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Editor's Introduction

ART. I.—*India: Its Past and Future.*

1. *Indische Alterthumskunde* von Christian Lassen, ord. Prof. an der Universität zu Bonn. 1ster Band. *Geographie und die älteste Geschichte.* Bonn, 1847. 2ter Band. *Geschichte von Buddha bis auf die Ballabhi und jüngere Gupta Dynastie.* 1852.
2. *The Calcutta Review.*

A well known writer of Great Britain at times indulges in the imaginary vision of some traveller from New Zealand taking his stand, in the midst of a vast solitude, on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. This, to a majority of readers, suggests a time immeasurably remote, a time that will, that can never come. And this we must call natural. The same spirit exists in all ages. Doubtless, the men of Nineveh, in their pride and power, never dreamt that civilization and knowledge should once fix their abode in continents utterly unknown to them; and that travellers from distant regions, from an isle, cold, dreary, and barbarous in their time, should in vain labour to decypher on some mouldering pedestal the name of their proudest chief. Doubtless the princes, the philosophers, the merchants, of tumultuous Alexandria,

with all their wiles and deceitful policy, as the Spanish Armada, the everlasting monument of their treachery and cruelty, was scattered by the winds of heaven. "Fear shall take hold upon them—the depths shall cover them—the Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

By J. H. Merle D'Aubigné

ART. IV.—*The True Barrier against Ritualism and Rationalism.*

The Authority of God; or, The True Barrier against Romish and Infidel Aggression. Four Discourses, by the Rev. J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, D. D., President of the Theological Institute, Geneva. With an Introduction, written for this edition. Author's complete edition. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers.

DR. D'AUBIGNE has won for himself a standing as a Christian author, which will of course ensure readers for whatever he may publish, without any "letters of commendation" from us. This little volume is enlivened by that evangelical ardour, and that fresh and racy style, which give a charm to his histories, and a *vis vivida* to all his productions. As we should expect, he views the topics handled in these discourses largely from the historical stand-point, and thus adds to their strength and value. He, however, does not fail to sustain the plenary inspiration and divine authority of the Bible, by arraying those arguments, which are always conclusive on the subject, with great skill and force.

And surely the occasion of these discourses demanded that he summon to the defence of God's truth all the resources of Christian learning, logic, and love. It was no less than the defection of his associate in the Theological Faculty of Geneva, Professor Scherer, to the ranks of those who deny the normal authority of the external word, *i. e.*, the Scriptures, by asserting that the inspiration of its authors differs not in kind, but only in degree, from the spiritual exercises of ordinary Christians. Consequently, so far as *authority* is concerned,

the Scriptures stand on the same footing as the writings of Baxter, Calvin, or Edwards, and indeed the fancies and preferences of every individual; *i. e.*, they have no real divine authority to command the conscience, and require faith and obedience. Thus we have the so-called intuitional theology, derived from our own intuitions and preferences, instead of the Divine Word. We become a law unto ourselves, instead of having a law of our faith and practice in any external revelation from God. This is unmitigated infidelity, however it may disguise itself under the appellatives of Christianity. And we regret to say that it is in this highly specious, seductive, and dangerous form, the current infidelity of our time, for the most part, shrouds itself, and deceives multitudes of the simple and unwary.

But we will let the author's account of the origin of these lectures speak for itself, and at once confirm and illustrate these remarks. He says, p. 34, et seq.

"I must say a few words concerning the occasion of these discourses. A man of much talent, whose person I love, and whose character I esteem, while I deplore his errors, wrote a letter to me in November, 1849, which was published in Paris, in May, 1850.* The following extracts from this letter, which are quoted verbally, are necessary to be known, for the full understanding of my discourses:

'No supernatural intervention has removed the authors of the books of the New Testament from those causes of error which they could not avoid without an intervention of this kind.' 'The New Testament nowhere declares itself inspired.' 'These writings are the productions of great saints, or of great religious heroes.' 'The action of the Spirit in the Apostles does not differ in its nature, from that which every believer has a right to expect—a duty to desire.' 'In other words, the inspiration of the Apostles is purely religious; it only exempts them from error in the measure in which sin brings forth error, and holiness, knowledge.' 'I do not see what harm can arise to piety, from changing the letter of a code to the living products of apostolic individuality—an

* "La Critique et la Foi; Deux Lettres par Edmond Scherer." Paris: Chez Ducloux.

