Shepherd of Israel. And when my spirit leaves this clay tenement, Lord Jesus receive it. Send some of the blessed angels to convey my inexperienced soul to the mansion which thy love has prepared. And O, let me be so situated, though in the lowest rank, that I may behold thy glory. May I have an abundant entrance administered unto me in the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For whose sake, and in whose name, I ask all these things. Amen.

S. Thoughts on the Education of Pious and Indigent Candidates for the Ministry

THOUGHTS

ON THE EDUCATION OF

PIOUS AND INDIGENT CANDIDATES

FOR THE MINISTRY PHILADELPHIA

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1846

There is in the minds of many a strong prejudice against the whole plan of educating young men for the ministry, on the funds of the Church. Of this prejudice, the writer confesses that he once was a partaker, owing to his education among the descendants of the Scotch, who generally entertain a strong aversion to every idea of depending on others for their subsistence. There can be no doubt that this feeling of independence has been of great service to the Scottish nation, in leading the poor every where to struggle hard to maintain themselves. This is, therefore, a feeling which should be respected and cherished; and all persons should have it instilled into their minds in their early education. I have known many young men, who were so much under the influence of this sentiment that they have rejected all offers of gratuitous aid, and have laboured, for years, to acquire the means of finishing their education. And although I cannot but respect the character of such, I am now of opinion that an enlightened and enlarged view of all the circumstances which should regulate the conduct of candidates for the ministry would lead to a different conclusion.* The true state of the case is this. The Church wants ministers, and must languish and decline, if she does not obtain a sufficient supply. Every pious young man who has talents to be useful in the ministry, has the ability to make for himself a comfortable living, in some secular business; and in a worldly point of view, every young man of vigorous mind and enterprising disposition makes a sacrifice of his temporal interest by becoming, in this country, a candidate for the ministry. If then, a sufficient number of candidates, from the class able to support themselves, do not offer, is it not the duty of the Church to assist in the education of indigent and pious youth, possessed of good natural abilities? The question to be decided is extremely plain, and simple—Shall the Church do without a sufficient supply of ministers, or endeavour to obtain such a supply, by educating pious young men, who are unable to gain an education by their own means? Suppose the Church to proceed on the principle involved in the objection to this mode of procuring a supply of ministers, what will be the consequence? The appeal must here be made to facts. What has been for twenty years past, the proportion of candidates who have had it in their power to support themselves? Upon looking over the catalogue of our students, from the commencement of this Seminary, I find that, at least, one half the whole number have required to be aided by the funds of the Church, or by benevolent individuals. Some of these, by spending years in teaching, might have found their

way into the ministry; but the greater number would have been discouraged, and would have turned their attention to some other pursuit; or, they would have sought an entrance into the sacred office, without any suitable and thorough preparation. Certainly, we have not had a superabundance of good ministers; and surely, no one would wish to see our Church filled with men imperfectly prepared. With all our exertions by means of the Board of Education, the number of our ministers falls far short of the demand.

Perhaps, there is a lurking idea, in the minds of many, that some disgrace attaches to this plan of education. As it would be a disgrace to an able bodied man, to live upon the charities of his neighbours, so it is thought, that something of the same disgrace must attach to the young man, who is able to provide for himself by honest industry in some lawful occupation, to live on the funds of the Church. Now this would be a fair statement of the case, if nothing else was to be taken into consideration but the interest of the person himself. But if the Church needs his services, and if in order effectually to serve her, he must be educated, the case is entirely changed. While she is educating these youth, she is preparing ministers for her own use, and whose services are necessary to her prosperity. If the state needs skilful officers and expert engineers for her defence, she finds it expedient to institute military schools for the education of such as are willing to turn their attention to the military profession: and no question is asked about their wealth or indigence, because the good of the country is the object in having them thus educated. This is right; and no one ever thinks that any disgrace attaches to those young men, who are thus educated, at the public expense. And if the Church were able, it would be but justice for her to educate all, of whatever external circumstances, who were qualified to do her service. But this is not demanded; all that she is requested to do is, to support, or aid such young men as are unable to furnish the means of their own education.

What has now been said will answer an objection often made by plain, well-meaning people, when applied to, to contribute to this object. They say, "our sons have to labour for their living, and what obligation is on us to give money to educate other men's sons." To such, we would respectfully say, "Have you a minister who preaches the gospel to you on the Sabbath, and do you value this privilege? Or, if you are destitute of the stated dispensation of the word, do you not desire it, as the richest privilege you can possess in this world? Well, if you need ministers, where do you think they are to come from? If all are of your mind, and refuse to aid in preparing young men for the ministry, the consequence will be, that there must be a great deficiency of educated ministers; and when you wish to obtain one, it may not be in your power; and your children may be brought up without the regular administration of the word and ordinances of God, which you must esteem a great calamity, if you have any just estimation of the worth of their souls. But if you are so situated as to be sure of enjoying the means of grace, do you feel as a Christian, no compassion for the extensive regions in our own country, which are destitute of the regular preaching of the gospel? Do you never consider the case of the millions, and hundreds of millions, of benighted heathen, who are now on their way to the great tribunal? If in the sovereign dispensations of divine mercy, we have received and enjoyed the preaching of the word, shall we be so selfish, as not to be willing to send it to those who are perishing for lack of knowledge; who are suffering a dreadful famine, not for the want of bread, but for the want of the word of the Lord?

Perhaps, you say, that you are the friend of missions, and willing to contribute to this object, but not to the Board of Education. But permit me to ask how the missionary enterprise can proceed

without devoted ministers? The cry every year of the Missionary Boards is, "Who will go for us?" But how can they go unless they be sent? And how can they be sent, unless they are prepared and educated for the work? The truth is, that without the Education Board, your other Boards would be, in a great measure, useless. Look over the wide missionary field at home and abroad, and ask yourselves where these men who are bearing the heat and burden of the day, were obtained? The answer will be, from our Colleges and Seminaries, and a large portion of them were beneficiaries of Education Boards. They exercised the pious self-denial, to become beneficiaries of the Church, that they might have the opportunity of preparing themselves for the arduous work in which they are now wearing out their lives. I have called them beneficiaries, but I doubt the propriety of the term; they are not the obliged persons; but the Church is their debtor. And their sacrifice is far greater than that of the most liberal contributor to their support. And let our farmers and mechanics, when called on to contribute to this object, not consider it as a gratuity to the individuals aided, but as a necessary means of keeping up a supply of faithful pastors for our increasing Churches, and as the only effectual method of obtaining missionaries to carry the gospel to the destitute, both on our continent and in foreign lands. Let it be considered, also, that if God should favour their sons by calling them to prepare for the work of the ministry, other people will be solicited to assist them in obtaining the requisite education. And here it may be proper to remark, that many pious parents ought to seek this honour for their sons; and every congregation should have pious young men in a course of education for the ministry. The neglect of some large congregations, in this respect, is great and surprising. They may have experienced frequent revivals of religion, and yet have never sent forth a single minister from their bounds; whilst other Churches have, within the last half century, sent out dozens. In reading the "Life of the late Dr. Proudfit," nothing struck me more forcibly, than the fact that from the single church of which he was pastor, thirty or forty young men had entered the ministry; probably a larger number than from any single congregation on the continent; or perhaps in the world. Every parent, or pastor, who furnishes a good minister to the Church, becomes thereby a rich benefactor to the whole body. And if they have not the ability to give a good education to the promising youth who may rise up among them, the Church is bound to aid them; and in order to this, application must be made to all our congregations for their contributions.

Another objection to this mode of obtaining candidates for the ministry is, that poor young men taken up to be educated, are commonly rude and unpolished in their manners, having grown up among rough, unmannered people. And it is remarked, that such seldom acquire the refinement and polish of manners, which are expected and should be found in ministers of the gospel. If this objection had weight, it would operate powerfully against the selection of the apostles, by our blessed Lord; for they were all taken from the humbler walks of life; and although their Master miraculously supplied their want of learning, by endowing them with supernatural knowledge and the gift of tongues, yet we do not read that he wrought any miracle to give them the manners of polished gentlemen. Perhaps, the objector lays too much stress on the mere polish of manners. In our opinion, true humility, meekness, and benevolence will produce the most genuine politeness, and if these dispositions are possessed in a high degree by the minister of the cross, the want of exterior accomplishments, though desirable, may easily be dispensed with.

It is not intended to be intimated, that clerical manners are of trivial consequence; they are undoubtedly important, and when of the right kind, tend to promote the usefulness of ministers of

the gospel. The idea which I intend to communicate is, that those manners which are in vogue among the higher classes of society are not exactly those which always become a preacher of the gospel. A young man who possesses genuine piety and good sense, will be likely, in the course of seven years' training, to acquire as much ease and polish of manners as are necessary, in a majority of clergymen; for, while a few have to mingle with the wealthy and fashionable classes of society, the greater number must labour among poor and plain people, with whom sincerity and friendliness are the qualities in a minister's conduct which serve best to recommend him to their esteem and confidence. And I venture to assert, that of the hundreds of students who have passed under my observation, those from rich families have possessed no superiority of manners over their poorer brethren. And this leads me to notice another objection of a still more serious nature. It is, that a dependence of this kind for the means of education must have a debasing effect on the minds of youth, and detract from that manly independence which is an estimable trait in the character of any man, and especially of a minister. Now, in my judgment, this objection is utterly without confirmation from the facts which have fallen under my observation. The circumstance of indigence may, indeed, have the effect of keeping down that spirit of pride and arrogance, which is so apt to arise in the minds of youth born to affluence; but this is a real benefit. But as to any spirit of meanness generated by this mode of education, it has no existence, except in the imagination of those who make the objection. If the candidate is actuated by the elevated aims and pious motives which should govern all who aspire to this office, he will not be liable to any influence of the kind supposed. Indeed, commonly, the funds of the Church are so dispensed, that the beneficiary seldom knows the individual to whom he owes his support: he receives the aid needed as coming from the Church, through the agency of the Board of Education. From the origin of this seminary as was before stated, at least one half the students have been more or less dependent on charitable funds for their support; and yet it has never been observed by the professors that these were, as a body, inferior to the others in any respect whatever. Certainly their being beneficiaries has not lowered them in the opinion of their fellow students, as far as the fact was known; for in a majority of cases, the wants of the needy are supplied without giving such publicity to the transaction that it becomes known even to their fellow students.

If we should now take a survey of all the pastors and evangelists in connexion with the Presbyterian Church, whether labouring at home or in the foreign field, there would be found no marked inferiority in those educated on the funds of the Church in manners, piety, talents, or usefulness. If all who were thus educated should at once be withdrawn from the field of labour, it would leave such a chasm, or rather such a desolation as would fill every pious mind with grief and discouragement. If then, this plan of providing a supply of ministers for the Church has been found necessary in times past, why should it not be equally, yea more necessary hereafter, as the field is every day widening both at home and abroad, and the demand for labourers more urgent, every succeeding year?

Contributing to aid pious students in their preparation for the gospel ministry, has ever been considered a laudable species of benevolence; and the establishment of scholarships and bursaries in Colleges and Universities, has been with a direct view to this object. From the biography of the reformers, and other eminent men since their time, it appears that they felt a deep interest in the subject, and often used their influence to obtain aid to enable candidates for the ministry, to pursue their theological studies to their completion, without interruption.

There is scarcely any plan to which objections may not be made: but if this plan be essential to the prosperity of the Church—I had almost said, to its existence, why make objections? They may injure a good cause, but cannot possibly do any good. In these cases, it has been truly remarked, that those who contributed most largely to educational funds were not the persons who usually find fault, but such as desired an excuse for not giving. Now, as charity ought to be free and unconstrained, let such keep their money, but let them not influence others, by their objections, to hold back their contributions. If there be any thing wrong in the management of this business, let it be pointed out, that it may be corrected. If any improvement in collecting and disbursing these charitable funds can be devised, let it be suggested, that it may be adopted and carried into effect. But we earnestly beseech all the friends of our Church, not to raise nor listen to a clamour against this necessary scheme of benevolence, at a time when the demand for labourers is greater than it ever has been. To hinder or discourage the education of poor and pious youth of good talents, for the holy ministry, is actually to oppose the vital interests of Christ's Church; and when this is done by Presbyterian ministers, it is a species of ecclesiastical suicide. It is virtually to cut the nerves by which our efforts in advancing the kingdom of the Redeemer must be made.

Here we might leave the subject, but it is our wish to meet every objection which has been made, or can be made to the principles and plan of our Board of Education; for we are both sorry and surprised to learn, that in some quarters, and with some persons, this Board has become unpopular. It is alleged, that there cannot be a very urgent need of our multiplying ministers, while there are so many unemployed, hanging about our large cities; and whenever a Church becomes vacant, immediately a swarm of candidates are found seeking a place and a living. For such ministers we have no apology to offer, except that many will get into the ministry, who have not popular talents, and therefore do not readily find a field where they can do good and support their families. Such are sometimes truly pious men, and if they had a charge would be faithful and edifying pastors. And they are not to be blamed for seeking a place in which they may be useful, and at the same time gain a living for their dependent families. Again, settled pastors are often through the caprice of their people, obliged to resign their charge and being cast out, without means of subsistence, it is natural and reasonable for them to seek another situation. Often they are not censurable for being without charges, but the people to whom they ministered, and who had engaged to afford them a support. Cases are known, in which a single person has had influence to occasion a severance of the sacred bond, which subsists between a pastor and his flock. But after all, this thing is greatly exaggerated. Look into our cities and large towns, and how many unemployed Presbyterian ministers do you find? Some, indeed, are engaged in teaching; and in whose hands can youth be more safely and advantageously placed than in those of ministers? It is devoutly to be wished that pious ministers were so abundant, that every school in the land might have one at its head. But what connexion has this with educating poor and pious youth? These when received into the ministry, are not usually the persons who spend their time in idleness. Let facts be ascertained, and you will find that poor ministers are the most laborious and the most ready to go on foreign missions. Christ himself was, as to worldly goods, the poorest of the poor; and by choosing that condition, he has sanctified a state of poverty, and rendered it honourable in ministers of the gospel to be poor. He, therefore, commonly calls his most faithful servants from this class; but as he himself subsisted on the charities of his devoted friends, he would have his Church to be liberal in the support of poor ministers, and in aiding pious students to prepare for their sacred work.

Another objection is, that many of those youth selected to be educated for the ministry, do not possess sufficient strength of mind to avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from a liberal course of learning; so that, when they have passed through all the schools, they are found poorly qualified to be useful ministers of the gospel. It must be confessed, that there has not always been sufficient caution in receiving young men on the funds of the Church. There has not been, in many cases, a sufficiently rigid scrutiny into the natural capacity of the candidate. Some pious persons are so destitute of the powers of mind requisite to profit by a liberal education, that after passing through all the usual stages of a literary course, they are almost as little qualified for the work of the ministry, as if they had remained at the plough, or in the counting-house. Though there has been a fault in regard to this matter, yet the blame does not lie at the door of the Board of Education, but with the too partial friends of the youth who recommended him. And, perhaps, there has been some want of vigilance and care in the Committees of Presbyteries, who have had committed to them the responsible duty of examining and recommending beneficiaries to the Board. For some years, the Board have, very properly, devolved the whole responsibility of receiving beneficiaries on the Presbyteries, and have resolved to take all who are thus recommended, and they will receive none but such as are under the care of some Presbytery. Here it may be remarked, that when a youth is once put on a course of learning, with a view to the ministry, it is extremely hard to drop him, unless he should be found guilty of immoral, or very imprudent conduct. When he has been induced to relinquish the business for which he was preparing, and has been encouraged, and perhaps, persuaded, to turn his attention to the ministry, to drop him is not only cruel, but a severe injury, which none are willing to inflict unless the unfitness of the person is most manifest. And, indeed, with every degree of caution, it is impossible to judge certainly of the capacity of candidates, in the commencement of their course; for while some are so dull, that they never can be made any thing of, there are others whose minds are developed very slowly, and who improve under culture, to a degree far above what was anticipated. The fact is, that in all cases, the education of youth is an experiment. What any individual will be, cannot commonly be known, prior to the trial. In all institutions of learning, it will often happen that many who enjoy the advantages of instruction do not profit much, either for want of capacity, or habits of study. We must educate a multitude in our schools and colleges, in order to bring out the talents of a few. In regard to moral delinquency, the cases have been so few, that it is a matter of sincere thankfulness, that out of the hundreds of youth educated for the holy ministry, so few have acted in such a manner as to render it necessary to cast them off. In general, the beneficiaries of the Board have exhibited an exemplary behaviour during the whole course of their education.

Some time ago it was a matter of serious consideration, whether young men educated on the funds of the church, should not be brought under obligations to repay all that they receive. Our Church determined that this was not expedient. To send out our young ministers under a heavy load of debt, is surely to place them in a very undesirable situation; and although they have personally received a rich benefit in their education, yet it should be remembered that they were aided in acquiring learning, not for their own benefit, but for the service of the Church. Every man of right moral feelings, will be sensible, however, of an obligation, which he will be disposed to discharge in some way, whenever Providence shall put it in his power; and we do find, that, frequently, pecuniary returns are made by some who have been the beneficiaries of the Board. Most of our young ministers receive so meagre a support that it should not be desired, if they were

willing, that they should think of repaying what they have received. And there are some who, though they have not repaid the Church in kind, have more than done it by services rendered to this cause, and, especially, by aiding other young men in obtaining an education.

It is true, however, that there are persons in affluent circumstances, who were aided through their whole course by the funds of the Church, who have never made any return, or even acknowledgment, of their obligations. Concerning such, we would only say that their moral sensibilities are not as strong and delicate as they might be. But what would be thought of the man who after having been essentially aided by the Board of Education, should refuse his aid and co-operation in its benevolent exertions?

There is also another case, in which real injustice is done to this Board. It is, when a young man, after receiving aid from its funds, through his whole course, as soon as he enters the ministry, leaves our connexion and joins some sister denomination. Now we do not censure the young minister for entering a field more important and more inviting than he can find in our Church; but it is our deliberate and we think impartial judgment, that in such a case, he is bound in conscience to repay all that he has received. In conclusion, we would address ourselves to the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church. We entreat you, dear brethren, to look at this subject seriously, and you will find that there is no institution more vital and more necessary to our prosperity, as a Church, than the Education Board. It has been said, that compared with our other Boards, this is unpopular with many of our churches and with many individuals, who are able to aid it. But why so? Whence this prejudice? Do you wish our churches to be furnished with able, well educated pastors, and how are they to be obtained? Perhaps, your opposition is to a public education in theological seminaries. Well, propose some better plan, and we shall rejoice to adopt it; but the Church has been fully persuaded that such institutions were necessary to the best preparation of the greatest number of candidates for the ministry. But there is no compulsion in regard to this matter. Any who choose to pursue their studies in private, or with private pastors, are at liberty to do so: only we ask you to give your aid to enable poor and promising youth to acquire the requisite training to become useful ministers of the gospel. The place of study is a secondary thing. The work of missions, foreign and domestic, is becoming every year, more important, and pious, faithful men are demanded for this service; and where will you find them, unless you assist young men who are willing to devote themselves to this important work? Nearly all the missionaries in the foreign and domestic field, have come out of your theological seminaries; and the fact is, that most of them imbibed the missionary spirit while in these institutions, and a large proportion of them were educated, too, on the funds of the Church. If this department is neglected, or should become unpopular, one of two things will be the consequence; either, there will be a deplorable deficiency of labourers in the vineyard of the Lord; or, the Church will be filled with imperfectly educated men. In either of these cases, the cause of our Zion must decline. Other denominations will reap the harvest; for they are becoming more and more attentive to the education of their ministers. Yea, several large denominations, which some years since seemed to entertain a very low estimate of the necessity of learning in the ministry, are now straining every nerve to promote a liberal education among their ministers. If we do not come forward liberally, and vigorously, in support of this scheme of benevolence, we shall undoubtedly fall into the back-ground, in comparison with our sister denominations. While we sincerely rejoice in the more correct views which some of them entertain on the subject of ministerial qualifications, we do not

wish to see our own beloved Church retrograding in this matter. If the Presbyterian Church has been more distinguished for any one thing than another, it is the uniform zeal which she has cherished for the education of her ministers, and her unceasing exertions to bring promising and pious men into the ministry, who were destitute of the means of obtaining a thorough education.

It will not be a matter of surprise, that if our Church neglects her duty in relation to this matter, God, in righteous judgment, may so order things that we shall have few pious young men to educate. Already, the number of candidates is said to be diminishing. Let us beware of incurring the displeasure of the Lord of the harvest.

It may be proper to say a word respecting the way in which this business has been managed by the Board of Education. The writer, while he seldom ever meets with the Board, has been in a situation to observe its proceedings, and he is free to declare, that in his opinion, much zeal, wisdom, and diligence have uniformly characterized the management of the Board, and their Executive Committee. And our Secretaries and Agents, have been indefatigable in their exertions. The Presbyterian Church is under unspeakable obligations to a few working-men, in Philadelphia, who have for years served on her Boards and her Committees. The sacrifice of other benefactors of the Church is small when compared with the weekly labours of some of these devoted men. I know that some jealousy exists in other parts of the Church on account of so many of our Boards having their seats in Philadelphia, as though the power of the Church was too much concentrated in a few persons. And if it were not that the true interests of the Church would suffer by their removal, it would be desirable to have them distributed among the principal cities, included in our bounds. This is desirable not for the reason hinted at, but because a disproportioned requisition is made on a few benevolent men, for their time and labour. These men can have no other than benevolent motives for their long continued, and faithful services. They attend to the business of the Church weekly without any compensation, except the satisfaction of doing good. And as to honour or applause, they neither seek it nor receive it; their names are scarcely known to the Church, for which they so assiduously labour. Though equally faithful men might be found in other cities, yet I am persuaded, that there is a great advantage in having the business of the Church, concentrated in the place where the General Assembly generally meets.