authority to a history; and, to say all I think, a cabalistic ventriloquism for the noble accent of the human voice.' 'In the ancient Church, they had recourse to the authority of an inspired code, just as they had recourse to the episcopacy, and to the magical virtue of the Sacraments, because the spirit which animated the primitive believers was either changed or withdrawn. They had to create an *authority*—to substitute an external, literal, tangible rule, to that impulse of life and spirit which the apostle himself formerly opposed to the economy of Scripture.' (2 Cor. iii. 6.) 'The Reformation of the sixteenth century, after having begun, in the person of Luther, with great liberty, and great spirituality of views upon the subject, was arrested in its development, and finished by preserving, besides many other things, the remains of that system against which it had arisen. Protestantism remains a mere system of authority; the only difference between it and Roman Catholicism being, that it has substituted one authority for another—the Bible for the Church.' 'For the simple believer, the Bible is no longer an *authority*, but it is a *treasure*.' '*Biblicism* is not merely a theological error, but it is a plague upon the Church.' 'The Holy Spirit, after this enfranchisement, will again occupy that place which belongs to Him in the life of the Church and of the believer; for the reign of the Spirit and that of the letter are two hostile and incompatible sovereignties.' 'We will again raise to honour a precious truth, which Quakerism has long represented alone, and of which the Christians of our days seem again to have some idea.' 'Instead of sending a poor proselyte to the articles of a code—to the formulas of dogmatism, and to the leaves of I know not what mysterious oracle, we would send him to the great prophets of all ages—to the living teaching of the Church—to the Word of God personified in His servants—to the Spirit and its manifestations—in short, to the immediate contact of the heart with truth.'

"The letter in which these assertions were made, being communicated by the author to some of his friends, was soon circulated, in manuscript, in Geneva and elsewhere. The question of the Inspiration and Divine authority of the Scriptures became a subject of general interest. The author of the letter

delivered public lectures, in which he developed his system. It became necessary that the truth concerning these important questions should be publicly professed in the Church. Such was the occasion of the first two discourses, which were delivered on Sundays March 17th and 24th, at special services of the Evangelical church of Geneva. The third was delivered June 26th, in the General Assembly of the Evangelical Society, over which the author was called on to preside. The fourth was addressed to the friends and students of the Theological College at Geneva, October 2d, at the commencement of the session."

We need not say that our author has refuted this malignant heresy not only with his wonted learning and logic, but also with that Christian tenderness and wisdom, which alone could have been equal to a crisis at once so delicate and so urgent. But he does not confine himself to impugners of the authority of the Bible from the infidel side. The authority of God in his word is far more widely overborne from the Papal and prelatical side. Here the authority of the Church, in the form of tradition, or the decrees of infallible Popes or Councils, is set up to overshadow and overbear the authority of the oracles of God. Dr. D'Aubigné, therefore, devotes a part of his discourses to this class of assaults upon the Bible. Here he finds occasion to develop the scriptural doctrine of the Church, seeing very clearly with the Reformers, that if the Church of the New Testament be any visible society or corporation on earth, then it must have the attributes of truth, sanctity, infallibility and unity, which the Scriptures, in divers ways, ascribe to the Church. The logical conclusion is inevitable, with such premises. Whatever such a visible body declares to be the truth, through its appropriate organs and representatives, must be true. Thus we have a standard of truth above the immediate word of God, and Protestantism dies. We do not remember to have seen any brief deliverance on this subject more to our mind than the following, p. 19, et seq.

"It is a fundamental principle of the blessed Reformation, that nothing which is external—nothing which man can give or take from man, constitutes the communion of the soul with God, or

salvation; this communion proceeds solely from the act by which the soul, without any intervening object, attaches itself to Jesus Christ, by means of justifying faith.

“It is a natural consequence, that the Church—which is the body of the Lord, and out of which there is no salvation—is not any society whatever governed by men, and of which human decisions and a written constitution rule the admission, the conditions, the extent. The true Church is solely the communion of all those who have Jesus Christ for head, His word for rule, His Spirit for the principle of life. In vain would a pope, bishops, even synods, presbyteries, councils of churches, disown the members of this body, and excommunicate them; they are the Church, because they are of Christ: ‘I believe in the communion of saints.’

“Here, then, are two important principles.

“The first is, that Christ and His word are the only absolute authorities for the Christian. The second is, that the relation of the saved soul with Christ, is an immediate relationship; no human mediation is necessary to establish and maintain it.

“These two principles are disowned by the Papacy. Rome recognizes many authorities—many mediators. The visible Church, with the multitude of its institutions, slides in between the soul and Jesus Christ, as authority, as a necessary mediator. The Reformation destroyed these excrescences of the human self, which, instead of leading to Christ, remove from Him. All the Evangelical Church should beware of making them re-appear in the smallest degree.

“The most natural leaning of the human heart is to desire to be something. A particular church—a church government cannot escape from it. If the clergy were abolished, the Evil One would endeavour to turn the laity themselves into clergy: ‘What I say unto you, I say unto all: watch.’

“One of the greatest evils of Protestantism has arisen from this, that the idea of the spiritual invisible Church—of the *Body of the Lord*—has been put into the shade; that the sovereign importance of it has not been sufficiently felt; that every one has sought again and again to attach himself essentially to the corporation—to the sect of which he was a member. The Papacy—softened, mitigated, doubtless, but always

preserving some of its essential features—has thus returned, in many places, into the bosom of the Reformation.

“The errors prevalent in the English Church date far back; unknown in the Apostolic ages, they commenced very early in the Church. In the third century, some divines began to confound the true spiritual Church—the Body of Christ, *σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ*,—with the visible or empirical Church. That was applied to the external Church, which is Christianity, which belongs only to the internal Church, to the assembly of those ‘whose names are written in heaven,’ Heb. xii. 3. *Unity* and *sanctity* are two predicates or attributes of the spiritual Church—of the *Body of the Lord*. The desire was to apply these in an absolute manner to the visible Church. Now these two attributes, which can perfectly be united when applied to the invisible Church, mutually exclude each other when they are applied to external Christianity. If you wish that the visible Church be *one* externally, you must certainly tolerate in it many members who are not *holy*. If you wish that a visible Church be composed only of *holy* members, you must break the unity, and form a little Church separate from the great one.

“From that time we find two parties in the Church; those who exalt the unity at the expense of the sanctity, or the *Catholics*, and those who exalt the sanctity at the expense of the unity, or the *Sects*. Cyprian was the first apologist for the outward unity of the Church in a book on the ‘*Unitate Ecclesie*.’ He pretended, like some divines of our days, that out of this external Church, in which, according to him, was the episcopal succession of bishops, no one could have part in the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Montanists, the Novatians, and some other sects, were apologists for the absolute sanctity of the external Church, and maintained, that every Church of which some members are not holy members of the body of Christ, is not a true Church. The truth lay neither with the one nor with the other. Unity and sanctity are the necessary attributes of the spiritual Church, to which we must, above all, belong—out of which there is no salvation. But as for the visible, or empirical Church, unity and sanctity are the attributes towards which it ought to tend—which it ought to

endeavour to attain, without, perhaps, being ever able completely to come up to them."

Having sufficiently indicated to our readers the general drift of the volume before us, we will now offer a few reflections in regard to the nature and causes of these two leading and all-inclusive forms of unbelief—the ritualistic and rationalistic—superstition and infidelity.

In that hideous portraiture of heathenism, which Paul gives in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, we find not only a graphic sketch of its vices in detail, but also of those radical sins and errors which underlie and produce this monster growth. It will be observed, that he attributes to heathenism those foul iniquities and worse than brutal abominations, the very mention of which shocks all sense of morality or decency. But all those pollutions are uniformly represented as flowing from a single cause, viz: renouncing, ignoring, or perverting the truth concerning God. Thus verse 21, et seq. "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful. * * * And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man—*wherefore* God gave them to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts," &c. So verse 26, et seq. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. *For this cause* God gave them up unto vile affections," &c. Now, wherein did this rejection of God and the truth concerning Him precisely lie? It did not lie in abjuring all belief in a Supreme Divinity, or the obligation to render to such Divinity due homage. It did not lie in rejecting the whole truth concerning God. This would have been too monstrous to impose even upon their own sin-blinded souls. It was entirely another process. They *changed the truth of God into a lie*. They did not reject or ignore it altogether. This were impossible to rational beings made in the image of God, howsoever that image may be marred by sin. They retained so much as this; that there is a superior order of being, to which men owe homage and worship, and on whose favour or wrath depends their happiness or misery. Is not this now vital, fundamental truth? Surely. Among the school of modern pantheistic, and we know not what

other progressives, it would entitle its holder to Christian fellowship. Yet they so held this truth, as to change it into a lie. They denied other associated truths, no less vital, which were essential to any right reception of this. They ignored or denied the unity, supremacy, independence, holiness, truth, spirituality, infinitude and perfection of the Godhead. They recognized and worshipped God's creatures and works as true divinities. "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things." So they "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." Thus holding the great truth that there is a Divinity, which we ought to worship—they changed it into a lie, by rejecting connected truth, and superinducing upon it abominable errors. Now this is the radical and characteristic feature of all forms of apostacy from God, Pagan, Mahomedan, Infidel, of rationalistic, ritualistic, superstitious, and other forms of degenerate and apostate Christianity. All kinds of false religion rest not on the utter denial of *all* truth, but on half truths turned into lies, by the admixture of positive or negative errors.