If it were in my power to suggest any improvements in the system pursued by the Board of Education, I would willingly do it; but on an impartial survey of the rules of the Board, I am of opinion, that they approximate as near perfection, as can be expected in any affairs conducted by fallible men. If every Church in our connexion would do its duty in regard to this matter, we should not only have funds enough, but candidates enough; for then every Church would feel the obligation not only of contributing money to support indigent students, but of endeavouring to supply the Church with a succession of pious youth, to be educated for the sacred work of the gospel ministry.

S. Universalism: False and Unscriptural

UNIVERSALISM

FALSE AND UNSCRIPTURAL

AN ESSAY ON THE DURATION AND INTENSITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

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UNIVERSALISM

FALSE AND UNSCRIPTURAL

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Universalism characterized—Its contrariety to Scripture The final destiny of men is a subject, which, beyond comparison, exceeds every other in interest and importance. After a short time has elapsed, the affairs of nations, of empires, of kings and rulers, of agriculture, commerce and manufactures, of canals, railways, steam engines, navigation, architecture and political economy, will all have passed away, and be as though they had never been. But when the sun shall have ceased to shine, the heavens become dark, and the stars have fallen from their fixed places, the immortal soul of man shall exist, and think, and feel, and expand its powers, and shall flourish in the vigour of perpetual youth and health, and shall advance in knowledge, dignity, glory, and felicity, far beyond any thing which we can now conceive; or with its imperishable faculties, shall sink into the darkness of eternal night; shall be corroded with unceasing regrets, and bereft of all hope as well as present comfort; shall see nothing in the boundless prospect of the future, but the blackness of darkness for ever. Her energies impotently excited against God, shall return upon herself with terrible vengeance; and sin unpardoned, unrepented of, and now unrestrained, shall be the principal cause of that torture, which is represented by the “worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched.”

It is truly wonderful, that knowing, as we do, that there is a future state, we are not all, whatever may be our characters or opinions, more occupied with the concerns of eternity than with all other interests. When we seriously consider this subject of infinite moment, we cannot but censure our own carelessness and stupidity; we cannot but feel that we are chargeable with the grossest inconsistency. What! to walk along the brink of eternity, and to be drawn towards this endless existence by an irresistible force, so that in a few years, months, or days, or even in a few moments, our condition will be immutably fixed, and yet feel no concern, take no thought, and make no exertions for our own salvation! What words are strong enough to express such folly! If we were all perfectly sure of making a change for the better; if we entertained assured and well-grounded hopes of a happy life after our departure, the nearness of that event, and the object before us so interesting and glorious, ought, in all reason, to lead us to have our minds principally occupied with these future and eternal things.

There is, then, in the universe, no question so interesting to us as this: “What will be the condition of the different characters of men after death?” I take it for granted that there is a future state, and that the soul of man exists after the body returns to the dust, and will continue to exist without end. If any of my readers entertain a different opinion, and suppose that there is no hereafter for man, I must leave them at present to indulge in their infidelity. It is not my object at this time, to refute this

degrading doctrine. I can only stop to offer up a prayer to the Father of Lights, to recover you out of the snare of the devil, by whom you are led willing captives; and that of his infinite mercy he would so enlighten your minds, awaken your consciences, and impress your hearts, that you may not remain in this destructive error, but may be speedily rescued from this horrible pit of atheism, from this midnight darkness, and brought into the “marvellous light of the gospel,” if yet you are within mercy’s limits—for there is a degree and kind of error from which there is no deliverance, but the unhappy wretch is sealed up under judicial blindness and hardness of heart. For such we may not even pray. 1 John 5:16. Their character and doom are described by Paul, where he says: “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they shall believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” To such characters Isaiah received a message, when he saw the glory of the Lord Christ in the temple. “And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” These awful words our blessed Saviour applies to some of the Jews who attended on his ministry. It is important that all men should be aware that there is an error, or state of infidelity, from which there is no recovery, and a sin which is never forgiven, “neither in this world, nor in that which is to come;” a sin unto death. But taking for granted the doctrine of the soul’s immortality, our inquiry is, whether all men of every character and class shall be finally saved; or whether they who die impenitent and unreconciled to God, shall be eternally punished. To err on such a point must be dangerous, but the danger is not the same on both sides. For if they should be right who hold that all men will eventually be saved, those who deny the doctrine would only lose the present knowledge of their happiness, and even this they would not lose if they were sincere Christians; for whatever becomes of the wicked, such are certain of salvation, and eternal happiness they cannot forfeit on this plan. Therefore, if universal salvation should be the truth, sincere Christians will not be losers; and if wicked men should err on this point, and reject the doctrine of universal salvation, it will not be injurious to them, even if their error should afford them some uneasiness. Their error, in this case, would impose a salutary restraint upon them. If it be said that it is always beneficial to know the truth, I answer, if this doctrine be true, I deny the position. It is better for society, and better for the sinner, that he should not be sure that there is no danger of losing eternal happiness. But we may have occasion to return again to this subject. I now proceed to observe that if the doctrine of universal salvation is not true, then the error is likely to be fatal. For I presume that most who receive this doctrine, make it the foundation of all their hopes of future happiness. Now, if this foundation should prove to be false—if they should be found altogether mistaken about this matter—if the eternal misery of impenitent sinners should be by them realized—O, how grievous the mistake! How dreadful the surprise! How remediless the loss! How deplorable and desperate the condition! If we saw some of our fellow-creatures walking along a narrow path on the verge of a dreadful precipice, having on one side firm ground, but on the other a frightful abyss, what advice should we give them? Would we not most earnestly exhort them to lean to the Safe side, and to be constantly on their guard, not to tend in the smallest degree toward the yawning gulf? The cases are alike, and the application is easy. But perhaps the advocates of universal salvation will tell us, that there is in this case no danger of mistake; that they can demonstrate from reason and scripture, the truth of what they believe, and are willing to venture their salvation upon the scheme. Well, this seems to be placing the subject on fair ground. It is certainly incumbent on

those who depend on this doctrine, and especially on those who teach it, to be able to demonstrate it so clearly that not even the shadow of a doubt should remain. If the doctrine cannot be rendered absolutely certain, it is most manifest that they are inexcusable who propagate it, whatever show of reasoning they may exhibit, or whatever probabilities they may rake together. If there is the least danger of being mistaken in their opinion, the teachers of universal salvation ought to be considered as the destroyers of the souls of men; for many, no doubt, are induced from their belief of this doctrine, to neglect the means of grace, and to continue in the practice of their sins. But here, at the very entrance upon our subject, we are met by two classes of Universalists, differing exceedingly from each other. The one denying all future punishment of every kind and degree; the other admitting and maintaining the doctrine of a retribution to the impenitently wicked after death, but insisting that however long their punishment may be protracted, yet it is not in any case strictly and absolutely eternal.

Unless it had been verified by experience, I never could have believed that any man, much less a whole sect, with the Bible in their hands, could have persuaded himself that the Scriptures of the New Testament taught no such doctrine as that of the future punishment of the wicked. I should be as little surprised if these men were to assert that the Scriptures inculcated a system of atheism; or that in the whole volume there was not a letter of the alphabet to be found. There is in this opinion an audacity in relation to the word of God, which should cause us to tremble. It seems like giving the lie direct to the Almighty. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." To deny what is so clearly, so frequently, and in such various methods, taught in the holy Scriptures, appears to me to be more presumptuous and impious than to reject the Bible altogether. Indeed, this doctrine is worse than that of many deists; for they are willing to admit a state of retribution after death. It is equal in its licentious tendency to the very worst systems of paganism; I say to the very worst, because the heathen generally admitted and believed, that wicked men after death underwent a severe judgment, and were doomed to horrible tortures in Tartarus, according to the nature of their crimes. The plain truth is that this system contains in it the most virulent poison of atheism. That doctrine which frees wicked men from all fear of future punishment, even if they die blaspheming the God that made them, goes as far to open wide the door to the commission of all manner of sin as atheism can. If the person imbued with this doctrine feels inclined to commit some secret crime under the influence of avarice, revenge, ambition, or lust, what has he more than the atheist to restrain him? Suppose that by assassinating a near relative he can get possession of an estate, or can remove a disagreeable partner, or that he has it in his power to defraud the speechless orphan, or the helpless widow, by appropriating to his own use their property, what is there, I ask again, in this doctrine to restrain the sinner from the perpetration of the foulest crimes more than in the rankest atheism? This opinion is also insulting to the good sense of mankind. It seems to suppose that men are so silly or stupid that they will believe any thing which is preached to them; that they are such dupes that if it be told them that sweet is bitter, and bitter sweet, or that white is black, and black white, if there be some appearance of logic, and some boldness of assertion, they will receive it. Why do these false teachers (for such I must call them) meddle with the Bible? They might hold out some appearance of defence if they would reject the Scriptures entirely, but by acknowledging the Scriptures, they subscribe to their own condemnation. But perhaps they will say this is all mere assertion, and will call upon me to prove their doctrine false. To this I reply that there are some things so plain, that they require no proof by argument. This is one of them. Suppose I should bring forth a host of scriptural arguments to prove that there is a terrible hell into

which the wicked will be cast, these perverters of truth and reason, might pretend that I did not hold or teach the doctrine of future punishment, with just as much plausibility as that it is not contained in the writings of the New Testament. For what if I should use the strongest terms which our language affords, and employ every variety of expression, and even descend to particular cases, and give a vivid description of the punishment endured, what could I after all do more, to render my meaning plain, than is done in the sacred Scriptures? I do consider, therefore, this opinion to be one that needs no formal refutation. Can any man in his sober senses believe that those abandoned sinners whom the justice of God would not permit to remain on earth, but who, by the immediate vengeance of Heaven, were cut off by dreadful judgments, shall go directly to the pure regions of heavenly bliss. What! shall the traitor Judas, who died by his own hand, and thus went out of the world with the guilt of the most unnatural murder on his head, find his "own place" immediately among the saints of the Most High? Shall the sinners of the antediluvian world, whose enormous wickedness caused its destruction, be admitted at once to glory? And the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, stained with all the pollution of their abominable crimes, feel no evil on account of their sins, but be ushered forthwith into Paradise? And the Canaanites, whose unnatural crimes the earth could no longer endure, be placed in a far more eligible condition than the saints of God ever enjoy upon earth? But perhaps these enemies of the truth will say, that they do not believe that the soul exists in a Conscious state after death, until the resurrection of the body, and therefore all that has been said about the wicked going directly to heaven, is without force. I have long observed that error never appears single. One false opinion requires the aid of others to support it, and give it the appearance of consistency. But if we should admit this principle, it could not afford any real support to this most unscriptural opinion, or at all weaken the force of the objection which has been urged. For according to this supposition, those abandoned sinners, whom, on account of their crimes, justice did not permit to live upon earth, will, in their next conscious moment after death, be arraigned before the tremendous tribunal of God, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, and can the Judge of all the earth do right, if he should free them from all condemnation and punishment? Why are they called into judgment, to receive according to their deeds? Would these Universalists, in the fulness of their benevolence, have us to believe that on that awful day, intended especially for the manifestation of divine justice, there will be no distinction made between the righteous and the wicked, and that it will fare as well with the man who has spent all his life in open rebellion, as with him who has sincerely and faithfully served God, and has embraced the terms of reconciliation proposed in the Gospel? But it may be that I still mistake the real opinions of these men. They may believe as little in the day of judgment as in the fire of hell. And certainly it is as easy to disprove the one as the other. But if this be the case, I must be excused from following them any further. They must enjoy their delusion. I will therefore take my leave of this new race of Universalists. I believe they have the credit of broaching a doctrine which no sect called Christian, ever entertained before. Indeed, I do not think that in the foul sink of heresy, which seems to embrace almost every monstrous form of error, a single instance can be produced from antiquity, of any one who denied all future punishment. If originality in this case be any matter of boasting to these corrupters of the truth, they may rejoice in their "bad preeminence." But that I may not seem to dismiss the subject without exhibiting any proof, I will select a few out of the many passages in which the doctrine of future punishment is clearly taught: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where their worm

dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” The same form of expression is here repeated three times in the most emphatical manner by our Lord. I have no doubt, however, that these wonderful critics would undertake to prove to us, that there is no threatening of future punishment here! They must possess extraordinary ingenuity, or must calculate very largely on the stupidity and prejudice of those who receive their instructions. The same divine Person says to the wicked scribes and pharisees who malignantly opposed the truth: “Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” If there had been any of our modern Universalists among them, they could have told them to set their hearts at rest, and not to regard these threatenings, for they should all most assuredly escape the damnation of hell.

Again: “And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality; eternal life: But unto them who are contentious and obey not the truth, hut obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man that doeth evil.” There is no need of comment here, words cannot be plainer.

Again: “Seeing that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

It is unnecessary to multiply the citation of texts of similar import. The frequency of such declarations is known to all who are familiar with the New Testament. If it be said that all these texts can be so interpreted as to give a sense consistent with the doctrine of those Universalists who deny all future punishment, I have only to say, in reply, that upon the same principles of interpretation, it can be proved that there will be no future happiness to any of the human race; no resurrection of the body, and no general judgment. For although these doctrines are taught in the New Testament as clearly as it seems possible, yet not more expressly than the future punishment of the wicked. Some men, to support a favourite theory, may renounce the clearest principles of reason and common sense; but people who are wise will not commit themselves to the direction of such teachers, in spiritual matters, any more than they would in the affairs of this life. This tenet is one of serious import to the well-being of civil society, and demands the attention of the magistrate as well as the theologian. I do not mean that these propagaters of dangerous error should be persecuted for their opinions. I abhor all such methods of suppressing heresy, as contrary to the spirit of Christianity. But my meaning is, that it behoves the civil magistrate to consider well, whether such persons as openly profess that they believe in no future punishment, ought to be admitted to give testimony on oath, in any case. It has certainly been the practice of some of the English courts, and I believe, of some judges in this country, to refuse to admit men professing such opinions, to take an oath, and with good reason; for how can the most solemn oath bind him who believes that there is no punishment reserved for the perjured person in another world? But I

will not spend longer time in refuting an opinion, the condemnation of which is written as with a sun-beam, on almost every page of the New Testament; especially, as all that may be said in opposition to the more plausible opinion of those who admit future punishment, but hold that it is not endless, will equally militate against this error.

SECTION II("tw://[self]?tid=3&popup=0" \ "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

The fallacious reasoning of Universalists answered

I desire you to bear in mind what was said in the commencement of this treatise, that it is incumbent on the Universalist to prove his doctrine so clearly that there may be no ground for the least reasonable doubt. But how will he be able to accomplish this task? He may pretend to argue it from the perfections of God. 1. He may assume it as a first principle, that a Being of infinite wisdom, power and benevolence, never would bring into existence a creature to be eternally miserable. If we had nothing but theory to deal with, this argument would appear plausible; but it has this great defect, that it concludes as strongly against known and acknowledged fact, as against the doctrine of eternal punishment. If it could prove any thing, it would show that a Being of infinite benevolence never would give existence to creatures who should be miserable in any degree, or for any period. How can it be reconciled to the goodness of God, that men suffer in this world, and that many of them will suffer for ages in the future world? The answer may be, that their sins deserve the punishment which they endure; or that the good of the universe requires it. Well, if sin is of such a nature (and none can demonstrate the contrary) that it deserves eternal punishment; or if the good of the universe requires the eternal punishment of sinners, then their punishment may be eternal as well as temporary. Whatever sin deserves it is right to inflict, and as right if its desert be eternal suffering, as if it be temporary. But if the Universalist insist that no sin can merit eternal punishment, I answer, let him demonstrate this, and the dispute is at an end. But this point shall be considered presently.

2. The argument derived from the holiness of God against the eternal existence of sin, is of the same nature, and may be answered in the same way. If the eternal existence of sin were incompatible with the holiness of God, the existence of sin for a million of years, or for one year, or one moment, would be also incompatible with this perfection. As far as the argument is concerned, the length of duration is of no consequence, for God is the same through his eternal existence, and is as holy now when sin does exist, as he ever will, or can be through eternity.

3. But we come now to the main point; the hinge of the whole question. The Universalist lays it down as a principle, that the sins of finite creatures never can merit eternal punishment, and therefore a just God never can inflict such a punishment. Undoubtedly, if the principle assumed is correct, the conclusion is inevitable. God will never inflict an undeserved punishment "The Judge of all the earth will do right." But we demand the proof of this assumed principle. How is it manifest that the sins of men may not deserve an endless punishment? I am sure the position is not self-evident, and I know of no means by which it can be demonstrated. The Universalist may allege that sins committed in a short time never can deserve an endless penalty. But this is no correct method of estimating the duration of punishment. No such principle is recognized in the administration of the divine, or of human governments. In providence a man often suffers all his life for one wrong step; and in civil governments, the crime which it required only a moment to perpetrate, is punished with confinement for years, or for life. And the admitted principle of those

with whom we dispute is incompatible with this method of apportioning punishments; for they agree that the sins of a short life are punished, or may be punished for ages of ages—for a period which, in some sense, is called everlasting and eternal. Now, if they can tell us how this is consistent with the principle assumed in their argument, it may not be difficult to show that for aught we know, sins of this life may be justly punished for ever. The truth is, this is a subject on which human reason is incapable of judging correctly. We are not, without revelation, competent judges of the deserts of sin. But it is alleged again, and may perhaps be principally depended on, in support of this argument, that a finite creature cannot contract infinite guilt; as the acts of such a creature are finite, the punishment which they incur must, of necessity, be finite also. This may be thought good reasoning by those who use it, but in my apprehension, it is mere sophistical quibbling. Just as forcibly might we reason that a finite creature could not be the subject of eternal happiness, for this is as infinite as eternal misery. And it matters not, as it relates to the argument, how the finite creature becomes the subject of that which in its duration is infinite. If I were fond of reasoning about infinities, I would confront this argument by one much stronger, which indeed has been often employed. I would say, that the guilt of offences is properly measured by the dignity and excellence of the Being against whom we transgress, and by the extent of the obligation which binds us to obedience. This is an acknowledged principle among men. He who strikes or abuses a good father, or a good king, to whom he is subject, aggravates his guilt to a degree which is estimated by the scale mentioned. But I am aware how liable we are to mistakes, when we reason about infinities, concerning which our ideas are merely negative, and of course very inadequate; and therefore, though I see no flaw in this argument, I lay but little stress upon it, and choose to rest my faith on the plain declarations of the word of God, which will never mislead us.

4. Another argument to which Universalists resort with much confidence in support of their favourite tenet, is derived from our feelings. It is asked whether every benevolent man does not desire the salvation of all men, and can it be supposed that God is less benevolent than his creatures? It is, moreover, asked whether any earthly parent who loved his offspring, would consent for any misconduct, to see them eternally miserable? If it was completely in his power, would he not use every means to rescue them from such destruction? And does not God, the Father of us all, love his creatures more than any parent does his children? and can we suppose, therefore, that he will inflict upon them eternal punishment? There is no doubt but that this argument has more influence in making converts to Universalism, and confirming them in this doctrine, than any other. It may therefore be necessary to consider it the more particularly.

1. And let it be remarked in the first place, that mere feelings are a deceitful source of argumentation in most cases.

2. That the feelings of interested persons, can, least of all, be permitted to sit in judgment on a matter of this kind. We know well enough how the opinions of men are biased by their interested feelings.

3. The feelings of persons ignorant, in a great degree, of the design and end of punishment, ought to have no weight in determining the degree of punishment. But we are not sufficiently acquainted with the divine government to be able to judge correctly of all the ends to be answered by the infliction of the penalties of the law. Our feelings may be natural and even virtuous, but they may arise from the narrowness of our views. If our knowledge was greatly enlarged, we might possess

very different feelings on this subject. A child on seeing an atrocious murderer executed, feels a tender compassion for the sufferer, and would give the world to rescue him from the gibbet, but the enlightened and just judge, though he compassionates the culprit, feels no wish to save him from punishment, knowing how important it is to make a public example of such transgressors. Now, it would be just as reasonable to reason against capital punishment, from the feelings of the child, as to conclude against eternal punishment, from the feelings of men.

4. But the fallacy of this argument is manifest, because it is as strong against the sufferings of men in this world, by pestilence, war, famine, oppression, earthquakes, shipwrecks, &c., as against eternal punishment. What benevolent man does not desire that the millions of suffering creatures in the world at this time should be relieved? and yet God, who is able to deliver them, does not do it. What father, of natural feelings, could stand by and see his children, for any misconduct, so cruelly tortured and oppressed, and so miserably destroyed as multitudes have been in every age? And is God less benevolent than man? Does he love his creatures less than earthly parents their children?

5. Finally, the argument derived from compassion, and benevolent feelings, militates against the opinion that men shall suffer for ages in the future world, as well as against eternal punishment. What benevolent mind can think of such sufferings without earnestly wishing to relieve the unhappy sufferers? but God does not relieve them. The truth is that this mode of reasoning is utterly fallacious. It overlooks those circumstances in the character of God which ought to have principal weight in judging on this subject. God is infinitely holy as well as benevolent. God is the Governor of the universe. And after all, for aught the Universalists can prove, this infliction of eternal punishment may be a part of his universal benevolence.

I think, that now, every candid mind must acknowledge, that the Universalist cannot bring any clear demonstration from reason, that the punishment of obstinate and impenitent sinners will not be eternal. If he can establish his doctrine, it must be by proofs derived from the Scriptures. We are perfectly willing to meet him on this ground, for in our opinion, the only way, in which this question can be satisfactorily decided, is to subject it to the test of a fair examination of the word of God, correctly interpreted. God knows what will be the end of the wicked, and if he has revealed, that after suffering for a season in hell, they shall come out and ascend to heaven there for ever to dwell, we shall willingly embrace the doctrine; for we take no pleasure in contemplating the sufferings of our fellow creatures, either in this world, or the world to come. We do not hold this doctrine because it is agreeable to our feelings, but because we believe God hath revealed it. Just as we believe that there are now thousands of our fellow creatures in a suffering state, not because the idea is agreeable, but because the fact is attended with such evidence, that we cannot disbelieve it. True benevolence does not consist in disbelieving that men are now miserable, or will be miserable hereafter, but in efforts to relieve them from misery and render them happy, as far as we can, or as far as is lawful. In defending his position, the Universalist ought to adduce texts so clear, that their meaning cannot be reasonably disputed, and answer satisfactorily all the objections from other plain texts, which seem to teach an opposite doctrine. It will not answer the purpose, to bring forward obscure passages of Scripture, which are of difficult or doubtful interpretation, to which he may choose to give a sense favourable to his tenets. Neither can we admit doubtful inferences, from principles or declarations which may be clear. Least of all can it be tolerated, where such interests are at stake that he should think it sufficient to show that

the terms employed by the Holy Ghost, to represent future punishment, I may possibly signify a limited duration, because in some other places they are so used. The usual and proper signification of the terms, in the New Testament, must not be departed from without evident necessity. The usage of the writer or speaker in other passages, where these terms occur in relation to other subjects, should be carefully kept in view. No forced and extravagant construction of plain passages ought to be listened to, for a moment. What we want is truth, and not to be amused with the ingenuity of fanciful glosses. With these principles in sight, let us come to the point. And I would demand of the Universalist to produce one plain text of scripture, in which it is unequivocally asserted, that wicked men, cast into hell, shall be released from their misery, and raised to glory. This he cannot do, and he must be bolder than wise, who shall undertake it; yet this is the very point on which we want proof, and on which we might expect the Scriptures to be explicit, if it had been the intention of God to reveal this doctrine.

Again, I demand of the Universalist, to produce some plain declarations of scripture, showing that all the sins of sinners, dying in impenitence, will be pardoned in the future world; or, that any sins will be pardoned in the future world. No such text can be produced. In the accounts which the Scriptures give us of heaven, we learn that there are many admitted to that glorious place, who came out of great tribulation in this world, but no mention of any that were brought out of the torments of hell; yet surely if this was the doctrine of the Bible, we might expect to find some hint, somewhere, of this marvellous translation, and of the means by which it was effected.

Moreover, the doctrine of the Universalist is inconsistent with itself, for on the one hand he maintains, that sin does not deserve eternal punishment, and therefore there was no need of a Redeemer to save sinners; as in the course of time, they would come out by discharging their own debt; but on the other hand, teaches and insists, that men are delivered from sin and hell by the death of Christ, which supposes that they could not be delivered without his mediation. These things are irreconcilable. The dilemma is completely horned, and their escape impossible. If they fly from one, they are caught on the other. To show this, we ask this simple question, Are sinners saved from hell, by the operation of justice, or mercy? If the former, then the death of Christ was unnecessary, and the damned are saved without being under any obligation to Christ, and all men might have been saved in the same way. If the latter, then eternal punishment is consistent with justice, and all the divine attributes. We will propose it in a different form, Is the reason why sinners are released from hell, because they have satisfied justice by their sufferings, or because Christ has atoned for their sins? Let the Universalist answer. Or again, does the sinner in hell suffer all the penalty threatened in the divine law, or is he released from that penalty by the atonement of Christ? If the former, then certainly he is saved without dependence on Christ; if the latter, how long must he have suffered, if a mediator had not interposed? If only for some longer time, then Christ by his death, does no more than shorten the period of his punishment, which would have come to an end without a Mediator's interposition. And how can it be explained, that if Christ undertook the salvation of these sinners, he did not save them from all the punishments of hell, as he is supposed to do from a part? But this notion of sinners being saved from a part of the deserved punishment is repugnant to scripture, which in numerous passages, declares that wicked men shall receive according to the deeds done in the body. It is plain from the general tenor of scripture, that whatever is threatened in the law, will be endured by those who are cast into hell. And in the whole Bible there is no mention of any mercy exercised towards those who will

be condemned at the day of judgment. There is no hint that their dreadful torments will come to an end.

Some, indeed, suppose that future punishment is designed to humble the sinner, to bring him to repentance, and to accept of the offers of mercy through Christ. This scheme is a mere human invention, not supported by a single text, rightly understood, in the whole Bible. It is inconsistent with the idea which the scriptures give of the effect of these vindictory punishments, the tendency of which is not to produce repentance unto life and reconciliation with God, but to stir up impotent rage, to drive to utter despair, and to lead the unhappy wretches to blaspheme the God of heaven. But I would ask, what will be the consequence, if some of these sinners should continue in obstinate impenitence? The whole scheme goes on the principle, that repentance and reconciliation depend on the free-will of the creature. It is evident then, if he remained obstinate under all the means enjoyed in this world, and for ages of ages, under the torments of hell, there can be no certainty that he will ever repent. Therefore some may suffer eternally according to these principles.

It is a point which has never been explained, how sinners, long confined to a dungeon of darkness and despair, and to a society of abandoned blasphemers, should be fit for the exercises, enjoyments, and society of heaven. If they go out, as criminals from a penitentiary, because they have suffered their time out, they will be found as unfit for the mansions of glory, as our penitentiary criminals, for refined and virtuous society. Some do indeed, talk of a purifying fire, a sort of purgatory, by which all the dross of sin will be consumed: just as a furnace removes the dross of metals, cast into it. This, perhaps, is the most plausible idea, which the Universalists ever advance, in favour of their system. But the mere infliction of pain has no tendency to make men holy. The natural effect of mere punishment is to lead the sufferer to hate the person who inflicts it. No inference in favour of this theory can be drawn from the utility of afflictions to Christians, in this world; for the agency of pain, in this case, is merely incidental. It is the sanctifying efficacy of the grace of God, to which the benefit should be ascribed. Again, if this purgation depends on the free will of the creature, it may never be completed; for as before said, that obstinacy which can resist this means for ages, may continue to resist as much longer, and so the sinner may remain eternally in misery. But if pain produces its effect, by any kind of necessity, independently of the human will, it is hard to see how that effect can be moral purity; which cannot exist without the consent of the will. Or, is it meant that the Holy Spirit operates on the soul by means of the pains of hell? I shudder to express such an idea. The decisive objection to this theory however is, that it is totally repugnant to the doctrine of future punishment, contained in the word of God. The punishment of the wicked in hell, is never represented to be salutary to the individual sufferer, but always destructive. The soul cast into hell is never spoken of as sent into a state of discipline and purification, but as lost, or destroyed with an everlasting destruction. "Fear not them that kill the body, but fear Him who after he hath killed hath power to cast both soul and body into hell."

It is a favourite maxim with Universalists, that all punishment is intended for the benefit of the transgressor: a principle contrary to all the reason of man, contrary to all the principles on which penalties are annexed to human laws, and it would scarcely be possible to conceive of any thing more opposite to the whole doctrine of Scripture respecting the punishment of impenitent sinners.

Among all the numerous texts of Scripture which speak of future punishment, there is not one, which in the smallest degree, favours this principle. According to this notion, the wrath and curse of God against impenitent sinners, would in reality, be a blessing. The execution of the penalty of the law, would be the means of salvation; and everlasting destruction would be the means of everlasting life. Into what absurdities will some men run, to prop up a favourite system!

SECTION III("tw:///self?tid=3&popup=0" \l "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

The Doctrine of Universal Salvation receives no support from the express declarations of Scripture

It is time to inquire how the advocate of universal salvation, attempts to demonstrate his doctrine from the express declarations of Scripture. Here, in the first place, he entrenches himself as in a citadel, in the declarations of Scripture, often repeated, that "Christ died for all men;"—"is a propitiation, for the sins of the whole world"—"tasted death for every man;" and "gave his life a ransom for all," &c.

It may be doubted, on good grounds, whether any of these universal expressions in which all the world, the whole world, &c., are used, ought to be interpreted so as to comprehend every human being, who ever has, or ever shall live. The true import and extent of such phrases must be determined by the subject and the context. When it is said, "the whole world lieth in wickedness," certainly true believers are excepted. When we read in Revelation 12:9. "That the Devil and Satan deceiveth the whole world," we must restrict the phrase to the whole world of the ungodly. So also when Paul says to the Romans, "your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world," we cannot interpret the phrase in its most unlimited extent. And to the Colossians he says, "which is come unto you as in all the world."

There was a special reason, in the times of the Apostles for using frequently such general expressions, respecting the extent of Christ's atonement, to counteract the deep-rooted prejudices of many of the Jewish Christians, who entertained the narrow principle, that the church and the blessings of the gospel, peculiarly belonged to their nation. This led the sacred writers often to declare, that Christ came to save the world, and that his death was a propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world; not of us Jews merely but likewise of all nations.

There are many, therefore, who believe, that some of them are intended, merely to express, in strong manner, that the benefits of Christ's death were not to be confined to the Jews; but to be extended to the whole world;—to all nations; and that these universal expressions, in other places, refer, as appears by the context, to all sorts of men, kings, governors, and servants, &c., and in some instances, (and these are the texts most depended on by the Universalists,) they include all the members of Christ's mystical body.

They believe, that God, foreknowing all that should ever repent of their sins and believe in Christ, did provide an effectual atonement for all such and no others: and although, they admit the infinite value of Christ's death, and its sufficiency for the salvation of all men, in itself considered; yet as it was designed and offered only for such as should believe, it is in strict propriety an atonement for no others. Now if this theory be correct, the doctrine of the Universalists is cut up by the roots. Their boasted argument from the death of Christ can have no existence. But as many Christians receive those declarations of scripture which have been referred to, as teaching that in some sense Christ did die for all, and every one, of the apostate race of Adam, I will answer the

argument on which so much stress is laid, on this ground. And here I remark that although it is said that Christ died for all, gave himself a ransom for all, &c., and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, &c., it is nowhere said that he so died for all as to render the salvation of all certain. Provision may be made for the benefit of men, which they shall never enjoy, because they never comply with the terms on which it is offered. This argument would have some plausibility if the blessings purchased by Christ were not suspended on certain conditions; and if it had not been expressly and repeatedly declared, that all they who refuse to comply with the conditions, shall assuredly perish. A king might make provision for the pardon and reconciliation of a rebellious province, but if it was ordained that none should receive the benefit of his clemency but such as came forward and made their submission, and renewed their allegiance, then certainly it never could be argued that they who refused these terms and continued in rebellion, would be pardoned and reconciled. It matters not how the way of reconciliation was opened, if the mercy proposed was by the sovereign suspended on a condition, and that condition is refused by some of those to whom the benefit is offered, it is evident that they can claim no share in the pardon. Now, there is no truth more undeniable than that the benefits of Christ's death are offered to men, on condition of sincere faith and true repentance. No promise of pardon is made to any others; no intimation given that rejecters of the gospel shall ever receive the benefits of the gospel; but on the contrary, it is positively declared that such shall not be pardoned, but shall be subjected to a heavier condemnation than if Christ had never died, and the offers of salvation had never been made. Wherever the gospel is preached, these terms are proclaimed. They are contained in that commission given by the risen Saviour, from which all the authority of ministers is derived: "Go," he says, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Now, if the doctrine of the Universalists had been the truth, the commission would have been expressed in a very different style. The good news to be proclaimed would have been that all will be finally saved. Why is it, if this was intended to be revealed, that it is never mentioned? Surely every unprejudiced man, in reading or hearing these words, would suppose that there was no salvation for unbelievers. Our Lord, when he is speaking of the great love of God in sending his Son into the world, at the same time teaches emphatically, that none will be saved but believers; that all unbelievers will certainly perish, with an aggravated destruction. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." But the Universalist says that he shall have eternal life whether he believes or not—that there is no danger of perishing utterly. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Is there any trace of universal salvation here? Would our Saviour have used this method of speaking, if he had intended to teach this doctrine? "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Here, indeed, is something, which, separated from the context, seems to make as much for universal salvation as any thing in the Bible, but the next words entirely remove every impression of this kind, and seem to have been uttered to confound all such opinions. "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And if there were not another text in the Bible on this subject, the last verse of this third chapter of John is sufficient to affix a seal of

condemnation on the doctrine of the Universalists for ever. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." Here nothing depends on the import of terms, which it is pretended are of equivocal meaning. It is positively asserted that they shall not see life. The only possible evasion is, that all will some time or other believe; but is there the least intimation of any such thing here, or any where else? If our Saviour knew that all would certainly believe, and intended that we should receive that, as a revealed truth, why speak of some who should not see life, but remain under the wrath of God? The Universalist cannot demonstrate then from the fact of Christ dying for all, that all will eventually be saved; for the contrary is declared concerning those who do not believe.

It is impossible in this treatise to enter into a critical discussion of all those texts which are adduced by Universalists to prove their favourite doctrine. But to show how far they come short of a demonstration of universal salvation, by an appeal to scripture, I will select a few of those texts which are apparently most in their favour, and give them a brief consideration. In 1 Corinthians 15:22, it is said: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here the Universalist pleads, that the salvation of Christ is just as extensive as the death introduced by Adam. To which we answer:

1. That the apostle in this chapter is evidently treating, not of the resurrection of all Adam's race, but of all true believers. What he says of a glorious resurrection, relates to those who had fallen asleep in Christ; "they that are Christ's."

2. But admitting that the word all is equally extensive in both members of the sentence, it makes nothing for universal salvation, for the apostle, by the phrase being made alive, evidently means that all shall be raised from the dead, and this is what we all believe. Christ will raise from their graves not only the just but the unjust. "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Yes; all shall be made alive; all shall rise and stand before the Judge, but not that all may go into the happiness of heaven; but they that have done evil shall be raised to life, that they may be doomed to deserved damnation. That the words of Paul do relate to the resurrection, a child may know by reading the chapter whence they are taken.

- 1 Timothy 2:4. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This text does not assert any thing respecting the event of the salvation of all men; it only declares that the salvation of all men is a thing which in itself considered, is agreeable to the will of God. But it can be shown from scripture, in many passages, that that which is consonant to the will of God does not always take place. Christ says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" "O that they were wise!" But such expressions cannot be adduced to prove that the event thus willed or wished must come to pass.

"Do not that abominable thing which I hate." But although nothing is clearer than that God hates all sin, yet we cannot argue from this that sin has no existence.

Sin, in all its degrees, is contrary to the will of God, and yet sin exists. The present happiness of all creatures is in itself a thing most agreeable to the will of an infinitely benevolent Being, but yet

many endure pain. Nothing, as to the event, can be argued from these expressions of the divine will. If the Universalist should argue that what God wills must be accomplished, for who hath resisted or can resist his will? I answer, that when it is said that God wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, he did not declare his purpose in regard to the event, but only expressed what in itself was pleasing to him, as he has elsewhere declared, with an oath, that "he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked." But if we take it according to the mind of the Universalist, it will prove too much for his purpose. It will prove that all men must immediately be saved and brought to the knowledge of the truth, for it is now the will of God that all men should be saved; and if the will of God is necessarily effective, then all men would have now the knowledge of the truth. It cannot therefore be demonstrated from this passage that all men will be saved, on any interpretation. But if we take an impartial view of the context, I think it will appear highly probable that the word all here does not refer to men individually, but to classes; for this verse contains a reason for offering prayers for all men; that is, for all conditions of men, as the apostle explains it, "For kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Another text on which great dependence is placed by the Universalists, is Romans 5:16. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." There is not a word here of men's being delivered from hell and translated to heaven. If these words proved universal salvation, they would prove that in this life all men are justified. Two persons are in this context brought into view, and one is said to be the type of the other. Between Christ and Adam there is this remarkable correspondence or similitude, that they are each the head of a people who are intimately connected with them and depend upon them. Though they thus stand as type and anti-type, and are alike in this one respect, yet this resemblance does not hold in every thing. They are not compared as to the number of persons connected with each; but in regard to the efficacy which they respectively exerted on those connected with them. As to the argument of the apostle and the pertinence of his comparison, it is of no consequence what the numbers are. The superior influence and abounding of grace over the power of sin, will be manifest in a single case. But as both these heads or representatives have a certain seed to whom they stand related, the whole of these are several times mentioned by the apostle, by the terms many and all, which terms, in such a connexion, do properly refer, not to the same persons, and precisely the same number, but to the individuals composing these two bodies or systems, whether the number in each be equal or unequal. The number connected with each head must be determined by the general doctrine of scripture. When the many, dead through Adam, are mentioned, we know that the whole human race are intended, because we know from other sources, that they are born under this curse; but when the many and the all, who "receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness," are spoken of, there is no necessity for supposing that these words include the same, or an equal number, as in the former case. It is much more natural to refer them to that whole body of which Christ is the head. The condemnation which came on all men undoubtedly relates to the whole human race; but the justification which comes upon all men, can properly relate only to those who are justified by faith. But even if the words all men should be taken here in their utmost latitude, it never can be intended to teach that all men, however impenitent and unbelieving, are in a state of justification. It can mean no more than that justification is freely offered to all men.

It is a good rule of interpretation never to give a meaning to a particular passage which is repugnant to the whole scope and tenor of the writer, and which would make him contradict himself.

Now, if these texts do not prove the doctrine of universal salvation, it cannot be proved—it is incapable of being demonstrated from the scriptures; for although many obscure passages are alleged, none of them are stronger than those already considered. Is it safe, then, I would ask, for any man to venture his salvation upon these interpretations? Is it benevolent to instil a doctrine pregnant with so much danger, into the minds of men, when it rests on so slender a foundation?

SECTION IV("tw://[self]?tid=3&popup=0" \l "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

Universal salvation cannot be inferred from the limitation, in some instances, of the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever. As the Universalist cannot demonstrate his doctrine from any passages of scripture which directly assert it, so he cannot prove that those numerous texts in which future punishment is expressed by the words eternal, everlasting, for ever, &c., are not to be taken in their usual and obvious meaning. I say in their usual obvious meaning, for it cannot be denied by the Universalist, that in nine instances out of ten in the New Testament, the word eternal means a duration without end. Certainly it does when used in relation to God and his perfections; and to the future blessedness of the saints; with what propriety, then, can we depart from this meaning, when it is used to express the future misery of the wicked? Why would the inspired penmen employ a word so likely to mislead, if they meant to teach that future misery was temporary? That these terms do, in some cases, express an endless duration, he cannot deny, without denying the perpetuity of the saints' felicity in heaven, and the eternity of God himself, for by these same terms are these ideas conveyed. Let us take a single passage, Matthew 25:41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Let it be well weighed that this sentence of everlasting punishment is to be solemnly pronounced when Christ shall come to judge the world, when time shall have come to an end. Now if Christ had intended to save men out of hell, we might suppose he would accomplish the work of salvation before the day of judgment, for then he will give up the mediatorial office, so far as it consists in the government of the universe and the salvation of sinners. This is the time of the restitution of all things. After this he that is unjust must be unjust still, and he that is filthy, filthy still. But let it be considered again, that the duration of the happiness of the righteous and of the punishment of the wicked, are expressed by the same term. There is a variance in the words in our version, merely to avoid the too frequent recurrence of the same word, and everlasting and eternal were thought to be of the same import; but in the original the word is precisely the same in both cases. If then eternal happiness means happiness without end, eternal punishment means punishment without end. And let it again be considered that the same term is used to signify the eternal existence of God himself.

Out of more than seventy passages in which this adjective is used in the New Testament, in above sixty it must be conceded by the Universalist, that it expresses a duration strictly eternal, unless he will deny the endless duration of God and his attributes; or the perpetuity of the felicity of the saints in heaven. By what rule of interpretation can he determine that when it is used to express the duration of the misery of the wicked, it is not to be taken in the same sense? especially when the

future destiny of the righteous and the wicked are contrasted in the same passage, as in the text cited above. Can it be believed that in one part of the sentence it means a duration strictly eternal, and in the other signifies temporary punishment? If this could be believed, then we must suppose that there is no certainty in any thing taught in scripture. There could be no means of ascertaining what the meaning of the scripture writers is. The Universalist believes that the salvation of all men is a doctrine clearly revealed in scripture; but if it had been the purpose of the inspired writers to teach this doctrine, would they have expressed the extent or future punishment of the wicked, by a phrase which every where else in the New Testament means an endless duration?

Again, suppose that it had been the design of the inspired penmen to teach that the punishment of the wicked was endless, what terms could they have used more forcible than those which they have employed? I know of no language which would have answered the purpose of conveying this idea if the language used by them does not. If then it is not taught in Scripture, that the punishment of the wicked in hell is without end, it cannot be reached in human language. Let the Universalist tell us how the idea of a duration absolutely eternal could have been conveyed, and I will agree to show, that the same objections may be brought against his terms, as those used. In fact there are none stronger. And what if they are sometimes employed to designate a period not strictly eternal? this use of the terms is almost confined to the Old Testament, and from the nature of the case the meaning can easily be ascertained, from the nature of the subject spoken of, or from the context, but what is there in the passage quoted, or in its context, to show us that endless duration is not intended? I confess, that if I were to set myself to devise a form of expression to convey the doctrine commonly held by Christians, I could not find any one, which to my mind would be more decisive. I could here cite hundreds of texts, but it would be useless. If the Universalist can demonstrate that this means a limited duration, he can prove any thing.

Some of them, indeed, make short work of answering the argument from this text, by denying that it has any relation to a future state of existence. It is, according to them, a highly figurative representation of Christ's coming in his providential dispensation, to secure his friends from persecution, and to inflict temporal punishment on his enemies. But methinks, it would be much easier still to deny that there was any future state, or judgment to come; and indeed some of their teachers, have come very near to this point.