Since man is so constituted that he cannot rest long without some semblance of religion, so the great mass of the heathen world, and indeed of all the world who reject or know not the gospel, make up their religious system of certain truths which, by perversion, are turned into lies. Let us look at this momentous fact, in the principal forms in which it exists, in its causes, and in some of its practical consequences.

1. All religious error, the world over, whether mixed with the truths of Natural Religion or of Christianity, and be each error greater or less, runs in one of two directions; either toward superstition or scepticism; therefore, when mixed with and falsifying Christian truth, in the line of ritualism or rationalism. Now, there is in each of these grand currents which bear along fallen humanity, an element of truth, although so mixed with error as to be turned into a lie, and as to turn all other truths interblended with it into lies.

Superstition undertakes to propitiate God by rites and ceremonies often rigid and austere, and relies on these to ensure a good estate with him, while it leaves the heart uncleansed, free

to indulge its ungodly feelings and evil lusts. The peculiarity of superstition is, 1. That it makes religion, or that whereby we are made acceptable to God, to consist of ceremonies rather than inward moral excellence. 2. It makes a fund of merit out of these services, whereby they are conceived to deserve the favour of God. 3. It has little regard to their reasonableness or unreasonableness, to their fitness to promote piety, or honour God, or to their having been commanded or not commanded of him. Superstition, as it is connected with a degenerate Christianity, usually clings to the cardinal Christian mysteries of the Trinity, incarnation, atonement, original sin, regeneration. It shrinks from no mysteries in religion. It holds them all often in their utmost completeness. Moreover, it rightly holds that God is to be honoured by worship, and that he can never be pleased with those who do not render him homage; and withal, that if God reveals any truth, or commands any duty, it is not for us to inquire whether or not it accords with the dictates of our own reason. It must be reasonable, whether we see how or not, if it emanates from the Supreme Reason. But these truths are turned into lies by the error superinduced upon them. First, by losing sight of, and ignoring, as often as is convenient, the great fact that no ceremonies or sacrifices can be acceptable to God, which he has not himself appointed, and that even such as he has appointed cannot be pleasing to him, unless offered with a right spirit and pure feelings. Even sacrifice and burnt offering, divinely appointed services for God's ancient people, he desired not, unless accompanied with a broken and contrite spirit. Thus superstition, however earnest it may make one, even till he becomes a complete devotee, yet substitutes ceremonies and penances for a humble, penitent, holy heart and life. Next it vitiates all these services, however otherwise good they may be, by making them meritorious; giving them a character of self-righteousness, in derogation of the righteousness of Christ, and the ruin of that humility which alone is consistent with right feeling in fallen beings. It changes the truth of Christ's one and only sacrifice into a lie, not by denying it, but by making its efficacy dependent upon our sacrifices and works. It operates in the same way upon his priestly office by making it dependent on the intervention of a

human priesthood. It overthrows his kingly office, not by denying it, but by transferring its exercise to popes, patriarchs, or other supposed vicegerents of Him whose name is above every name. It destroys the prophetic office of Christ, not by denying it, but by erecting the Pope, or Church, or Councils, into infallible expounders of this will; whose decisions all are bound to believe and obey, whether they agree or conflict with the sacred word. It subverts the work of the Spirit, not by denying it, but by making baptism, and other rites administered by human hands, the sure and indispensable instruments of regeneration, so that men are born to newness of life, not by the will of God, but of man. It can grant indulgences to the robber or the adulterer, and reward bead-counting, genuflexions, and paternosters, with a title to heaven. Admitting that worship is due only to God, it can yet encourage creature worship to the Virgin and departed saints, as those who bear the special impress of the Almighty. So does baptized superstition hold the truth, at least a great deal of it, yet so hold it in unrighteousness as to change it into a lie.