SECTION V("tw://[self]?tid=3&popup=0" \l "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

Universalism disproved by express declarations of Scripture as well as by man's relations to the divine law

It may be said, why should a doctrine of so much importance be conveyed only in terms which it is acknowledged, do not always signify endless duration? Why not express it in some less equivocal form; in a way which could not be misunderstood? I answer, that the very thing demanded is done in passages, almost innumerable. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" "Many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." "Shall not see life." "Not every one that saith Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Ye shall die in your sins, and whither I go ye cannot come." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." "He that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." "Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." "If any

man see his brother sin a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it. For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; good were it for that man if he had never been born." "Between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." "There shall be gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." "For I say unto you that none of these men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." "I pray for them, I pray not for the world;" "whose end is destruction;" "whose end is to be burned;" "whose end is, according to their works." "The things that are not seen are eternal;" "whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb, from the foundation of the world." But there is one view of this subject, which ought not to be omitted, in this treatise, from which it may be shown, that the punishment of the sinner may justly be eternal, even if any one sin deserved no more than a very short punishment. As long as man exists, in whatever state, a rational, free agent, he must be under obligations to obey the law of God. That law binds him not only on earth, but in hell. Disobedience to the law of God necessarily incurs its penalty according to the nature and malignity of the offence. If then a sinner be cast into hell, under the guilt of such sins as would require him to suffer for some limited period, he will by repeated and continual disobedience, go on perpetually to contract fresh guilt, so that he will never be able to pay the debt due to divine justice. The only objection to this view is, that men are in Scripture said to be punished for the deeds done in the body, and that men in hell are not in a state of probation. I admit, that men at the day of judgment will be condemned, only for the sins committed in this life. No man can justly be condemned for sins not yet committed; but this does not hinder, but that the sinner may continually contract fresh guilt, in a future world. That men should be capable of sinning, it is not necessary that they be in a state of probation. Those who have committed the unpardonable sin, or who are given up to judicial blindness, although their probation is ended, are still capable of sinning.

Indeed, if the principle here assumed, that men could not sin unless in a state of probation were correct, there could have been no sin since Adam's fall, if a Saviour had not interposed. Upon this principle, there could be no holiness, among the saints in heaven; for when a state of probation is closed, if there can be acts of duty, there may also be acts of transgression. The fallen angels do still sin, although their probation is ended. Satan sinned grievously in deceiving our first parents, and in murdering our whole race, as he does every day in seducing men into sin. On these accounts he is called a murderer, a liar, and the father of lies. If sinners in hell feel enmity to God, and blaspheme his name, and indulge the worst passions of every kind, they only sin continually. If the damned were incapable of acts of sin they would be equally incapable of a sinful nature, but will any one be so absurd as to maintain that casting a sinner into hell will take away his depraved nature?

Still, however, it may be urged, that although the wretched in hell may sin, they cannot with propriety be punished for their sins. There is great inconsistency in this allegation, for the very nature of sin is, that which deserves punishment. If sin in the damned do not deserve punishment, they are not blamable for it; but that for which a man cannot be blamed is no sin. If we admit the existence of sin, we never can deny the justice of punishment.

If it should be further objected, that sinners in hell cannot avoid sinning, and therefore cannot be justly punished for what they cannot avoid, I answer, that if this objection has any weight it goes to prove that they cannot sin; but in whatever circumstances they can sin, in the same they incur deserved punishment. But sinners in hell are under no compulsion to sin, any more than the saints in heaven are compelled to be holy. In both cases they act freely. If saints in heaven are secured from sinning, it is in a way perfectly consistent with free agency. And if the damned in hell are under any necessity of sinning, it is nothing else than that which arises from total and unrestrained depravity. There is then no compulsion in hell to sin, any more than there is in heaven to be holy. Now if men may remain sinners for ever, they may justly be punished for ever. But finally, their sin is itself the most dreadful punishment that can be conceived. What worse hell can any imagination conceive, than unrestrained malignant passions, with the lashes of a guilty conscience, conjoined with fear and utter despair in regard to the future?

If then the soul be immortal, and be entirely abandoned to its own sinfulness, the torments of hell must be eternal. This argument does not prove, that God could not save men from hell, if that had been his purpose, but it utterly refutes all arguments against the justice of punishing sinners eternally; for if we were to concede that in a short life men could not deserve eternal punishment, or that the evil of sin was not infinite; yet these concessions would not affect the conclusion derived from this view of the subject.

SECTION VI("tw://[self]?tid=3&popup=0" \l "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

The immoral tendencies of Universalism invalidate its pretensions to a divine origin

It may be fairly asked, whether this doctrine of universal salvation has a good tendency; whether it is a doctrine according to godliness? What effect has it a tendency to produce upon the multitude who are living in sin, and who are exceedingly reluctant to forsake it? Will it not render the daring transgressor still bolder in his defiance of divine authority? Will not the profane and licentious, under its influence, become more impious and more abandoned? Will not the careless multitude, who love their pleasures, their gains, and their ease, become still more regardless of their duty and their best interests? Surely the world is wicked enough already. Surely there is no need of opening wider the flood-gates of iniquity? Why lessen the salutary restraints, which however neglected and despised by many, still have a powerful influence in preventing enormous crimes? But what, in fact, is the effect of this doctrine on the minds of those who receive it? The question may be answered, by asking another; who are they that greedily embrace this opinion? Are they the truly pious, who are endeavouring to live in obedience to the gospel? Or are they men of corrupt lives, who wish to be at ease in the indulgence of sin? I leave any reflecting man to answer these questions according to his own impartial observation of facts. I do not inquire whether a few apparently devout Christians may not, on account of a sensibility too exquisite, have favoured this doctrine? The inquiry is not whether there are not among Universalists men of upright moral character, for such men are found among atheists. The true point of inquiry is, whether, while the doctrine of universal salvation is rejected by almost all serious Christians, it is not cherished by the most profligate. I do not mean that these join themselves regularly to organized societies of Universalists. The fact is, they are mostly men who hate all religion, and if this opinion obliged them to attend any kind of worship, they would like it much less than they do. Those who associate for the worship of God, and yet hold this doctrine, are a small minority of the great mass who in

one form or another embrace it, and are influenced by it. In speaking of the practical effects of this doctrine, therefore, I wish not to be considered as referring to those societies which maintain the regular worship of God, and whose lives are decent and characters respectable. I allude to a much greater multitude—to that vast corrupt mass of society, from among whom all forms of religion, and all respect for religion are banished. Go into the haunts of vice, in high life, or low life, and you will find almost every man cherishing the belief, that there is no punishment in reserve for his sins. The gambler, the swindler, the debauchee, the blasphemer, the perjured man, the assassin, the duellist, the fraudulent dealer, and such like characters will generally be found holding the doctrine of universal salvation. When we meet with an exception among gross sinners, of one who does not believe this doctrine, it is not for want of inclination, but for want of evidence. Some men would give half their fortune to be assured of the truth of this doctrine. But when they have been carefully instructed in the doctrines of the Christian religion in early life, they often find it extremely difficult to receive doctrines so opposite to the plain language of scripture.

How baleful the influence of this doctrine on the minds of men, when under strong temptation to commit some great crime, may be easily conjectured. Avarice, lust, or ambition prompts to the deed; the occasion is favourable; secrecy seems to be secured; conscience remonstrates—the idea of the judgment crosses the mind. The will remains for a while suspended, but the doctrine of universal salvation is suggested. There is no future punishment, why need I hesitate? thinks the man; or if there is a hell I shall soon be delivered from it; and instantly he is determined to perpetrate the foul deed to which by his lusts he is solicited. O ye preachers of this false doctrine, how many atrocious crimes will you be responsible for, of which ye know nothing at present! How can you be accessory to so many horrid deeds of darkness? “How long will ye not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” And O ye people, beware of these false teachers who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Regard not their fair speeches. Their doctrine is not of God. If Satan were to preach, what doctrine can be conceived more congenial with his designs? It is indeed all derived from his original text: “Thou shalt not surely die.” Mark the spirit, the character, and the conduct of those men who go about the land proclaiming universal salvation. Inquire into their former lives, and suffer not yourselves to be imposed on by these false teachers. They are not commonly men to whom you would confide your dearest earthly interests, and will you commit to their guidance your immortal souls? Remember that you are acting for eternity, and that you cannot return to correct mistakes made here, however fatal they may be. Permit me earnestly to exhort you to read your Bible with serious attention, and you cannot be misled by the cob-web sophistry of these seducers. Be kind to all men, as neighbours and citizens, and fellow-creatures, but receive not those who bring such doctrine, as teachers, or you will bring a curse upon yourselves and your children. “Bid them not God speed” in their impious work. You cannot doubt but that they are false teachers, and their doctrine ruinous, if you will read your Bibles.

SECTION VII("tw://[self]?tid=3&popup=0" \l "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

The argument against Universalism from general consent

If the New Testament were put into the hands of a thousand indifferent persons who knew the Greek language, but had never heard of the doctrines which had been derived from the book, and they should all be asked separately whether it inculcated the doctrine of eternal punishment for

such as should die impenitent, there would be but one opinion in the whole. Whatever they might think of the reasonableness or justice of the doctrine, they would with one consent declare that it was plainly taught in that book. This is not a mere conjecture, for we have in fact not only thousands, but millions of witnesses of this kind in the people of all nations, who from the beginning have embraced Christianity. During the successive ages in which this religion has been embraced by millions, and the scriptures translated into almost every language, this has been understood to be the undoubted doctrine of scripture with the exception of a very few speculative individuals. On this subject the belief of the primitive church is undoubted. Except Origen and Clemens of Alexandria, no one of the Fathers embraced such an opinion. All sects in the eastern or Greek church, hold this doctrine to be taught in the New Testament. The western or Romish church has always held it. Every portion of the Protestant church has understood the scriptures on this point in the same manner. Perhaps a few of the fanatic Anabaptists of Germany might dream of an escape from hell-torments, but even among them, with all their crude opinions, this opinion did not prevail. Even the Socinians, who do not deserve to be ranked among Christians, did not venture to deny the eternity of future punishment. Faustus Socinus, the father of the sect, admits in all his works, and often reasons from it, against the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. What modern Unitarians think is not yet evident. I believe they are puzzled what ground to take. Such men as Priestley and Belsham were indeed believers in universal salvation, but whether this is the common belief of Unitarians, is not clear.

Until lately there never existed a sect calling themselves Christians, however heretical, who made universal salvation an article of their creed. On this point even Jews and Mohamedans are of one mind with Christians. And will you, then, O reader, venture your eternal interests on a doctrine so circumstanced? Will you give more credit to these seducing teachers of universal salvation than to all the martyrs, fathers, and saints who ever lived? Finally, retire, I beseech you, into your own breast, and ask whether you are conscientious in cleaving to this doctrine. Inclination pleads for it, but what does conscience say? In your most serious hours—in affliction and sickness, have you no misgivings—when death stares you in the face, are you not afraid to trust to this refuge of lies? Let me ask you, did you ever know a sinner to be reformed and converted from the error of his way, by means of this doctrine? Did you never observe any case in which any one was the worse for receiving this doctrine? Have you known any who were recovered by the grace of God, from a vicious life, and still after their conversion held fast this doctrine? And have you not heard of instances of men renouncing this doctrine, with abhorrence, as soon as they became penitent?

If a criminal were about to suffer capital punishment, whose life had been exceedingly wicked, could you advise him to set his heart at ease, and trust to universal salvation? Would you not think it safer for such an one to repent and flee to the peace-speaking blood of Jesus? Why then teach a doctrine which cannot be safely trusted in the last hour?

SECTION VIII("tw:///self?tid=3&popup=0" \l "Universalism_CONTENTS-")

The Nature of future Punishment

Taking the Holy Scriptures for our guide, we must believe, not only that the punishment of such as die in their sins is endless, but that the misery experienced by such will be exceedingly great. We cannot entertain the opinion that the threatenings of Scripture are merely intended to frighten men: the word of God uses strong figurative expressions, but never resorts to exaggeration to produce

an impression. All its declarations are sober verities, and will be found in experience to be awful realities. It is a remarkable fact, that those descriptions of future misery, which are most appalling, were uttered by our Saviour himself. Surely no one after reading these can be of opinion that the sufferings of the lost are small. No; their intensity cannot now be fully conceived, they so far exceed all the sufferings endured in the present life. Consider only the case of the rich man who had while in life, been clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and he seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Could any representation of intense misery be greater? The words need no comment, they speak for themselves. "And if thy hand offend thee," says our Lord, "cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee (that is, cause thee to sin) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." I know not what the reader may think of these awful words, but I confess, that I never read or hear them without an impression of terror. Indeed, were it not for the blindness of our minds and our stupid unbelief, such awful declarations from the mouth of Truth itself would cause our very flesh to tremble. This dreadful fire is not merely hinted at, but the declarations are repeated and reiterated as if to present the fires of the pit before our eyes. Surely "God is a consuming fire;" and, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." How will the Universalist dispose of this passage? Oh, it is appalling to see men trifle with such a subject. In these words of our Lord, we have both the perpetuity and intensity of the miseries of the damned clearly announced. The pain is that of fire, and it never is quenched. Whether the fire be understood literally or figuratively, is of no importance. It will be a pain better represented by the suffering produced by fire, than any thing else.

Again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." And who knoweth the power of his anger? Who can tell the pressure of the wrath of God, not merely striking him, but abiding on him? We are exhorted by the same divine Teacher, "not to fear them that kill the body, and have no more that they can do; but to fear Him who hath the power to cast both soul and body into hell." In several instances, he describes the place of torment as "outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." And when sentence is pronounced upon the wicked at the judgment, the sentence will be, "Depart, accursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels—and these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Even if we should suppose no positive infliction of pain, but only that which must come from the nature of the human mind, and circumstances in which the person will be placed, the misery of a lost soul will still be inconceivably great. Only think of the loss of all earthly enjoyments in a moment. The king descends from his throne, into darkness and degradation; the noble personage is deprived of all his titles and estates; the rich man can carry no part of his wealth with him; the man of pleasure will find no sensual enjoyments in the world of woe. The common man leaves

behind him his home, his farm, and his occupations; and the poor man must leave his cottage, which is as much to him as the palace to the prince. In short, at death, every man must lose all the earthly possessions which he claimed, and all earthly pleasures are for ever at an end. The pleasant light of this world shall be no longer seen; the senses will no longer be regaled by the sweets of nature. The world of punishment is always represented as dark—exceedingly dark. Whatever is perceived will be objects of horror, and instead of the pleasant sounds of melodious music, there shall be the voice of weeping and wailing. That the rich and great are in as much danger of being lost as any others, is evident: God is no respecter of persons. He will not regard the thrones of kings in dispensing justice to his creatures; and if we may rely on the testimony of history very few of this class will escape perdition. Of the kings of Israel, after the division of the tribes in the days of Rehoboam, all, without exception, were wicked; and of the kings of Judah, the good were a minority. And in countries called Christian, how few royal personages have even the appearance of piety! We need not, therefore, inquire what the state of the fact is, in regard to the heathen. According to the Scriptures, rich men are in greater danger of perdition than others, for it is declared by our Lord himself, “that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And the Apostle James says, “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten, your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh, as it were fire. Ye have heaped up treasure together against the last day.” Again, “Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?” The misery of the rich will be greater than that of the poor, as they will lose more, and have more talents to answer for. I know that these truths have very little effect to discourage men from hastening, to be rich, in doing which, they fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. But the degree of misery, in the future world, will depend more on the sins committed here, than on any difference of external circumstances. The poor are often greater sinners than the rich; and every one shall reap the fruit of his own doings. The thought which will give poignancy to the sufferings of the lost will be the conviction that they admit of no relief, nor the least mitigation. However the view may be extended far into futurity, no ray of light or hope dawns on the thick and terrible darkness. In the sufferings of this life, the prospect of a speedy termination, is the chief alleviation; but there, no such prospect arises to the view; and so certain will the wretched sufferer be, that his case admits of no relief, that all comfort from delusion is impossible. How many persuade themselves, that there will be no future punishment; or that if there is, it will be temporary! but there are none in hell who retain this doctrine. The slightest pain would become almost intolerable, if the patient believed that it would never cease. As hope alleviates every kind of misery; so despair is the ingredient in the cup of suffering which renders it so exceedingly grievous, that none can exercise any patience; but all are found weeping, wailing, and gnashing their teeth. Dismal, indeed, must be that prospect which is alleviated by no ray of hope, but presents the blackness of darkness, for ever and ever.

One reflection which will greatly aggravate this misery is the irresistible conviction that it is deserved, and that it has been brought on by misconduct. And in regard to those who enjoy the offers of the gospel, the misery of hell will be aggravated to an inconceivable degree, by the reflection that heaven was within their reach but was foolishly rejected; and also because the guilt of despising and rejecting the mercy of God exhibited in the gospel, so exceeds the guilt of the

sins of the heathen, that compared with it their guilt seems to be small. Our Lord said to Nicodemus: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." And he said of the Jews: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." "That servant who knew not his master's will, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; but he who knew his master's will shall be beaten with many stripes." In apportioning punishments, the rule of justice will be followed: "To whom much is given of him much will be required." But of all the ingredients in the cup of future misery, none is so bitter and intolerable as remorse. This is a pain diverse from all other pains. It has a poignancy and excruciating anguish which renders misery complete. We cannot conceive of any misery so great as this, when it is felt in its power. For as pleasures are of many different kinds as well as degrees, so also pains have as great varieties. Some very acute pains we are subject to, only by a connexion with the body; others are independent of the body, and are more lasting, as the pain of disappointed hopes, of reproach, of regret for not having done the good that was within our reach. From these and similar causes, our pains may be exceedingly intense; but the pain of remorse, which may be described as the feeling of ill-desert—the consciousness of sin voluntarily committed, is of a different kind from all other pains, and is more intolerable; and it is not a transient emotion, but one which must occur upon every recollection of our evil deeds. And though here we may continue to forget our sins by plunging into the vortex of pleasure, or engaging with all our powers in worldly business; or by the blindness of the mind and the errors of the judgment, we may not have the clear conviction of the enormity and guilt of our sins, yet all these methods of avoiding remorse will be wanting in the world of woe. There no amusements will be possible—no business will occupy the mind to prevent serious reflection, and all blindness and error as to the number and magnitude of our sins will be done away. They will appear continually before the mind, in all their blackness, with all their grievous aggravations, and remorse will sting the soul with incessant venomous strokes, as if it were for ever subject to the attacks of a scorpion. This is indeed a worm that never dies; a fire that is never quenched. God may have so constituted the mind and so ordained the laws of nature, that the punishment of sin shall arise from itself. It matters not whether the Governor of the universe inflicts condign punishment on incorrigible transgressors immediately, or by the instrumentality of those laws which he has established for every species of being. I believe we can conceive of no greater torment than what will arise from a conscience thoroughly awakened to see sin in all its aggravating circumstances of turpitude and guilt. To this we may add the misery of malignant passions—of impotent rage and envy, and unsatisfied cravings after a good which is for ever out of reach. In these exercises there is a double misery. The very feeling of evil passions is an unhappy feeling. The malicious, and revengeful, and envious are their own tormentors here. Such passions may have a gratification, but it is not of the nature of happiness. It is a diabolical feeling, and will constitute a portion of the misery of hell. But besides the unhappiness of these malignant passions, they will be accompanied with a conviction of the moral evil which attaches to them, and with an irresistible feeling of deep and damning degradation. Remorse and self-contempt will accompany all the exercises of the active soul, in a world where every restraint is removed.

Happiness or misery may be much enhanced by contrast. If there were no heaven, hell would not be as dreadful and intolerable as it is. The idea of the happiness and glory of the saints in heaven may be considered as giving the consummation to the misery of the lost; especially the consideration that they might have possessed everlasting joys if they had been wise; and that

some with whom they were nearly connected on earth, and who often entreated them to be reconciled to God, and to lay up their treasures in heaven, are among those who are rejoicing and praising around the throne of God and the Lamb. The most vivid pictures of the sufferings of the damned, commonly represent them as having a distant and despairing view of a lost heaven. Thus, when our Lord represents the misery of the rich man, he places it in contrast with the happiness of Lazarus. "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." And it will be seen that some whose advantages and opportunities of obtaining eternal life were far inferior to their own, will be in possession of that felicity which they failed to secure. In this respect "the first shall be last, and the last first." According to what our Lord said to the Jews: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold there are last, which shall be first, and there are first, which shall be last."

Let us look distinctly at the condition of a lost soul, as far as we can imagine it, when it first enters eternity. All delusive hopes vanish in a moment, and all doubts respecting the truth of a future state. It is felt to be a dreadful reality. The reflections of the lost soul may be conceived to be something of this kind. "The pangs of death are over, and I have passed into a new state of existence.—But what means this tremendous darkness? What horrors are these by which I am surrounded? What fiends are these which stare upon me and seem ready to seize me? Oh how wretched are my feelings! What a burden of guilt oppresses my soul! What I often was warned of has come upon me! My probation is ended! The door of mercy is shut for ever against me! My salvation is now impossible! Oh! that I had been wise, that I had considered my latter end.—But my repentance comes too late. I am lost!—my soul is undone!—I am already in hell! O misery! misery! misery!"

Next, let us view this same lost soul when the archangel's trumpet shall sound and call the living and the dead to the great tribunal. Now the sleeping dust awakes, and every human soul is clothed again with its own body. But while some rise with glorious, celestial bodies, resembling that of the august Judge, the wicked rise, with bodies of frightful deformity—they rise "to shame and everlasting contempt." The judgment is set, and the books are opened; and now comes the turn of this man who died in impenitence. All his sins of thought, word, and deed are recorded in the book of God's remembrance, with all their aggravations. The man is speechless, "for every mouth shall be stopped." And all his shameful acts of iniquity are exhibited to the attending universe in the clearness of sunlight. Shame and confusion cover him. But the book of the law is there also, and the awful penalty and curse due for every sin is made manifest. Justice holds the balance; and every one sees that the sentence of condemnation is just: it could be nothing else than what it is. And his own conscience re-echoes the curse of the law. His wicked rejection of the gospel is also made prominent, as the chief ground of condemnation. The very devils seem to rise in condemnation, for they never had a Redeemer provided. The heathen rise up in judgment against him, for they never had a Saviour offered. Tyre and Sidon appear in judgment against them; and even Sodom and Gomorrha enhance his guilt and condemnation, for with his privileges and opportunities, they would have repented. The rejecters of the gospel stand conspicuous among the condemned throng: their shame and remorse far exceed that of others, and their terror of

condign punishment agitates them in a horrible manner. But now the sentence against them, in a voice of thunder, pierces their soul. If any one moment of the eternal misery of the lost is preeminently more painful than all others, it would seem, that this must be that moment; when the Son of God, who died for sinners, and who waited with much long suffering on these unhappy wretches, having now, in the impartial exercise of his function as Judge, examined the case, estimates the guilt of every sin, pronounces the heart-rending sentence, "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." It is in vain that we attempt to conceive the pangs and agonies which must accompany that sentence Experience alone can reveal the whole truth, and may a merciful God save us from this experience! The judgment is past; the Judge and his saints and angels return to heaven, where he resumes his place on the celestial throne. But what becomes of the lost sinner? He hears the music of their universal song of praise—but it increases his anguish; he goes away into everlasting punishment. Let us endeavour to grasp this eternity of woe. Let us call in the aid of arithmetic and try to number his years, or ages of misery. Alas! vain is our mightiest effort of imagination.—Vain is the aid of the most extended multiplication. It seems to be at last as far from the end, as at the beginning. Let us then imagine a point of duration as far forward as our imagination can reach, and let us suppose an inquiry be made, of this miserable man, whether he experiences any mitigation of his torment, by the lapse of millions of ages; or whether he finds that he can bear up any better under his load of sorrow, in consequence of having borne the pressure so long. His answer must be, No! no! I experience no alleviation. My despair—my remorse—my raging enmity,—my anguish are the same, and ever will be the same!—But we are wrong in attempting to conceive of the full misery of the damned. It swells like a turbid ocean far beyond our thoughts.

Then what should we do, while there is an opportunity of escaping from such a dreadful state? My only motive, in endeavouring to depict the misery of the damned as vividly, and yet as truly, as I am able, is to induce my readers to flee from this coming wrath. I beseech you, therefore, my dear fellow sinner, to indulge in no delay in fleeing for refuge to the hope set before you. Remember Lot's wife. Remember how unexpectedly the deluge came upon an ungodly world, and how suddenly the storm of fire and brimstone burst on the cities of the plain. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die; for as I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn and live."

APPENDIX

AN OBSOLETE ERROR REVIVED An obsolete opinion, viz: "that the wicked will be annihilated at the day of judgment," has recently been revived by the Rev. Mr. Dobney, a Baptist minister of the city of London, in a work which has been republished and pretty widely circulated in this country. This theory is not less repugnant to the clear teaching of the New Testament, than the different systems of Universalism. According to this scheme, the most enormous sinner who ever lived, would receive the same punishment as the person chargeable with the fewest sins, and these of the lightest guilt. Upon this theory, how will it be more intolerable for Chorazin and Bethsaida, than for Tyre and Sidon, and the doom of Capernaum more dreadful than that of Sodom? But the Holy Scriptures, in innumerable places, declare that wicked men will be punished "according to their deeds"—according to the fruit of their doings. And in many cases it cannot be said that wicked men are punished in this life, for they spend their days in mirth and festivity, and are exempt from the afflictions which the pious suffer. As the Psalmist says: "There are no bands in their death, but

their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued as other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish. They are corrupt and speak wickedly. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth." But of the people of God it is said: "Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them." And as to the doctrine of annihilation, it is our opinion that it is nowhere taught in the sacred volume; and there is no evidence from reason or revelation that any substance which God has created, will ever be annihilated, much less the rational soul of man. When the inspired writers speak of destruction, they do not mean that the person or thing said to be destroyed, shall be reduced to its original nothingness, but that its beauty, value, or felicity shall come to an end. When we read of the world being reserved to be destroyed by fire, the substance of the earth will no more be annihilated than when it was said that it was once destroyed by a flood. But however this may be, we have clear evidence from divine revelation, that the souls of the wicked will not cease to exist, for the sentence denounced on them by the Judge will be: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;" and "they shall go away into everlasting-punishment." But annihilation is a momentary punishment. It can scarcely be said to be felt. The "quenchless fire and the never dying worm" are not felt by the annihilated. To them there is no place nor time for "weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth." This doctrine has really no foundation in scripture, and can only be rendered plausible by putting a forced construction on a multitude of plain passages. The universal testimony of the church in all ages is against it. Some pious men, through the indulgence of too great sensibility at the thought of eternal misery, may have adopted this singular opinion, more to save their own feelings than from any clear conviction that the doctrine was scriptural. But it is always the wisest and safest course for short-sighted mortals to receive the declarations of God in their plain and obvious meaning, and leave it to him to vindicate his own character and administration, on that day specially appointed for this very purpose. The righteousness of his dealings with his creatures will then be made manifest to the whole rational universe. There is no reason to fear that the Judge of all the earth will not do right, or that he will punish any of his creatures more than they deserve.

It moreover appears to us that this doctrine will be found to derogate from the necessity and value of Christ's sufferings and death, and from the obligations of the redeemed to praise him for his glorious work of redemption.

Let the lovers of truth and the Bible, therefore, beware of this doctrine. They do not need it for their own consolation; and as to the wicked, it is enough to know that they can be punished in proportion to their demerit, without being annihilated. At last all will be convinced that his ways are not unequal; and although he has sworn that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, yet he has also said, that "he will by no means clear the guilty."

It is true that God is love; but it is also true that he is a consuming fire. While his mercy will be eternally displayed in the salvation of the saints; his justice will for ever be manifested in the punishment of sinners. In both these attributes he is glorious; and one great end of all his works and dispensations, from the creation of the world, has been to exhibit these attributes, together with his wisdom, power, and faithfulness. And although the doctrine of eternal punishment is awful and mysterious, yet the justice and propriety of it will no doubt be made evident to the whole universe of intelligent beings. Let every humble disciple learn to receive the truth of God implicitly, and bring not only his own feelings, but reason itself in due subordination to the teachings of the

word of God. This submission God requires of every disciple in his school; and the want of this childlike simplicity and humility, is the true reason why many cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. "I thank thee, O Father Lord of heaven and earth," says Christ, "because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matthew 11:25-26.

S. The Way of Salvation: Familiarly Explained

THE

WAY OF SALVATION

FAMILIARLY EXPLAINED,

in a conversation

BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN

By the Rev. A. A. ALEXANDER, D.D.

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PART I

THE

WAY OF SALVATION

[The names of the children were John, fifteen years of age; Benjamin, thirteen; Rufus, ten; and Mary, eight. The speakers will be designated by the initial letter of each name; the letter F, standing for father.]

F. Come, my children, as our evening meal is over, and the weather is serene and temperate, let us take our seats under the shady trees, which overhang the brook, at the back of the garden, and spend an hour in conversation.

M. O how I am delighted to hear you say this! I remember how many pleasant evenings we spent under those large oaks, last summer, and how many pleasant stories you told us, all out of the Bible.

J. I have made it a practice to spend some time in that retired spot, evening and morning, for some weeks past, and I have wondered how so many people could prefer lying a-bed, to breathing the sweet air of the garden and groves, early in the morning.

B. I love the place too, there are so many birds, warbling their notes in the branches; and so many gay butterflies sailing through the air, and gracefully lighting on the ground.

R. Father, don't you remember what a nice summer-house we built, last summer, and how we covered it with boughs, and gathered the green soft moss for seats?

M. O yes, I remember, that I gathered a basket full of wild flowers, and stuck them all around the summer-house, just as if they had grown there; but the next time we came, they were all drooping, and almost withered.

F. And have you forgotten what I said these fading flowers were an emblem of?

M. I don't know what an emblem means.

F. An emblem, my daughter, is any natural or visible thing, which has a resemblance to some moral or spiritual thing.

J. I remember well, that father said those flowers were an emblem of youth and beauty, which must soon wither and fade, as did these flowers.

B. Father, will you now tell us some pleasant story?

F. My son, we must not be too fond of pleasant things. We must think of what will be profitable. Of late I have felt a great solicitude for the salvation of the souls of my dear children, and I wish now to speak to you of your need of a Saviour.

During this conversation, they arrived at the place, and took their seats.

J. I am glad to hear you mention that subject, for I heard Mr. Ambrose preach, some weeks ago, on the "worth of the soul." He said that it was more valuable than a thousand worlds, and the loss of it could never be repaired. I have been thinking much about it; and without my seeking, it comes into my mind, and all this day, my thoughts have been running upon it.

M. I wish, father, you would tell me what the soul is. I never saw my own soul, or the soul of any one. I do not know what it is like.

F. On many subjects, we are all children alike. My dear daughter, I know as little of the nature of a soul as you do. A spirit cannot be seen nor felt, because it has no flesh nor bones. But we know that the soul exists, as certainly as we know anything whatever.

M. I know what I see and feel, better than that I have a soul. This book which I hold in my hand, I can see and feel, but cannot see and feel my soul. I feel surer that I hold this book, than I can be of what I never saw.

F. My child, you deceive yourself. Who sees that book?

M. Why I see it with my eyes, and feel it with my fingers.

F. But who is this you call I? Is not that your soul? If you had nothing besides your body, you would know no more about that book than the stone under your feet does. Your eyes, and your fingers, are only instruments that bring sight and feeling to your spiritual part; which, in mankind, is called the mind or soul. If there is any difference, we are more certain that we have a soul, or that the soul is ourself, than of any other thing; for every time we see, or feel, or hear, or taste, or smell, we are conscious, that is, we are certain in ourselves, that our soul sees, feels, hears, tastes, and smells. Try, Mary, to stop thinking for one moment.

M. I cannot, for when I try, I am all the time thinking about trying.

F. Well, can any thing think but a soul? Every moment, therefore, you have a certainty that you have a soul.

M. But after all, I do not know what the soul is.

F. No, nor do I, except that it is that which thinks, and feels. But we know as little of what we see and feel. Here is a pebble; you see it is white and round. You take it in your hand, and it is smooth and fills up a certain space, so that you cannot shut your hand close. But what is that which is round and white and smooth and extended? You can tell no more about it, than you can of your soul.

R. Father, does the soul grow like the body? and is the soul of a man larger than that of a child?

F. You have fallen into a common error. You are endeavouring to give to a spirit the properties of a body. Size and shape belong to matter but not to spirit. But in one sense, the soul grows as much as the body, and may grow long after the body has reached its full size. The soul increases or grows in two ways; first, its faculties are by degrees brought into exercise and become more vigorous from day to day; and again, the mind is enlarged by an increase of knowledge.

J. I like to hear you converse about the nature of the soul, but what I most want to hear is about the salvation of the soul; for what good would it do me to know ever so much about my soul, if at last it should be lost? I cannot help thinking about our pastor's text—"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

F. I am pleased, my son, to hear you speak so seriously about the worth of the soul. To secure its salvation is surely the one thing needful.

B. I wish, Father, you would explain how the soul came to be in need of salvation; for our pastor said that if it were not lost, it could not be saved. Now, I thought that if it never had been lost, it would be sure to be saved. And would not man have been saved, if he had never sinned?

F. He would have been safe and happy as the angels are, but he could not with propriety be said to be saved. A man who has never been sick is well, but you cannot say he is healed. That applies only to such as have been sick. To save any one is to deliver him from ruin, into which he has fallen or to which he is exposed. None can be saved, therefore, but lost sinners.

B. I understand this now; but how did we all become sinners? A holy God could not create us sinners.

F. No, my son, to say this would be blasphemy. God created every thing good according to its kind. And it is declared that he made man "in his own image, and after his own likeness;" that is, he was created in knowledge and holiness. I think, Benjamin, you could answer your own questions if you would only recollect your Catechism, which you repeated last evening. "Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?"

B. "Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God."

F. Very well, there you have it; and what is the Scripture proof which you learnt?

B. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

B. But, Father, how could one man's sinning make all men sinners?

F. In two ways. All Adam's posterity are made sinners by his sinning: First, because he stood for them, and acted for them, in what is called the first covenant: that is, the agreement which God made with Adam that if he obeyed him he should live, but that if he disobeyed him, he should die. Thus, when Adam sinned, and so broke that covenant, all mankind sinned in him, or his sin was theirs also, because they were included in the covenant. Secondly, our first parents having lost the image of God, and corrupted their nature, their posterity are all born in the same destitute and corrupt state. What other text have you on this subject?

B. We "were by nature, children of wrath, even as others." "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

M. Why, I thought some people were good and some bad.

F. No, my child, "there is none righteous, no not one." "All have gone out of the way." "There is none that doeth good."

M. Dear father, are you not good Yes you are, I know you are.

F. No, my child, I am by nature no better than others, and if I now differ from the worst of men, it is all owing to grace. "By the grace of God I am what I am." I have daily evidence of the most convincing kind, "that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." For every good thought and feeling, for every good word and work, I am indebted to the grace of God.

M. And our minister, was he born in sin?

F. Yes, my child, he confesses it every time he prays, and this is the doctrine which he preaches every Sabbath.

J. How does it come to pass, that while all are sinners by nature, and without holiness, some men are moral and amiable from their childhood, and others are wicked all their lives?

F. It is not owing to any essential difference in natural character, but some persons are from their youth under various restraints, which keep them from running so far astray in their actions as many others. Early instruction, a fear of shame, a dread of punishment, and the absence of strong temptations, are the means of restraining many. To all which, we may add the secret influence of the Spirit, in what are called his common operations, by which they are kept in a state of tender moral feeling, and are sometimes under strong convictions of their sin and danger.

M. Are no children good from their earliest age? May not young children be made good as well as grown people?

F. They may be sanctified from their birth, as was John the Baptist, and Jeremiah, and perhaps Samuel; but experience teaches, that few give evidence that this has been their case.

M. What then becomes of young children? If they are born in sin must they not be lost?

F. Now, my child, you are indulging a vain curiosity. What good can it do you to know what becomes of those who die in infancy? God has not told us, and we ought not curiously to inquire into secret things which belong to God. We know that God can save them, and we have no evidence that he will not.

M. Perhaps it would have been better for me if I had died when my dear mother was taken away. Nurse says my life was despaired of.

F. Now, Mary, you are sinning against God, by unthankfulness for the goodness which has preserved your life, and raised you up from the borders of the grave. It is true, if you continue in impenitence until you die, it would have been infinitely better for you to have died before you committed actual sin; but life, especially under the gospel dispensation, is a blessing for which we are bound to be thankful. For now you have opportunity to hear the Gospel, and if you believe, and repent of your sins, you will be saved. Why then should you wish that you had died? I hope you will never again utter such a speech. Your dear mother, when dying, requested—and it was her last request—that if you lived, you should be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” and she, with her latest breath, commended you to God. And now, my dear child, it is your duty, it is for your salvation to turn unto God with all your heart. Seek the Lord early while he may be found.

J. If man had not sinned, as he would have needed no salvation, of course no Saviour would have been provided; but what I wish to know is, why God could not save sinners without sending his own Son to die. I know that man is in a ruined state, and must perish unless he is saved from it; but why could not God, if he desired it, stretch out his omnipotent arm and rescue him?

F. God is under no obligation to save any sinner. As his law is just and good, he might let it have its course, and inflict deserved punishment on all who transgress. Thus he passed by the fallen angels, and left them to their doom, and thus in regard to the children of men, he shows mercy to whom he will—choosing some nations, and leaving others in the darkness of idolatry; electing some persons to life, and leaving others to pursue their own course. But when he determines to save sinners, it must be in a way consistent with the holiness of his nature, and not derogatory to his law. Sinners cannot be saved by a mere exertion of Almighty Power. The hinderance cannot thus be removed. God must be just in justifying the ungodly. The law of God must be satisfied, or the sinner cannot be saved. This rendered it necessary that there should be a mediator; and he must be one who could make satisfaction to law and justice, for the sins of men. None could do this, but the Son of God; and the Son of God could reconcile men to God, only by becoming man.

J. I always think of this with wonder. It seems to me the most wonderful thing in the Bible. I often ask myself, “how could the Son of God become man?”

M. Brother, I can tell you out of the Catechism. “The Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.”

R. I never thought before that the Catechism could teach us so many things.

F. Well, my son, I hope you will hereafter be more attentive to commit the Catechism perfectly to memory, and also some few texts of scripture which are annexed to each question to prove the doctrine; for if the Catechism did not teach according to the Holy Scriptures, it would be of no authority. It was intended to contain a short summary of what is in the Bible.

R. Why are there different kinds of Catechisms? At our Sunday School some learn the Shorter Catechism, which we use, but others recite the Heidelberg Catechism; and William Van Sickle

says, that their minister hears all the children in his congregation from that Catechism every Saturday afternoon, in the lecture room.

F. My son, that is the Catechism which has for a long time been used in the Reformed Dutch Church in Holland, and when the Dutch settled in this country they brought it with them; but my ancestors were from Scotland, where the Westminster Catechisms have been long in use, and they have been adopted as the Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church. The Shorter Catechism has always been highly valued, and much used by the Congregationalists of both Old and New England. But the Heidelberg Catechism has been more extensively used than any one composed by the Reformers. All the reformed churches on the continent of Europe adopted this Catechism. These two Catechisms perfectly agree in doctrine, and only differ in words and method.

J. Father, if it would not take too much time, I should like to hear you state the reasons why man needs a Saviour, and afterwards show that Christ is just such a Saviour as the sinner needs.

F. My son, I will do my best to satisfy you. The subject is important beyond conception, and I humbly pray that I may be guided so as to hold forth the truth of God, and nothing but the truth. I will enter on the task with the more pleasure, because I hope that you are beginning sincerely to inquire after the way of salvation. And I beg of you all, my dear children, to give diligent heed to the instructions of your affectionate father, or rather to the counsels of God, your Heavenly Father; for his word is able, through faith in Christ Jesus, to make you wise unto salvation.

R. Father, when we do not understand any thing, may we ask you to explain it?

F. Certainly you may, and it will afford me pleasure to give you all the information I can. I never feel more in the way of my duty, and no duty affords me more heart-felt pleasure than to instil divine truth into the minds of my children, especially when I find them ready to hear and eager to learn.

J. I wish you would begin with that want of the sinner, which is most pressing and most heavily felt. When the jailer at Philippi, asked, What must I do to be saved? what want did he feel, what kind of salvation did he inquire after?

F. Your suggestion is very reasonable. Often for the sake of proceeding systematically in our instructions, we begin too far off from the feelings of distressed souls. It is evident, I think, that a sense of guilt, or of exposure to condemnation, causes the most urgent of all the sinner's wants, and is that which is usually first experienced in the conviction of sin, produced by the Holy Spirit. Most people brought up under the Gospel have a general and habitual conviction that they are sinners. The frequent reproofs of conscience are sufficient to keep them from denying this; and as all are ready to make this confession, no peculiar disgrace is attached to the acknowledgment. But while they admit that they are sinners, they are disposed to excuse themselves, and cherish the opinion that they are better than most others; and the general conviction of sinfulness makes no impression on them. They are neither humbled nor alarmed by the thought that they are sinners; and, except when the fear of death is excited, they have no sense of their need of a Saviour. They give themselves up to worldly pursuits and pleasures, with as much eagerness as if they were sure there was no world to come, or as if they had no account to render to God for their sins. The case which I am describing is so common, that it is often hard to find, in a whole congregation, a few persons in good earnest, seeking the salvation of their souls. But sometimes, it pleases God to pour out his Spirit, and then many are awakened, and there is, for a season, a general concern

about the salvation of the soul.

B. Is that what is called a revival?

F. It is; and such seasons are very precious. Many who were far off from God are brought nigh, and the wicked forsakes his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and returns unto God and obtains mercy.

J. Does all seriousness proceed from the Spirit of God, or may we not be led to think and feel on religious subjects by awakening discourses or alarming dispensations of Providence?

F. As God works by means, we can never tell certainly, whether a serious thought or feeling is merely from the operation of God's word and providence, or whether the Holy Spirit gives an unusual energy to the means. It is safest, however, and attended with no danger to attribute all serious impressions to the Spirit of God, giving force to considerations which before passed unheeded by us.

J. How can we know that we are under conviction of sin from the Spirit?

F. As we cannot perceive the Spirit's operations, but by the effect produced, so if we have an abiding and deep conviction of our sins, we know that this effect is produced by this Divine agent.

J. I wish to know how persons feel who are under conviction. I am very sensible that I am a sinner, and I feel that I am a great sinner, but my heart remains hard. I have no tender feelings. Formerly, when I heard a solemn sermon, I was moved to tears; but these feelings soon passed away. Now, I seldom shed a tear, and when I do, still my heart feels as hard as a stone. I wish to be alarmed at the terror of the Lord, but I seem incapable of fear, and when I attempt to pray, it seems like a mockery; for when I am on my knees, my thoughts wander and I have nothing to say; or if I go over a form of words, my heart does not go along. I think, dear father, that mine must be the hardest and the wickedest heart that ever was lodged in any breast. I begin to fear that the Spirit of God has left me to myself, and that I am only permitted to live to fill up my cup of iniquity to the brim. Do tell me what I must do.

F. My dear son, though your feelings are painful, I rejoice that you have them; and I assure you they are not peculiar to yourself. Thousands have experienced the same. I cannot express the feelings which I have in finding you so earnestly exercised about your salvation. I have been, I confess, too negligent in conversing with you about your soul's concerns. I lament my backwardness and unfaithfulness in this particular. But I have felt much solicitude for the salvation of my children, and have often borne you on my heart at a throne of grace, with many tears, day and night. And now, I hope that God is about to answer my poor but sincere prayers.

J. I am afraid that I have given you an entirely wrong view of the state of my mind. It is true, that for several weeks past this subject has been in my thoughts, and I have wished to experience some deep impressions, and have been willing to feel the strongest convictions. Indeed, I have tried to produce such feelings by thinking on the most awful subjects, but instead of getting my heart softened, it has every hour been growing harder. You lately presented me with a copy of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and requested me to read it, especially the former part; remarking that if you had ever received any spiritual blessings, you owed much, under God, to that book. Two days ago I took down the book and carefully perused several

chapters; but although my understanding assented to every thing, yet I was able to feel nothing—nothing but hardness. And now what I wish above all things is, to feel conviction of sin, as I understand that to be the first step in Christian experience. Do tell me how I may get conviction—I care not how painful or terrible. I wish to be prepared to receive Christ.