Of this fatally distempered religion, the Pharisee was the model type. The scathing delineations of his character, given by our Saviour, present the great outlines which are constantly showing themselves in all the superstitious forms of apostate Christianity. The same slavish precision and punctiliousness in observing rites and ceremonies, made to cloak all sorts of moral dereliction, are alike flagrant and loathsome in them all. Thus the Pharisees tithed mint, anise and cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law. They devoured widows' houses, but for a pretence made long prayers. They compassed sea and land to make a proselyte. And when made, he was two-fold more the child of hell than themselves. They shut up the kingdom of heaven, neither entering in nor suffering others to enter in. They built the tombs of the prophets, and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous, while they were ready to crucify any living teacher of righteousness who appeared among them. In short, they were whited sepulchres, glossing over their inward corruptions by an ostentatious ritual. They were precisely what the Papal, Greek, Armenian, all apostate, superstitious, hierarchical churches,

bearing the Christian name, are at this day. Like these, they claimed to base their religion on the word of God. Like these, too, they did actually embrace many of its truths. Like these, too, they made the word of God and its holy truths of none effect by their traditions.

Looking now at Rationalism, it reaches the same goal, though by travelling in a contrary way, as all extremes, starting in opposite directions from the zenith of God's truth, meet in the nadir of soul-destroying error. As its name indicates, it enthrones human reason above God's word. It repudiates, or ignores, at all events, it will not accept or credit, whatever of the testimonies of God's word and principles of Christian doctrine it cannot explain into accordance with its own modes of reasoning and feeling. That is Rationalism which rejects any manifest teachings of God's word, any plain Christian doctrines, because they are repugnant to the judgment or feelings of the rejecter. It differs from technical infidelity in that it regards the Bible as in some sort a revelation from God, while infidelity, in the technical sense, discards it as an imposture. But it exhibits the spirit, power, and venom of infidelity in this, that it will not accept what the Bible manifestly teaches; not so much because God does not declare it to be true, as because when judged at the bar of its own intellect and feelings, it ought not to be true: *i. e.*, seems unreasonable, or incomprehensible, unworthy of God, or injurious to man.

Following this lead, some go a little way, some a great way, and multitudes go all lengths, till they have made havoc with every distinctive article of the Christian faith, everything that is either incomprehensible to the narrow, or unpalatable to the corrupt mind of man. It is only by a happy inconsistency, that any who start on this track, stop short of this dread finality. The principle, if good for anything, is good for everything. If justly applicable to one, it is justly applicable to all the doctrines and precepts of the Bible. Nothing can arrest this destructive process when once begun, but the potent veto of whatever vigour of conscience and purity of feeling yet remain in the soul. But whether partial or total, it is, in its nature, and as far as it goes, one and the same. And it is evermore marked by the following features.

The Rationalist acknowledges the Bible to be, in some sense, the word of God, but in no such sense that it is to be deemed authority for any doctrine repugnant to his own judgments and feelings. He also acknowledges that there is a species of truth in the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. He will usually receive them, or most of them, at all events, so far as their titles are concerned; and generally in somewhat of their meaning, discarding, however, so much of them as is either deemed to be inexplicable, or felt to be unpalatable; *i. e.*, all in them that is distinctively divine and Christian. Rationalism claims to receive them so far as they have truth in them, or for substance of doctrine. It would only, forsooth, free them of the unwarrantable dogmas in which they have been encrusted, which hinder their acceptance and efficacy among men, which confirm the prejudice and unbelief of the impenitent, and embarrass the faith of simple disciples; which, indeed, appear to be affirmed in the Bible, if we interpret it literally, and have therefore found their way into the creeds; but which, nevertheless, when adjudged at the bar of what it calls right reason, right feeling, common sense, philosophy, the enlightened spirit of the age, and we know not what other terms used to shroud the same revolt of the unsanctified soul against God and his truth, must be condemned as intolerable. In this way Rationalism declares impossible to be true, what God pronounces true. Yet, like heathenism and Christian Ritualism, it holds some part of God's truth, but so denies what is incomprehensible or unpalatable in connection with it, as to change that truth into a lie. Sometimes it carries this destructive process into one class of truths, sometimes into another; and once beginning, unless checked, will sooner or later put it through them all.

In illustration of our meaning, take the doctrine of salvation by Christ. All calling themselves Christians, admit most surely, that this is a true and cardinal article of the Christian faith, and still further, that he died for our sins. But then how did he die for our sins, and in what sense was his death efficacious therefor? The Scriptures, they confess, teach that Christ in his sufferings and death endured the punishment of our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon

Him: He became a curse for us; and so they teach that the first and immediate object of his sufferings and death was to release us from personal punishment, by direct substitution for it. But, says the Rationalist, this cannot be strictly true. It is monstrous to suppose that God could accept the woes of innocence in lieu of the woes of guilt; or that he can desire any sacrifice or suffering as a condition of reconciliation to a sinner who is truly penitent. These scriptural representations must be taken, therefore, to be merely figurative, intense, hyperbolical, or artistic statements, designed merely to awaken pious feeling, and deepen the sense of our extraordinary obligations to Christ. He died as a martyr simply, when on a benevolent mission to reclaim men to truth and virtue, by his holy teachings and spotless example. This was the primary and direct object for which he appeared on earth. His death was not the primary object, but was merely incidental to it, and a signal proof of his devotion to it; just as Paul's martyrdom was no direct object of his mission, but incidental to his great object of winning men to God by his holy teachings and example. Now, it is true that Christ died as a martyr. Is that the only or chief sense in which he died for the sins of men? Then is Paul as truly and as much our Saviour, our Redeemer, our atoning sacrifice, as Christ! Thus this most vital truth of salvation by Christ is turned into a lie, not by rejecting everything connected with it, but by rejecting what is vital in it. We might readily show, if it were necessary, how a similar process has been applied to the Trinity, incarnation, justification by faith, original sin, regeneration, election, every distinctive doctrine of Christianity, till even in some of the most ancient and renowned churches, Puritan and Reformed, defections have occurred which retain little beyond the principles of natural religion, with Christian titles annexed to them.

We have selected this particular doctrine, because it is the very corner-stone of the Christian religion, as regards faith and practice, and because, of late, those have arisen in communions nearly allied to us, who are disposed to apply this annihilating process to this and other correlate doctrines. Rationalism is an extremely insidious as well as dangerous leaven to introduce in any degree into our religious reasonings.

As the ancient Pharisees were the representatives of a divine religion paralysed by being overlaid with superstition, so the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, were the representatives of the same religion paralysed by rationalizing unbelief. And we shall do well to heed the charge of our Saviour and of his holy Apostle—Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Touch not, taste not, handle not. For a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Superstitious formalism turns the truth of God into a lie, not so much by believing too little, as by adding to it human inventions which spoil it. Rationalism rejects these inventions of superstition, and so far is right; but it also rejects more or less vital elements of revealed truth, without rejecting every feature and ingredient of that truth, and so turns it into a lie.

Moreover, it is true as Rationalism contends, that the truth of God is supremely rational, as God himself is the Supreme Reason. But it perverts and misapplies this truth, and so turns it into a lie. Whatever God is, or does, or ordains, must be right, simply because he is perfect, because he is God. To deny this is Atheism. But does it hence follow, that puny, short-sighted, sin-blinded mortals can fathom the divine counsels, and completely survey the universe, all time and all space, and determine what it is wise and right for Infinite Goodness and Wisdom to do, or to pronounce aught false or absurd which God has pronounced true? Is God to give an account in any of his matters to worms of the dust, or are they competent judges to review, annul, or condemn any of his procedures? Never! We cannot recognize such a being, as our God. Such a being, amenable to, capable of being measured by a race who must first become fools that they may be wise, could never be a legitimate object of adoration or religious worship.

But it is said that he who made the Bible made the human mind: that truth revealed by him through the one channel, can never contradict truth revealed through the other: that, therefore, the Bible cannot reveal anything contrary to the intuitive decisions of the human mind. But to say nothing further—What are intuitive decisions of the human mind? Those things which the whole race intuitively perceives to be

true, with as much certainty as they perceive their own existence. But this cannot be applicable to the denial of any of those great Christian truths which Rationalism rejects: for the people of God, a multitude whom no man can number, have believed them, and thousands have sealed their faith with their blood. If any one says that the mysteries of godliness are denied by his intuitive convictions, he simply mistakes his own sinful prejudices, and the pride of his narrow intellect, for the intuitive decisions of the human race. They are truly rational who are satisfied to take the attitude of learners, not of judges, before the Infinite and Unerring Mind; who take the yoke, and learn of Christ. They find that the truth of God, however mysterious in some aspects, alone satisfies the wants of their moral, intellectual, and spiritual being; that it harmonizes with divine Providence and devout feeling; that all departures from it for the sake of shunning difficulties, do but multiply the difficulties they would thus shun, going from labyrinth to labyrinth, "to find no end in wandering mazes lost!"