F. Your notions of conviction I think are erroneous; and also of the end which it can accomplish. You seem to think that conviction of sin consists in very tender relentings, or in awful terrors of conscience, and therefore, that you now have no convictions; but such feelings as you wish for, would not give such a true sense of your sinfulness as you already experience. If you had the feelings desired, you would think your situation better than you now view it to be. Much of the depravity of the heart consists in its unyielding hardness. To be deeply convinced of this is then a more real and thorough conviction of sin, than what you are wishing for. And you seem to think that such feelings as you have been seeking would prepare you to come to Christ. This is the working of a self-righteous spirit, which desires to come with something that deserves favour. But no feelings of distress, however keen, would in the least fit you for the reception of Christ. You can have no fitness, but to feel your need of him. This is all the fitness he requires, and that you have now, if you feel that you need a Saviour. Conviction is in no other view a preparation for believing in Christ, than as it shows us that we are in a lost condition, and utterly unable to help ourselves; and that we must perish, unless mercy interpose: and the effect is not complete unless we see and feel that it would be just in God to cast us off for ever. This is a point, my son, on which you have not expressed your feelings.

J. I am glad you mentioned it. Last evening I walked in the grove, and was meditating on my lost and miserable condition, and the thought came into my mind, that my day of grace was past, and that my sins were too great to be forgiven. This suggestion appeared so much like an evident truth, that, for the time, I fully believed it. I was, however, calm, and felt no peculiar terrors, but began deliberately to think what my condition would be in the world of woe. I had often heard that lost sinners in hell would for ever blaspheme God, but I thought that I never could join in their blasphemies. I thought that God had not only been just, but kind towards me. I was fully convinced that he was in no degree to blame for my perdition, but that all the blame would lie on myself. And I had, at that moment, such a sense of the righteousness of God, in my condemnation, that I seemed to acquiesce in my being sent to hell, as a thing that a holy God must do. I never saw any thing plainer in my life, than the entire justice of God in my eternal condemnation, and this when I seemed to be certain that it would be my doom.

F. I am satisfied on this point, and I see nothing to hinder you from immediately committing your soul into the hands of Jesus, who is waiting to receive you. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." He invites sinners to come unto him, and promises, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." And he requires no preparation—no previous cleansing, no particular degree of conviction. Come helpless, come just as you are, come as a self-condemned sinner—and come now. "Behold now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." Lay hold of eternal life, for by accepting Christ, you have life. The sceptre of his mercy is extended towards you—touch, and your soul shall live.

J. Oh Lord! I would believe—"help thou my unbelief."

[Here a shower of tears prevented further utterance, and the distressed child fell upon his father's bosom, and for a long time continued to weep profusely.] M. Dear father, let us return to the house. Is brother John sick? Why does he cry so?

F. Be still, my daughter; I hope God is dealing graciously with your elder brother, and I wish from my heart that all my dear children were affected as he is.

[Here the conversation ended for this time. The other boys were much affected, partly with a lively religious impression, and partly with tender sympathy.]

PART II

THE

WAY OF SALVATION

The father having agreed to spend the next evening in the same sequestered and delightful spot, the children were all punctually there by the appointed hour. John no longer appeared dejected; the dark clouds, which had shaded his youthful countenance, were dispersed, and a calm serenity rested on his brow, while hope and joy seemed to speak through his eyes. His heart was indeed at rest, for he seemed to lean gently on his Saviour's bosom. But he did not appear forward to speak; he seemed rather to wish to be left undisturbed to the sweet repast of love and joy with which he had been favoured. The other children were overawed and were still. The father, who had had a long interview with John, was unable to conceal his swelling emotions. Tears of joy trickled down his cheeks, and he looked around upon the little circle of his children with a tenderness and a solicitude, which he had never before felt in an equal degree. After some time of tender silence, Benjamin ventured to speak.

B. Father, I wished to hear you explain more fully why it was necessary for God to send his own beloved Son into the world to save sinners.

F. I told you that God is so holy that he cannot suffer sin in any of his creatures to go unpunished. The sinner, therefore, must die, or some one must die in his place. And the law of God is holy, just and good, and cannot be set aside. It must be honoured and fulfilled, which could not be if sinners escaped the deserved penalty. God had threatened death as the punishment of every sin. This awful word includes every kind and form of death, and every evil which ever shall come upon man. No angel could be permitted to be a mediator between God and man, for angels are dependent creatures, and can perform no works which are not required of them by the law under which they are placed. An angel could not endure the curse due to so great a multitude. A person of infinite power and dignity was requisite; and where could such a one be found but in the Godhead? For though God is one in essence, yet he exists in three persons, united and distinguished in a manner which can neither be expressed nor understood. This glorious mystery is made known in connexion with the plan of redemption. The eternal Father agreed to give his only begotten Son to become man and to die for sinners. The coequal Son consented to be made flesh and to dwell among us, and bear our sins in his own body on the cross. The Holy Spirit entered into the counsel of peace, and undertook to prepare the human nature of the Mediator pure and spotless, by a miraculous birth, and to fill and consecrate this sacred but peculiar nature, with the immeasurable

fulness of his grace; and also to apply the redemption purchased to all the chosen sons of God, and to prepare them and preserve them for the heavenly inheritance. In the fulness of time, the Son of God was manifested in the flesh, and having brought in an everlasting righteousness by his obedience and death, he returned to heaven, where he is now enthroned in glory.

R. Father, most of what you have said is in the Catechism. I have been reviewing my questions almost the whole day.

F. Well, Rufus, let us hear what you can remember on this subject.

R. "Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition; made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time."

F. Very good. Let us hear now whether Mary can tell us wherein Christ's exaltation consists.

M. No, father, I can't remember it unless you ask me from the beginning.

F. Rufus, you can give it to us, as you have just been over it.

R. "Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day; in ascending up into Heaven; in sitting at the right hand of God the Father; and in coming to judge the world at the last day."

B. You did not finish telling us why God could not forgive our sins without an atonement.

F. True, my son, I was led away from the subject by the interesting inquiries of your brother John; but I think from what has been said, it must be evident to every impartial mind that the holiness and justice of God can never suffer sin to be pardoned, except on account of a full satisfaction. No other person was qualified to render such a satisfaction but the Son of God; his atonement therefore is the only ground on which a sinner can rationally or scripturally hope for the forgiveness of his sins. But not only the holiness and justice of God, but his truth and faithfulness are pledged to punish sin; and there is no way by which the veracity of God can be vindicated and honoured if the sinner escape the punishment of his sins, unless some one step into his place and die for him. The curse of the law must be endured, either by the transgressor, or by his surety. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This, God hath solemnly spoken, and if he fail to execute his own threatenings, where is his truth? Such a failure in a man would be considered very wrong, and shall man be more true than God?

B. But, father, did not God say to Adam, "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die?" and yet he lived almost a thousand years.

F. My son, there are more kinds of death than one. The word "die" in that place includes all kinds of punishment. And in the most important sense of all, Adam did die immediately upon sinning; for he was separated from his union and communion with God, in which spiritual life consisted, and he became dead in sin, and dead in law, and in due time his body also died.

J. I love to think of Christ on the cross, bearing our sins in his own body. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." He came to redeem his people from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. If I did not see the holy law of God completely fulfilled in Christ, I could have no hope.

Now God can be just and justify the ungodly that believeth in Jesus, because he hath found a ransom. Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and his blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness. I wish that the whole world could see the excellency of Christ as I now see it. He is indeed the chief among ten thousand, and one altogether lovely.

F. John, you speak with feeling and energy, because you speak from the heart. I rejoice in your comfortable views and feelings, but I must forewarn you that this sunshine will not be uninterrupted. Cloudy days, if not dark and stormy nights, must be expected by Zion's pilgrims, as long as they are journeying through this wilderness. And you will find that you will greatly need a skilful guide to direct you in the right way, and to bring you back when you have strayed. The need of Christ's atoning blood and justifying righteousness is first felt and always felt; but it is not long before he becomes precious to the believer, in his prophetic office also. No want is more sensibly experienced than the want of spiritual knowledge, which none can supply but Christ, by his Spirit. We need instruction every day and every hour. We need a spiritual discernment, without which nothing is known aright. We need wisdom to comprehend the things which are freely given to us of God, and to enable us to order our conduct aright. We need a meek and docile spirit, that we may be apt to learn, and we need such a measure of Divine knowledge as may make us useful to others. Mary, can you tell us how Christ executes the office of a prophet?

M. "In revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation."

J. O father, how briefly and plainly this is expressed. I shall begin now to love the Catechism. I will go over it all, without delay.

F. Suppose, my son, you begin to commit to memory the Larger Catechism; it contains the same doctrines as the Shorter, but it is much fuller, and there are many points treated more satisfactorily. It is in my opinion, the best system of theology, for the size of it, in the world.

R. What, father, better than the Bible?

F. We never compare any human composition with the Bible. The excellence of this Catechism is, that it embodies, in a short space, the most important doctrines and duties inculcated in the Bible.

J. I do not see so clearly as I wish, why the Mediator should be a King. I wish, father, you would make some remarks on this subject.

F. The work of redemption is a great and complicated work. None could accomplish it but one possessed of Almighty power. Man had fallen under the dominion of an enemy whom it was necessary to conquer, in order to his deliverance. His own sinful passions and propensities must be subdued, and a victory must be obtained over the world, which he has hitherto served. When he is brought into a state of reconciliation, still he remains, while in the body, in an enemy's country, where he is liable to be assailed by numerous foes. To oppose these, he has no power in himself. He would fall, if left to himself, by the hands of the weakest of his enemies. He needs a Captain of salvation to protect him, to teach him how to carry on this spiritual warfare, and to give him the victory over his enemies. On all these accounts, his Redeemer must be an all-powerful King. Again, the promises of God to his people, in the covenant of grace, require, that he who undertakes to accomplish them should have dominion over all the elements, all the laws of nature, and all the creatures of God, intelligent as well as irrational. So we read, that principalities are

subject to Christ, and all the angels are his messengers—"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Christ also must be gloriously exalted as Mediator, as a reward for his deep humiliation. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee I should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Php_2:6-10.

J. What wonderful wisdom shines in the plan of salvation; and not only wisdom, but love and mercy, beyond all human thought! And what is most wonderful, justice shines as brightly in the salvation of a sinner as mercy.

F. The method by which grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, is, I believe, the most glorious exhibition of the Divine attributes which has ever been made in the universe. While man reaps the benefit of it directly, all holy beings must be benefitted to all eternity by this wonderful display of the Divine attributes; for their dignity and happiness depend on the clearness of the knowledge of God to which they can attain.

B. Father, I should like to hear you, in a few words, give a view of the way of salvation.

F. I scarcely know how to comply with your request. I hardly know where to begin, or having begun, where to end. Paul has given it in one sentence. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves—it is the gift of God." The whole is a plan of mere mercy and grace. It originated in pure love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. The undertaking of the work of redemption by the Son was of unmerited favour—"As Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us." "As Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it". "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The work performed by Christ was, 1. A revelation of the truth.

2. A perfect obedience to the law, rendered in behalf of his people.

3. A full atonement for their sins, when he bore them in his own body on the cross, and was made a curse, to deliver his people from the curse of the law.

4. His resurrection, and his continual intercession for all that were given him of the Father.

5. The mission of the Holy Spirit to convince them of sin, to regenerate them, and bring them by faith unto Christ.

6. The progressive sanctification and conservation of believers; by defending and protecting them from all enemies, and keeping their graces alive; by reclaiming them when they go astray; chastening them for their improvement in holiness; supporting and comforting them in all their afflictions, and finally giving them a victory over death, and ministering to them an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

7. Christ has also given assurance by repeated promises, that, he will come again to receive his people, and openly acknowledge them before the assembled universe; when their bodies shall be raised from the dust, and shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Then shall they be caught up into the air with him, and shall ascend with him to Heaven, where they shall ever be with the Lord. The riches of that inheritance which Christ has purchased and prepared for them that love him, far exceed all human conceptions. But we know that it is “incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.” Then the redeemed shall stand distinguished on Mount Zion, as “they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;” and freed from all sin, and filled with gratitude, they will never cease from praising God and the Lamb. And they shall go no more out, but shall be as pillars in the temple of God. Blessed is every one that shall be privileged to join in the hosannahs and hallelujahs of the temple above.

B. What I wish more particularly to know is, the way in which God brings a sinner back to himself, or what are the views and feelings of a sinner returning to God by faith and repentance.

F. The ways of God’s dealings with those whom he effectually calls, are exceedingly various in many respects, but as to substance, the result is the same. Rufus, let us hear you give the answer to the question, “What is effectual calling?”

R. “Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel.”

F. The first step in a religious life is serious consideration; the next is a sincere desire to escape from the danger of perishing eternally. At first, outward sins and great sins affect the conscience; but as light and knowledge increase, the affections of the heart are discerned and felt to be sinful. The convinced sinner’s first thought is to satisfy the broken law by reformation, or by prayer and penances; but when he sees that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” he despairs of help from the law. The light of conviction is so strong in some, that they are cut off from all legal hope almost instantly; while others may be months and years striving to work out a righteousness of their own. Nothing is harder, than for a man to give up all hope of saving himself; he catches like a drowning man at every thing within his reach. But when this hope is dead, he feels as if he were sinking, and begins to cry in good earnest for mercy and help. He is taught and made to acknowledge, that though he can do nothing good, yet his inability is his sin, and not his apology. He is deeply convinced of the sinfulness of his nature, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and that in him dwelleth no good thing; that he deserves to be made forever miserable; and that if he is saved, it must be by mere grace; yet he is resolved to die seeking for mercy, if die he must. One of the most common feelings of a convinced sinner, is a deep sense of the dreadful hardness of his heart and blindness of his mind, which he often thinks is peculiar to himself.

J. Dear father, how exactly you describe my feelings.

F. Well, my son, tell us how you felt when you hoped that you had received Christ.

J. I am afraid to say that I have believed—it seems too great a good to be mine. I am sometimes afraid that I am deceiving myself; but I cannot doubt that I have viewed Christ as lovely and as a Saviour suited to me. After giving up all hope of salvation, while you were conversing with me, and repeating God’s gracious promises, I felt my hard heart begin to melt—I began to think that God

could save me through Christ, and the mere possibility of being saved, filled me with such emotion as I never felt before. This morning when I awoke from a sweet sleep, my thoughts were raised to God, and I believed that he was my reconciled Father in Christ. Humble joy filled my soul. I arose, and before I had finished dressing, I took up my Bible and opened at the eighteenth chapter of John. I read this chapter and the next, and it was as if a new book had been put into my hand. The sacred pages appeared to be illuminated with beauty and glory. I knew then most assuredly that this was the truth of God; and while tears of penitence flowed, at a view of the sufferings of Christ, I felt confident that I trusted in Him, and that He had become my Saviour. If I ever loved anything, I experienced love to Christ, and his love seemed to be shed abroad in my heart. After this season of joy and sorrow sweetly mingled, a delightful peace seemed to be diffused through my soul, which still continues, but I am afraid is decreasing. My strongest desire was to show my gratitude to my dying Saviour for his love. The language of my heart was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And immediately I was conscious of a most enlarged benevolence to my fellow creatures, and a strong desire to invite the whole world to come to Christ, that they might be saved; and also a tender affection to the people of God, and to the ministers of Christ's Gospel. And my heart firmly resolved and vowed to spend all my days in the service of God my Saviour.

F. I do not know, Benjamin, that I need say anything more. If God draws you to himself, as I hope he has begun to do, you will understand these things in another manner than you can now by any description. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man, that trusteth in him."

M. Was not my dear mother pious? Is she not gone to heaven?

F. I hope so, my dear daughter. I believe she was a true Christian from her youth.

M. How old was she when she joined the Church?

F. I was not acquainted with her then, but I have heard her say that she thought she loved Christ when she was a little child. But she was not permitted to go to the Communion, till she was fourteen years of age.

M. Would it be wrong for me to wish that she would pray for me, now she is in heaven?

F. We read nothing in the Bible of departed saints praying for their friends on earth. We know not whether they pray at all. All their work is to praise. But you need no other mediator to intercede for you but Christ only, and He is willing to be your advocate and to ask God to forgive your sins, and adopt you as his child.

M. Well, father, I wish to be a Christian, and I am sorry that I have often been a naughty child. I hope God will forgive me. Do, father, pray for me, and for us all, that we may get to heaven and be for ever with our dear mother—and what is far better, be with Christ who loved us better than any father or mother could do.

[The father knelt down on the ground and the little group beside him, and he poured forth the effusions of a full and paternal heart in behalf of his beloved children.]

HYMNS

A MORNING HYMN

CHRIST, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only light,
Sun of righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Day-spring from on high be near,
Day-star in my heart appear.
Dark and cheerless is the morn,
Unaccompanied by thee;
Joyless is the day's return,
Till thy mercy's beams I see:
Till thou inward light impart,
Glad mine eyes, and warm my heart.
Visit then this soul of mine,
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, radiancy divine,
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.

DIVINE INFLUENCE

SAVIOUR, I thy word believe,
My unbelief remove;
Now thy quickening Spirit give,
The unction from above;
Show me, Lord, how good thou art,
My soul with all thy fulness fill,
Send the witness, in my heart
The Holy Ghost reveal.
Blessed Comforter, come down,
And live and move in me;

Make my every deed thine own,
In all things led by thee:
Bid my sins and fears depart,
And with me O vouchsafe to dwell;
Faithful witness, in my heart
Thy perfect light reveal.

Whom the world cannot receive,
Lord, manifest in me;
Son of God, I cease to live,
Unless I live to thee:

Make me choose the better part,
Display thy love, my pardon seal,
Send the witness, in my heart
The Holy Ghost reveal.

RESTORING AND PRESERVING GRACE

AH, give me, Lord, myself to see;
Against myself to watch and pray.
How weak am I, when left by thee!
How frail! how apt to fall away!
If but a moment thou withdraw,
That moment sees me break thy law
Jesus, the sinner's only trust,
Let me now feel thy grace infused;
Ah, raise the fallen from the dust,
Nor break a reed already bruised;
Smile on this cheerless heart again,
Nor let me seek thy face in vain.
Let thy meek mind descend on me,
Thy Holy Spirit from above;

Assist me. Lord, to follow thee.

Drawn by th' endearing cords of love

Made perfect by thy cleansing blood,

Completely saved, and born of God.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

LORD, I feel a carnal mind,

That hangs about me still,

Vainly though I strive to bind

My own rebellious will;

Is not haughtiness of heart

The gulf between my God and me?

Meek Redeemer now impart

Thine own humility.

Fain would I my Lord pursue

Be all my Saviour taught,

Do as Jesus bids me do,

And think as Jesus thought:

But 'tis thou must change my heart,

The perfect gift must come from thee:

Meek Redeemer now impart

Thine own humility.

Lord, I cannot, must not rest,

Till I thy mind obtain,

Chase presumption from my breast,

And all thy mildness gain!

Give me, Lord, thy gentle heart,

Thy lowly mind my portion be,

Meek Redeemer now impart

Thine own humility.

Let thy cross my will control,
Conform me to my guide;
In thine image mould my soul,
And crucify my pride;
Give me, Lord, a contrite heart,
A heart that always looks to thee:
Meek Redeemer now impart
Thine own humility.
Tear away my every boast,
My stubborn mind abase;
Saviour! fix my only trust
In thy redeeming grace:
Give me a submissive heart,
From pride and self-dependence free;
Meek Redeemer now impart
Thine own humility!

S. WHY HALT BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS?

WHY HALT BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? by Archibald Alexander

1 Kings 18:21

Between truth and error, light and darkness, there is a perpetual conflict. Every human soul experiences something of this. Evidence is always on the side of truth; but by the mind blinded by prejudice and passion, the evidence of truth is not seen, or not perceived with sufficient clearness to give it efficacy. A mind under the influence of depraved dispositions is incapable of judging impartially of the nature and evidence of truth; it is strongly biased by inclination to sinful indulgence, and by a fixed aversion to everything which tends to restrain the evil desires of the corrupt heart. Yet some rays of light will at times dart into such a soul, and awaken serious reflection; and conscience cannot be easy when the obligation of duty is felt, and the course pursued is seen to be a series of transgressions of God's holy law. Conscience asserts the rightful authority of God, and testifies against known sin. The sinner is brought to a pause. The thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity, are dreadful. He begins to think of a reformation, the necessity of which he cannot doubt; but some darling lust puts in its plea and solicits indulgence. The deceitful heart promises, that if now indulged, it will consent to forsake the beloved sin at some future time—perhaps it promises never to solicit for indulgence again. "This once only" has been the plea which has often decided the eternal destiny of an immortal soul. When the truth is heard from the pulpit, the sinner is often brought to a stand. He is convinced that his course of life is wrong, and that if persisted in, it must end in ruin. For a moment he hesitates—halts between two opinions—between truth and error, between duty and transgression, between the choice of life or death; but too often the pause is momentary, the hesitation which is painful is brought abruptly to a close. The young man just entering on the path of sinful indulgence, whose conscience is not yet seared, and who has some knowledge of the truth—has to pass through many a tremendous struggle with his own conscience before he can go on in his sinful course without opposition. Often is he brought to halt between two opinions. Often does he resolve to break the chains of iniquity which begin to entwine around him; but these resolutions are like the cords on Samson's arms—under the power of the next temptation, they are like thread when it touches fire. Repeated efforts proving ineffectual, the vanquished soul gives itself up a willing captive to Satan. All serious opposition ceases. And now the sinner begins to justify his course by error and infidelity. He becomes ingenious in finding out arguments in favor of his licentious course. Hereafter there is no more halting between two opinions; he is carried down the strong current, until he plunges into the abyss of perdition! The prophet addressed the idolatrous Israelites with the question, "How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The object of Elijah was to bring them to a decision, one way or the other. Nothing is more unreasonable than hesitation in a matter so important, and where the duty and interest of those addressed were so manifest. But still they are left to choose. If they are willing to serve God, well; if not, choose whom you will serve. Only halt no longer. God hates this perpetual vacillation. "I wish that you were cold or hot," says Christ. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold

nor hot, I will spue you out of my mouth."