These two dangerous routes, two principal tracks of the broad road which so many travel, have their origin in that evil heart and evil conscience which inhere in fallen humanity; a heart averse to God and propense to all evil, a conscience charging guilt and threatening the wrath of the Almighty, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. According as one of these predominates over the other, while neither is cleansed by the blood and Spirit of Christ, will the drift of the soul be towards either superstition or infidelity, which, mixed with Christian truth, respectively become formalism or rationalism. So far as the conscience is active and charges guilt, so far it will crave some method of appeasing God; and, so far as the evil heart persists in its love of sin at the same time, it will crave some method of propitiating God, which will not interfere with its sinful indulgences and idols, but rather sanctifies them. Therefore it will crave superstitious rites and ceremonies, hoping to atone by strictness in these things for license in all others. Such are the beggarly elements to which mankind in all ages have been driven, who have not bowed to Christ's easy yoke, pacified their consciences through his blood, and by faith purified their hearts, thus cleansing them from

all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And in this state of mind, people will not stop to inquire whether the yoke of ritual and hierarchical bondage under which they come, is reasonable or scriptural. They prefer to assume it with a sort of blindness, since they deem ignorance the mother of devotion; and if their religion be scrutinized too narrowly, it may be found not to serve their purpose. "Man," says a celebrated writer, "cannot renounce either his sins or his God." His evil heart binds him to sin; his evil conscience makes him afraid directly to approach, and yet afraid altogether to forsake his Maker. Superstition is the result. The same causes in other circumstances generate Rationalism, which usually prevails among those who have learned how senseless and worthless rites and ceremonies not ordained of God must be, and how vain any rites, even divinely authorized, must be, when divorced from moral purity. In these circumstances, what will he, whose heart is averse to the God of the Bible, but whose conscience will not suffer him utterly to break loose from God and Christianity, do? He will make God altogether like himself, *i. e.*, he will in a sense accept the Bible and Christianity, while yet he will contrive to explain away and repudiate so much of them as is repugnant to his own unhumbled mind and heart, meanwhile flattering himself, and as many others as choose to believe it, that he still accepts the substance of the whole; at all events, that he accepts enough for the soul's salvation. This may be true in some cases; it certainly is not in others. But whether true or not, he will be sure to think it is so, and to esteem all in the highest degree intolerant and bigoted who do not agree with him. He can tolerate all forms of religious belief in others, for there is truth hid under them, which he is large-minded enough to perceive and acknowledge. He is only disturbed when others have not a like charity for his own views; when they deem the principles he assails, so important that they will not receive him within the circle of Christian fellowship. In its full development, in modern Pantheism, Rationalism leads men to avow that they can believe everything, "as many creeds as are offered;" *i. e.*, that they in reality believe nothing; and this more especially, because it is a radi-

cal principle with them, that moral evil is a stage in man's training for goodness, and so, that in its place, it is in itself good. As Rationalism is essentially negative, denying positive truth, instead of having anything positive itself to propagate, so it lives comfortably amid all forms of belief, so long as it is itself quietly tolerated. It takes no offence, till it is itself condemned and disowned. And disowned it must be, wherever there is a living, positive faith, which in its very nature strives to live and reign, and overthrow all antagonism to itself. Says McCosh, "A negation can exist anywhere; it is slippery, easy, accommodating; but that which is positive must have space and room, and it would drive out that which resists it."

Every man is by nature something of a rationalist and something of a ritualist, for every man is by nature sinful, and so guilty, blind, averse to holiness and truth, which yet his conscience will not suffer him utterly to repudiate. So long as the best of men are imperfectly sanctified, so long they will need to watch, lest some residuum of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees still work within them, to turn them from the simplicity that is in Christ. The difference between those, who, calling themselves Christians, respectively belong to Christ and Antichrist, is often not that one class holds fundamental truths which the other rejects, or that one class holds errors while the other is free from error; but that the one class, whatever may be their errors, hold them in such proportion and subordination to the truth, as not seriously to impair its integrity, vitality, and authority; while the other hold errors of such magnitude and in such admixture with the truth, as to paralyse it, and turn it into a lie. This criterion will hold good even of those merely speculative believers of the most orthodox creeds, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. For all these discern not, and of course believe not in, that divine beauty of spiritual truths which alone can attract the heart. So rejecting what is most vital and essential in them, they turn the truth of God into a lie.

It follows from all this, that an individual, or a communion, may cling to fundamental saving truth and hold fast the Head, while yet weakening and deforming, but not destroying, that faith by manifold errors and "doubtful disputations;" and, on