Sinner, make up your mind. You are left at perfect liberty. There is no constraint, no coercion. God will have none but willing servants. But know, that if you make a wrong choice, if your mind adopt a wrong purpose, and determine to follow an evil course, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

S. WHAT THE DISCIPLES SAW

WHAT THE DISCIPLES SAW

by Archibald Alexander

"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see," said our Savior; "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them." Matthew 13:16; Luke 10:23

What things did the disciples see and hear which prophets and kings desired to see and were not gratified? They saw the seed of the woman, predicted in paradise to bruise the old serpent's head. They saw the person who was to descend from Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. They saw the Lamb of God, whom Isaac so strikingly typified, when he was laid upon the altar to be sacrificed. God did not allow the stroke to fall upon Isaac, but he did not withhold the sword of justice when his own Son stood in the stead of sinners; but said, "Awake, O sword, against the man who is my fellow—smite the shepherd."

They saw Shiloh, to whom was to be the gathering of the people. They saw Messiah, the prophet whom God promised to raise up, like unto Moses—the King-Messiah, whom God promised to sit upon his holy hill of power. They saw the Priest whom God swore that he would raise, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek.

They saw Immanuel, the wonderful child, who had the government on his shoulders. The branch from the root of Jesse and stem of David, whose kingdom was to be everlasting. They saw the "Word made flesh." "God manifest in the flesh." The eternal Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and express image of his person. They saw the stupendous and beneficent miracles wrought by Jesus, in the healing of all manner of diseases by a word or a touch, and even at a distance. They saw him give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. They were witnesses of his power over the elements in commanding the winds and the sea to be still--and these boisterous elements obeyed him. Also when he multiplied a few loaves and fish, so as to feed thousands of hungry people, they were the dispensers of his bounty to the multitude, and gathered up of fragments, after the feast was over, vastly more bread than was originally possessed.

They saw the "Man of sorrows," whose visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. They saw the Lord of glory, to whom belonged the world and the fullness thereof--so poor, that while the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, he had nowhere to lay his head. And soon after these words were spoken, they saw the Prince of life dying between two thieves, as though he had been a chief malefactor. Yes, they saw the author of life expire in death, and laid in the grave a pale and lifeless corpse. But soon they saw that tomb empty, and were permitted to see the Savior risen to life, in the same body. They inspected the wounds in his hands, his feet, and his side. They saw him transformed, so that he ascended to heaven before their eyes, in like manner as he will be seen when he makes his second appearance. All these

were sights which prophets and kings desired to see, but saw them not. And their ears were also blessed. The ear is an organ expressly blessed of God, for "faith comes by hearing." The word of God commonly goes into the heart through the ear, rather than through the eye. The apostles heard Jesus preach, who spoke as never man spoke. They heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth. They heard the sermon on the mount. They heard all his striking and beautiful parables, and their lucid explanation. They heard his kind inculcations and gracious promises, his prayers and his predictions. They heard what made their hearts burn within them. But men may be blessed who have not seen, but have believed. As our Lord said to Thomas, "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen--and yet have believed."

S. An Amiable Youth Falling Short of Heaven

An Amiable Youth Falling Short of Heaven

by Archibald Alexander "One thing you lack." Mark 10:21 The history of this young man is given by three of the evangelists, Matthew 19:1-30, Mark 10:1-52, Luke 18:1-43, in nearly the same words. It is therefore doubtless worthy of our marked attention. This youth possessed many things, and yet was deficient in one. He was rich. He was possessed of power, for Luke calls him "a ruler." He was remarkable for his morality. Few young men in our day could compare with him in this respect. When our Savior, to try him, mentioned several of the commandments of the second table, in which our duty to our fellow-men is enjoined, this young man was able to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up." And our Lord did not deny the truth of his assertion; yes, he admitted it, for Mark says, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him." He was pleased with the purity and blamelessness of his external conduct.

Yet this youth had no proper knowledge of the state of his own heart. His obedience was only like that of Paul when a Pharisee, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." This young ruler, however, was not ashamed to address Christ in the most respectful manner. He came, regardless of the sneers of his peers, and kneeling, said, "Good Master." He came to him as a serious inquirer. The question which he asked was the most important that he could ask, or that any man ever asked: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He was convinced that something was still needful, but he knew not what. He had heard of the teachings of Christ, and he was impelled by the serious impressions on his mind to break through every difficulty, and to inquire of the Master, believing that he could tell him what to do to secure this object of infinite value. And evidently, he was confident that he was willing to do whatever should be prescribed. Oh, deceitful heart; how little did he know of its true state! But Jesus knew, and in a moment brought him to a fair test. He knew that, notwithstanding all his fair professions, amiable character, and courteous demeanor—he was an idolater in his heart, and worshiped mammon with supreme affection. He therefore said, "Go, sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me; and you shall have treasure in heaven."

O what a test for a lover of riches! See, the young man's countenance changes; he remains silent. His heart is undergoing an evident conflict. Heaven and earth, with all their charms, are before him. For a moment, perhaps, he hesitates; for he sincerely wishes to possess eternal life—but, O upon what a hard condition! to give away all his riches, to which his heart was wedded! No, no! He cannot do it!

See, he turns his back on the Savior! He turns his back on all the treasures of heaven! He goes away sorrowful indeed, very sorrowful to lose the opportunity of securing eternal happiness, but deliberately resolved not to relinquish his hold of this world. He will have his "good things" in this life, whatever may become of him in the next. Here is a picture of the true state of thousands—of thousands of well-instructed, moral, and amiable youth! But was not this a hard test? Was it not more than is required of others? Not at all. All may not, in fact, be put to this same test; but every

true disciple has already passed this ordeal, and has renounced the world as a portion—as an object of supreme affection. And every true Christian, however much of this world he may possess, would instantly resign it all at the command of Christ. It is the characteristic of every genuine disciple, that, for the sake of Christ, he has been made willing to forsake father, mother, wife and children, house and lands, yes, life itself.

It is true, this test, if made practical in our churches, would detect the hypocrisy of a multitude of professors; or rather, their lack of supreme love to Christ is already but too evident, from the ardor with which they pursue the world, and from their unwillingness to part with even a small portion of their wealth to promote the cause of Christ. This young man possessed many excellent qualities and advantages, and lacked but ONE THING. Yet that was the main thing—the one thing needful—a heart to love God supremely—a heart to prefer heavenly treasures to earthly riches. Though his character and conduct were so correct and amiable, yet his heart was not right in the sight of God. He went away sorrowful. But did he ever come back with a better mind? We do not read that he ever did. His sorrow was not that of true repentance; that is, repentance unto life. But his sorrow was "the sorrow of the world, which works death;" a sorrow which probably he has bitterly felt for eighteen centuries, and which will never cease!

What good can his riches do him now? They only furnish fuel to the flame in which he is tormented! Let young men look at this! Let the lovers of riches look at this!

Although neither the future course of this rich young man in this world, nor his final destiny, is given in the Scriptures; the probability is, that having turned his back on the Savior and on the heavenly inheritance, he relinquished all thought about his salvation from this time, and abandoned himself to the enjoyment of his idolized riches. Men who have for a time been under serious concern about the salvation of their souls, and afterwards turn back to the world, because they find the terms of salvation too difficult, commonly become more careless and more hardened than others. "Their last state is worse than the first." But though we have no record of the end of this rich young man, we have, from the lips of the Savior himself, an affecting account of the end of another rich man, who lived in splendor and pleasure on earth, but neglected piety and charity. The transition, in his case, from a sumptuous table, and from being clothed in purple and fine linen—to the torments of hell, is as great as the imagination can conceive! When he began to experience the keen anguish of future misery, O how bitter was his cry! "Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame!" But it was too late to pray. He had enjoyed his good things here—and torment awaited him in the world of woe!

S. Obedience to Christ Gives Assurance of the Truth of His Doctrines

Obedience to Christ Gives Assurance of the Truth of His Doctrines

by Archibald Alexander (1772—1851) "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine—whether it be of God." John 7:17 The truth of the Gospel is established by two kinds of evidence; external and internal. The former is historical, and depends on the testimony of men to the miracles which have been wrought in confirmation of the Christian religion, and the fulfillment of prophecies, which furnish conclusive evidence of the truth of any doctrine. The nature of this kind of proof is very obvious. If God, by the exertion of his power, in a miraculous way, gives attestation to the declarations of any person, then we know that that person speaks the truth; for God, we are sure, will not give his attestation to an impostor, or to that which is false. People, however, may be well acquainted with this species of evidence, and yet may know little of the truths contained in the Bible, or may entertain very erroneous ideas of the nature of the truths revealed. Thus, in fact, we find men who have examined the external evidences of Christianity, and have been by this means fully convinced of its truth, differing entirely in their views of the doctrines of revelation. In this, there is nothing unaccountable, as this kind of evidence does not bring before the mind the truths revealed, but is external to them; and while two men are equally convinced that the Christian religion is from God, on account of the miracles performed, the record of which has come down to us, well attested; and on account of the numerous prophecies which have been exactly fulfilled; they may nevertheless interpret the Bible on very different principles, and in consequence arrive at very different conclusions. Or, the one may attentively study the contents of the Bible; while the other pays no serious attention to the subject, and remains ignorant of the true system of doctrines taught in this book.

But, in regard to the internal evidence of Christianity in the heart, the case is different. The evidence here arises from a view of the truth itself; and can only be fully appreciated by a mind under divine illumination. This evidence may indeed be rendered convincing to any rational mind not under the influence of strong prejudice, by an exhibition of the perfection of the theory of theology and morality which the Bible contains. It can easily be shown, that this theory is far more perfect, than that of any of the heathen sages; and yet the writers were destitute of human learning, and unaided, were utterly incapable of producing such admirable works. By an argument of this kind, Jenyns has demonstrated the truth of Christianity. This mode of reasoning can be appreciated by every rational mind. But there is another species of internal evidence, which is perceived and felt only by such as enjoy the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This arises from a view of the truth itself—from a discernment of its beauty and glory; and also from a consciousness of its salutary effects on the heart. This is the kind of evidence on which saving faith is founded. It is a kind of evidence which can be appreciated by the weak and unlearned, as readily as by the greatest scholars and philosophers. In regard to it, all stand upon a level; or, rather, the simple and unlearned possess the advantage; for the pride of reason and of human science stands very much

in the way of the exercise of faith. In accordance with this, our Savior says, "I thank you, O Father! because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes." For it is an established rule in God's government, to resist the proud, and to cast contempt on the wisdom of this world. As says the Scripture, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world—to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world—to confound the things which are mighty."

Many suppose, that plain unlettered Christians, who know little or nothing of history, and are therefore unable to appreciate the force of the external evidence in favor of Christianity, have no rational foundation for their faith; but merely receive the Scriptures, because they have heard, from their parents and teachers, that they are the word of God. That many in Christendom have no better foundation for their faith than this, is readily admitted: but the real Christian, whose mind has been enlightened by the Spirit of God, believes the Scriptures to be the word of God on the best and highest evidence, on the testimony of God himself. For when the truth is apprehended in its spiritual nature, by a divine light shining upon it, it manifests itself to be the word of God; because it bears the impress of God on its face. A blind man may be fully convinced that the sun exists, because thousands testify to the fact; and because, though he does not see this great luminary of day, he feels warmth from its rays; so men blind to spiritual things may be fully and rationally convinced that Christ was a divine teacher, and the Son of God, by many conclusive arguments. But as the blind man remains ignorant of the visible appearance of the sun, which is perceived by every child who has eyes; so unrenewed men—men destitute of spiritual life, however intellectual and learned, remain blind to the true nature of spiritual objects. The humblest, weakest believer, possesses a better knowledge of the true character of Christ than can be attained by any exercise of reason. This is humbling to human pride, and men of the world are disposed to disbelieve the statement; but its truth is proved by the effects produced by the different kinds of knowledge. "By their fruits you shall know them."

Speculative or mere natural knowledge of Scriptural truths, not penetrating into the true excellence of the truths believed, but resting on the external evidences and systematic relations of the truth, exercises but a small influence on the heart and affections; whereas spiritual, or saving knowledge, by which the beauty and glory of divine things are apprehended, has the immediate effect of exciting the affections and emotions, in a way corresponding with the nature of the objects perceived. So that under the influence of new and holy feelings, the purpose of the heart to honor, worship, and obey God, is formed, and this purpose becomes habitual; and the clearer the soul's views of divine things, the firmer and stronger this purpose becomes. The person thus enlightened and affected, is renewed—converted—and all his pursuits, his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, are different from what they were before. "Old things are done away, and all things become new." From what has been said, we may learn the true import of the text, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," which may be thus paraphrased—If any man possesses that state of mind which will prompt and lead him to choose the service of God, and determine to obey Him, he will be at no loss respecting the truth of my doctrine; for he will have such a view of the excellency of the truth which I deliver and will possess such a conviction of his own sinful and helpless condition, that he will, at once, be persuaded of the divine origin of the plan of redemption, from its perfect adaptation to his own urgent needs. And if he obtains such a view of the purity and perfection of the commandments of God as to

delight in the law of God, after the inner man, and to resolve to render universal obedience, he will entertain no doubt about the truth of my precepts; which are nothing else than an exposition and application of the law of God, and whoever does the will of God from a the heart, will experience a pleasure, so pure and-soul satisfying, that he will be sure it must proceed from the eternal fountain of felicity; according to that of the Psalmist, "In keeping your commandments there is a great reward," and according to the words of Christ, "my yoke is easy and my burden is light," and of the apostle John, "his commandments are not grievous."

Suppose a man to be brought to the fixed purpose, to obey the will of God, and to proceed daily in his service, delighted with the law in all its precepts, such a person will experience great peace of mind, and the joy arising from the exercise of holy affections will have an internal evidence of the truth of religion, which no unregenerate man can possess, or well conceive of. For such affections and such obedience are contrary to the bent and inclination of his soul, and he can scarcely believe that there can be a real pleasure in those exercises for which he has no taste. He may, indeed, admit, that if there exists a strong relish for such pursuits, there may be pleasure; but he is apt to be incredulous about the existence of an ardent love of the service of God. For the most part, he views religion to be a constraint, which men place on themselves, and that it is a yoke hard to be borne. A number of people brought up in a dark cave, into which the rays of the sun never entered, if brought out, when this luminary was shining in its brightness, would need no arguments to prove its existence; they would have the evidence in themselves, in the shining of the light into their eyes; or, if placed where they could not see the sun, yet, where there was a reflection of his rays, they would need no other evidence of its existence. Christians are described as people brought from darkness to "marvelous light," as being "light in the Lord." Now, if this divine and spiritual light has shined into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ—will they be at any loss to know whence this divine light proceeds? Can they ascribe these new views to any other source, than to the "Father of lights, from whom comes down every good gift and every perfect gift?" When the mind is in a right state; that is, when it is freed from the blindness of nature, and has the eyes of the understanding opened, the light of the glorious gospel will shine into such a regenerated mind, revealing to it the beauties of holiness, and causing it to rejoice in the glory of God. To such an one Christ appears lovely—the chief among ten thousand, and he becomes the jewel of their hearts. Idols are at once cast away, and he as their rightful King is enthroned in their affections. If believers doubt of their own sincerity, yet they do not and cannot doubt of Christ's excellency and suitableness. His doctrines they humbly receive, and found their hopes of salvation on his faithful word alone. The doctrine of Christ is not merely what as a Prophet he taught; but it is also the doctrine which respects himself. Christ himself is the center—the substance of Christian doctrine. His divinity—his incarnation—his holy life and miraculous works—his sufferings and humiliation—his crucifixion as an atonement for sin—his resurrection, ascension, and glorification—these truths which relate to Christ's person and work, are known to be divine, by everyone who is truly enlightened by the Spirit of God.

Everyone who does the will of the Father in heaven is thus enlightened, and receives, simply and cordially, the whole doctrine of Christ as far as he is instructed in the Holy Scriptures. He has received an unction which teaches him all these things; that is, a spiritual illumination; so that without the authority of any man or any church, he knows by an internal evidence, that these

doctrines which relate to Christ, are true; and that they came from God. To know the truth, to embrace it cordially, to love it sincerely, and to be molded into a conformity with it—is that which constitutes one a true Christian.

Error never can supply the place of truth. As well might you expect the body to be nourished by poisons as the soul by error. Truth is sometimes mixed with error, in doctrines taught to the people; and if the errors are not fundamental, the truth which accompanies them may prove nourishing; but its efficacy will always be hindered or impaired by error, in proportion to its magnitude and prevalence in the system. In order to salvation, Christ's doctrine must be known and cordially embraced. All God's children are taught by Him. "You shall know the truth," says Christ, "and the truth shall make you free."

Apostasy is nothing else but a denial of, and departure from, the truth, once professed. Those judicially abandoned of God, and given up to believe a lie that they might be damned, are such as "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Christ declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." All truth as well as life, dwells in him as in its fountain. And every obedient believer is made to know something of the excellence of the truth; so that he can say with Paul, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Every true believer has the witness in himself. He needs no external evidence to convince him of the truth of the gospel. As he needs no proof that the sun exists and is the source of light when it shines into his eyes; so when the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ—who is the image of God, shines into his heart, he knows that this spiritual light proceeds from the Sun of righteousness. Thus, every true Christian, however weak and unlearned, has a solid and rational foundation for his faith; and there is no other foundation on which a saving faith can rest. Many beheld the wonderful miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, who remained his enemies; and many now believe without a doubt, that these miracles were wrought, on the testimony of eye witnesses, and from the effects produced by Christianity on the state of the world; and they have no doubt, but that many prophecies are proved to be from God, because they have been exactly and literally fulfilled. And yet these people remain under the predominant influence of the love of the world! "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Spirit." In all countries, and in all religions, the mass of the people have a traditional faith. They believe as they have been instructed, and seldom doubt of the truth of their religion, which, however, they receive implicitly, without any examination. The majority in Christendom receive the Christian religion on no better evidence, for although it is attended with convincing evidences of its divine origin, with these they are not acquainted. But let us suppose a person to have grown to manhood, with no other than this traditional faith, and then to be brought under a deep conviction that he is a sinner, and that he can do nothing to remove the sentence of condemnation under which he lies, or to restore to purity and perfection his corrupt nature. To such a convicted sinner, the most important inquiry is, "What must I do to be saved?"

He hears the gospel. He learns that by believing on Christ, the Son of God, he may obtain everlasting life. At first, the news seems to be too good to be true. He fears that there is some mistake in the matter. But now the Spirit of God enlightens his mind to understand the gospel method of salvation. He sees that the atonement of Christ is sufficient to satisfy all the demands of law and justice. He sees that the door of reconciliation is set wide open, and that he is invited and entreated to be reconciled unto God; and that the greatness and number of his sins are no barrier to the free exercise of mercy. And he not only sees and believes, that Christ is in all respects, a

suitable Savior, just such a one as he needs. He beholds a divine glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ, by which he is so attracted, and his thoughts so occupied, that he forgets himself. He is absorbed in the contemplation of the wisdom, the love, the justice, and faithfulness of God—as these attributes shine in the work of redemption. Under these believing views, his affections are strongly moved. He feels springing up in his heart a love to God in Christ—such as he never felt to any other. His soul is ravished with a peculiar joy, which, as to kind or degree, cannot be described. At this moment, he gives himself away to God. He has a fixed purpose formed in his heart, to honor and obey his Lord and Master, come what will. Has this person no rational evidence of the truth of the Christian religion? There may be a question, whether this evidence ought to be denominated rational; for although it is such as does and ought to satisfy the rational mind, it is an evidence not owing to the deductions of reason, or any logical process—but it arises from the supreme excellence of divine truth revealed to the soul, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This man knows now certainly, that the doctrine of the gospel is of God. This is the divine anointing, which if a man possesses, he needs no one to witness to him, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Savior of the lost. For the evidence is complete, and this faith which he exercises in Christ, as thus exhibited, is "the faith of God's elect." But all do not attain to those clear spiritual discoveries which have been described. Some have but dim views of divine truth, and their faith is in proportion weak; but in the use of appointed means it gains strength, and that which was feeble in the beginning, will grow up to maturity. Few of those who are favored with bright spiritual discoveries of the glory of Christ at first, continue to enjoy these clear views, long at one time. The blessed vision passes away. They fall back, if not into distressing darkness, yet into an obscure twilight. This is necessary, lest they should conclude that these spiritual views were their own and depended on themselves. And as spiritual pride is apt to rise and swell, in consequence of the delightful exercises of mind, which the soul enjoys—it is expedient that God should withdraw from the soul those views, in a measure, and leave it to feel its own weakness and unworthiness. When the soul is made to see something of the depth of its depravity, and to feel sin, on account of its turpitude, to be a burden, this very conviction furnishes a strong evidence of the divine authority of the Scripture; for it is by the law, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, that this knowledge often is acquired. That sin does really partake of the evil which is seen in it, the enlightened soul can no more doubt, than it can of its own existence. But if this conviction is true and correct, then certainly, the word which has produced it must be the word of God. No word of man could ever thus affect the conscience, and search out the secret faults of the heart. The effect of the truth on an awakened conscience is wonderful. It "divides between the soul and the spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." When the faithful preaching of the gospel is heard by one, just beginning seriously to consider his ways, it often appears to him that the preacher has the power of searching the heart; or that someone has communicated to the preacher, information respecting his personal character. All deep conviction of sin, therefore, furnishes a direct proof of the truth of the word. And when we consider how completely the feeling of guilt and condemnation is removed by faith in Christ, and what secret peace takes possession of the mind, we are sure that words which can produce such an effect, must be from God; for where else do we find such effects produced? Whatever others may think, the believer himself cannot doubt—that views which have so suddenly charmed away his grief, must be from God. There is no change in nature more remarkable, than that produced on the feelings of a convicted and distressed sinner, by the simple exercise of faith in Christ. It is a

change from overwhelming sorrow—to unspeakable joy; from darkness—to marvelous light; from condemnation—to reconciliation; from enmity—to friendship; in short, from spiritual death—to spiritual life. The enlightened and renewed man has then, the very best evidence of the truth of Christ's doctrine, an evidence which no other can possess, until enlightened by the same Spirit. And now, suppose the person thus renewed by the grace of God, never to have heard or known anything of the external evidences of Christianity; even if he were to suppose that the gospel was of modern origin, yet he would cleave to it, as having undoubted evidence of being the word of God. And when the children of God fall into darkness, and are sorely buffeted by Satan, and have skeptical thoughts injected into their minds, their deliverance does not come from reasoning, and reading books on the evidences of Christianity—but by the shining of the truth itself into the heart. One ray from the Sun of righteousness will scatter a darkness which has long been oppressive; and one gracious promise applied, and sealed on the heart, will bring peace, when all other resources fail. Let those who are slow to believe these things, contemplate the patience, the courage, the joy and triumph of the martyrs of Jesus, in the early times of the gospel. Whence this superhuman contempt of torture and of death? Whence the elevated joy, experienced by some in the midst of racks and flames? It was the sight of such effects as these, which multiplied converts to Christianity, at a time, when the very name was punished with a cruel death. And these effects of the gospel have not entirely ceased, even in our day. Even converts lately called out of a savage state, especially in the island of Madagascar, have manifested a Christian fortitude and cheerful resignation to cruel sufferings for the sake of Christ, which does not fall below the same traits in the early martyrs. And how often have those who have had much experience about the beds of dying saints, been filled with wonder and gratitude, at the power of the word of God, when accompanied by his Spirit, to support and console the departing spirit—even when the body was racked with excruciating pain! The evidence, arising from such scenes, is often not only convincing but overwhelming. Often have I wished, when witnessing such scenes, that infidels could be present to see the wonderful efficacy of the gospel, in giving peace and joy to people in the agonies of death. The writer has now in his recollection, the case of an obscure young woman, whose habits of reserve and modesty were such, that very few people knew anything of her pious exercises, until she was laid on the bed of death. Though poor, and obscure, she was not ignorant nor uncultivated; far from it. She had a mind of uncommon intelligence, which, by reading, she had stored with knowledge, especially pious knowledge. The Bible was her daily companion—the Bible was the source of all her comfort. And the doctrines of Christianity she understood not only theoretically—but experimentally. She had felt their power. She had daily proof of their efficacy to support the soul under peculiar trials. Though I had known nothing of the elevation and fervency of her piety, until called to visit her in her last sickness, when, instead of giving instruction and comfort to the dying saint, I felt it to be one of the highest privileges I ever enjoyed—to witness the heavenly serenity of her countenance, and to hear the expressions of faith and hope which flowed from her lips. From what has been said, we may derive the following INFERENCES.