the other hand, that the truths of the gospel may be held in name and in a sense, but so held with superincumbent fatal errors, as to be utterly subverted. Hence the plausible and universal plea of heretics, that they hold so many precious truths in common with the orthodox, that they ought not to be *disfellowshipped*; or that by spreading a drag-net through Christian literature, they can fish up nearly the whole brood of their own heresies, one here and another there, is of no account. The question, Ought not those who hold in common a great number of fundamental truths to walk together? is too much loaded with ambiguity to admit logically of an unqualified affirmative or negative answer. Like many other questions *ad captandum*, put by partisan sciolists in ethics and divinity, we can only answer them safely after the manner of the old theologians in such cases, neither yea nor nay, but *distinguiamus*. The mere theist holds a great deal of precious fundamental truth. Is he, therefore, to be recognized as a Christian? The Socinian holds a great deal more in common with us, albeit he denies that our Lord is God, and hath purchased the Church with his own blood. Shall he then be brought within the sacred circle of Christian fellowship? The Papists hold vastly more, even most of the distinctively Christian mysteries. Shall they then be countenanced as true Christians who turn the truth of God into a lie, by making all grace dependent on the intervention and pleasure of the priesthood for its efficacy, substituting ceremonies for holiness, and making all subservient to hierarchical domination? Or suppose that all else be held "according to the strictest sect," but that vicarious atonement, or spiritual regeneration, or eternal punishment be contemptuously abjured, does, or does not, one such heresy so derange all associated truths, as to turn them, either at once or ere long, into a lie? There can be but one answer to these questions in the light of Scripture, history, or logic. It is possible out of a hundred related facts, to state all accurately, only omitting a single one, and, by that omission, to falsify all the rest. What sort of an account would he give of man, who should state everything truly about him, except simply that he has a moral nature, or, stating this, should ignore its fallen state? The question then in these cases is, not merely how many and what truths others

hold in common with us, but whether they so hold them, or other things in connection with them, as virtually to neutralize them. In our present imperfect and fallible state, there surely is a broad field in which Christians must agree to differ. But there is another sacred enclosure which cannot be invaded. To reject the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is to reject Christianity. Here there can be no compromise. It is well, the very instincts of the gracious soul demand it, that those who have hereunto attained, and agree in holding the head, should walk by the same rule, and combine their strength in a common cause against a common foe. In this behalf, and *pro hæc vice*, they may well forget their differences, justly feeling that their points of agreement are vastly more important than their points of difference. When the friends of God summon us to associations of this sort for the purpose of promoting our common Christianity, but not of protecting its impugnors, we hear their voice, for it is not the voice of a stranger, but of the true Israel. Then will we gather to the "sacramental host of God's elect." But how often do heretics and reckless innovators make the welkin ring with the same watchwords, for the manifest purpose of screening their heresies and arts from detection and exposure! These we will not hear. For although the voice be the voice of Jacob, the hands are the hands of Esau.

As we have seen, the truth is turned into a lie by being incorporated with positive or negative errors which produce the transmutation. It is a necessary consequence, that the surest defence against, and remedy for this fatal tendency, is to hold and teach the truth as it is in Jesus, in its utmost fulness and simplicity; for all parts of the system of divine truth mutually support and brace each other. The removal of any part, therefore, although it be not the foundation, weakens and imperils the whole edifice. This must be so, as God is its author. It is so, as all experience testifies. We are persuaded that such could be shown, historically and logically, to have been the effect of losing faith in doctrines so remotely connected with Christian experience, as the imputation of Adam's sin, and the scriptural idea of the Church. Therefore, whatever connections we may form for promoting our common Christianity, with those who cannot yet digest the strong meat of what is

peculiar to the system called Calvinistic, we must not in any wise fetter our liberty to maintain them boldly in every appropriate sphere. To bind ourselves not to teach all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded us, is treason to him and his truth, therefore, to our common Christianity. We sum up all in the celebrated aphorism of Augustine:—*In necessariis unitas; in non necessariis libertas; in omnibus caritas.*

ART. V.—*Thoughts for the Ministry.*

EIGHTEEN centuries ago, the command was given to the Church, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Here is at once the *charter* of her territory, and the *compend* of her duties. The earth is hers by the grant of Heaven, just as fast as she is ready to occupy it; and the end of her being as to this world, is, through the occupancy of her domain, to bring all mankind to the knowledge of the truth. That she has hitherto failed in both respects, is, alas, too manifest to require even an assertion. She has suffered the enemy to retain long and almost undisputed possession of large portions of her territory; while in the meantime countless millions of those whom it was her duty to have reached, have descended, unevangelized, to their graves, and to the miseries of death eternal. Solemn truth!

Nor is she now, we fear, with all her activity, awake to her duty, or prosecuting her work in a way likely to be very soon successful. The population of the world grows much faster than Christianity spreads, and the resources of the Church are not developed and applied as they actually exist or accrue. Increasing numbers, abounding wealth, divine commands, promises, invitations, and influences, have not given her that progressive impulse which might have been expected, and which doubtless is indispensable to her success. She tarries yet on the borders of her rightful possessions.

That the responsibility of this delay does not rest with God, all will admit. His command is and has been uniformly the