1. That unrenewed men, who are not taught of God, however they may by learning and the exercise of reason arrive at the conclusion that the Holy Scriptures are given by inspiration, and contain a true revelation of the will of God; yet never can attain to a true, saving faith; for "we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." And we see the reason why a merely rational, or historical faith does not work by love, nor produce any radical change in the character; because by it, however clear and strong—the excellence and beauty and

glory of Christ and divine things are not revealed to the mind. The blind man may be as fully convinced of the existence of the rainbow as any other person, and may assent to the fact that what are called colors are exhibited in this phenomenon; but he is incapable of those emotions which are produced in the minds of those who can see, by this sublime and beautiful arch in the heavens. And in this case, we see, that there may be a certain conviction of a truth, when the evidence which produces it, does not present to the mind, the true nature of that truth. Just so it is, in regard to spiritual things; people who are spiritually blind to their nature may, by conclusive arguments and testimony, be convinced of their reality.

2. We learn also, that where there is a sincere love of truth, and a pious disposition to be conformed to the will of God, both by believing what his word declares, and doing what it commands—there is a true faith. And hence it may be inferred that the person possessing such a state of mind, in regard to the truths of the Bible, has been enlightened by the Spirit of God. A ray from Christ, who is "the light of the world," has shined into his heart, to give him the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. True knowledge and pious affections are inseparably joined; the one cannot exist without the other. The views of the understanding and the purposes of the heart, from the constitution of the mind, must be in concurrence. But the affections and volitions of the heart, are not in concurrence with the mere 'speculative' convictions of the understanding, for reasons already given.

Hence we see clearly the true ground of difference between a dead and a living faith; it is owing entirely to the different kinds of evidence on which they are respectively founded. In the one case, the evidence though convincing, does not afford to the mind a view of the real spiritual nature of the truths believed. In the other, the evidence is the excellence and spiritual beauty of the objects of faith. In the one case the evidence is external to the truth; in the other, it is the internal shining of the truth into the mind.

3. Finally, when faith is weak, the true method of strengthening it, is not to be found in logical reasoning—but in divine illumination. There are doubts, which may be removed by a careful and impartial investigation of the evidences of divine revelation; but this may be effected, without any real increase of true faith; this can only be invigorated by the same efficient Agent, by whom it was first produced. All the most vigorous efforts of human reason, in the most gifted minds, can never produce one true spiritual idea. This dependence of the soul on God for every step of progress in the divine life, is beautifully illustrated in the prophet Isaiah, "He gives strength to the weary and strengthens the powerless. Youths may faint and grow weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:29-31)

Let all then who wish to know whether the doctrines of Christ are true, pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit; let them get their minds into that state which is favorable for the clear discovery of the truth, and they will find, that as the light of the sun needs no witnesses to testify of its existence, when it shines into the eyes; so, when obstructions are removed, and the intellect is prepared to receive spiritual ideas, the light of truth shining into the mind, carries its own evidence with it! The man thus enlightened, has no need that anyone should testify to him of the truth; for he perceives the light, and tastes the sweetness of the truth, as it is in Jesus. The more the believer grows in grace, the firmer and more efficacious will be his faith. And as the Spirit is given in answer

to prayer, freely—we should unceasingly cry to God for this richest, this sum of all spiritual blessings. The indwelling of the Spirit is the rich fountain of life, from which all holy acts and spiritual exercises and enjoyments proceed. In accordance with the sentiments and reasonings in the preceding discourse, are the facts in the case. Converts among the heathen, in whom the moral change is so remarkable, are not convinced of the truth of the gospel by being made acquainted with its external evidences, of which they are as yet incapable—but by its internal light and power by which their consciences are awakened, and the demerit of sin, and the efficacy of the promises of the gospel to relieve and compose their troubled minds, are felt. And, among men of strong and highly cultivated minds, more have been converted from infidelity, by reading the Scriptures, than by studying the external evidences.

S. THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

by Archibald Alexander

"To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Ephesians 3:8)

It is recorded of Christ, that "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." But this poverty related only to external condition and earthly goods. He was indeed poor in the things of this world. He was born in the most abject poverty. He lived poor—for he said to one who expressed a desire to be his follower, probably from a hope of worldly benefit, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." He had neither house nor home; and sometimes hungered for lack of food, while laboring in Jerusalem, from morning to night. No one in that city seems to have invited him to a night's lodging; for when he had spent the day in preaching in the temple, and healing the sick who resorted to him, it was his custom in the evening to retire to the mount of Olives. And when journeying—which was always on foot—he was sometimes refused the privilege of lodging in a village by the way. When a prophecy respecting him as king was to be fulfilled by his riding on the foal of an donkey, the animal must be borrowed. And when tribute was demanded of him, he was not in possession of so much money as half a shekel, and therefore sent Peter to the sea to catch a fish, which he knew had the sum necessary for the two of them in its mouth. Indeed, the owner of heaven and earth, in his voluntary humiliation, was content to live upon the charitable contributions of the pious women who accompanied him from Galilee. And when dying, he had nothing to leave for the sustenance of his bereaved mother, but committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, who did possess a home, to which he immediately took her. And when dead, he had no grave of his own where his body might rest, but his lifeless corpse was laid in the tomb of another—a rich man, who graciously gave up for its use a new tomb prepared for himself. But though poor in this world's goods, he was even then rich—rich in divine power, for whenever it was necessary, he could provide food for thousands of hungry people. He was rich in the possession of every divine perfection, for the fullness of the Godhead "dwelt in him bodily." His riches, as being infinite, were indeed unsearchable. But the RICHES OF CHRIST which Paul preached among the Gentiles, were the RICHES OF GRACE. Who can fathom the depth of the love of Christ? Surely it "passes knowledge;" it has a depth, and height, and length, and breadth, which an angel's mind cannot compass. If we would trace this stream to its source, we must go back before the foundation of the world. This fountain of divine mercy is hidden in the depths of eternity; yes, more, in the unsearchable depths of the infinite mind of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

Christ is not only rich in his divine attributes and love, but in his mediatorial character and possessions. The richest creature ever formed was the human nature of Christ, which he has

assumed into intimate personal union with his divine nature. This human nature is enriched with knowledge and sublime properties, which, though finite, as every creature must be, yet far surpass all the richest endowments of the highest angel or archangel who stands in the immediate presence of God. Here is an object to call forth the wonder and adoration of the innumerable angels who encircle the throne of the great I AM. This divine mediatorial Person is the foundation of the whole plan of redemption. As GOD-MAN, he was born, and lived, and taught, and died, and rose again; and now "ever lives to make intercession" for all who have by faith committed their souls into his hands. And in this character of Mediator he has become heir to a glorious inheritance; and of this inestimable riches he has made every true believer a co-heir, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." There are unsearchable riches for the Gentiles, and also for the Jew; for he makes no difference. All genuine disciples will have their allotment in the celestial Canaan. "It is a broad land of wealth unknown." And these inestimable, inexhaustible riches are freely offered to all. O who will consent to make known these glad tidings to the hundreds of millions of Gentiles now on the earth, and spend their lives in preaching to them the unsearchable riches of Christ?

S. A DISCIPLE

A DISCIPLE

by Archibald Alexander "The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." (Acts 11:26) A disciple is a learner, but a learner supposes a teacher. In reality, the visible church is only a school, where Christ is the great teacher. The word of God contains all the lessons which are inculcated in this school. But as Christ is the sum and substance of the word, he is not only the teacher, but the subject of the lesson taught! "This is eternal life, to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." "You have not so learned Christ, if so be you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." A genuine disciple is not only taught out of the word, but by the Holy Spirit. External teaching, however correct, is not sufficient. We need internal illumination by the Spirit. "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth." "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Not that this divine instructor teaches anything different from the word. No! He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the Spirit of truth, and will guide the disciples into all truth. "As for you, the anointing which you received from him remains in you, and you don't need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, you will remain in him." (1 John 2:27) He "reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." But what are some of the lessons learned by the disciple in this school?

1. The worth of his soul.
2. The value of time.
3. Veneration for the holy Scriptures as the infallible rule to guide our faith and practice.
4. Our ruined and condemned state—"children of wrath, even as others," "dead in trespasses and sins," "without hope and without God in the world."
5. The Spirit convinces the human heart, or rather, gives the soul a glimpse of the indwelling sin, by which it is convinced of total depravity. Oh, what a multitude of evils; what a fountain of impurity; what a mass of corruption! The heart is found to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. There is found nothing in it truly good.

What can be done? Where shall the sinner fly for relief? Where, but to the house of mercy—to the city of refuge? There stands One with wounded hands widely extended, who invites the perishing sinner to come to him for safety. The guilty soul hesitates—fears this invitation cannot be for one so unworthy. But no other door is open, and the kind, entreating voice is still heard, Come—"and him who comes, I will never cast out." It ventures—trembling, it advances—it throws itself into the arms of divine mercy, and is graciously received, without merit, without upbraiding; becomes a son or daughter by adoption, and if a son, then an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ.

6. The disciple also learns to prize Christ above all people and above all treasures. "To you who believe, he is precious." He values Jesus above all price as his infallible Prophet, his sovereign King, as well as an atoning Priest. The disciple learns to roll all its burdens on the Lord, and learns to live outside of itself, by desiring vital supplies from Christ, day by day. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

7. Again, the disciple is taught the beauty of holiness. Moral or spiritual beauty is the glory of heaven. External glory is nothing; but moral, divine excellence is the glory of God, comprehending all his divine perfections. To view this excellence, is the beatific vision in which the happiness of heaven consists. Oh, glorious state! Oh, blessed abode!

8. Finally, the disciple learns to know the reality and sweetness of communion with God. While many are contented to worship in the outward court, he desires to penetrate into the holy of holies, where he can hear the words of the divine oracle, and see the resplendent face of Immanuel. The apostle teaches that the most holy place is a type of heaven; and surely nothing on earth is more like heaven than intimate communion with God.

S. LOVE OF THE TRUTH

LOVE OF THE TRUTH

by Archibald Alexander "They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth in order to be saved." (2 Thessalonians 2:10)

I think it is John Newton who somewhere says that he never knew any person who appeared to be actuated by a sincere love of the truth, who did not come right after a while, however far off he might be when he began to feel this motive operating. The case of Thomas Scott is a remarkable illustration of this remark. When he commenced his correspondence with Mr. Newton, he was a Socinian, and was solicitous to engage his correspondent in a controversy on the points of difference. Mr. Newton, however, while he avoided controversy, still entertained and expressed the hope that Mr. Scott would come to a right belief, because he thought he perceived in him a sincere desire to know the truth.

It seems to me that this is one of the first lessons which they learn who are taught of God. The Holy Spirit, when he would lead anyone to the saving knowledge of the truth, produces in him a spirit of sincere and humble teachableness. The soul led by the Spirit thirsts for the knowledge of the truth. This is a very different thing from ardent attachment to particular opinions which have been imbibed from education, or from the connection with a particular sect. Such attachment cleaves to error as tenaciously as to truth. A man may be willing to lay down his life in defense of his opinions, and yet may be destitute of the love of truth. The genuine love of truth makes its possessor willing to relinquish his most cherished opinions as soon as it shall be satisfactorily demonstrated that they are not true. The love of the truth renders a man not only earnest in the pursuit of the beloved object, but impartial in his judgment of evidence. He fears deception, and admits new opinions only after the evidence has been thoroughly sifted and weighed. This disposition is commonly accompanied with a deep sense of our ignorance and liableness to error. The lover of truth cannot be satisfied with mere plausible appearances, he must have solid ground to rest upon; he therefore digs deep until he comes to a rock. And as the Holy Bible is the treasure of divine truth, he searches the Scriptures daily to find out what God has revealed. But conscious of his liableness to be misled by ignorance or prejudice in interpreting the Scriptures, he is incessant in his prayers for divine illumination. Such a one trusts little to his own reason or human authority; he wants to hear what says the Lord. And those who search for truth as for hidden treasure shall not be disappointed. There is a gracious promise that if we seek--we shall find. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given him."

S. The Value of Good Books

The Value of Good Books

by Archibald Alexander

"Bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus when you come, and the books, especially the parchments." (2 Timothy 4:13) When we consider how much good has been done by the published works of such men as Baxter, Owen, Doddridge, Alleine, Boston, Edwards, etc., we wonder that men gifted with a talent for writing attractively and powerfully, do not devote more of their time to the preparation of good books. But although, in theory, we acknowledge the all-pervading power of the press, yet the importance of the subject is not practically felt in all its momentous consequences. The man who is enabled to write a truly evangelical and useful book, or even a single tract of first-rate excellence, may convey the saving truth of the gospel to a thousand times more people than the living preacher can ever instruct by his voice. And hundreds of years after the death of the writer, the production of his pen may be but just commencing its career of usefulness, only to be terminated with the end of the world. Those men, therefore, who are blessed with the ability of producing one work of evangelical excellence, may be considered among the most highly favored of our race, and must enjoy a rich reward hereafter. The plan of first publishing important views of evangelical truth from the pulpit, and then from the press, with such changes as may serve to render them more popular, is a wise economy of time; and considering the incalculable power of the press, more of our learned and eloquent preachers should avail themselves of this method of benefitting the public, by diffusing abroad the precious truths of the gospel.

S. LOOKING UNTO JESUS

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

by Archibald Alexander "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)

1. A look of inquiry. Who is this Jesus? I see that he is a man, for I behold him a babe in Bethlehem. I see him clothed with a body like other men, and growing in wisdom and stature. He has flesh and bones, and eats, drinks, and sleeps. Yes, I see his body wounded and bleeding, lacerated with the scourge, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross. See, he bows his head and dies! But is he no more than man? In this child do we not see rays of divinity encircling his sacred head, and indicating that in union with this child is the mighty God? Divine glory beams forth from his face. This is the only begotten Son of God—God manifest in the flesh, possessed of the power and knowledge of the Most High. I gaze upon this mystery. Angels can do no more. I am lost in wonder—so are they. This union of the infinite and finite I cannot comprehend; but I can adore the incarnate God. But my anxious spirit still inquires farther--Why such condescension, such humiliation, such unparalleled sufferings? I learn that all this was to qualify him to be mediator between a just God and the sinner. Being a daysman, he must lay his hand on both, and therefore he must partake of the nature of both. But my inquiry farther is--What work, as mediator, does he perform? What offices does he execute? The ancient prophets, from Moses downwards, have foretold him as a prophet—a priest—a king. Such offices the sinner needs: he is ignorant, and must have a divine Teacher; he is guilty and condemned, and needs a Savior—a substitute—a great High-priest, to offer an atoning sacrifice sufficient to satisfy divine justice. It was this which required his incarnation, and his accursed death on the cross. And the redeemed sinner needs a King to deliver him from the power of his enemies, and bring him to glory.

2. The look of confidence. The soul, burdened with its guilt, and with the fearful expectation of coming wrath, finds no rest nor peace--until it gets a glimpse of the cross; beholding the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, it is assured of pardon and salvation. Nothing is lacking to its peace: justice is satisfied, the law is fulfilled, precept and penalty are satisfied, God is reconciled, and conscience can demand no more. "There is peace and joy in believing."

3. A look of dependence. The poor beggar looks to his benefactor for relief and help, because he is benevolent, and especially because he has promised him all needed supplies. The believing soul, sensible of its own weakness, looks to Jesus for all needed help and strength. It relies simply on his word of promise, knowing that what he has said he will most certainly perform.

4. This is also a longing look—a look of intense desire after conformity to his glorious and perfect character. As the child looks at the copy-plate when he is learning to write, so the Christian looks unto Christ as his perfect model. It is a look of imitation—copying his fair example. His language is, "Be holy, for I am holy."

5. It is a look of hope and joyful expectation. Christ is absent from our sight, but we have the promise that he will come again. Saints are looking for his second appearance. This often fills their

thoughts. They "love his appearing," "looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God." This is the look of constant watchfulness, that they may be found of him with their loins girded and their lamps lighted. All Christians should be in the attitude of watchers, for they know not the day nor the hour when their Lord comes.

S. The Almost Christian

THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN

by Archibald Alexander The almost Christian may have a speculative knowledge of all the leading truths of Christianity, and may be able to defend them. The almost Christian entertains a great respect for religion and its professors and institutions. The almost Christian feels a strong desire to enjoy the benefits of the gospel, and may often have his affections much moved, and may form many good resolutions; he may indeed possess a counterfeit of experimental religion, so like that it may deceive not only the man himself, but the most judicious ministers. The almost Christian may be exceedingly conscientious and exact in attending on all the external duties of religion; as touching these, he may be "blameless;" and in regard to zeal, he may be ardent, so as to put to the blush the real believer.

He may also be liberal, and contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, and to feed the poor. He may become a popular preacher of the gospel, and be the means of the conversion of others. He may even go to foreign lands, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen. He may, in short, do everything which the real Christian does, and feel everything which the real Christian feels—but one. He fails in one single point, but that is an essential point. He never has given his heart to God. He loves the world better than he loves Christ. That most excellent gift of charity has never been poured into his heart. His religion may be all traced to the mere love of happiness, and the operations of a natural conscience, enlightened and awakened by the doctrinal knowledge of the truth. The apostle Paul teaches, that if a man without CHARITY, that is, love to God and man, should possess angelic eloquence, prophetic knowledge, and the power of working the greatest miracles; yes, if he should have zeal strong enough to make him a martyr, and liberality great enough to induce him to give away all his goods, it would "profit him nothing." Such a one would, after all, be only an almost Christian. The deceitful heart of man will turn itself into every conceivable form and shape but that of true holiness; of this it may assume the shadow, but never the reality.

S. Quotes

Short pithy gems from Archibald Alexander

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No one was ever saved because his sins were small.

No one was ever rejected on account of the greatness of his sins.

Where sin abounds — grace shall much more abound.

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However long you may have continued in rebellion, and however black and long the catalog of your sins — yet if you will now turn to God by a sincere repentance, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall not be cast out!

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God is not glorified in any transaction upon earth — so much as in the conversion of a sinner.

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It will never do to plead sin as an excuse for sin, or to attempt to justify sinful acts by pleading that we have an evil heart. This instead of being a valid apology, is the very ground of our condemnation.

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Men are more accountable for their motives, than for anything else; and primarily, morality consists in the motives, that is — in the affections.

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It is as natural and reasonable for a dependent creature to apply to its Creator for what it needs, as for a child thus to solicit the aid of a parent who is believed to have the disposition and ability to bestow what it needs.

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Virtue consists in doing our duty in the several relations we sustain, in respect to ourselves, to our fellow men, and to God — as known from reason, conscience, and revelation.

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Is it not more reasonable to believe what God speaks in His Word, than to confide in our own crude and feeble conceptions.

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Do not for a moment suppose that you must make yourself better, or prepare your heart for a worthy reception of Christ — but come at once — yet come as you are.

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If you were not a sinful, polluted, helpless, and miserable creature — this Savior would not be suited to you, and you would not be comprehended in his gracious invitations to sinful men.

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Now, my friend, I beg you to consider that this blindness and unyielding hardness is the very core of your iniquity — and to be convinced that you are thus blind and stupid, is true conviction of sin.

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God has set before you an open door which no man has a right or power to shut. If you should be shut out, it will be by your own unbelief, and not for want of a warrant to come. Enter, then, without delay or hesitation. None can less afford to delay than the aged sinner. Now is the time. Now or never. You have, as it were, one foot already in the grave. Your opportunities will soon be over. Strive, then, I entreat you, to enter in at the strait gate!

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In vain do we seek to awaken our churches to zeal in evangelism, as a separate thing. To be genuine, it must flow from love to Christ. It is when a sense of personal communion with the Son of God is highest that we shall be most fit for missionary work, either ourselves or to stir up others.

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